

18 CLARIFYING LOVE

Richard and I went back to our discussion of Love. I put forward the thought that one of the keys to this process is clarifying the idea of Love, which has been ill-defined, misused and distorted. Cleaning up its definition in our minds is an important piece of foundational work.

Two thousand years ago, we were taught Love was the most important Law to human existence—it must come first if intelligence is to be maintained. Teaching Love is not religious, it is the most practical thing in the world. One of the major pitfalls we humans have fallen into is that of making any teaching on Love sound like religion. Many people throw out teachings based on Love, or only give them lip service because they think those teachings are religion, which they have been subtly taught to reject.

Richard thought that the ideas on Love sounded good, but wanted to know how to Love someone who had just been abusive to him. He said in an exasperated tone, "Who could feel anything but anger and hate in that situation?"

"To Love, you must first straighten out your definition of the word. This may sound trite, Richard, but the people who can feel Love when attacked know what Love is and do not have realities called anger and hate in them."

"But . . ." Richard interjected.

"Stay with me for a minute. Remember, our goal is to let go of the old beliefs and manipulative teachings long enough to build some new brain cells. If, when I am finished, what I have said does not make sense, throw it out and go back to the old way.

"Love, in Aramaic, does not mean cooperate with and help the person who is beating up on you. It does not mean accept every atrocity with a smile and pretend that all is well when it is not. Love does not mean that you don't hold people accountable for their behavior. Love is not a passive state of suppressing your anger so you look like a saint," I reported.

"So, it's okay to get angry when someone abuses you!" Richard said gleefully. "I thought so!"

"The reality in your head is giving you information that was not delivered by my words, Richard. It's okay to get angry with someone if you want your mind to be stupid while you interact with them," I replied.

KEY THOUGHT—A mind without Love is "stupid."

"What is that supposed to mean?" Richard almost shouted. "It sounds like you're playing games with me and I don't like it!"

"There is an old saying that the Truth will set you free, but first it's going to make you very, very angry," I said half-jokingly, in an attempt to lighten the energy a little.

"Richard, the word Love in this culture is so distorted that its true meaning is almost lost. Much of the entertainment industry would have us believe Love is sexual athletics and satiation. Others would have us believe it is self-denial and sacrifice. Still others would have us think we show Love by receiving their abuses graciously. Think about it. Who has something to gain by our believing in these bizarre definitions of Love?" I could almost hear Richard's brain churning in search of an answer.

"I'm not sure what you mean."

"If I believe Love is sexual athletics as portrayed on the screen," I suggested, "might I pay for more sick movies and demand more intense and bizarre sexuality in order to be satiated? Might I think what is played out in movies is normal and try to live up to the reality I've come to believe is true? Might I find myself wanting to participate in the outrageous habits for which much of the entertainment industry is famous?"

"We need to recognize, Richard, that fulfilling outrageous fantasies will never satisfy us, it will only lead to even more bizarre behaviors. Until we do, we will continue to repeat those behaviors, wondering, 'Is that all there is? What's wrong with me?' If we hold painful realities in our minds, it does not matter how many of the 'rewards' based on an incorrect understanding of life we receive, happiness will still elude us. No matter how many possessions, how much money, sex, power or fame we achieve, these things can never satisfy us because they are empty and false. Satiation masquerades as satisfaction, but when it is experienced, it cannot deliver its tempting guarantee."

KEY THOUGHT—Possessions can not take the place of happiness.

I told Richard that I had always enjoyed the story of the old man on his deathbed who was asked for the secret to happiness. The old man is said to have replied, "For years and years I searched for what people told me would make me happy, and then I decided to be happy without it." Happiness is a state of mind, a choice we make, not a result of possessing things or being in control of people or circumstances. People often use the sensation that comes from possessing things as a substitute for happiness, for relationship and as a way of not dealing with their internalized pain .

"Real relationship is dead in the glamour industry's definition of Love. Have you ever felt used as a sexual object and then thrown away? Anyone who buys into the common media definition of Love becomes a sexual object in their own mind and in the minds of others. Of course, like other objects, they are thrown away after use," I added.

"I've been on both sides of that scenario," Richard said sadly, "and I don't understand why it has to be that way. I would Love to be in a true, honest and real relationship. Perhaps that is impossible until I straighten out some of my conflicting realities."

"I think you are right. We tend to live exactly what we have learned, and if we have been used and abused, it takes work to live differently. Relationships are a wondrous place for nurturing, support and healing if we can remove the confusing and conflicting realities we have hooked into them. My experience of people who reject or cannot form long-term relationships is they have so much pain in their 'relationship file,' they have to keep on the move or they will have to face what is hidden inside of them."

"I've been on the run too long," Richard chimed in. "Who promotes this insanity, why is there so much confusion in the world?" he asked.

