

Pathwork™ Steps

Some Aspects of Love

Study Guide for Online Meetings on PRS 16 and PL 240

Week 1: The Essence of Love: Self Love

Week 2: Fear of Loving and The Valid Desire to be Loved

Week 3: The Roles of Reason, Will, and Emotion in Loving

Week 4: Love in Relationship

Week 1: The Essence of Love: Self Love

Love as a Spontaneous Soul Movement of the Inner Self PL 133

All religions, all philosophies, and all psychology agree that love is the key to everything, to fulfillment, to security, to creative growth. And yet, **love cannot be commanded**, nor can it be a commandment. It is a free, spontaneous soul movement. The more it is tried, due to conscience and obedience, the less does it succeed.

Where lack of fulfillment exists in a life, it is a sure sign that, somewhere, the soul has not yet learned to love.

Love and self-confidence are inevitably interdependent. Where love is lacking, the psyche must be confused. It works in both ways -- it is equally true to state that where confusion exists, love must be lacking. These disturbed emotions and distorted perceptions form a nucleus, almost like a foreign body.

PL 133

Some Aspects of Love PRS16:

All great religions teach that love is the foundation for happiness, the key to understanding of life and God. However, due to this truth, they erroneously make a commandment out of love.

Love is not a commandment, but the greatest of all freedoms. *It is a spontaneous soul movement of the inner self and happens naturally*, as a result of certain conditions of the personality such as psychic health, inner correct understanding and concepts, and soul currents which are in harmony with universal currents.

And yet, the word love often has a hollow sound. It may even elicit resistance and defiance in some people. **The word love has suffered a similar fate as the word God.** It is often misunderstood and approached from a side that ultimately does more harm than good -- for instance, when man feels he is forced to love. Love covers all sorts of other human emotions and needs -- as, for example, in the pseudo-solution of love.

On our path, it is essential that you approach your inability to love -- in whatever respect, and to whatever degree it may exist -- with an open, objective mind and without self-condemnation. Stop trying to force and manipulate your feelings into idealistic molds. Allow your actual feelings to simmer on the surface and evaluate them calmly. Then see what stands in the way.

By examining the images, pseudo-solutions, misconceptions, the idealized self image, the specific dictates of your personal superimposed conscience, you will find that they all prohibit loving. Establish in what specific way this applies to you. Make the connection between the wounding in childhood and the present inability.

PRS16

If you feel healthy and genuine love, you never compromise your dignity. Genuine love will always keep its dignity. You may suffer disappointment, but not undue humiliation. This love rests in itself; this dignity will create respect, not abasement or misuse. Healthy love -- since it is seeing, not blind, strong, not weak -- will always be true to your inner self just because, by eliminating the little ego, it does not aim at the fulfillment of its selfish desires. Thus the real love is free from all masochistic or sadistic tendencies; it is healthy and without egocentricity or other unhealthy, personality choking currents.

Fear is a major obstacle to attain real love, and it can only be present when man loves himself too much, takes himself too important, cares too much for his own well-being, thus clinging instead of giving freely of himself in the right and healthy manner. If you take yourself overly important, you will have to be afraid. If you give your own ego less consideration, you do not need to be afraid that "something might happen" when you genuinely love. Fear covers your eyes with a heavy veil and blinds you. You can neither see yourself nor others.

PL 4

Some Aspects of Love PRS16

If man cannot love himself in the healthy and right way, he can never love another. If he does not respect himself, respect for others is impossible. If he has no understanding for the workings of his psyche, he must lack understanding for others. If man strains toward others in order to replace his missing self-love and self-respect, while confusing this goal with love for them, he can neither gain proper esteem and love for himself, nor for, nor from others. He has to begin with himself by finding why he does not love, nor respect himself. What distortions, wrong conclusions, misunderstood commandments, real and false guilts, prohibit a realistic and justified self-consideration which he will then be capable of extending to others.

