

BE LOVE

| HOW TO END PAIN
| BY ESCAPING YOUR EGO

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Preface

There exists a truth you can choose to embrace as a force multiplier that will transform every aspect of your life. This truth will melt away your pain, end your struggles, and it will set you free to live your dreams.

Human behavior is shaped by a desire either to avoid pain or to seek pleasure. The problem is that most of us fail to understand the true causes of pain and the true sources of pleasure, so we fail to achieve the desired result. If I told you it was possible, would you make it a priority to end your pain? Would you seek fulfillment if I told you that doing so is easy and pleasurable? It *is* possible for you to end pain—for you to exist within a new realm of pleasure—and to do so without causing any harm.

Maybe you are alone, filled with worry and anxiety because of a lifestyle that sometimes feels unbearable. During your spare time, perhaps you

are hooked on a constant stream of meaningless entertainment and social interactions. Tortured by your own thoughts, constantly in need of escape and distraction, the idea of inner-peace isn't something you believe possible. No matter how you try to escape—perhaps with a bottle of alcohol, in the comfort of your favorite junk food, in the enjoyment of legal or illegal drugs, or in the thrill of meaningless sex—the pain is only temporarily relieved.

Maybe you are desperately searching for that special someone—that one true soulmate who will make you happy. You have already been involved with many partners, but when things don't go exactly as you had hoped, you move on. The cycle continues because you still believe that the right person is out there somewhere.

Perhaps you are one of the lucky ones who has found your soulmate. Maybe you are married with children. You may have everything you wanted but still aren't happy. If you were to vocalize your

complaints, people would tell you that there is no problem and that you have nothing to complain about. Still, you know that something is wrong. You are unfulfilled. You still feel the angst, the exhaustion, the frustration, and the disappointment of day-to-day life in a world that feels meaningless and filled with such terrible suffering and injustice. Sometimes you feel that nothing can be done about any of it.

I know you are doing your best. You work toward goals, you seek a better job, and you are on the path toward earning more money so that you can eventually buy a nicer home or drive a more luxurious car. You continue to believe that happiness is just around the corner. I've been there. This is how most of us live. This is what we believe is reality.

How do you feel? What are your sources of pain? How is your physical health? Are you worried about the future? Are you scared of anything? Are you feeling guilty or shameful? Are you suffering

from boredom or craving freedom and adventure? Are you tired from too much work and too many responsibilities? Are you angry with anyone? Are you being treated poorly or taken advantage of? Are you jealous? I know it is hard to believe, but none of this pain is necessary. Your pain and suffering can easily be eliminated.

Let this book reveal the antidote to suffering. There is one truth that will diminish your pain and ultimately end it. When you align your thoughts and behavior with this one truth, you will rise to your highest possible level of success. Your life will be filled with meaning. You will be free. Your relationships will be blissful. You will physically feel great, and you will be more attractive. You will live without fear. Your life will be a legend.

Don't believe me now, just keep reading. You don't have to believe in any religion, and you don't need to practice any form of mysticism. You don't even have to believe in God. The answer—the highest form of truth—lies within you. This book is a

gift that will help you align with that truth—a truth so real and so powerful that it will effortlessly guide you through the rest of your life.

This highest form of truth is love. Few know how to live within its energy and how to unleash its power by escaping the ego.

Ego is the opposite of love. Ego holds us back from *being love*. It offers nothing. Love offers everything. This book was written on a whim, over the course of just 10 days, from the perspective of love and with the voice of love.

Where is the Love?

Sin is where love is not.

—Helen Schuman, *A Course in Miracles*

For most of my life, it was impossible for me to love. I trusted all that was observable yet fake. I ignored all that is invisible yet real.

I did not understand the direct causes of my suffering. I did not understand why I failed to properly love my wife, my child, my friends, and my family. I have known the feeling of love, yet in very real ways, I have failed to love. I have demanded things, I have argued my positions, and when this has failed, I have slipped into deceit. I have imprisoned myself and others through attachment. I have offended, I have suffered, and I have allowed others suffer from the attacks of my ego.

I have failed to love not only in deceit but also in ugly truths. How self-righteous I felt in my truth-

telling and how catastrophically wrong those truths were. How foolishly I believed that my immediate feelings and desires were real—that the lies I told myself about myself were about the real me. My self-importance, greedy ambitions, and even my sexual fantasies and adventures meant everything to me. I failed to love my wife and even others who grew so close to me. Centered only in self-centeredness, I destroyed even the most beautiful relationships only to preserve my sick ego.

I have also failed to love in business and in my various creative pursuits. Every relationship or negotiation was only a manipulation to get what I wanted rather than an opportunity to serve others. Now I know that each failure to trust another human being was a productive and creative possibility that I shut off from myself. To the extent that I have failed to love my customers and act generously in my collaborations, I have also failed to prosper.

Even as I was lost within this enormous sense of self-importance, I still failed to love myself. I believed that I was my ego. I felt tragically misunderstood and separate from others. I believed in scarcity and in the ruthless competition of capitalism. Clinging to fragile self-confidence and false self-esteem, I was confused about what was real or unreal. I believed in my own ideas, trusted my own logic, but was frustrated when others failed to see the greatness I wanted to see in myself.

Looking back, I don't remember what I thought was so extraordinary about myself. If I was truly great, wouldn't I have loved myself? By failing to love myself, I was constantly hurting and frequently ill. Every failure to love begins with our own inability to be alone in a quiet room—to be enough for ourselves and to enjoy our own company. That was me.

I have loved madly and deeply, but my great failure was in my inability to *love completely*. The thing about love is this: if it is partial, then it isn't

love. Love is all or nothing. If you keep love hidden—if you believe that love should be something that is expressed only on date-night and within the context of your one romantic relationship, then the pain and darkness will persist in other areas of your life. Darkness will overshadow the love until it barely exists anywhere. Love can exist everywhere because love *is* everywhere.

Love and God

If love is truth, where does that leave God in this? This book deals with some of the same topics as religion. You have your own unique relationship with religion (or lack thereof). Maybe you are concerned that I will be taking a religious point of view (I will not) or that I will be preaching about God (I will not). I will simply accept your views on spirituality and religion.

