

About Love



Alova

Abstract: Love is and always has been a human ideal, yet now there is so much confusion about what it is and how to get it that our ideal has been all but lost. We regain understanding of what love is by examining what it is and what it is not, and how we grow from pleasure to affection to love. Then we can seek ways to experience love more abundantly with a greater and grounded recognition of our goal.

1. What is love?



Love is, and has always been, an ideal of humanity. We seek it in myriad ways—physically, emotionally, spiritually—by virtue, by learning, by hook or by crook, by prayer. Nowadays, the word “love” is used in so many different ways that our ideal has been all but lost in the confusion of words and concepts.

In popular culture, love has been equated to everything from lust to domination to God. Whatever it is, people want to have it, to get it, to hang on to it. We think of love the way we think of an object, which we can acquire, possess and give.

However, love doesn’t work that way; when we give an object, we don’t have it any more. When we acquire an object, whoever had it previously no longer has it. But when we love, we don’t cease to have it—in fact, we often feel even more love than before we “gave” it!

♪♪♪♪
I need your love
♪♪♪♪
Give me all your love
♩♩♩ ♩♩♩
I want you for all time
♪♪♪♪
God is love

- 1) Therefore, love cannot be given or received, acquired or lost.

Hmm.

So if we “give” love, what we really mean is that we do some actions that are motivated by an inner feeling of benevolence and good will, and that if people “give” us love, they act in a way that helps us or makes us feel better.

Loving actions are not the same as the love that motivates them, however, because the same actions could be motivated by something else—a sense of duty or commitment, a hope to receive something in return, fear, or even a desire to manipulate or control. Besides, an action intended to benefit us could harm us instead.

2) Therefore, love **is** not action.

Hmm.

When we love someone, we often sacrifice our own needs or wants in order to provide something for the one we love. Sacrifice is regarded as a hallmark of love; people who sacrifice for our benefit are extolled, sometimes even worshipped.

Someone may sacrifice for us out of love, or due to other motives as well—a sense of duty, or perhaps a calculated cost-benefit analysis. Often love doesn't involve sacrifice at all.

3) Therefore, love in itself is not sacrifice.

Hmm.

Loving actions sometimes cause pain or destruction. Surgery is painful and destructive, even though it can save life. Morphine feels good, even though it kills.

Sometimes, we only know years later whether an action was loving. As a youth we may have resented a parent or teacher who taught us a very hard lesson, but as we mature we might realize that she or he was actually the most loving one in our lives. Similarly, we might realize that someone we liked for years because they made us feel good actually might have done us a lot of harm.

4) Therefore, whether an action feels good—to the recipient or to the actor—is not a sufficient gauge of whether it is loving.

Hmm.

Love is something we feel or sense, like an emotion. Is love a warm sentiment or emotion?

Some people are strongly emotional and others are not; yet everyone can feel and express love. Unemotional people can feel and express love just as much as emotional people, perhaps in different ways.

We wouldn't want our surgeon to be feeling strong emotions during our surgery. Even if surgeries are performed unemotionally with complete dispassion, a surgery may actually be a great act of love.

The ideal love to which humans aspire is enduring, life-long and beyond, whereas emotions come and go like clouds (unless we actively prolong them).



Love is forever.

Love can exist with great passion or with great dispassion, with emotion or without. Emotion and emotionality are not hallmarks or measures of love.

5) Therefore, love is not an emotion.

Hmm.

When we have a desire, it goes away when it is fulfilled, at least temporarily. When we have a need, it also disappears when fulfilled. However, when we love people, our instinct is to give, to care for them. We want them to be happy, which increases our own happiness.

We might also want someone we love to care for us, but loving and desiring are two distinct feelings. We can desire something from someone we love, or we can desire something from someone we don't love. We might be dependent on and need someone; but we can need people with or without loving them.

6) Therefore, love is not desire or need.

Hmm.