When man condemns self-love, he does so, perhaps, because he only thinks of its negative, self-centered manifestation. He simply ignores that there also exists another type of self-love, which is the true core of loving others. Healthy self-love is the realistic viewing of one's assets and liabilities; respecting and liking the self in spite of the latter, because the former are recognized and fully evaluated.

PRS 16

Perception, Determination, Love as Aspects of Consciousness PL 115

How can you love if you are insecure? It is not possible. Again, of course, there are degrees. Again, it is not a question of either/or. There are many areas in which a person is secure and therefore capable of love. But to the degree that insecurity permeates the soul, to that degree genuine capacity for loving is absent. Let us now connect inner security with love and evaluate various stages in the scale of the love capacity.

The basis of love is healthy self-love. If you are insecure, you cannot trust yourself. If you do not trust yourself, how can you love yourself? So you see, healthy self-love and inner security are directly linked.

PL 115

There is the healthy kind of self-love existing in the mature soul, but wherever your unconscious attitudes and currents are distorted, healthy self-love will be distorted as well.

Self-love in the **wrong** way exists in many forms.

1. The crudest form is selfishness -- putting oneself into a better light or position than one's fellow creatures, wanting advantages for oneself that are disadvantageous for your fellow creatures, and also a certain type of self-admiration, in a sickly way. This is obvious.

2. When it exists and is hidden in the emotions and not so much in outer deeds and manifestation, perhaps even covered by contrary outer conduct which is thus not genuine, then it is difficult to detect by others or by the self-searcher. It requires the depth-work of such a path.

3. Sickly self-admiration, being in love with oneself. A person may be in love with certain faults... Or a person may be in love with his way of life, with his manner of living, or whatever it may be. This is subtle and easily confused with the gratefulness and joy of living, which is purely positive.

PL 53

Some Aspects in the Anatomy of Love PL 240

Self-love and love for others are intricately connected. You cannot love yourself if you do not love others, and you cannot love others if you do not love yourself. Conversely, if you hate yourself, you hate others. Again, you may not be aware of this correlation and of the unconscious process that makes you deny the self-hate and therefore be in need of hating others.

The confusion is: if you love yourself, do you then indulge yourself? Do you then follow the line of least resistance? Do you then rather blame others than honestly look into your lower self? Does self-love mean giving free rein to the aspirations of the lower self and of the mask self? On the other hand, does the necessity on the path to face the truth of the lower self and its subterfuges and deceptions and coverings mean that you have to express and live this self-hate imbedded in this aspect of the personality? This is a very deep and tragic struggle in all of humanity. You begin to experience its beauty when you permit yourself to be aware of this struggle, of this confusion, and therefore find your first foothold in true security. Security lies in your first admitting this struggle, in your awareness of this struggle. When you are not aware, you seek the false solution to self-love, which is self-indulgence on the one hand and blaming others on the other hand.

It remains for you to find the places in your inner being where you still live in the pseudo-solution of loving yourself by indulging yourself, by blaming others, by excusing and justifying your own lower self traits, and all the more severely heaping accusations on others.

I want to suggest here a very specific meditation, asking the highest forces within and around you in exactly these areas that were discussed in this lecture. Where and how do you hate yourself? Where and how do you project this self-hate onto others and thereby increase the self-hate? Where do you prevent your freedom by childish denial of boundaries and structure, of laws and rules, in small and large areas? And where do you feel within yourself that you are unworthy? Where and how do you love your soul, your mentality, your body? Go deeply into the meditation in which you let yourself know that you are divine, that you need to fully face yourself in all aspects and only increase the sense of divinity. Let your consciousness align itself with the divine will of loving yourself; loving yourself without indulging yourself, without whitewashing your lower self; seeing it straight, and loving your beautiful structure, loving your incarnation, loving all that is around you, even that which seems to infringe in some way on you. Recognize its lesson and begin to love it.

PL 240

Week 2: Fear of Loving and The Valid Desire to be Loved

Fearlessness to Love PL 146

All truth teachings postulate that love means freedom, peace, life.

