

# LOVE: THE ULTIMATE HEALER

*"I was dead, then alive. Weeping, then laughing. The power of love came into me, and I became fierce like a lion, then tender like the evening star."* **Rumi**

## True Abundance Is Found In The Heart

No matter what we buy or how much material wealth we achieve, we'll keep feeling empty if we don't find fulfillment from within. External measures of success only fulfill us if they are a product of the expressions of our heart's essence. Celebrities like Marilyn Monroe, Whitney Houston, and Michael Jackson provide classic illustrations of this. They had beauty, fame, money and talent, but didn't sufficiently love themselves and couldn't fill their emptiness, even with all the adulation, fame, and wealth at their disposal.

When we experience that same nagging "emptiness," we try to fill the void with external things, because we are socially conditioned to believe success, money, and prestige brings happiness. This is nothing but a grand illusion. When we search outside ourselves to find whatever we believe will finally satisfy our yearning, we are in fact, at that very moment, our emptiest, unable to realize that who we already are is more than enough. This inner lack breeds fear: the opposite of love. Fear that we will not attain what we think will make us "better" than who we naturally are drives us to compete with others, and creates envy and feelings of inferiority. We lose our optimism and joy, which then affects our sense of well-being.

On the other hand, the deepest fulfillment and peace comes from the feeling of love that is felt within the heart when we trust that we are whole just the way we are. It first fills us from within, and then becomes so vast and all encompassing that it flows towards others. When we truly feel tender compassion within us and express it towards others, no matter what our outer circumstances might be, we find the ultimate satisfaction. In turn, others sense our love and openness and naturally respond the same way, creating ever-widening circles of well-being and love.

## A Reason For Living

Victor Frankl relates one of the most poignant and powerful personal experiences of the spiritual and psychological nature of man in his book *Man's Search for Meaning*. A Jewish psychiatrist from Vienna, Frankl was imprisoned in the notorious

Auschwitz concentration camp. In the camp, all possessions were taken away from the prisoners and an effort was made to degrade them to the point where they lost all sense of their own worth and reason to live.

In spite of the brutal treatment the prisoners received, in many instances, their sense of spirituality increased; some were able to retreat inwardly, to a place where the beasts that imprisoned them couldn't infiltrate.

Frankl's personal salvation was an inner journey that reflected his love for his wife. As he put it, "love is the highest goal to which man can aspire." He is a great example of how experiencing love within his being kept him fulfilled through the most deprived and terrifying existence, in which he didn't know if at any moment he might be killed: We stumbled on in the darkness, along the one road leading from the camp over big stones and through large puddles. The guards kept shouting at us and driving us with the butts of their rifles...as we stumbled on for miles, slipping on icy spots, supporting each other time and again, dragging one another of us onward. Nothing was said, but we knew: each of us was thinking of his wife; my mind clung to my wife's image, imagining it with an

uncanny acuteness. I heard her answering me, saw her smile, her frank and encouraging look. Real or not, her look was then more luminous than the sun, which was beginning to rise.

At that moment, when he saw the image of his wife, Frankl gained sudden insight into the meaning of life: A thought transfixed me: for the first time in my life I saw the truth as it is set into song by so many poets, proclaimed as the final wisdom by so many thinkers. The truth—that love is the ultimate and the highest goal to which man can aspire. Then I grasped the meaning of the greatest secret that human thought and belief have to impart: The salvation of man is through love and in love.

Frankl had a sudden insight into how to survive the inhuman abuse he was receiving from the Nazis. That insight kept him fulfilled, strengthened and alive in the darkest days when others around him perished. He survived and went on to become well known for his teachings and writings on the importance of love in their lives.



## Body And Mind Are One

Current researchers in the field of psychoneuroimmunology have accepted the body and mind as sharing a continuous uninterrupted flow of chemicals and electrical signals. In particular, they have researched the links between emotions, thoughts, and body chemicals, and know they are impossible to separate. When a person has a negative thought or feeling, whether based on a past trauma or a current life event, the brain responds to the stressful situation by secreting certain chemicals. These stress chemicals, in turn, negatively affect the body and its organs. Conversely, positive, joyful thoughts and emotions will affect the body's chemical responses in a positive manner, supporting both physical and emotional well-being.

