

GENUINE LOVE

(Excerpt from forthcoming book, *The Power of Love*)

By Fran Grace, Ph.D.

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Many human “love” relationships are little more than roller coasters of attachment and avoidance – subtle power plays and bargaining exchanges to “get what I want.” “We watched the movie you wanted to watch last week – it’s my turn to pick the movie this week.” “If you really loved me, you would stay home tonight.” We do things for the “loved one,” with the secret hope to win their approval or gratitude, and to put a pressure on them to give us what we want. “After all I’ve done for you and sacrificed for you, ...” When they don’t notice our “sacrifices” or follow through with the behavior we are hoping for, we are hurt and resentful. “You don’t appreciate me.” Each interaction is silently burdened with often-unspoken expectations, which put a subtle pressure on the other person to act a certain way in order to be loved and accepted. When they fail to meet our inner expectations, our energetic communication to them is, “You hurt me.”

Genuine love is free of expectation and “sacrifice.” It doesn’t require us to give up ourselves or dimensions of ourselves. It doesn’t have any need for the other person to be a certain way or to fulfill us. Genuine love gives without thought of repayment or notice. It gives because it loves, not because it needs something in return. When “love” quickly turns to resentment, then was it love to begin with? No – it was an inner hope or need to get what we wanted.

Genuine love (unlike infatuation) is not blind to a beloved’s defects, but it chooses to focus on the potential and the strengths in the beloved instead of the

limitations. I remember, as a young girl of ten, overhearing the softball coach tell my parents, “She has a lot of potential as a short-stop.” That one statement vitalized me with energy to do my very best the whole season. If this coach had focused on all of my missed plays out on the field (and there were many!), I would have become downtrodden and dragged the whole team down with me.

As human beings, we fall in love, want to be loved, long to belong, and long to experience “true love.” But what happens when we actually find ourselves in a love relationship? What we long for often seems to elude us. There are peak moments, but often these “highs” unfold in an overall context of disappointment, betrayal, and resentment. We walk away thinking, “I’ll never do that again” – and then we do. We fall in love again. We keep trying. There is something innate within us that reaches out for love, wanting to unite with something “higher,” something “real,” something “healing.” Within the human spirit, there is a strong impulse to love. Yet, this impulse or mechanism doesn’t come with instructions! And so we bumble our way through the territory of love without a clear map.

We are on a search to find something – Love – but we are going about it with unconsciousness and ignorance. Instead of removing the blocks to love within ourselves, we look to another person to give it to us. A more conscious way of finding love is to discover it within ourselves. The center of our being, commonly called “the heart chakra,” carries the energy of genuine love. It is innate and discoverable within each of us. When we think of someone or a pet or a place that we truly love, we feel the energy of that love within our hearts as a warm, golden sweetness. This is true even when they are not present, even when they are no longer in this world as a physical form. This

means that the love is *within us*. We are able to call it forth as an inner experience even when that loved one is far away.

One of the most profound descriptions of this Love is given by my spiritual guide, Dr. David R. Hawkins, affectionately called “Doc.” At age twelve, he was biking his paper route in rural Wisconsin during the winter when a storm hit, gusting with twenty-below-zero winds. He found refuge in a hollowed-out snow bank along the road. Instead of fearing death, Doc experienced a timeless and gentle “Presence” of overwhelming Love that “melted” the mind into complete silence:

Soon the shivering stopped and there was a delicious warmth, and then a state of peace beyond all description. This was accompanied by a suffusion of light and a presence of Infinite Love which had no beginning and no end and was undifferentiated from my own essence.....The mind grew silent; all thought stopped. An Infinite Presence was all that was or could be, beyond all time and description (Hawkins, “About the Author,” *Power vs. Force*).

He experienced what is true for all of us: our essence is one with Infinite Love. When we contact and cultivate that inner truth, we feel a natural bond with others that flows with Love. In that bond of genuine love, there is no possessiveness or disappointments, no pushing and pulling. The sense of a separate self dissolves: “When I look in other people’s eyes, there is only one Self” (Hawkins, *Dialogues on Consciousness*). What we do for the other blesses ourselves, and what we do for our own soul, blesses the other.

On the “Map of Consciousness” developed by Hawkins, the energy field of Love is characterized by a shift from exterior action to an interior “way of being in the world”: “Make a gift of your life and lift all mankind by being kind, considerate, forgiving, and compassionate at all times, in all places, and under all conditions, with everyone as well as yourself” (Hawkins, *Eye of the I*). The level of Unconditional Love describes the person who loves everything and everyone truly without condition, and the love is not

personal: “There is a desire to use one’s state of consciousness for the benefit of life itself rather than for particular individuals” (Hawkins, *Eye of the I*). One eventually becomes Love itself.

In our self-striving, achievement-oriented culture, we are trained to think that if we study something then we will master it. However, knowledge tends to breed arrogance and conceit. We don’t become loving by reading a book on it or by going to a workshop. We become loving by being in the presence of loving people and loving animals, and by removing our inner resistances to genuine love. Are we willing to let go of “being right”? Are we willing to let go of our expectations that the other person will fulfill something for us? Approve of us? Be forever grateful to us? Are we willing to let go of the secret hope that the other person will read our minds and do what we want – and if they don’t, blame them for our unhappy situation? Can we let go of resenting someone or blaming ourselves just because the relationship didn’t turn out the way we expected? Can we still love them for who they are and wish them well, even as we relinquish the form of the love as we had hoped it would be? Genuine love does not end when a relationship takes a different form. A certain relational dynamic may “be over,” but Love that is genuine is never “over.” Whereas emotions, attachments, and infatuations come and go, Love never ceases. This is true even when someone betrays us, disappoints us, or leaves us. Genuine love does not depend on external circumstances.