The only definition at all useful is to know that anything that furthers unity, inclusion, expansion, union, anything that realizes the benign nature of the universe is love and perpetuates love.

Anything that ignores the divine and benign nature of the universe and of life and therefore moves in a direction of exclusion and separateness is the opposite of love and must perpetuate the opposite of love. The opposite of love is nonlife -- various degrees of death, for there are many degrees of death, just as there are many degrees of life. It perpetuates fear.

Yet man fears the life, the peace, and the freedom of love, and clings to the separating forces in himself of non-love as a saving, protecting device. It is necessary that you put precisely into words, "Here, in this or that respect, I do not love, and I refrain from wanting to love because I am afraid of it."

PL146

Some Aspects of Love PRS16

The next aspect I wish to discuss is **fear of loving**. I already mentioned this important topic before [PL 72]. If such a fear exists, it is essential that it be found and taken out of hiding. It requires a profound truthfulness with oneself, and a finely attuned "listening into" one's subtle reactions, to ascertain in what respect this may be so. A good way to begin may be to examine any problematic area of your life. Do you have any trouble with your mate? Or can you not find an adequate mate? Your conscious eagerness to love may be a fact, but it does not eliminate a simultaneous fear of loving. These two contradictory aims may live side by side. The fear of loving may inhibit the desire to love; it may make it "conditional," i.e. contingent on something or someone else.

Problems in a person's career may also be connected with fear of loving. For example: if someone fears any attachment because he cannot stand loss and hurt, he may prohibit feelings, even in regard to involving himself in satisfying work. He may (unconsciously) deliberately choose only those occupations he does not enjoy, so that possible loss and failure would not bring suffering. Hence, he may "use" his work, without putting himself into it. Truly loving one's work for its own sake, for what it stands for, for what it can do to contribute to others, instead of using it for an ulterior purpose, means being motivated by love -- love for the work, love for people who benefit from this work. Fear of loving, no matter how hidden, prohibits fulfillment.

Inability to stand frustration also undermines the love capacity. One of the differences between maturity and immaturity is the ability to stand frustration. . The attempt to make the other give all of himself can easily be camouflaged with the word "love." But is it love?

Are you capable of "allowing" others to feel about you as they wish? Or do you inwardly try to coerce them to conform to your desires, and resent them when they do not? Do you grant others the freedom of not liking you, without getting angry and resentful? If you do, you will not fear loving. If you do not, you erroneously believe their not loving you implies your worthlessness. As long as a hidden forcing current emanates, as long as one wants to rule others and wish their "unconditional surrender," fear of involvement, of loving, of personal investment of the self, exist.

Fear of loving may override the soul's urge to participate in life, making him withdraw into a shell of self-centered seclusion, causing him to prohibit his feelings from reaching out. Though writhing in loneliness -- and often complaining about it -- there is no intention of risking one's "safety" by coming out of this self-imposed prison.

Such "love" is virtually a forcing current and a bribe

PRS16

“The Valid Desire to Be Loved”

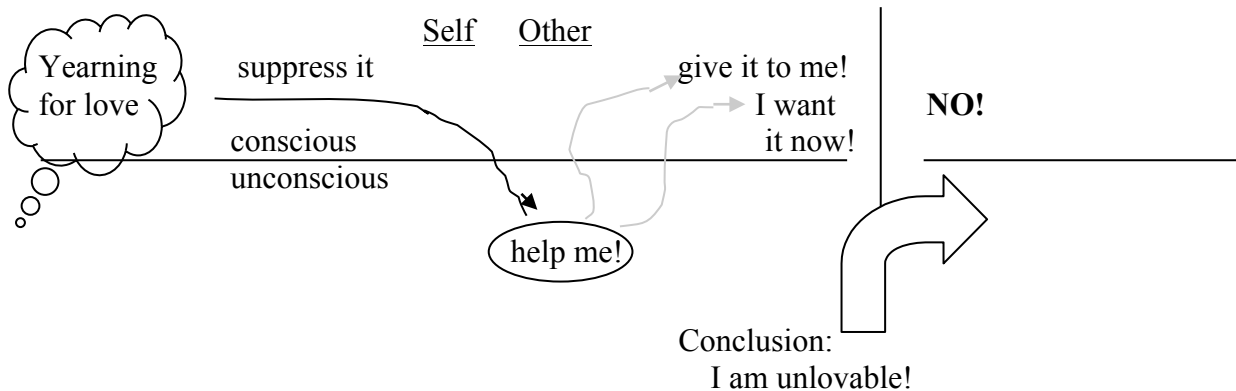
Summary created by Dottie Titus for the Pathwork Teachers Helper