If you do believe in God, you may find that we believe in the same thing. If you do not believe in God, you may also find that we believe in the same thing. Different people use different language to describe the same thing. While truth is truth no matter how you describe it, language is still important. Proper language reveals truth while improper language distorts it. Religious and spiritual language is perhaps the most distorted of all, so let us use a simpler language.

You have heard the cliché “God is love.” This means God and love are the same things, right? Now turn it around, and you come to one of the central concepts of this book: love is God.

Despite my lack of religion, I recently became more comfortable using the word “God” when I understood that God is love. Maybe you are close to someone who talks a lot about God. What do you think they mean when they use the word “God”?

Often, when people speak of God, they claim that God exists because of the mysteries of nature, the unexplored vastness of the universe, and the unknowable causes of creation. But when the word “God” is used in this way, it merely becomes a synonym for “unknowable.” God, in this sense, equals “ignorance” or “not knowing.” Surely God is something greater than “not knowing.” What exactly is it that people speak of when they use the word “God”? Much like the concept of love, the concept of God seems almost indefinable.

Nonetheless, when you and I both use the word “God,” we are conjuring up two different images and concepts. God is whatever we imagine It is. You might believe in a wrathful, punishing god in the sky. I might believe that God is embodied as energy that is loving and forgiving. Others believe in multiple gods or no God at all.

Religious figures such as Jesus and the Buddha talked a lot about love. Love is the cornerstone of Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, and many other faiths. So, if we are talking mainly about love, why hide behind the confusing language of faith? Why not just talk about love? If it is said that God is love, then it can also be said that love is God. When we use the words interchangeably, we realize that “love” is the better word.

I am asking you to take a leap. Once again, consider that whenever people say the word “God,” what they really mean is “love.” They are synonyms. Love is the way in which humans perceive and connect with God-energy. When two people

become spiritually-bonded, they say “I love you.” To say “I God you” would sound silly. Most religious language sounds just about as silly, and most of it ends up dividing us across faiths and cultures. But when we use the word “love” rather than “God,” we are perfectly clear, and we communicate in the language everyone understands.

Throughout this book, it will become clear that love is the source. Love is the energy of creation. Love is the light that eliminates darkness. Love is what connects us to the universe. Love is what heals us and saves us. Rather than referring to “God,” I will simply call it what it is: love.

Let us capitalize the word “Love” just as others might capitalize the word “God”. Capital Love not only makes a romantic relationship heavenly, it shines through every area of your life. Love lifts you up beyond ego so that you become a deep source of healing and abundance. Love brings not only happiness but bliss and fulfillment. Love is heaven

not just on earth but eternally. In Love, you have nothing to fear; not life and not death.

When you embrace the idea that Love is what others call God, some things become clear:

- Love is *not* in the sky watching over us. Love is *not* outside of us. Love is within.
- Religious or spiritual people may or may not be Loving people.
- Anything which is not Love is ego. This is a central concept and further explanation will be provided.
- All aspects of society are designed to exploit us by teaching us to live in the ego.
- Ego is not real.
- Ego is the cause of pain, misery, and suffering.
- Love is all we need because Love is the cure for ego.
- Love fixes everything and harms nothing.

How thoughtful of God to arrange matters so that, wherever you happen to be born, the local religion always turns out to be the true one.

—Richard Dawkins

I had my own experiences with religion. I grew up in the Midwest and attended the Episcopal Church almost every Sunday. Like most church-going children, I dreaded church as something that ruined an otherwise wonderful weekend. I didn't see the point of sitting, standing, kneeling, and repeating the same words week after week. My favorite part about church was when it was over, when we were finally free to walk out into the sunshine believing we had been forgiven by God. Now we could go home to watch football, relieved of our guilt and content in our renewed riotousness.

Growing up, I feared that God was up in the sky watching everything I did and listening to my thoughts. I also believed that Santa Claus was also watching over me to find out whether I was

naughty or nice. The thought of these two invisible beings constantly spying on me caused some paranoia. It was enough to make me want to really behave myself.

As children eventually do, at some point I figured out that Santa Claus wasn't real. For a few more years into the future, I continued to pretend with my parents that I still believed. I worried that, if I failed to continue the charade, I wouldn't get any presents. After a few more years, I was getting too old to pretend and the whole thing was becoming embarrassing.

When I finally confessed to my parents that I no longer believed in Santa (the mythical man who spent his eternal life punishing and rewarding the naughtiness or niceness of every child on earth), my parents smiled and assured me that I would continue to get presents just like before. What a relief!

Next, I asked my dad, "What about God and Jesus? The story sounds a lot like the Santa Claus

story. Is that story true?” My dad responded in a stern voice and explained that, no, in fact, *this other* story about the man in the sky is true. He told me that it is a huge sin to question God. Now I felt ashamed. I stopped questioning anything for a while.

In high school, I was invited to the summer church camp—a week of canoeing on the lake, campfires, playing beach volleyball and, of course, the mandatory talking about Jesus. I was originally reluctant to go because I was afraid of becoming one of those Jesus freaks who starts preaching to everyone. But with the encouragement of my pastor and parents, I reluctantly decided to give it a try.

Church camp was great. Even listening to poetic Bible readings in this setting was calming and beautiful. My favorite memory from church camp is the time I went canoeing with a blonde girl. We lazily paddled to the other side of the lake. Out of sight from everyone, it must have been Jesus who

filled me with the inspiration to make my move. My heart was beating like crazy as we shared one blissful, soft kiss. Perhaps not very Christian of me, but I can tell you that I was filled with the presence of the Lord.

I returned home on fire for Jesus. Yet, I was surprised to find that the secular world now felt dull and uninspiring. My “secular friends” weren’t interested in hearing about my mountaintop religious experiences. I retreated to my room and read the Bible religiously for the rest of the summer. You might say that I was reborn, but it didn’t take long until I was...what is the opposite of reborn?

I craved another religious experience. The next event was a weekend youth retreat in the fall. This was to be held in the city, yet promised to be another mountaintop experience. Throughout the weekend retreat, I felt that God was right there with me. There were so many signs, so many unexplainable coincidences.

For example, if I wasn't getting along well with someone, then I was coincidentally paired with that person for an exercise in understanding and forgiveness. Then there was this girl who I had my eye on. In a stroke of fate, we were somehow matched together for an intimate activity. The entire weekend was filled with these kinds of unexplainable coincidences. My faith in God was strengthening by the hour.