"To answer that, notice who receives the benefits of a twisted understanding of Love. Anyone who distorts Truth to gain something for themselves is in so much pain and lives in such inward poverty that they cannot live honestly. They think they must manipulate to have anything for themselves—to survive.

"Have you ever noticed that the promoter of the idea that 'Love is self-sacrifice' always has their hand out, and those who feed on abusing others push the idea that Love is the gracious acceptance of their abuse? Those who promote Love as sex have a lot more sex objects of whom to take advantage, and those with a victim mentality get the benefit of playing out the role to which they are dedicated," I added.

"I'm not quite keeping up with everything you're saying, but I get its importance. I suppose I have to clean up some of the clouds I've allowed my mind to accept and build more brain cells about what Love really is before I will fully grasp it. However, you've got my attention again. I have a question that has bothered me all my life, Michael. What is Love?"

"I don't know what it is," came my unexpected reply.

"What? Why are we having this discussion about Love if you can't even tell me what it is?" he demanded.

"I didn't say I don't have any ideas, Richard. I just hesitate to reduce such an important matter to words. Words are too small for such a topic. In Aramaic, it appears that Love is what we are, it is the 'stuff' of human existence. Without it, we are not human, but reduced to less than animal status. In the Aramaic Scriptures, we are told that we are made in the image and likeness of the Creator and that the Creator is Love.

KEY THOUGHT—If the offspring of an elephant is an elephant and the offspring of a dog is a dog, what is the offspring of Love?

"Do you remember, when you were a child, looking around at the way the world worked and knowing in your heart it was supposed to be about something other than what you were seeing, something other than the almost universal strife?"

"Look into the eyes of a child. How many times, on an energy level, must that child be violated to cause him to hate? How much propaganda does it take to grow a child into a person who can kill, into a person who believes that the world is a fearsome place—that life is poverty, relationships hell and sex dirty? What does it take for people to believe they are sinners, condemned by a Creator called Love in Whose Image they are made? Why is there such confusion in the world? For the answer, check out who benefits from programmed unconsciousness."

"I'm not sure if this is what you mean," Richard interjected, "but I can think back to being a kid, watching the hypocrites fight and belittle each other, and I knew that was not how we were supposed to behave. I kept coming back to my abusers with trust and total Love, and kept getting wiped out," Richard said sadly.

"So you took on their behavior?" I asked.

"What?! I wouldn't do that!" he protested.

"Are you sure?" I queried.

"I've never been abusive, I've never hit anybody in my life!"

"Have you ever withdrawn Love, put down or tried to control others for your own benefit? Have you used anger, money or things to manipulate others into behaving the way you wanted?" I inquired. "Have you ever withheld Love from yourself?"

"Well, yes, but that's not abuse," he said, looking defensive.

"Think back to being the kid that kept Loving those that abused him—he only wanted one thing—to be Loved. How did he feel when Love was withheld and he was manipulated with money, threats and put-downs?" I asked quietly, aware that some very tender feelings were surfacing in him.

"Abused," he replied quietly. I sensed tears just under the surface, tears that had been held inside for a long time.

"It feels to me like there might be a lot of sadness, grief and uncried tears wanting to let loose, Richard."

"I was taught it was wrong to cry," his voice cracked as he tried to hide his sadness.

"That is another reality with which we've been brainwashed. Macho doesn't work. If we cannot accurately feel our feelings, we are out of touch with an important guidance system. Recall, Richard, the operative principle here is 'If I'm in pain, I'm in error.' The pain is an attempt on the part of the body to warn you of error and be of help.

"Notice, you felt abused when all the things you normally do to people, yourself included, were done to you as a child," I pointed out.

"You mean I am an abuser? I've never thought of myself that way. I always considered myself a nice guy. I thought what I was doing was normal," he added.

"These are behaviors that few have escaped. It is an almost universal phenomenon, an opportunity for healing that virtually every one of us gets. Unfortunately, abuse and exploitation have become 'normal' for many people, but that does not make it 'natural.' Remember when, as a child, you knew life was about Love and abuse was a foreign concept? I believe that abuse can be inherited, but usually it must be learned.

"People stuck in the mind-set of the world—whether teacher, parent, politician or minister—through the denial of Loving feelings and the use of abuse, help to build many distorted realities into peoples' minds. The distorted realities are then used to control and exploit. This is done with our cooperation, and the realities we choose to identify with direct us to live in a way other than our natural inclination, which is to Love."

KEY THOUGHT—"All exploitation is based on co-operation, willing or forced, of the exploited. However much we may detest admitting it, the fact remains that there would be no exploitation if people refused to obey the exploiter."