If we don't understand how life works and its significance, we cannot handle good events any better than the bad ones. We need wisdom, maturity and spiritual knowledge to motivate our self-exploration.

Everyone wants to be loved. This is healthy and leads to creativity. Lack of love paralyzes our creative force. We often choose the wrong way to get love, largely because the longing is unconscious. This leads to frustration. We need to understand why we do this.

The child wants limitless and exclusive love and is made to feel bad for such demands. The child concludes the desire for love is wrong rather than realizing the type of love he or she demands is not right. The first misunderstanding is that the longing for love is shameful and must be hidden. This leads to many unhappy circumstances.

Even when we believe we are aware of our longing, we usually don't see the sadness, unfulfilled longing and our struggle to hide our sadness and search for a substitute fulfillment. This struggle is exhausting, and it produces reactions that bring the opposite of what we want. We have to see how this struggle plays a part in our conflicts.



So we substitute other fulfillment: approval, importance, superiority, impressing people. We go through life trying to prove ourselves and with a tendency to conform.

The compulsion to prove something is universal and unconscious. It makes you self-centered, proud, arrogant, superior – or submissive. These lead to people not loving you.

The way out:

Feel the original longing

Feel the sadness that resulted from not getting the love you wanted

We have to realize that it is not we who are not lovable but the artificial mask we created that is unlovable. If we remember this, we can drop the self-pity. If we were to get what we think we want, it would not feel satisfying because it comes in response to the mask. We can never get exclusive, limitless love when we want it and in the way we want it as long as we are human. In any conflict, this is always at the root of it.

The key: Whenever you find yourself reacting out of proportion to the circumstances, you are caught in this conflict, struggling for your very life (it feels this way) to get your needs met, to get unconditional, limitless, exclusive love.

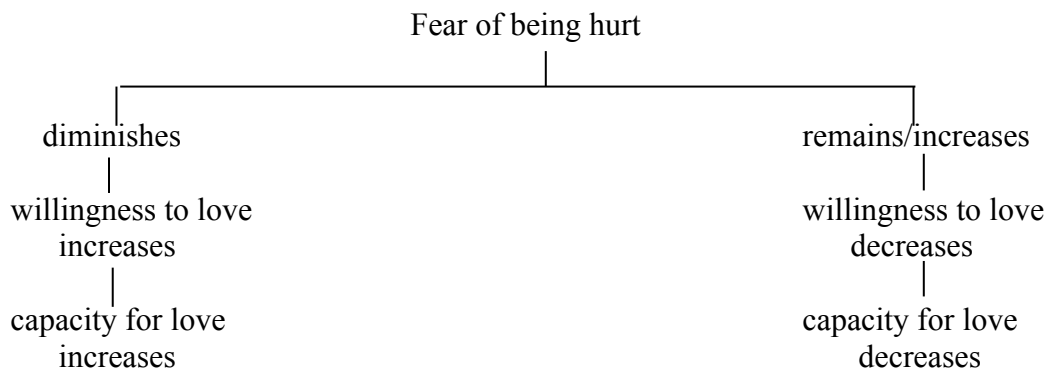
Fighting to prove ourselves brings out the worst in us. What is that “worst”? Identify it, and you will understand why you are not loved as much as you wish.