On the last day (after I had once again ascended the mountain peak), it was casually announced that there had been "secret helpers" watching us. Stepping out from behind the curtains came the helpers, who were "taking care of us" by coordinating things. What? We were being spied on? Those fateful coincidences I had experienced were manipulations? My faith had been shaken.

I started to think not just about these retreats, but about religion in general. My young mind concluded that, in a very real sense, religion is something that is created by people (behind those

metaphorical curtains) whose job it is to create an illusion. Faith is manufactured.

I had come to my personal truth about what religion is—people creating experiences for other people. The whole thing, from the words to the buildings, to the customs—it is all a creation of human beings to make other human beings think, feel, and believe what they are told to believe. Where exactly was God in this? I began to seriously doubt and, over the course of a few years, I lost my faith in God. What replaced my faith in religion was my faith in people. I believed that it is possible to create our own heaven on earth.

A few years later, I grew up and moved away to college on a basketball scholarship. Away from my parents, I stopped attending church. Eventually, I even stopped calling myself a Christian. I became a cynic and began to question everything.

My new mission was to seek the cold truth about how the world works, even beyond what I had been taught in school. After college, I came to

believe that progressive politics would save us. I eventually became so cynical that I stopped believing in much of anything.

My business education had taught me that what was real was my future career. My belief system became an ideological cocktail made up of some combination of education, science, capitalism, accomplishment, status, money, and success. My passions were music, writing, and I still paid way too much lip service to progressive politics. Politics became my primary way of claiming moral superiority and dealing with the guilt of a meaningless lifestyle. For many years, perhaps the only truly meaningful part of my life was my marriage to the woman who I Loved madly.

Love and Marriage

We hunt for love in other humans just like us, expecting to get love from them when these humans are in the same condition as we are.

—Don Miguel Ruiz

Most of us believe in the idea of finding our one true Love, getting married, and living together happily ever after. In practice, the possibility of Love between two people depends very little upon their marital status. Marriage even tends to work against the possibility of lasting Love.

I was married young, long before I had given marriage much thought at all. In high school, at the start of senior year, I had fallen deeply in Love with a foreign exchange student from Slovakia. The end of senior year had arrived too soon. While she was supposed to return home, our love felt unbreakable, and we could not let each other go.

I proposed, she accepted, and so our very first act as adults was to follow our hearts—against all voices of reason and against all odds. The only way for the two of us to have stayed together in the United States was to get married, so that is what we did. Now we were free to be together forever, and I was the luckiest man in the world.

I believed in our Love, but I'm not sure if I ever believed in marriage. In marriage, what matters more than the life-long commitment is the daily choice about whether to honor that Love. I felt no need for the marriage contract. I wasn't going anywhere. I simply wanted to be by her side more than I had ever wanted anything in life. I believed that nothing could change my decision to spend each day by her side. She felt the same way about me.

Love between two people is one thing, but marriage is another. Love is in every gesture, every word, and every touch. Marriage is different. Marriage becomes a sick obsession about holding

onto each other. Marriage means that you must respect an exhaustive set of social rules and expectations. Legal marriage is too much about becoming attached to each other and living by the rules of society. Those rules and expectations are a systematic destruction of Love. This is why you see so many divorces and, perhaps worse yet, so many miserable old couples.

My version of romantic Love is this: I will Love you unconditionally. I won't tell you what you can and can't do. I will remain open to our growth. I will try to resolve any challenges we face. I will accept you. I will adore everything about you. I'm glad that's settled—now let's go out into the world and kick some ass!

My wife was also clear about what she wanted from our marriage. She wanted to be my everything. She wanted to be the only one to fulfill my emotional and sexual needs. She wanted a significant degree of control over my time. She wanted me to do my equal share. She wanted

power over what I could or couldn't do. She also wanted to go out into the world and kick some ass.

Clearly, our individual ideas about marriage were not exactly aligned. In the beginning, Love compelled me to give her everything she wanted. In time, my attempt to meet her expectations started to cause suffering. It didn't feel right that all of this was expected, demanded, and taken for granted. Giving is more fun when you have some choice in the matter. When you are metaphorically asked to give flowers every day, then giving them feels like a chore.

My wife asked a lot of me and most of the time, I delivered. During the times when I failed to meet her expectations, the asking always switched to yelling, blaming, and shaming. In time, our marriage was no longer just about Love and that desire to be together. It was about us both trying to get what we wanted from each other. It was a debate, a negotiation, an argument. It was not about Love, it was about marriage.

There is a fundamental problem with marriage—the part that everyone knows is *completely unnatural*, and yet, everyone accepts as something that is required. Let us question what few dare to question: the default, universal expectation of monogamy.

Without much thought, discussion, or negotiation, in marriage, most people assume not only sexual monogamy but also emotional monogamy between partners. The unspoken understanding of marriage is something like this: “Thank you for choosing me as the one person whose job it is to fulfill your every need. You will live with this decision until death regardless of whether this is even possible.” How absurd it is that anyone should sign such a contract! In the marriage contract, you completely give up your freedom and independence with no guarantee about what you will get in return. Would you sign such a contract in business or in any other area of your life?

It may sound harsh, but some people get married because, deep down, they don't have enough faith in Love. Despite everything we see on the wedding day, marriage is not a celebration of Love. Marriage is a legal mechanism for safety and security. If you do not believe that Love provides all the security in the world *by itself*, then you still don't know what Love is. Marriage will not save you. Only Love, true Love, will save you. Without this kind of Love, marriage won't work, and nothing in life will work very well for you.

Marriage, in its commonly-accepted form, is the systematic obliteration of Love. Any married couple who has avoided the wrecking ball of marriage has found their bliss by aligning themselves instead with Love. Let us place our faith in Love, not in marriage. Marriage is not about Love, it is an institution of the ego. Now let us define "ego."

Love and Ego

Ego is about the roller-coaster ride of pride and shame or superiority and inferiority. Ego keeps you in a relationship with others' images rather than in a relationship with other human beings.

—Kevin FitzMaurice

“Sweetie, I am so sorry I yelled at you earlier. You know that it is only because I love you so much. Please forgive me!”