Sometimes, we use the word “love” toward something we like very much: “I love broccoli,” or “I love sunshine.” (Similarly, we use the word “hate” toward something we simply dislike.) Liking isn't the real love we crave as human beings; it is affection based on pleasant sensations and pleasant memories. Likes and dislikes change and shift. We might like someone one day, or in one setting, and not the next. Sometimes, we might not even like ourselves.

We might love someone deeply, but not really like them very much. We might not enjoy spending time with them, we might not like their personality or behavior, but we want the best for them and care about them just as much as we care about ourselves.

At the same time, we might like and enjoy someone a great deal, but not really love them or care about them very much. Liking and loving are different, and are not necessarily even felt towards the same people.

7) Therefore, love isn't just strong liking.

Hmm.

When we love someone, we might trust them—to not hurt us, to not betray us, to always care for us. We are apt to feel angry and unloving when someone betrays our trust. Is love trust, or is trust a sign of love?

We could love someone very much who falls into bad company or addiction, and not trust them at all even though we still love them so much and wish for their well-being. Trust can be foolish rather than loving, for enabling someone to harm us is not helpful—to anyone. We could also trust our accountant completely, even though we don't know her or him well enough to feel love. We can love someone whom we don't trust, and we can trust someone we don't love.

8) Therefore, love is not trust, and trust is not love.

Hmm.

Sometimes, we discover someone with such beautiful qualities that we are overwhelmed with admiration, or even adoration. This feeling is sometimes described as "love." Someone might "fall in love" with a great teacher, leader or philosopher, admiring everything the person says or does. This can happen as the result of a spiritual awakening when one is overwhelmed with love and adoration for God.

However, we can admire and even adore someone we don't love at all. Throughout history, people have adored even cruel gods. We often admire people for certain qualities or achievements, even though they may have acted in deplorable ways.

We also can love people whom we don't particularly admire—we just love them and care about them anyway!

9) Therefore, love is not admiration or adoration.

Hmm.

Love is often associated with romance, sex and marriage. However, we also love our children, family members, and friends, even when there is no aspiration for romance or sex. We hope that love is present continually during sex and marriage, but love does not necessarily lead to or even include those possibilities.

10) Therefore, love in itself does not involve romance, sex or marriage.

Hmm.

2. Love Is ...

Although we couldn't and wouldn't want to marry everyone, **we can aim to love everyone**. The more people we truly love, the better we feel, the better our lives and the better our societies. How much **we love** other people is more important to our own happiness and well being than how much others love us. We can love someone even if they make mistakes that hurt us, even if we don't like them very much, and even if they don't love us.

This gives us an important clue about what love is. **Love is a state of our own mind and being.** It is not dependent on other people or circumstances. This explains why love cannot be given or received, and why we become confused if we seek to obtain it from outside ourselves. We are the only ones that can choose to love. We create it ourselves! Someone can encourage or facilitate us in feeling love, but no one can cause us to experience love, no matter how hard they try and no matter how much they love us.



How can we attain this wonderful state of mind and being, and how can we experience it more abundantly?

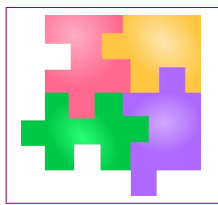
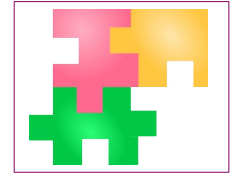
We usually feel love for another person, or perhaps a special animal. When we love someone, we want her or him to be happy, to feel good, to enjoy health and well-being, to have needs met and be free of pain or discomfort. In fact, we want for someone we love exactly what we want for ourselves.



This gives us a second important clue about what love is. We experience love when **we want the same well-being for another as we want for ourselves.**

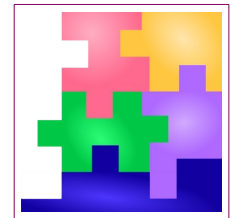
When we love someone, it changes us. It doesn't necessarily change the other person, but it changes us—perhaps to our delight, perhaps to our frustration. But we change, somehow, some way.