Mahatma Gandhi. India of My Dreams

"I can kind of remember when I knew I shouldn't treat people the way I do." Richard almost sounded like a child as he spoke. "I always wanted to be Loving to people, but was hurt so often I guess I hardened myself to the effects of my abrasive behaviors and my tendency to bully people."

We explored the idea of abuse and came to the conclusion that abuse and withholding Love are learned responses. It became apparent from our discussion that the reality structure in most people's minds, which is formed as a result of their distorted learning experiences, determines their behavior. Each distorted experience is a result of the combination of internal realities interacting with environmental influences.

"In Aramaic, blocking awareness of abusive behaviors, of Love and/or of feelings was called 'hardening the heart,'" I explained. "Each hardened heart is convinced that to act in accord with its distorted reality structure is 'normal.' When we can't feel, we can be convinced to do all sorts of insane things to ourselves and others and think it's normal." We observed, each from our own experience, that a person with a hardened heart remains convinced his actions are right when he does them, even though he says others are insane when they do exactly the same things.

Richard reiterated his understanding of what he called "that intriguing attribute" of the mind: Blockage of Truth. "A mind in denial literally hides information from itself; it does not see information contrary to what it believes."

"That seems to be how it works," I affirmed. "If we hold an emotionally charged goal of being right, the mind hides all evidence that enables us to see the Truth. The only thing available is error. Think about people who abuse but deny it. They reinterpret their behavior to justify it or blot the Truth out of awareness so they can continue to think of themselves as 'right.' The Truth of the abuse they do is invisible to them. This is a condition that can be corrected only by the Love of Truth.

"Have you ever, for little or no apparent reason, been abruptly thrown out of someone's life or, perhaps, thrown someone out and wondered why?"

"As a matter of fact, I was just thinking about a time when a seemingly close friendship ended over an inconsequential argument," Richard answered. "She blamed me for something I knew nothing about, and there was no way to convince her to think about it differently. I've often wondered why that happened, but I think you just explained it. I am understanding it for the first time. Her mind could only give her the evidence she needed to make me wrong rather than accept responsibility. Blocking my input was her way to protect herself. Her 'heart was hardened against the Truth.'" Richard seemed deep in thought as he spoke.

"If you want to do an interesting experiment, show someone evidence of a Truth they do not want to see. Unless they Love Truth deeply, they will:

1. Tell you that you are crazy or imagining things, or they 'forget' the event ever happened.
2. Leave, physically, by making an excuse or, mentally, by wandering off to other topics and not acknowledging the conversation you are attempting to have with them.
3. Turn on you with some form of manipulation, usually anger, to stop you from presenting your information or accuse you of a similar defect, telling you about a time when you did the same thing as though that justifies their behavior and 'makes them right.'
4. Attack you fiercely, in a manner that is all out of proportion to the issue involved. You will wonder what hit you. Chances are you will end up unwelcome in that person's life.

"If you continue to present the evidence they are in denial about, be prepared to duck so you keep your head," I said, half-jokingly, "because there is so much insanity in our culture."

"I recognize that experiment and have been attacked for doing exactly what you describe, but do you really believe that many people are crazy?" he questioned.

"I am talking about insanity, not craziness, Richard. In this work, an 'insane mind' is defined as one that lacks the condition of Love . A mind without Love is a mind without real choices, therefore 'insane.'

"In Aramaic thought, it was known that without Love, humans were easy to take advantage of, weak and vulnerable. Love is a major key because it inoculates the mind against insane behavior," I offered. "That is why it was called the First Law. A lack of awareness of this Law is the recipe for insanity."

He broke in, "I'm lost again. This starts to make sense, and then the sensible part seems to evade me."

"That's what happens when building brain cells. The realities that show up in your mind from newly developed brain cells are fragile and easily distorted by conflicting realities from the past . That is why I ask people to investigate, think on these ideas for themselves and not believe a word I am saying."

"Oh, come on, michael. Obviously, you're saying all of what you do, so people believe it," he said, with a touch of sarcasm.

"Actually, Richard, no. I say what I say to build a different framework and tools with which to experience life differently. A thought system built on someone else's experience is just a belief system and will tend to crumble under pressure.

"For instance, you asked earlier about a definition for Love. I don't have one, but I do know a way to experience it and what signals tell you when Love is present."

"What are the signals that tell you Love is present?" he asked.

"First, the mind that holds the condition of Love—in the ancient Aramaic 'Perfect Love'—is peaceful and patient in all circumstances. This mind takes responsibility for any disturbance it has and, therefore, heals itself quickly and creates a space of healing for others. Additional fruit the mind of Love includes is tenderness, compassion and gentleness.

"A mind that proclaims it punishes and brandishes fear in the name of Love is either deceiving or is a deceived mind. No such fruit is possible from Love."