Does this sound familiar? Have you ever said or done something terrible to the person you claim to Love the most? Have you ever attacked this person and then attempted to explain it or justify it in Love? If you think Love is capable of attack, then you don't know Love. Your faith is not in Love because you are acting within the boundaries of your ego. This is not me being critical. There is nothing wrong with you. All our egos work the same way, mine included.

If you are like most other people, my use of the word “ego” elicits the same uncomfortable feelings as my previous use of the word “God.” Naturally, the desire you might have to roll your eyes and to put this book down right now is nothing other than your ego vying for your loyalty and adherence to it. Your ego will obviously feel threatened by our attempt to destroy it. It is fighting to hold its power over you. Love, on the other hand, is asking you not to resist this new perspective.

I don't care what you do with this book because it isn't about me. This book is a gift written by Love and for Love. Love is asking to be heard.

I will not be asking you to trust my version of or definition of Love. You know exactly what Love is because human beings cannot exist without It. You already know Love because you have it in you. You must know that Love does not and cannot attack. Ego attacks. Ego does a lot of terrible things, all of which I will explain precisely. Now we are looking at

ego from the perspective of Love, the only true perspective.

You know what Love is. Close your eyes and think of a moment when you felt Love in the purest form that you can remember. Was it a romantic first kiss? Was it a warm embrace from your mom when you were a small child? Was it in the bond you felt the first time you held your newborn? Now stop reading. Close your eyes and think not just about one of these moments, but think of two or three. Take your time.

Love is a feeling. The details don't matter; just feel how Love feels to you. Notice how these Loving feelings take you beyond any concerns you might have had just now. Now you are in a higher realm that feels spiritual.

I am not writing this book to define Love or to convince you that Love is great. I believe, with complete faith in your goodness, that you already know exactly what Love is. I am also certain that the way you feel Love is the same way I feel Love. Love

is universal. It has power and truth beyond what we can define or understand. There is no need to define Love. The need is to make it possible for you to *live in* that place of Love. By rejecting ego, it is possible to go through each day while remaining in the Loving place you just imagined and felt so vividly.

I will show you what Love has shown me—it is possible to fully be Love. By placing your faith in Love and rejecting ego, that Loving feeling will be the source of your day-to-day truth and reality.

On the one hand, this seems impossible. On the other hand, after embracing a few simple ideas, choosing Love becomes so very natural and easy. It is a simple choice—difficult only in that it requires a period of radical transformation. Transformation is what happens when you let go. This is the only path toward healing, toward becoming, and toward creating a life that is as great on the outside as you are already great on the inside. Love is the path

toward greatness. Paradoxically, it is also the easy path of least resistance.

Your first breakthrough is to understand that 1) Love is all-or-nothing, and that 2) ego is the enemy of Love. People incorrectly think that ego is necessary. This belief is what causes pain and suffering. To serve ego and Love simultaneously is to serve two opposing masters. There is no way to serve two opposing masters. If you are not placing all your faith in Love, you are placing it in ego. Ego obscures Love and it is the source of pain. It offers you nothing. I will show you how to give Love complete domination over ego.

Your ego is not your identity. Your ego is common and uninteresting. Under the influence of ego, all of us look, think, act, and behave in the same predictable ways. From the perspective of Love, your true uniqueness and identity will emanate, and you will begin to observe ego as something silly and even hilarious.

When love is coming out of you, you are not searching for love because you are afraid to be alone. When you have all that love for yourself, you can be alone and there is no problem. You can be happy to be alone, and to share is also fun.

—Don Miguel Ruiz

Not long ago, on the day that my wife finally threw me out, I had come home after having tea with a woman who I was trying to seduce. I talked with this woman openly, and she listened without judgment. Not only did she listen, she saw me. What she saw and what she heard was a man who did not Love himself. He did not know that Love starts by Loving yourself. I was in the habit of seducing because I believed that the only way for me to experience Love was to receive it from a woman.

She told me that I needed to learn to Love myself. She suggested a book by Don Miguel Ruiz called *Mastery of Love*. I highly recommend you read this after this book (or even alongside this

book). Before reading this, I chose another book by this author called *The Four Agreements*.

Our conversation over tea was a miracle in my life. I had come to a point at which my life was in disarray. I had turned to this new friend for Love. Love is exactly what she provided, though she did it in a way that I did not expect. Nothing physical happened between us. However, through a twist of fate, still, my wife found out that I was not where I said I was. She had caught me lying again, and she once again became extremely angry.

Immediately upon returning home that afternoon, my wife confronted me violently in the presence of our five-year-old daughter. She told me to pack my bags and to finally get out. Even in my usual state of panic, I decided that this time would be the last. Looking at my terrified young daughter, panicking at the thought of her daddy leaving, I still knew that I had no choice. It was time for Daddy to go. Crying and shaking, I hugged her. I told her that I

Loved her and would always be there for her. Then I turned my back, closed the door, and left.

I was now alone and in the deepest pain I had ever known. Unable to think of any other alternative, I followed my friend's book recommendation. I soon found some amount of comfort in reading. This is what Love does. This is how Love works. It works every time, but only if you are open to it and only if you stop resisting it.

Over the next few days, I unknowingly began a spiritual journey away from ego and toward Love. *The Four Agreements* are summarized as follows:

Agreement 1: Be Impeccable with Your Word

Do not say what you do not mean. Say only what you do mean and say it carefully. The words you choose and the way that you say them have enormous power. Respect that power.

I knew that I needed to fully commit to honesty in every area of my life.

Agreement 2: Don't Take Anything Personally

This, in my opinion, is the most important of the four agreements. If you are going to transcend ego, you must learn not to care what people think. What they say about you is only true if you believe that it is true about yourself. This understanding makes room for self-Love.

If you know and believe that an insult or a judgment isn't true, then the insult or judgment doesn't count. It is only about the person attacking. It isn't about you; rather, it is about their pain.

I knew that I needed to find a way to believe in myself beyond what my wife, or anyone else, was going to say about me.

Agreement 3: Don't Make Assumptions

Ego is only able to justify an attack after it imagines that the attack is justified. Ego is afraid of being attacked, so it must attack first. To stop the ego from doing its thing, stop making assumptions. Instead, you can simply clarify the situation,

understand it, and then react calmly to the truth of the situation.

Agreement 4: Always Do Your Best

You will never be perfect. You will slip. You will make mistakes. Don't beat yourself up. Just do your best to fix it. Doing your best requires nothing more than your best (don't try so hard that you strain or stress yourself) and nothing less (don't be lazy).