Love takes us beyond our selves, like a great masterpiece of music or art. We feel expanded and expansive. Love causes us to transcend our usual barriers and the boundaries of body and mind. This expansion feels good. Here is a third important clue: **love is transcendent.**



When we love, our caring and sense of self extend to someone we previously considered completely separate from us. Our awareness expands to include whom we love, since we care about her or him just like we care about ourselves. We are not only conscious of our own needs or wants, but of someone else's too. Here is our fourth clue. **Love is an awareness**—an expanded awareness.

Love is the awareness that we are one with someone else. We care about someone we love just like we care about ourselves. We transcend our individual selves when we truly love someone else, because we realize our oneness with them too.



“I salute the light within your eyes where the Universe dwells. For when you are at the center within yourself and I within mine, we shall be one.”

—Chief Crazy Horse

Love is the awareness of unity.



The true nature of anything is known by its fruit, the results of its action. To determine the nature of love, it is necessary to examine its fruits.

3. Love in Action

A newborn baby is not able to obtain food or other survival needs. The baby was just recently part of the mother's body, and the mother usually continues taking care of her baby's needs. The baby might coo or smile when satisfied, and soon learns to recognize the people who provide food and cuddling. We might say that the baby loves the mother, although the baby is far too young to be conscious of feeling love. It would be more accurate to say that the baby feels pleasure.





A mother, however, has a feeling that transcends herself. She actually beholds a literal part of herself, now in a separate body. She naturally wants to do everything possible to meet her infant's needs, just as she was doing before giving birth.

As her child grows up and develops autonomy and independent thought, a mother sees her child as more and more distinct from herself, but she always has the memory of her experience of being one. This is why a mother's love is legendary; she has actually experienced physical unity with her child. **Unity is a key element of love.**



Sages and now physicists tell us that everything in the universe is connected to everything else. So everything really is one connected whole. Everything is in unity with each and every one of us, although only sages are consciously aware of it.

Children grow up without the memory of unity their mothers had, and develop self-awareness as separate individuals. Throughout life we experience pleasure and pain, naturally seeking to be closer to sources of pleasure and farther from sources of pain. We look for people who will never bring us pain, and who will prevent the pain of loneliness.

When we feel pleasure, like a baby who coos happily after being fed, we sometimes speak of our good feeling as “love” even though it is really just pleasure, gratitude, or desire for more. When we experience an abundance of pleasure in life, we often feel expansive and want to share with more people, to help and promote their welfare.

When we have experienced an abundance of difficulties and hardships in life, we also may feel expansive and care about other people more! Hospital workers have noticed that children who have been physically abused are frequently the most loving and compassionate children on the ward. Poorer people generally share more and tend to be more giving and compassionate than their wealthier compatriots.

Difficulties and hardships often cause us to want—and need—other people who care about us. We also encounter people who need us to care about them too. In fact, we all need everyone to care about all of us!

But a **feeling** of caring isn't quite enough. We need action, with results that really help. Love is not just warm fuzzies, melodious songs or imagined ideals. Love is not just providing sweetness or what someone wants.

Love always benefits the one who loves, and action motivated by loving feelings sometimes—but not always—realizes its beneficent goal.

Since love is an awareness, a state of mind and being, we can make mistakes in how we express our love in action. Sometimes people with good motives do things that unintentionally cause unnecessary pain and destruction; thus the adage, "The road to hell is paved with good intentions." Apparently, ***something more than intention is required for an action to be truly loving.***



In order for us to express our love in action that actually benefits those we love, we must **examine** the entire situation and **discern** what would really be best for them. It is not loving to give children whatever they want, since they don't have the knowledge of what is in their best interest or the self-discipline to act accordingly. If we love someone who is diabetic, we'd better take them something other than a sugary dessert.