"That makes sense out of a lot of senselessness I've seen," Richard sighed. "What did you mean when you said you had a way to experience Love?"

"We could call this an experiential definition: Love is what you experience just after you use True Forgiveness. It is what is left when the mind's realities get out of the way. Now, if I tell you that and you believe it, we will have another belief system in the world, another belief system to fight over and defend.

"If you use the tools and have a personal experience, personally experienced, is there anything to fight over? No. Only the insecure who don't know what Love is, have to force and fight over their B.S.—their Belief Systems. Only the insecure need to have everyone believe the same way they do so that their beliefs will not be challenged.

KEY THOUGHT—An experiential definition of Love: What you experience just after True Forgiveness.

"Richard, each of us was created in a state of Love and we deserve to experience that state twenty four hours a day, seven days a week. If we are not experiencing it, something is out of place. When we withhold Love from another, it is we who suffer from the withdrawal of that Love, it is we who experience the lack of Love. Re-member what you knew as a child about the way the world was supposed to operate?

"My function in the world is to deliver tools to people and point them toward the results possible with the use of the tools. My goal is to inspire you to use the tools and then arrive at your own conclusions about life. Of course, I think when the evidence is in, this work will prove itself correct, but the world does not need another belief system. It needs the experience of Love.

"Love, in Aramaic , is a condition in the mind that each individual is responsible for maintaining. It is the fuel that empowers the human mind to function correctly.

"Without Love, the mind is dysfunctional and we do insane things. Tell me, Richard, when are you most intelligent? When do you have the most flexibility, the widest range of choices and the highest levels of creativity? Is it when you are angry? Afraid? Hostile?" I asked.

"Obviously, most everything I've ever done and regretted was done when I was in one of those states. Let me be clear on this. Are you saying that Love is the key to intelligence?" he inquired.

"If intelligence means the ability to choose, yes. Notice when a choice is made in anger or upset—a lack of Love—it is no choice at all. We are simply driven by resonance—emotional realities from our past—driven to do things, often against our own will and choice. This only happens in a mind that lacks Love," I emphasized.

"This lack of Love, which compromises intelligence, has led most of humanity to be shackled to religious and political systems based on fear. We need to understand how to forgive our fears, or as said in the Aramaic Scriptures, 'cast out' the 'demon' fear. If we do not we will find ourselves unwittingly acting in support of that demon. A mind without the condition of Love promotes and reinforces fear at every turn. No true Spiritual teacher who understands how life and the mind operate uses fear to motivate."

KEY THOUGHT—"The greatest help you can give me is to banish fear from your hearts."

Mahatma Gandhi, Ramanama

Richard broke in. "I have seen fear motivate people to do the right things."

"In the short term, I agree. You can get people to do things out of fear. Have you noticed the long term result is always a disaster? For instance, a parent forces a child with threats and abuse. The child obeys the parent out of fear; but, in the end, hates them and passes the force and abuse on to others. The reason is the tools used to produce a result will always produce a result like the tools. Children are 'learning sponges;' they are believing creatures. What they live with, they learn, and then they live whatever it is they have learned."

"This makes too much sense!" Richard's whole being seemed to confirm his agreement with my words.

"Yes, and there is a peace when one achieves a practical understanding of tools that work and has the intellectual basis to reinforce that understanding. This work draws on all disciplines in order to build a solid foundation for the undoing of unconsciousness and for a life that is harmonious and peaceful. With its synthesis of different disciplines, it is a big chunk to bite off and chew.

"It takes patience and time to build the brain cells and integrate each of the disciplines upon which this work is built. That foundation is what makes these tools fully available. Some unconsciousness as you undo the patterns of the past and move into understanding and knowledge is to be expected. Allowing deeper issues to surface, in the presence of Love, burns them off, so to speak. If you are willing to look into yourself, your family interactions and the dynamics of the culture, healing accelerates.

"An unwillingness to look deeper means that old patterns will tend to be passed on and played out by the next generation. Conscious, Active, Present Love is the key to healing whatever needs to be healed."

"What is the best tool for really, truly getting to the space of Love within relationships with children, spouses or myself, and healing those generational patterns?" Richard inquired.

"When someone triggers a healing opportunity, the first thing to do is choose to be responsible for your mind's output, forgive and learn to hold the condition of Love in your mind in all circumstances— regardless of what your mind prompts you to do. We call that kind of Love all-encompassing Love. The tool, My Commitment, from the Healing Through Relationships workshop was developed to assist in creating that space of Love. It is a powerful key to staying on track and keeping Love in your mind when you feel turmoil. It is the best reminder I have found to get me back to a Loving space when upset surfaces. Speak it at least daily in your closest relationships and say it aloud to yourself while looking in the mirror."