



CHAPTER TWO

Love

TO LOVE WITHOUT BOUNDARIES

It is here, amidst the loom of love, that our lives can generously and magnificently be portrayed if we take the time to connect and weave together all of the caring, nurturing and loving threads connecting us to people, places and things.

— Author

Ethereal. Overwhelming. Exhausting.
Motivating. Exquisitely delicious and equally

painful. These are the words that come to mind when I think about the oft-used word "love." Sometimes I think we use it so often in passing that we forget the import and hefty weight that the word actually conveys. It is not to be trifled with. Not to be toyed with. After all, people die for love. They move mountains for love. They build, create, suffer, endure... All for the sake of, and in the name of, love. Sometimes for just the promise, just for a fleeting taste, of this most abundant and awkwardly elusive elixir of life. The sweet, sweet enchantment of love. In my book, it is the number one reason to live.

I struggle to define love which is different than describing it; and conversely, it is easy to state what it is not. For me, sometimes clarity can be found when I very purposefully set out to define an idea, concept or theory by pinpointing what it is not. This allows me to build some defining boundaries - a box, if you will, where I can then narrow my thinking about a particular thing.

Following this train of thought, what love is not, my mind went straight to the concepts of hate, darkness and evil. More specifically, a darkness of spirit, mind and body where greed, excess and depravity are the greatest character achievements and life is individual-centric and

selfishness is the guiding principal for one's action or inaction.

Within this narrow backdrop for what love is not, perhaps love is simply to do what is right for the highest good of all concerned on a societal scale, and at the individual level, love in such a manner as to nurture, share and create an uplifting relationship with self and others. And perhaps, perhaps, there will be that one, the one special person, that feels the same about you. The soul mate.

So, with this "thing" called love, I opine and believe that it is without doubt the greatest motivator that exists, and I daresay that when we harness the power of love, we latch on to the unending and everlasting threads of the universe as they weave their tapestries through time and space. It is here, amidst the loom of love, that our lives can generously and magnificently be portrayed if we take the time to connect and weave together all of the caring, nurturing and loving threads connecting us to people, places and things. To portray them through love... with ourselves and those we care about.

I once heard someone say, I can't quite remember who or where, that "we should strive

to live in the light.” As I ponder the gravity of the statement, I can’t help but equate it to “we should strive to live in love,” because to me they, light and love, are one and same, and if my reason for getting up in the morning is to imbue the tapestry of my life and the lives of others with love, boundless and free, then I do believe that is a wonderful, fulfilling and glorious reason to live.

However, I think there is more to love. My own experiences have taught me, shown me over time, that love is not always tender and soft, or as my kids will jokingly say, “all unicorns and rainbows.” Sometimes, the exercise of love’s passion is thorny and leathery tough and to endure it, one must possess grit and faith. Let me explain.

My wife and I were recently having a quiet discussion about love over a wonderfully aromatic and velvety glass of wine, and the topic turned to “falling in and out of love.” One might think that because of the topic selection (which came to light organically through conversation) that we were having a problem with our relationship; however, nothing could be further from the truth, and actually, it is the polar opposite. Our relationship, which

we have carefully and conscientiously nurtured over the years, allows us the freedom and safety to talk about anything. From falling in and out of love to wondering what in the world we ate to create the zeppelin filling amount of gas that is now propelling us around the house (a new fuel source I believe – should bottle and sell it). Absolutely nothing is out of bounds. That too is love.

I believe it is a fairly universal reality for most people that you can't be in euphoric love all the time, and in fact, there are times when the euphoria and wanderlust in one's eye for the other person has dimmed considerably. I chuckle here because I can recall with great clarity the time my ex-wife threw her high heel shoe at me from across the room. It cut through the air as if propelled by some magical and powerful force, and then there was a loud crack as the stiletto of the high heeled weaponry impaled itself in the wooden closet door. This happened when we were still relatively happy at the beginning of our relationship, and in spite of that, the shoe flew. I am just thankful that her aim was so poor.

Of course, it is normal to have disagreements and even pretty intense arguments (stiletto

heel throwing is not normal by the way), but perhaps it is unexpected to one who has just fallen dramatically in love and suddenly senses or feels that the overwhelmingly charged electricity of love is waning. It can be, as most of us have experienced, alarming. The question surfaces in the mind like a monster rising from the deep subconscious, "Am I falling out of love?" as perspiration beads on our brow and our chest constricts with each breath. This question, of course, "Are we, am I, falling out of love?" sets in motion entire rivers of anxiety as hurricanes of fear lash at the shores of our every thought. "Is this the end of the road for us?" Woe is me! "I had such high hopes this time..."

Karla, my wise shaman companion, noted that love was like the ocean, vast and beautiful and subject to the ebb and flow of the tides as the world spins and the moon exerts her gravity upon her friend, the Earth. Relationships, like the ocean, have numerous pressures and forces affecting them and these create an inevitable ebb and flow in the feelings of closeness and intimacy, and similarly, this ebb and flow also affects the energy levels and bandwidth available between people in

a relationship. Babies are born. Jobs are difficult and time consuming. Cars break down. Partners travel. Bills must be paid and the toilet needs plunge. Sometimes, the euphoric lust and romantic depth of new love must take a back seat to the principles of “doing what must be done” and “burning the midnight oil” so the house can be heated, babies can be fed and the bills can get paid. Of course, that too is love if one chooses to see it for what it is. Committed trust in the relationship.

As we neared the end of the glass of luscious wine, we both agreed as our relationship has blossomed and deepened over time, it is the sure knowledge that the ebb and flow of love’s amorous passions is natural, and sure as the tides come and go, so it is also with those feelings. Of course, having that degree of faith and trust in the relationship, the certainty in the relationship, is key to being patient with the process. Patience with the relationship and patience with your lover and friend that all is well can only exist when there is trust.

As I savored the last sip of honey dew vine water from Willamette (rhymes with dammit) Valley, my definition for love became clearer, as now I could see it was our ability to talk about

literally anything that allowed my wife and I to feel safe and secure, and this in turn allowed us to trust in the relationship and in each other. Consequently, it was this trust that allowed us to be patient with the ebb and flow and the ins and outs of everyday life as it affected the movement of the partnership day in and day out. And so it is, that our relationship has ebbed and flowed many, many times over the years, and I can say with great certainty that it will continue to do so.

This same truth is applied to many other relationships that are loving in nature, but of course not in the carnal sense. But, nonetheless, on various levels, these same principles work with all relationships.