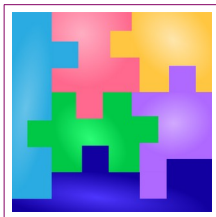
Examining and discerning take effort, care, consideration. It's not always easy to figure out what is really best for someone. What's best is not always what someone wants, not always what feels good, not necessarily what experts think or books say.

We learn to express our love effectively by trial and error. Good intentions are the first requisite, but love in action is not an instant or automatic result. Experience increases and expedites this discernment. Accumulation of this experience is wisdom.

Without wisdom, love is frustrated, ineffectual, impotent.
Love without wisdom results in confusion, albeit with sincerity.
Love with wisdom manifests as divine grace—God in action.

♪ ♪ ♪ ♪
God is love

Now we can understand why it is said that God is love.



Here is our final puzzle piece. **Love requires wisdom** in order to bear its fruit and manifest as love, rather than as confusion or even harm. **Wisdom is a necessary component of love.**

4. Pleasure → Affection → Love



Babies are aware of their bodies, through which they feel pleasure and pain. A baby naturally **identifies the self as the body**, since the body is the only thing of which a baby is initially conscious. To express affection for a baby, we provide physical comforts like food, warmth and rocking.

Babies learn that their individual bodies are separate from others. They learn to move and get reactions, gradually discovering that they can cause pain or pleasure to others.



As they grow, they develop mental awareness also. They feel emotions, desires, anticipation, dismay, excitement—not necessarily caused by physical sensations. Emotions, like bodily sensations, can feel pleasurable or painful. Children feel emotional pleasure and pain, as well as physical.

Just as a baby identified the self as the body, the source of physical pleasure and pain, a child now **identifies the self as the body plus the mind**, emotions and desires.

Just as physical pleasure and pain drive behavior throughout life, emotions also drive behavior throughout life—much more strongly than most people realize. Adults often mask their motives with rationality, but most of our decisions are based on an underlying emotion or affection (or disaffection). “E-motion” moves us to act.

Affection is mental pleasure. It is pleasant for everyone around. Affection mitigates pains and difficulties in life. It even feels good to be in the company of people and animals who are feeling affection. It is said that enlightened sages of ancient times could look at their wives with such affection that they became pregnant! We follow our affections—for food, for beautiful sights and sounds, for enjoyable experiences, and for people we like.

Affection is our second step toward love. We can give and receive affection. Affection can be quantified and compared—we like one food more than another, one song more than another, one person more than another. We gauge how much someone likes us by how much affection they bestow on us. There are countless ways to express affection.



All mammals express affection, especially for their young. There is something natural and biological about affection for family members. Although we identify our individual selves with our individual bodies and minds, our sense of identification often extends to family members. We instinctively feed them, protect them, care for their needs.

As we grow older, we also start to identify with other groups—regional, cultural, ideological. Each broader group with which we identify extends our scope of affection. Our sense of identity gradually softens and expands as we discover commonality—unity—with more people. We may even feel greater kinship with friends than with family.

As a child's intellect develops, thoughts, ideas and reasoning provide another source of pleasure and pain. When we learn that two plus two equals exactly four, the the accuracy and precision are intellectually pleasurable.

$$\begin{array}{r} 2.000000 \\ + 2.000000 \\ \hline 4.000000 \end{array}$$

When we learn to observe, make connections between bits of information, and draw logical conclusions, the process is intellectually pleasurable. An error in thought process is painful to the intellect.

If A then B.
If B then C.
⇒
If A then C.

We can appreciate and enjoy a beautiful, abstract idea, just as we appreciate and enjoy physical beauty. Our enjoyment can be regarded as intellectual pleasure, and we could say we have intellectual affection for beautiful, noble, just ideas.

With intellect, we can evaluate ideas, activities, and people according to facts and reason, rather than according to the biases of physical and emotional ties to family or culture. Using our intellect in this way has helped humanity rise from purely tribal behavior, in which people's identity and loyalty is based primarily on tribal membership, to more civil and humane societies that are more understanding and tolerant.