Don Miguel Ruiz, with his telling of the ancient Toltec wisdom, is a great place to start if you would like to learn how to Love yourself and to shift away from your ego. Read both *The Four Agreements* and *Mastery of Love*.

In general, it is essential to read, or to listen to an audiobook, or to somehow devour new ideas every single day. No single book is going to change your life if you do not continue reading something else the day after you finish it. It is also important to reread the most meaningful works because, as you

grow and change, you will pick up something new every time.

To be alive is to always be growing. When I am not devouring new ideas each day, I eventually lose inspiration, and I fall into depression. Reading is the best defense against depression. I will provide several quotes and recommendations throughout this book so that you can continue to build upon the growth that I hope you will experience here. For now, I would like to recommend two additional books on the topic of Love. The first is *Teachings on Love* by Thich Nhat Hanh. The second is *The Art of Loving* by Erich Fromm.

I have said before that the opposite of Love is ego. How exactly do you know whether you are experiencing life from your ego or from Love?

A brilliant, yet obscure author and friend of mine called Kevin FitzMaurice recently published a book called *Games Ego Plays*. By describing the functioning of the ego as a board game, he has revealed a new breakthrough understanding of ego.

The book, rather humorously, reads like an instruction manual for a board game. This Ego Board Game is played by individuals, governments, corporations, news organizations, movements, foundations, institutions, and groups of all types.

The game involves players switching among six different roles. You should read the book in its entirety, but for our immediate purposes, I will summarize each of the roles that ego plays (according to Kevin FitzMaurice). Everything that ego is, and everything it does, is done from the same six positions or roles. The six positions of the Ego Board Game are as follows:

1: Judge

The Judge decides who is in the Offender position and who belongs in the Victim position. The Judge decides whether to agree with the Defender or Prosecutor. If the Judge identifies a Victim, then he may turn the Victim over to the Jailer for punishment.

Ego reveals its Judge in statements like, “You shouldn’t have done that” or “You are guilty of hurting me” or, “This is what you always do.”

2: Jailer

The Jailer position of the Ego-Game Board enforces the consequences or punishments. The Jailer is given permission to jail the Offender whenever all parties agree with the Judge’s verdict. Ego reveals the Jailer in the form of a parent punishing a child for bad behavior, or in a spouse taking away the privacy of another spouse after an offense.

The Jailer’s role is to keep the Offender away from temptation, out of contact with Victims, and ideally provide a path to recovery. Most Jailers, however, aren’t great and can be overly cruel. They may even believe abuse is justified.

3: Prosecutor

Think of how an attorney tries to establish who the Offender is by proving who the Victim is. This is the Prosecutor.

When a couple argues, it is typically an argument between the Prosecutor and the Defender who are frequently switching roles without ever agreeing on the Judge's verdict. All form of argument and debate is meant to appeal to the Judge, who decides the winners and losers. But the Judge only has authority if both parties are willing to agree who the Judge is. If they do not agree on the Judge's verdict, then the argument continues and can go on indefinitely.

It is also interesting to note that roles can be easily switched. The accused may either choose to play the role of Defender or he may switch to the Prosecutor role. Here is an example of a switch in roles:

A woman says: "How dare you get drunk again!"

A man responds: "I only drink because you are constantly yelling at me and shaming me."

In this way, the man's move on the game board is to try to assume the role of Victim and Prosecutor rather than that of Defender who is guilty of an

offense (which is where his wife wanted to put him). If the wife falls for this trick by defending herself as someone who doesn't yell or shame, then she has assumed the role of Defender and the man's move has been successful. If she ignores the accusation of "yelling at and shaming" him, then she maintains her role as Prosecutor and can carry on being right.

Regardless of what either party does, neither will ever win any real victory. Sure, you can win the game, but it is just a game and has nothing to do with life. True victory can only be found when you stop playing the game and start living in Love.

4: Defender

To avoid ego games, don't assume the role of Defender. In his work as a professional counselor, FitzMaurice has routinely advised clients, "In most circumstances, it was not a good idea to defend, explain, or make excuses for their actions because this would only initiate or continue a game."

If you are attacked by a Prosecutor and refuse to play the Defender, then you are refusing to allow the Prosecutor the position being sought. Even when you are attacked, you can simply see that someone is trying to start an ego game with you. Respond to their pain, but do not start the game by attempting to defend yourself.

5: Offender

According to FitzMaurice, the Offender is the “mean, guilty person who has hurt some poor, helpless victim.” A great Offender attempts to turn the Victim into the Offender (see the example of the drunken man, above).

In *American Beauty*, Kevin Spacey’s character provides a great example of an Offender. In response to his wife assuming the roles of Jailer, Judge, Prosecutor, and Victim, he decides to stage a rebellion. He feels that his selfish, offending actions are justified because he sees himself as the Victim and is fed up. The freedom he claims is not the

freedom of Love; rather, the freedom to be an uncaring Offender.

Offensive behavior such as alcoholism, drug abuse, physical abuse, or cheating on a spouse is always the result of the Offender role. If you are living within the realm of ego, you might believe that the offensive behavior is your path toward freedom. While you may achieve a certain degree of freedom, you will also cause a great deal of destruction.

As an Offender, you might believe that your actions are justified by the unfairness of your situation. The pleasure you get as an Offender is an intense form of ego gratification—physical pleasure combined with the belief that your sin is justified.

6: Victim

The Victim is the person who uses a wrong as an excuse. The Victim is helpless, weak, and hurt. A person stuck in the Victim role often chooses this identity for life. While a strong person may attempt to let go of the Victim role, a lazy or weak person seeks pleasure by attempting to get sympathy from

friends and family and to generally be let off the hook. The problem is that, as with any of the roles, the pain and suffering will continue while you remain within the boundaries of the ego.

The ego game is a win-lose proposition. The winning positions are the Judge, Jailer and Prosecutor because they can assume “rightness.” The losing positions are Defender, Offender, and Victim because they are assumed to be either guilty or abused. In truth, the game does not produce a winner or loser because, for most people, the game never ends. It continues to draw you in further and eventually makes you crazy.