When love is our way of being in the world, then it is easy to give to others and support their success. Having contacted the inner essence of our own being, our happiness is doubled when we witness the joys and delights of others. We attend

meetings and agree to interactions because we are aware that the energy of Love is present and will benefit the world in some way. We don't need to "get something out of it." The danger is that we will unconsciously confuse a people-pleasing persona with genuine love. Genuine love has nothing to do with co-dependence or fostering the dependence of others. Can we let go of taking care of others as a way to enhance our own esteem and security? "If I do this for him, he will love and approve of me." "I better give her what she wants or she will leave me for another."

Genuine love is sometimes "tough love." We see this in the parent who fully accepts the adult child who is an alcoholic or drug addict – there is no self-blame or blame of the child. Yet, "tough love" means the letting go of protecting the adult child from his or her own karmic destiny. Healing and recovery are possible only when the addict connects to an "inner Self" of strength, truth, integrity, and self-compassion. They build such inner muscles often by falling down and picking themselves up again.

If someone goes to the gym with me to "help" me become more physically fit, how will I grow stronger if they lift the weights for me? A guiding and supportive presence is helpful, but in the end, I will have to lift the weights myself if I'm going to increase my strength. Genuine love does not become a disservice to others by doing for them what they could be doing for themselves. It supports their self-healing process without directing it or owning it as our own agenda.

One day, when I was sitting with Dr. Hawkins, he said, "You have a nice, compassionate energy." I replied, "Thanks to *you*." "No, sweetheart, it is thanks to *God*." As we become more loving and open to others, we realize that the capacity to be that way has not come from our own effort or from another person, but is, actually, a gift

of grace. Gratitude for a sweeter experience of life replaces pride or “feeling of accomplishment.”

During the last three years of his life, even as his physical capacities of vision and mobility naturally declined due to aging, the energy of Love was unaffected by this downshift of protoplasm. Whereas most people struggle to maintain a sense of dignity and humor as they become increasingly physically dependent, Doc emanated those qualities to others. To the very end, his presence uplifted all of the people and animals around him. On the surface, we were “helping” him – for instance, I would read to him and make the edits he wanted on his last book. But at the energetic level, it was his vibration of limitless Love that “helped” all of us and brought healing to all aspects of consciousness. Throughout the day, from morning until night, he prayed to be of loving service to everyone around him (including the animals). He said, “As the conversation happens with another person, the inner state is one of total silence and prayer for the other person’s happiness and enlightenment.”

This state of loving surrender and goodwill was true even in the moments of greatest betrayal, when those whom he had trusted grossly misrepresented him and his life’s work. There was an inner processing of the betrayals – Doc never repressed the real feelings of the human journey. But his only public response in such situations was to give a factual clarification to the students of his work that he did not authorize or endorse the projects and endeavors. He always lived out the teaching of Jesus and Buddha to avoid negativity rather than attacking it. “It’s best not to energize it or give it our attention. It will be a ‘flash in the pan’ – it will have only a negligible impact.”

Are we willing to let go of wanting “to set the record straight”? Wanting revenge?

Wanting to be justified? Genuine love extends its grace even to “the enemy,” leaving that person or group to meet their own karmic consequences. When we attack “an enemy,” we attack ourselves.

Throughout his public teaching life, Doc modeled the selfless giving of Love. In his aging, he modeled the selfless receiving of Love. In the end, he revealed through his way of being how Love is beyond “giving and receiving.” When asked how the mechanism of surrender related to the process of aging, Doc responded:

Getting older brings a big change in your lifestyle. Often there is a decline in vision, hearing, and mobility, which means you are increasingly dependent on the care of others for things that you accomplished previously without a second thought. Old age can be annoying. Suddenly, you are incompetent in areas where you once excelled. As you let go of feeling annoyed, however, you see that the incapacities of old age serve a purpose....

When you surrender to the process of aging as simply part of the human condition, you come to peace with it. You become more loving and appreciative of other people’s love and care for you. The more loving you become, you see that everybody is trying to be helpful to you. And it is loving to allow them to be helpful to you. People think, “Oh, I’m being selfish if I allow somebody to be helpful to my life.” Actually, it’s being generous. Generosity is the willingness to share your life with others. It’s a gift to people to allow them to love you” (Hawkins, *Letting Go: The Pathway of Surrender*).

Genuine love transcends a “giver” and a “receiver”; it knows that we are all connected in the web of life with each and every particle of existence. Because we are all part of the whole, when we heal something in ourselves, we heal it for the world. A single loving thought or intention is a blessing to the world. As we become more loving on the inside, we generate more lovingness in the world. Much like the rising of the sea level lifts all ships, so the radiance of unconditional love within a human heart lifts all of life.

Deep gratitude to my teacher.

For more information on Dr. David R. Hawkins: <http://www.veritaspub.com/index.php>