Translations and universal languages like music and pictures allow us to communicate with many different people and ideas. We find commonality with people we wouldn't have met or accepted previously. We feel unity in more ways with more people, who aren't as different as we imagined.

Using our intellect properly thus allows us to expand. Affection and commonality supported by truth and reason is our third step toward love.

As intellect develops, we naturally start to **identify the self with the intellect**, with our thoughts and opinions, in addition to the body, emotions and desires with which a young child identifies. Some people become so identified with their opinions that they feel they, themselves, are attacked when someone disagrees with their ideas. Some even become physically violent, even though opinions are not physical.

With our intellect we imagine ideals and endeavor to make them manifest in our physical world. We play with ideas, imagine scenarios, modify our plans. Ideas are abstract, non-material. When we identify with the intellect, we start to realize that **we are non-physical**. We are conscious of things that are not physical. We need a brain to communicate with one another, but our consciousness can drift and still be aware.

This non-physical being that we really **are** is often called the “soul.” The more we pay attention to our awareness as a being, rather than as a body, mind, or intellect, the more we come to **identify the self as the soul**.

When we identify our self as the body, physical unity with another living person is impossible. When we identify the self as our mind and emotions, although we might share similar feelings with someone, mental unity is not possible. When we identify the self as the intellect, even with many similar thoughts and ideals, intellectual unity is not possible.

Sensations, emotions and thoughts are tied to the physical body. Thus, if we think we **are** the body or mind, we cannot experience unity with another person. Bodies are separate, and so are their associated emotions and thoughts. Only when we identify ourselves as the non-physical soul can we experience oneness, love.

Love does not mean that we have identical bodies, minds, or thoughts with someone else, or that we can dominate or control the body or mind of another the way we control our own. Love is awareness of our oneness of being-ness, not of body or attributes.

Identifying ourselves as our being, which is non-physical, and becoming one with another being is an age-old practice taught in spiritual traditions. It is also used in modern military and “intelligence” training, including for special operations and security personnel. The ability to experience oneness with another creature is not new or reserved to sages or psychics; we can all do it.

Once we identify as a soul, we become capable of love. Before this, we were able to feel affection but not love, because we identified the self as the body, mind or intellect which cannot achieve the oneness of love. When we know ourselves as beings, as souls, we know that others are also souls, and we can become aware of our unity.

Our awareness of unity with someone else is completely independent of the awareness of the other person. It is not necessarily mutual.

When we are aware of our identity as a soul and our oneness with others, we realize that **all other people, all souls, love us too—most of them just don’t know it!** People who love are content and have an inner peace and knowing, and people who don’t love are less content.

When we are aware of our unity with others, we are better able to see the truth and interact with them as who they are, not what we wish or fear them to be. However, **loving people does not mean that we accept or condone their behavior**, sympathize with their feelings, agree with their opinions, or have an obligation to them.

Condemnation is rejection. It precludes unity and thus love. We might condemn someone's **behavior** as wrong or foolish, but we need to remember that a person, a being, is different from an action. We can condemn an action, but we have no right to condemn a soul.

There is a natural progression in human development that encourages our awareness to expand from bodily pleasure, to various levels of affection, and finally to love. Human beings uniquely have the ability to achieve this state of love in which we realize our oneness with everything in the universe. Perhaps this is the real goal of human life.

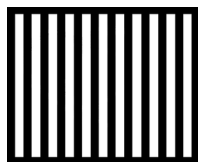
5. Expectations and Commitments

When people feel love for or from someone, they usually have expectations about how both of them will behave. Usually these expectations are just assumed, not discussed. People often expect loyalty to their image, family, and reputation. Some expect people who love them not to say anything they don't want to hear. When two people's expectations differ, one might feel betrayed in the future even if the other person had no such intent.