Interestingly, the ego game takes place between people, but it also takes place as that voice inside our own monkey minds. We have become so indoctrinated in the ways of ego that the voice in our heads knows how to play the game. Most of us have become experts at turning this game against ourselves even when we don't have anyone else to play with.

This internal ego game is perhaps even more destructive than the ego games we play with others. The internal ego game is ongoing, exhausting, and depressing. There can be no true happiness or fulfillment within the Ego Board Game because there is no Love. There is no heart, no soul, no empathy, no freedom, no justice, no giving, and no forgiveness. This ego game is often mistakenly referred to as “the real world” by miserable people. In truth, it is a game. There is nothing real about it.

For thousands of years, humans have been exploited and controlled in a grand ego game. From the youngest ages, we are conditioned to the ways of ego by our schools, then in the workplace, also through our legal system, in church, in our appropriate-minded social interactions, and throughout every other part of society.

The ego game is so pervasive that it seems real—it seems like truth. I am here to tell you that it is all a lie. Love is truth and ego is a lie. I have discovered the way to live outside of the ego. I have

found that this is the only path toward happiness, fulfillment, success, bliss, and goodness. Love is the way.

The path toward Love is the escape from ego. If you hope to escape your ego, it is important to fully understand what it is. For a more thorough understanding, read *Games Ego Plays* by Kevin FitzMaurice.

Love and Fear

He who indulges in empty fears earns himself real fears.

—Seneca

Fear arises from lack of love. The only remedy for lack of love is perfect love.

—Helen Schucman

They say that Love conquers all and this is literally true. Love is brave enough to conquer because It knows no fear. When we are afraid, we pull back from life. When we are Love, we open ourselves to all that life offers.

How strange it is that most people approach love so cautiously. We are afraid to open ourselves because we are afraid of getting our hearts broken. Why are we so afraid of love when love knows no pain and no fear? What we are really afraid of is not

Love; rather lower-case love, which we have confused for Love.

This kind of love is fearful because it is not Love. It is an illusion of ego. We are afraid to fall in love because we are afraid to be treated poorly. We are afraid to be treated poorly because we are taking things personally. When we take things personally, we feel the pain of judgment, disapproval, or rejection. We are afraid because, most of the time, “falling in love” with someone means starting a potentially painful ego game.

The ego game isn't real, and this kind of love isn't real; rather, it is a form of ego-gratification. In ego-based love, the objects of your desire only exist to serve the various parts of your ego. You are projecting an ego-based need onto another person, and then, when the person fails to give your ego what it thinks it wants, ego tells you that it is the other person's fault. At that point, you become frustrated at your inability to change the person. If this goes on long enough, you may even come to

believe that the person is no longer of any use and you may decide to end the relationship.

You can have a need for love, and if there's someone who needs you, that's what humans call love. That is not love. That is possessiveness, that is selfishness, that is control with no respect.

—Don Miguel Ruiz

If you are afraid to open your heart, then it is *impossible* for you to experience Love. It is your ego that is making you afraid of Love because your ego knows that Love will destroy it. You are being led by your ego, and this can only lead you into chaos, fear, stress, and misery.

Ego wants you to believe that someday you will find happiness within its ways, but this is impossible. Ego will always lead you into chaos, where you are jumping around between the six different roles (Judge, Prosecutor, Jailer, Defender, Offender, and Victim). You are being played by others and even by yourself. You are playing a game as though it were possible to come away with a real

victory. Games aren't real. You can play a game if it is fun but never forget that it is a game. You don't see the game as a game, and you don't believe it is possible to stop playing. I will show you that it is.

Why does this ego game exist in the first place? Do you think it is human nature to live from the ego? Do you think that ego always existed inside the human psyche? I don't think so, at least not to the ridiculous extent that we live from our egos today.

Let's go back before recorded history, back before the beginning of the agricultural revolution that began circa 10,000 BC. Do you think that there was room for ego games in tribal societies? I don't think so. There is no written history from this time, so we can't be sure, but let's try to imagine.

Tribal life was not competitive because there was no economy or market. It was all about cooperating with a closely-knit community. People did not exploit each other. Love was not something limited to two people expressing romantic Love.

Love was something that necessarily extended to every member of the tribe.

Check out a fascinating book called *Sex at Dawn* by Christopher Ryan. He points out even the sexual practices and family structures in the tribal communities were very different from that of modern society. The point I am making is that our current customs are not inevitable; rather, were put into place for a reason. Things used to be a lot different. For example, children in these ancient tribes were not raised by a mother and father; rather, they were raised by the entire tribe. Nobody cared who the father was—it didn't matter because it was everyone's responsibility to look after all the children.

So why does this modern ego game exist? Is it because there are winners and losers? Sure. The winners of the ego game are the elite who perpetuate a system that was created from the beginning with the absolute intention to control you and to exploit you. Rather than seeing ourselves as

fully-connected to a Loving tribe, modern humans are taught that we are on our own—that it is us against the world.

The primary reason we are fearful and enslaved is that we are dependent upon monetary currency (which of course is a control mechanism of the ruling elite). Everything about our modern societies; from our schools, religions, corporations, media, and our entire culture; is designed to reinforce the belief that this entire ego-based system is natural and inevitable. Quite the contrary, every aspect of our society was engineered by someone for some purpose. It would be foolish to consider anything man-made as inevitable.

The ruling elite believe that it is not in their best interests to allow Love to flourish. If the light were to shine, then their dark forms of oppression and exploitation would have no power over us. If you become Love, they will lose control over you. If Love could flourish on a massive scale, then the grand

ego game would eventually cease to exist. Love is the only true, sustainable, worthwhile revolution.

Today's society is designed to repress and suppress Love because that is the only way to make this darkness seem acceptable. You may feel that it is impossible to live in this world, as it exists today, as a beacon of Love. I will show you that it is not only possible but, even in this sick system, Love-based living is optimal. Ego has nothing of value to offer you, even within a world that was designed and built around it. When you have Love, ego is powerless, and you have nothing to fear.

Ego isn't real, and neither are any of its systems or institutions. Society is crafted in such a way that you depend upon money for survival. You then depend upon social approval for access to money. Just as intended, this causes fear. Beyond this, you are meant to fear the police, the legal system, and a political system that seems increasingly to be working against you. If this isn't enough, you are supposed to watch the news so that you become

afraid of violent crime or of deadly diseases. Many of us can't even send our kids to school without worrying about what might happen to them.