If one's ankle hurts, it "throbs" with pain as the heartbeat is experienced there. The heartbeat is felt even in one's fingers and toes, which are farthest from the heart. Without an abundant and continuous blood supply, circulated by the heart in proper rhythm, the body weakens and dies. When our hearts open and we experience the love within us, in our emotions as well as in the physical sensation in the body, we reactivate a flood of positive neural signals and pleasurable sensations all over our bodies.

Just as the heart plays a central role in our physical well-being, it guides our spiritual and emotional interaction with the world. When we relate to others from the heart, our connection to them affects the outcome of our interactions, and thus, our success. Everyone relates positively to a warm and loving person. We are bathed in the energy of their friendliness and kindness and want to be around them more.

## The Heart Is The Key To Life's Meaning

The heart is the key to experiencing love and a deeper meaning in life. Many of us have closed down our hearts due to painful experiences in the past. We do not trust, are cautious, and protect ourselves from expressing the love we feel inside. We do not allow others to love us. We are afraid that we will be hurt again. However, by shielding ourselves, we make ourselves more vulnerable and isolated. We are robbing the vital energy and strength of our hearts. We lose the ability to connect with others. When we dare to open our hearts again, magical and powerful things happen. The heart has its own wisdom and when we follow it, a natural inner knowing unfolds from within. Potent energies come to the fore and through its expression wonderful circumstances are drawn to us.

How can we get rid of the fearful states of a closed heart and find the love within us that can bring us peace? We must learn how to access the world within us and go to the very center of our beings and reopen our hearts so that all the positive energies within can begin to flow, filling both our own selves and those around us.

In order to discover the power living inside your very own heart, Eidetic Imagery is a wonderful tool. It helps us to discover how our perceptions of life change when we bring our hearts into all that we do. Here is an Eidetic Imagery exercise for you to open your heart more fully.

## Images For Your Heart

By no longer responding through the heart, we have accepted a

negative orientation toward life. There is a slow voluntary dying of our life force. The real heart is made of essence (a feeling of the heart) and flesh (the physical organ). If our performances and relationships in the world need improving, our whole heart must be brought back, both in essence and in flesh.

How do we go about it? First, we concentrate on where our heart is on the left side of your body. We become aware that the heart exists. Then we see or sense the image of our physical heart and experience the essence of the heart and the physical heart together. Initially, we may feel some discomfort, but soon this gives way to a transforming effect.

Sit in a quiet place where you will not be interrupted and allow the images to shift your body/mind consciousness.

1. See your heart beating inside your chest on the left side of your body.
2. Now imagine that you are doing things with your whole heart in it.
3. Become aware your heart is made of essence (feeling of the heart) and it is made of flesh also (the physical side). When you put the essence of the heart and the flesh together you have the feeling of the "whole" heart. Pay attention to this whole heart feeling, with the essence and the flesh both in the feeling.
4. Now see that you are doing things with your "whole" heart in it.
5. See yourself doing other things with the "whole" heart in it.
6. Now see that you are putting your "whole" heart into being with a person with whom you want to relate better. How are you with them? Allow the revelations of your heart to unfold.

From early childhood, we learn to allow just so much heartfelt emotion to be experienced. We get used to lesser participation from our hearts. So, we squelch our desires and limit our potential. We become afraid to go for what we really want. The following image brings our passion back, as well as our ability to follow our heart's desire, rather than that of our egos, which separates us from others.

## Heart And Desire Image

1. Think of all the desires you have.
2. Let all of these desires come into your mind and let your heart beat with these desires.
3. Let the world know your desires and let your heartbeat know the world. Go with your desires into the world.
4. How do you feel about yourself?
5. How do you feel about others in the world when you keep your heart in mind?

Notice how these images add energy, power and open your heart to encompass more love. You can do them over and over to deepen the capacity of your heart. ■

*Reference:* Image instructions developed by Dr. Akhter Ahsen.



**Psychotherapist Jaqueline Lapa Sussman** has delivered lectures worldwide and has trained top-level government officials, health care providers, corporate CEO's, professional athletes and university faculties. She has been featured in numerous magazines and newspaper articles and is the author of *Images of Desire: Finding Your Natural Sensual Self In Today's Image Filled Society and Freedom From Failure: How To Discover The Secret Images That Can Bring Success In Love, Parenthood, Career, And Physical Well-Being.*