Since love cannot be measured, given or received, it cannot be exchanged. If we want or expect anything in exchange for our "love," we want to trade actions—not love. ***Notice that the very moment we even think about getting, wanting, commitments, or duties, we instantly remove ourselves from the wonderful state of love and unity.***

It is impossible to give something from oneself to oneself—nothing changes hands. Exchanges require more than one party, separate from each other—whereas love means we know our unity.

Contracts require two separate parties, and stipulate rights and duties of each. Each party has a right to the other party fulfilling the specified commitments, and a duty to fulfill one's own commitments. (If a party has no duties, in law, it is not considered a contract and cannot be enforced.)



A duty or commitment is a type of bondage. It may be a joyful, willing bondage, but it is nonetheless bondage.

When we make a commitment with someone we already love, we both become bound. There can be great power and benefit in such a contract between people who love each other. A lifelong marriage commitment creates a haven of safety for children, and allows adults to have a permanent companion in life.

Having a long-lasting relationship with someone we can count on is the primary factor in living a long and happy life.¹

We can keep commitments with love or without, with joy or without, with or without a sense of burden.

Placing demands on someone we love may be appropriate, but it is not love. Telling our foot that we will no longer regard it as part of our self if it doesn't do what we want is simply not something we could say to a part of our own being.



Making requests, however, is different. When we **ask** someone to do something, without any threat of rejection or anger, both people remain free. There is no disruption in the awareness of unity. Love stays, love thrives.

If someone wants to constrain someone else out of personal desire or need, it is not love. Love does not seek to bind, impose, or possess.

A desire to possess someone can be a doomed attempt to realize unity. Dominating or possessing someone is not unity, but leans toward evil. Every soul created by God, our Source, has the right to make its own choices and experience the results.



Love itself **is** free. ***Love is a state of awareness, and it cannot be bound, forced, exchanged, negotiated, or extorted.*** Everyone is free to love. We can be aware of our oneness with anyone, any time, and of our unity with the rest of the universe too.

Love itself is always good—and the more, the better.

6. Being “In Love”

Falling, while jumping on a trampoline or sky-diving, feels good while we're in the air—but crashing on the ground is painful. Falling in love at first feels euphoric. We are elated, in the air, infatuated. Stars in our eyes blind us to faults and conditions that preclude a relationship we really want; thus it is said that “love is blind.” When we fall in love, we are at first unbalanced and unreasonable.



On a trampoline or sky-diving, we hope to touch ground gently and upright. When we fall in love, we usually **hope** to never touch ground. We need to be careful and refrain from making important decisions during this time. Patience is difficult, and seeing reality is difficult because our emotions and desires are adept at masking or ignoring facts we don't want to see.

1 Harvard longevity study, <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2017/04/over-nearly-80-years-harvard-study-has-been-showing-how-to-live-a-healthy-and-happy-life/>

Falling in love involves endorphins and sex hormones. Animals in heat are completely one-pointed in their drive to mate, sometimes even to the death. Humans are similar but, unlike animals, we have the ability to control our instincts. Reason and will power are required; social controls help, which is one benefit of religion and laws.



Romantic fairy tales conclude, "... and they lived happily ever after." The tales never mention coming down to ground—hard work, misunderstandings, conflict, tears. From childhood we're led to believe that it is possible and ideal to remain in the air for life.

In reality, we always eventually touch ground. In an ideal case, we touch ground gently and upright: the facts we didn't notice are tolerable or manageable, affection is mutual, goals are compatible and realistic, and the equality is present that makes friendship possible.

People who fall in love and then touch ground gently and upright are rare and fortunate indeed. They find challenges in life easier to meet, difficulties easier to bear. Initial infatuation matures into real love when they care about one another the same as they care for themselves, and eventually know their real unity.



More commonly, people fall in love and crash to the ground when character and facts become evident. Sometimes they seek a "twin soul" or "soul mate" to fall in love with, usually repeating failed patterns. Sometimes people crash on the ground enough times that they lose hope of finding "love."