Only freely given love has any meaning. Thus the first step, once we understand what we do to prove ourselves, is to allow others to not love us if they don’t want to.

Emotionally, we want to force others to love us. Yet the only satisfying love is that which is freely given. If we force others to love us, we know they are weak and weak love doesn’t satisfy. We long for strong, mature, freely given love.

“You can never experience the free gift of love as long as the forcing current operates undetected by your consciousness.” PL 69

The next step is to learn to love. We cannot have what we are not willing to give. Love is objectivity, not subjectivity. Subjectivity means we are focused on what we want. Objectivity means that we see ourselves and the other fairly. We are not perfect, and neither are they. If we want someone to love us despite our imperfections, we must be willing to love others despite their imperfections. While we cannot be perfectly objective, the more we see where we lack objectivity, the more objective we become.



As we learn how to receive and give love in a mature way and learn to look at life and ourselves objectively, we are less upset by others’ actions and attitudes. We are no longer afraid of being rejected or abandoned or not loved. We come to peace with who we are and who the others are.

Week 3: The Roles of Reason, Will, and Emotion in Loving

Too Much Love Giving PL 103

Now let us turn to the subject of will. In order to recapitulate and give you a little more clarity on the subject, let us now see some of the negative manifestations and the reasons why the will does not function properly.

(1) When you are unaware of what you want, even if what you want is in itself healthy and productive, the very fact that you are unaware of it must produce a negative result. Why? Not because of the wish itself but because for some reason you found it necessary to hide it, it causes a negative condition.

(2) Another reason why will power or wish capacity becomes unproductive is that you are split in your direction.

(3) As I have already said in this lecture, if your will is too strong so that it does not consider the obstacles, nor respect other people's inclinations; if it does not take into account the reality of the other person, whether or not this is welcomed and desired by you; if the strength of the wish is stronger than reality warrants, then you defeat your purpose.

(4) A fourth reason is too little will. If you are resigned and withdrawn, become apathetic and are too fearful to want to lead a meaningful life; if you do not dare to do what is necessary to produce such a meaningful life for yourself, but wait for some authority to give it to you, then you cripple your will power and wish capacity.

All four of these aspects prohibit a healthy, relaxed, steady flow of your will and therefore of your wish capacity.

Without will, there can indeed be no life and no growth. If you wish to fulfill yourself and your potentials, the outer strained will is often a hindrance. But the inner free will has to be cultivated so as to bring about such fulfillment in an indirect way, as is necessary quite often. The direct approach is awareness, and this does not come by itself. It requires your relaxed will. If will is coupled with moralizing judgment, it turns destructive because truth becomes inaccessible. If will wishes to go beyond your own tendency to moralize and is focused on what is true rather than on what is right, will produces truth -- and thereby love.

A detached love senses to let go, to have warm human feelings of sympathy and understanding wherein there is no demand. But the type of love -- be it in partnership relations, be it in personal friendships -- that needs and wants to possess, this is the type of love that can be as destructive in giving more than wanted as it is destructive in giving too little. To love too much when it is not wanted is as insensitive, as egocentric, and as greedy as loving too little.

Now, my friends, are you one of those persons who is too fearful to love, too withdrawn? Or are you one of those who is constantly ready to give generously, but perhaps too generously, because out of your need and perhaps also out of childish greed, you disregard the other? You do not sit back, relax, and calmly look at the other person. Or, my friends, are you perhaps a little of both? Look at yourself from this point of view.

Too Much Love Giving PL 103

Some Aspects in the Anatomy of Love PL 240

Let us speak of the fundamental personality structure in the human being in terms of reason, will, and emotion, and apply love to these functions.