You are human; therefore, you are Love. Love is truth. It would be impossible for belief in Love to be considered naïve or delusional when we all have felt its bliss, and we all seek Love above all else. Individuals, groups, and institutions will invariably undermine your pursuit of Love by trying to place you in the Ego Board Game. Even so, it is important that you know this ego game is just that: a game. You, on the other hand, are Love.

It may feel at times like you are losing the game, but you will never lose if you are connected to universal truth—the truth of Love. Ego, on the other hand, is very different. Ego skews perception and then has you believe that its perception is truth. As one author puts it,

The brain and the eye may have a contractual relationship in which the brain has agreed to believe

*what the eye sees, but in return has agreed to look
for what the brain wants.*

—Daniel Gilbert

Do not trust what you see, trust how you Love. By choosing to Love and deciding to be Love, you are choosing to align yourself with your deepest nature and your highest calling. By discovering that you are part of a universal oneness, you will come to know that you are no longer in competition with anyone. You will find out that there is no scarcity in Love. Love is expanding, ego is contracting.

Love's expansion is manifested in Love's giving. In Love, you are forming alliances with other humans on a spiritual level. In this way, you overcome all the aspects of ego that you thought were real. I am Love, and I repeat: you have nothing at all to fear.

Love and Pride

Pride is the main addiction in the world and the hardest addiction to kick.

—Kevin FitzMaurice

In true love, there is no place for pride.

—Thick Nhat Hnah

Just as the junkie feeds his never-ending addiction to the needle, the purpose of lower-case love is to feed the never-ending needs of the ego. Lower-case love is only an arrangement between two people. It is designed to feed ego's most magnificent realm; pride.

I say that pride is ego's most magnificent realm, but even so, it is so ugly. Pride is fake eyelashes, plastic surgery, expensive clothing and fast cars. Pride is in the desperate imitation of the pages of a magazine even at the expense of alienating yourself

from other people. Pride is buying a bigger house and insisting on giving a tour. Pride is pressuring your children to be the best in their class. Pride is believing that you are amazing, your marriage is amazing, your children are amazing, and even the city you live in is somehow amazing and superior to all other cities that have ever existed (perhaps for the simple reason that you live there).

Pride is that feeling of satisfaction you get watching others embarrass themselves on reality TV. Pride is believing that your political movement is right and that your cause is the most important cause. Pride is believing in your church or your religion while rejecting all others. Pride is in that momentary feeling that your life is perfect because of how it looks on Facebook. Pride has nothing at all to do with Love.

You may tell your children that you are proud of them because you want to motivate them to work harder. You want them to do what they are told. This kind of pride in your children is conditioned

upon good behavior or performance. Love is unconditional and knows no pride. Your children do not need your pride; they need your Love. Any expression of either pride or disappointment will only serve to teach them that the ego game is what is real. Teach them, instead, that Love is what is real. Life will work out much better for them.

I said before that pride is ego's most magnificent realm. Pride can be ugly, but sometimes pride can be sexy in a perverted sort of way. Pride is that hot girl that everyone simultaneously desires and hates. Pride is that rich, handsome man flying across NYC in a helicopter who every greedy gold-digger wants to marry. Pride is seduction. Pride is believing that you are more of a man because you are juggling several beautiful women at once. Pride is an expensive, explosive, yet momentary and fleeting pleasure. Pride is fast cars, diamond rings, VIP lounges and dirty sex.

Ego first seduces you with fear, then it incentivizes you with the pleasures of pride. Like a

drug, the pleasures of pride are intense and then vanish in an instant—leaving you with a painful hangover. Pride is destructive as a drug because it cares nothing about what others must lose for you to get your fix. The pleasure of pride is always followed by some sort of painful consequence. Pride's hangover might come in the form of revenge, financial debt, guilt, shame, the destruction of a relationship or the destruction of the planet. Not so sexy after all.

I am intimately familiar with the pleasures of the ego. Before I learned to Love, I was a prideful, ego-driven hedonist. My drug of choice was sexual adventure. If I had been writing this book two years ago, I would have indulged in telling you about every steamy detail. I would have taken prideful pleasure in boasting. That book would have sucked. Now I have come to understand that my exploits, however pleasurable they might have been in the moment, were silly, ugly, and embarrassing.

I am deeply sorry for all the pain and destruction that this has caused (though in Love I have learned to let go of the shame and guilt). I hope that my wife can one day forgive me, if only for her own sake. What first inspired this book is how badly my soul wanted to communicate these truths to her. I don't know if her ego will allow her to even read this book, but I hope that she does. I know that this raw language of Love will feel like an attack on her ego—but that is only her ego trying to hold on, and this is precisely the problem.

Ego causes destruction and failure. It offers no benefit in return. Just one silly example from my life; a few years ago, I was the lead singer / songwriter in a band. My songs and lyrics did come from a pure place of Love. Unfortunately, as soon as I was on stage, my pride would tend to get the best of me. It all went to my head, and I know that the audience must have sensed it. Our 2015 album is good, but I suspect that the project failed because of the surface-level arrogance and deep-seeded insecurity that resulted from the inner-workings of

my ego. Regardless of the music, I was simply unable to connect with an audience. No one needs that energy—people look to art for expressions of truth and Love.

Most people think that having too much ego is bad, but maybe a little bit of ego is helpful. I disagree. Ego needs to be destroyed completely. There are only two possible masters: Love or ego. You cannot serve two opposing masters, or you will face tremendous conflict, which is painful.

Ryan Holiday recently wrote an excellent book called *Ego is the Enemy*. He looks at historical figures—those who have accomplished enormous success and those who have failed miserably. You can guess by the title of the book what his conclusion is on the topic of ego. Here are two interesting quotes:

Behind every goal is the drive to be happy and fulfilled—but when egotism takes hold, we lose track of our goal and end up somewhere we never intended.

Writing our own narrative leads to arrogance. It turns our life into a story—and turns us into caricatures—while we still have to live it.

—Ryan Holiday

Love knows no pride. Love takes no pleasure in Facebook likes, jealous stares, or meaningless sex. Love is giving. Love is kindness. Love is service. Love is getting down on your knees in humility. When you are Love, there is nothing that another person can do to injure your pride because you have none. Pride is of the ego. It is an emotion that vanishes when you discover Love.