Yet the physical desire to mate and the soul's desire to experience unity are so strong that people often open up again—to pleasure, affection, and hopefully to love.

Many people think that if one is "in love with" someone, it means that one should want to marry her or him. However, being "in love" is temporary. One needs to decide if there is a realistic possibility of "in love" maturing into true, abiding love before making a lifetime commitment.

Many people also think that one should be "in love with" someone before marrying her or him. Some people want to be swept off their feet by the "right" person, like in the fairy tales. However, being "in love" is not at all necessary for a deep and fulfilling marriage relationship.

If we already know our identity as a soul and have realized our true unity with at least one other, we are much less likely to "fall" into love because we don't have unrealistic hopes or expectations; we are already grounded. **Love is not blind; infatuation is blind, and hormones are blind.** Love, the awareness of unity with all that is, encompasses all of the truth.

True love lives in truth and only in truth.

7. Increasing Love



From the time we become aware of ourselves as individuals, we seek oneness—to know our unity with everyone and everything, the truth that we are connected with everything in the universe. However, most of us don't realize that unity is what we want; we're just seeking pleasure and avoiding pain. The most universal human pain is feeling separate from our very Source.

Our first step to increase our experience of love is to remember often, until it is automatic, that we **are** the soul, and **have** a body, mind and intellect.

In order to function in the world, we must still refer to ourselves as bodies. “Are you hungry?” or “Have you been to Spain?” clearly refer to the physical body, not the soul. Language still identifies our selves with our bodies, so we need to make an effort to remember our true identity.

We can look into people's eyes to meet and greet their souls, as the eyes really are the window. (Texting, email, and virtual media simply do not suffice.)



We can practice looking at our spouse with overwhelming affection and gratitude.

We also need to refrain from rejecting other souls, who were also created by our Source. We have grown by seeking pleasure and rejecting pain, and we are used to rejecting sources of pain and labeling them “bad.” It is important to remember that a person **is** not her or his actions or thoughts. We should still reject what is wrong—a harmful action, a dishonest or unjust plan, an incorrect idea. But haven't we ourselves done or thought things that turned out to be harmful? To experience love we extend tolerance to others, even if we wouldn't have made the same mistake.

We must condemn truly evil actions, evil intentions, evil ideas. But people who do evil were also created by our Source. We need to reject their actions without rejecting their souls, their beings. Then, with wisdom, we can be aware of our unity, keep a prudent distance physically and mentally, and act appropriately. When we maintain our awareness of unity at the soul level, other people's awareness often expands as well.

We can also soften our sense of separateness by paying attention to inner similarities with other people. We can refuse to allow outer differences to convince us that separateness is the ultimate reality. The more we feel unity, the more we know that it is also real.

In love, it is essential to take wisdom as our constant companion. Love does not include relinquishing our own dignity, sacrificing to the point of putting ourselves in danger, acceding to someone's desires at the expense of common sense or prudence, or protecting someone's pride at the expense of truth or justice.

This expanded consciousness of love, being aware of our unity, is natural. We do not need new knowledge or skills; we just need to **allow** it.

A brain scientist experienced this state of awareness of unity with the universe after she had a massive stroke on the left side of her brain.² It is the right side of the brain that knows our unity, and the left side that allows us to distinguish differences, use language, and think sequentially.

Experiencing unity with one person or many involves balancing our innate faculties. Love requires the right side of the brain for awareness, and the left side for discernment and wisdom to express love in action.

**Love, the awareness of our unity, really is the answer
—for individuals, and for our world.**



2 Jill Bolte Taylore, Ph.D., *My Stroke of Insight: A Brain Scientist's Personal Journey*, 2006, <http://mystrokeofinsight.com>; https://www.ted.com/talks/jill_bolte_taylor_s_powerful_stroke_of_insight

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