Love & Reason

It is obvious that love is a feeling, but it is not so obvious that this feeling must result from an act of will motivated by intelligence. So love is certainly intelligence. If you truly look at any single issue in depth, in width, and in the full scope that deserves to be brought to any issue, you will have to come to the conclusion that to hate is ignorant, no matter how justified it may appear. It is lack of intelligence. There are, of course, many forms of hatred that are never admitted to be what they are. There are also degrees. Lack of love can simply manifest in separateness, in hopelessness, in lack of faith, in depression, in a bleak vision of the universe, in fears, in feeling victimized. And it can manifest in resentments, blame, hostility, and overt hatred, with many shades of the spectrum in between.

Love is certainly pure intelligence and reason. The deeper the understanding of the prevailing circumstances, the farther the vision goes, the more the person is in possession of the truth of the issue, the less will it be possible to experience any veiling of the truth by hate, and the more love must grow.

Love & Will

To feel the emotion of love is not possible without the will moving toward being in a loving state. If you do not wish to love, if you do not purposely express the desire to love (that is, to fully understand), if you do not have the intention to love, you will not love.

Love & Emotion

If you have misconceptions that to love is to lose, or to love is being impoverished, or to love is being taken advantage of, or to love means being weak, submissive, and spineless, then these ideas reflect a lack of reason, a lack of intelligence which will hamper your will to love.

It is sensation on every level of your being. This is easily verified if you but focus with a modicum of attention to your own reactions. When you are in a state of love, you will see differently; you will hear differently; you will taste differently. Life around you has an altogether different flavor. You will perceive and experience everything that comes to pass in a very different way. You will feel and touch differently.

PL 240

Some Aspects of Love PRS16

If you should feel that fear of love does not apply to you because you suffer from a tendency of being over-involved and therefore being the target of constant disappointments, question yourself: is your love directed at the real person or at the wishful picture you try to squeeze your love object into? If so, it could be that this is sensed and resented.

Genuine love must be based on the ability to see, perceive and evaluate as clearly as human perception allows. In order to be able to do so, the will to do so must exist. When this will is sent into the inner self, in a state of relaxed poise, the ability will grow and develop steadily. Then, and then only, can fear vanish, because any situation can be dealt with when one lives in reality.

PRS 16

Week 4: Love in Relationship

New Age Marriage PL 251:

There exists a tremendous tension between the male and female energy currents. This tension can manifest in a positive or a negative way. If it manifests negatively, sexuality is hooked up with denial (...repression, asexuality, impotence, frigidity) or with negative expression (sadism, masochism, fetishisms). To a degree, it may be necessary to give some expression to negatively connected sexuality, for if it is completely denied, the total personality is being thwarted, and the tension leads to such powerful accumulation that nonsexual violence accrues. Especially if these expressions occur in fantasy or in situations of mutual consent where no one is harmed or forced, this can be a step leading to a more cohesive, connected sexuality -- especially when this is not being glorified, but understood in its true meaning.

When the tension manifests positively, it is truly a psychic nuclear point. New age marriage is a psychic nuclear point. The energy released, the creativity liberated, the mutuality of ecstasy -- these are deeply spiritual experiences in, through, and with God. Divine sexuality must be recognized in the new age. It is neither to be found in the old taboos and denials, the moralizing judgment of this creative force; nor is it to be found in the deviations that occur by necessity as a result of incomplete development. The explosive force of the male/female tension and release mechanism permeates the total personality and transcends the finite. It truly spiritualizes the body and materializes the spirit, which is the task of evolution.

PL251

The Forces of Love, Eros and Sex PL 44

The spiritual idea of marriage is to enable the soul to reveal itself and to be constantly on the search for the other soul, to discover ever and ever new vistas of the other being. The more this happens, the happier the marriage will be, the firmer and safer it will be rooted, the less danger of an unhappy ending, and the more it fulfills spiritually its purpose. In practice, however, it hardly ever works that way.

Habit is a great temptress. The temptation of it is the sluggishness and inertia in which one does not have to try and work, the comfort of not having to be alert anymore... [then] an important element of their relationship is missing. The element of revealing the soul as much as possible.

