
INTRODUCTION

You Are Love

"The Buddha's teachings on love are clear. It is possible to live twenty-four hours a day in a state of love. Every movement, every glance, every thought, and every word can be infused with love."

Thich Nhat Hanh

You are made of Love! Love is the perfect and essential energy of life that lives in, and emanates from, the center of our beings. Love is the core of existence, that from which we are made and inseparably connects us to each other. Yet surprisingly, it often lies hidden, buried beneath the outward imperfections of our personalities and actions, making love so difficult to *un*-cover, and even more difficult to *dis*-cover. Fear, negative thinking, low self-esteem and the myriad of weapons that we turn upon ourselves conspire to obscure the one essential truth that we are Love incarnate. How do we penetrate this surficial turbulence of body, mind and emotion that can so easily separate us from the deeper waters of our spiritual existence as divine beings, all equal and all connected in the sea of life? To find the true Love that lies at the core of our existence, we must travel within, through the layers of illusion and fear that cloud this essential light that defines us.

Seek the Center

"The Kingdom of God is within you."

Jesus, from the Bible

To find the true love that you are made of, you must seek your center. Your center can be defined as the part of you that is always in balance, always secure, always clear, always strong and in harmony with life. It is the fulcrum around which your entire life revolves. When you are centered, you are balanced and able to live authentically, expressing the love that you are made of in everything you do. When you are not centered, you are out of balance and out of touch with yourself. You are out of touch with the love that you are made of.

As we navigate our way through this earthly journey, we are sometimes buoyed, and sometimes battered, by the waves on the surface of life. A sudden tragedy or a sudden job promotion, a broken promise or a heartfelt commitment, a lost friend or a newborn baby; each of these events can quickly knock us off center. To

maintain balance in these stormy seas, the ebb and flow of life must be navigated skillfully as we reach deeply into the mysterious ocean of our hearts, minds and souls.

Like black and white, yin and yang, or heads and tails, there are always at least two sides to the coin of life's daily dilemmas. Flip the coin over and your obstacles become opportunities - pain becomes pleasure, despair becomes joy, and emptiness becomes fulfillment. The two sides of every coin are needed to make up the whole coin. Without one, there cannot be the other. Like day and night, they depend upon each other for their identity and their relationship. This book explores the relationship between life's polar opposites, or dualities of the human mind. The polarities discussed are ones that are common to everyone's daily life: religion and spirituality, fear and courage, dishonesty and truth, suppression and expression, body and mind, resistance and desire, inertia and activity, destruction and creativity, depression and joy, culture and nature, co-dependence and independence. Each of us works continuously to navigate through these states of being the best way we can, and all of us struggle at some point or another. In the center, between each pair of polar opposites, is a balance point – or fulcrum – around which each pair revolves. This meeting point is what harmonizes the opposites and brings them together into harmony. Without this middle ground, the opposites remain at odds and disconnected.

To become whole people living complete lives, we need to find the balance point in the center of ourselves. At this central balance point, the two sides meet and merge and find themselves. Within every one of life's dilemmas, there is such a balance point that we can find which will help us to reestablish our connection to the core of love that lies within ourselves and enables us to be our best self. This book attempts to help guide you through these struggles to find that central balance point.

This book is the vehicle through which I share myself and my perspectives with you. The ideas expressed are based on the insights gathered during personal life experiences and reflections. Yet in spite of my attempt to tap into larger truths and to share them in practically useful ways, my words are limited by my own perspective and will undoubtedly fall short of the truth I am aiming for. This book is a reconfiguration of countless ideas and influences that have shaped how I think and perceive life. I have absorbed the energies and expressions of my parents, friends, teachers, enemies, lovers, animals, books, tragedies, victories and countless other life experiences and lessons that have inscribed themselves upon my soul. Thus the guidance provided here is, to echo Buddha's teaching, merely a finger pointing at the moon. I am not attempting to hand you the moon itself, but rather a mere symbol or representation of it. My finger-pointing may help you to

look in a new direction, and thereby to see things that you may not have seen. But reaching the moon is a personal journey that begins and ends within oneself. I hope and pray that this book can guide you there - within. May it serve you well on your inward journey towards being your best, most balanced, you.