He who is unwilling to take the risk of this great adventure upon himself cannot succeed in the greatest venture humanity knows -- marriage.

PL 44

Stages of love

from PL 115: Perception, Determination, Love as Aspects of Consciousness

Five ways that we may express love, from the lowest (least challenging) to highest (most challenging): descriptions indicate what 'spiritual nutrients' may be missing if this type of love is the primary channel for learning to love.

1. Love for inanimate objects

Objects do not oppose. They do not require the complicated mechanism of perceiving the feelings of others. They do not disapprove or criticize. They demand a minimum of personal sacrifice or consideration. Objects will make no demands.

2. Love for abstract ideas, principles, art, nature

The love for one's profession also falls into this category, although not necessarily exclusively.

Love for abstract ideas also prevents personal contact and involvement with all accompanying apparent risks and insecurity. But at least, it moves the mind, the soul, or spirit in some measure.

It may also require personal contact, confrontation with others of different opinions, involvement with other human beings to some degree, while love for objects may not necessitate this in any but the most rudimentary form.

3. Love for living creatures other than man: plants or animals

They require a certain amount of sacrifice, consideration, putting aside one's immediate selfish comfort -- at least, occasionally if the love is active and not merely theoretical.

It does not require the risk of rejection; nor the consideration of taking the trouble of pondering what the other's needs are; nor the effort of mutual understanding, of trying to understand, and of making oneself understood.

4. Love for mankind as a whole

This may still relieve a person from intimate personal involvement -- the most taxing form of love and therefore the most fulfilling one.

But it does require effort, thought, the willingness to sacrifice, activity, and many other attitudes that are highly constructive

5. Love for individuals in close, intimate relationship

The fact that you and those you are involved with may often demonstrate this love by very turbulent manifestations does not alter the basic fact one bit.

The fact that many manifestations of love have really nothing to do with genuine love, but are manifestations of immature needs and dependency and thus often bring rupture and disharmony, again does not alter the fact that such intercommunication furthers your general development and the capacity for genuine love... the process of growth cannot be measured by the outer harmony.

Some Aspects of Love PRS16

True love is continually open and sensitive to others -- even casual acquaintances. One may not particularly love the latter, but the individual who has reached this state of consciousness just cannot react and respond to people in any other way. It is a natural, intuitive "in-feeling," which not only considers others, but protects the self by this way of being. In a partnership of love, if one mate is not ready yet to venture into this full experience, the truly loving partner senses this and respects the other's right to be "wrong." The fact that his fear is immature and unrealistic must not serve as an excuse for overriding it in order to gratify self-will.

If, on the other hand, another person's right is respected, even at the price of relinquishing self-will, if one is willing to see the reality of another person, responses can be more finely attuned and will result in giving dignity to both parties involved. This will do more to draw the fearful one out of his seclusion than all the powerful love currents heaped on him, which he may be unable to receive.

Unawareness of this process in a relationship leads to a feeling of rejection, frustration, hurt and apparent injustice. Insensitivity to the need of the other person leads to ignoring his desire to receive love, being frightened off by the other's defenses and pretenses, and too frightened to venture out of his shell.

When the offering of love is not accepted, the entire relationship is often considered valueless. The fact that the offer is not welcome in the way it is presented may be looked away from, denied, disregarded -- with unfortunate results. Thus, one destroys what may actually or potentially exist and become meaningful, because the development does not happen according to a fixed, urgent, immediate, preconceived idea.

The same awareness and sensitivity we are discussing here towards other people, is applicable toward life as a whole. The relaxation from fear and self-will will show up in every other endeavor as well, to the extent the psyche learns spontaneity. With this new awareness, one senses the tides and individual rhythms of life and thus makes the best of every bend in the road, instead of stemming against the tide and wasting valuable energy. Love becomes possible when the inner ear is thus trained to follow the heartbeat of life and how it relates in different moments to the self. The same mechanism exists towards others and, when it is practiced and learned, perception of reality leads to love, as love leads to truth.

PRS16