Pride is difficult to let go of because it is the best source of pleasure you probably know. What you don't yet know is that Love's pleasure is *far greater*. Love offers you pleasures far beyond what ego permits. Love offers pleasure that is more intense, bliss that does not fade, and fulfillment that cannot be found inside the boundaries of the ego.

As intense and mind-blowing as prideful pleasure can be, Love's pleasure is far more powerful. But you can't get there unless you align yourself with Love. This requires a leap of faith.

In the second part of this book, I will show you how to escape your ego, and I will reveal to you Love's pleasures.

Pride is a feeling of superiority over another human being. Superiority is the cause of social problems, not the solution to social problems.

—Kevin FitzMaurice

Love and Jealousy

A summer breeze can be very refreshing, but if we try to put it in a tin so we can have it entirely for ourselves, the breeze will die.

—Thick Nhat Hnah

The transition to Love is not always instant because some feelings are difficult to change. Letting go of possessiveness and jealousy is perhaps the most difficult.

While I spent most of my life living as a huge ego wrapped in human skin, I guess Love has always been nudging me and poking at me from above. Until recently, I was unable to distinguish between love (as ego conceives of it) and Love (as the universe created it). Why, I wondered, was there always so much jealousy and possessiveness in love? Now I know the answer—there isn't any because that sort of thing isn't Love.

Part of me has always believed in a Love beyond ego. Like you, I have heard Love's beautiful clichés such as "if you love someone set them free." I have learned to Love without much jealousy. The problem is that I still allowed myself to live within the framework of a relationship that did not always fit Love's ideal.

The ways of the ego are deemed by society, and by our loved ones, as "normal." Most people find it difficult to fight a battle against normal. Like most people, I have tried my best to surrender to normal. You might say that I have struggled with that surrender, and so here I am in all my abnormality.

I could not surrender, nor could I fight. How I tried and failed in the fight against normal. Somewhere along the way, I discovered the ideal of polyamory. Polyamory is the idea that it is possible to openly Love more than one person at a time romantically and sexually. For a long time, I identified as polyamorous because this is what I had felt.

My Love for my wife did not fade when I began to also Love others. Just as parents Love more than one child at a time, polyamory suggests that we should be open to the idea of Loving more than one romantic partner at a time. This made sense to me and came naturally, and so I identified myself as polyamorous.

Unlike cheating, polyamory requires all parties to be open and honest with each other. If jealousy exists, it is dealt with Lovingly. I have talked with many people about polyamory. In nearly every case, the reaction was probably exactly what you are feeling right now: a tinge of intrigue, followed by immediate rejection. Most people know that *they* would be capable of loving two people at once, but then they imagine the painful emotional nightmare of their lover or spouse doing the same.

If you are like most people, you probably aren't keen on the idea of hearing exactly how your spouse had just had sex with someone else. The whole thing becomes too vivid and real. As soon as

these kinds of thoughts arise, jealousy wins. Jealousy is always spoken of as “normal,” even though it is of the ego. Because of jealous feelings, any conversation you might start about polyamory (or open relationships) will likely come to an abrupt halt. Jealousy is a painful emotion of the ego. Because it is of the ego, it cannot be accepted unless you want to allow ego to win. It is essential that we address sex and monogamy directly.

For most of my marriage, I was faithful to my wife. I was also extremely frustrated with monogamy. I knew and accepted that my wife was jealous about the idea of me making love to another woman. At the same time, I felt trapped in that monogamous relationship. I badly craved not only sexual variety but, but perhaps even more importantly, I felt almost injured by the fact that I was not allowed emotional closeness and affection with others. I felt that I needed to experience all that life offers. My solution was that we should find a way to honor our Love, but we should not hold each other back from being fully alive.

She strongly disagreed. Year after year, I tried my best to respect her feelings while fighting my own. Despite my feelings of shame and guilt, eventually, I was no longer able to keep my urgent impulses to myself. I felt that no one person could provide everything I needed. I projected these feelings, and my wild sexual fantasies, upon my wife. This brought a dimension of freedom and openness, but it hurt her feelings.

She was unable to deal with any of this. I am a bit embarrassed to say it now, but I had a fantasy that I thought might solve this impasse. I imagined that we would invite a sexy woman to join us for a threesome. In the pristine freedom of my slightly twisted imagination, this hot fantasy was so clear (and vivid). Should I tell you more about it? The three of us would become friends. We would learn to share our feelings and, eventually, our naked bodies with each other. This playful experience would fulfill us beyond what monogamy is capable of. I know this is crazy, but then again is it really so crazy?

I had little evidence that any type of open relationship could work. I was only following my intuition. I believed that within the friendship, caring, and the bonding that this ambitious, sexual adventure might bring, my wife might ultimately overcome her jealousy. The frustration that I had felt for so many years would surely dissolve if she would only just let go and give this a try!

I know exactly how ridiculous I sound right now. Few people talk about or write about these things in a serious way. But that's exactly the problem. There are some topics that are thought to be out of bounds, but why? I am asking in Love, not in ego. I'm being sincere. Why is it out of bounds or inappropriate to share thoughts, feelings, or ideas that are completely real?

Is what I am saying so ridiculous? Perhaps non-monogamy in a relationship is asking too much, but is a lifetime of monogamy in a world of fascinating people with incredible bodies reasonable? I didn't want to leave my wife. I didn't want to lie and

cheat. I just felt that I needed to have sex with someone else! Was it really too much to ask? Even if I really, really wanted it? I know, I sound terrible.

This impasse went on for many years. Eventually, it became clear that there was simply no solution. She wasn't open to any kind of group experience, she would not allow me to be with another woman alone, and my sexual tension was becoming such that I was about to explode. After many, many years of this, I saw no other solution, and I finally cheated.

In that affair, I found everything that I needed. The experience was wonderful in every way. My new girlfriend asked me, on that first night, how I would feel if my wife did the same thing. I have always tried to be fair, so I immediately told her that I would be okay with it. I meant it.

Upon my wife's return home from a business trip, I made one last attempt to include my wife in my hot new sex life. I told her that I had met someone and that this person was open to a

threesome (which she was). Unfortunately, everything shattered at that moment. In a few words, our lives had been changed irreversibly.

Upon telling my wife even the first thing about this girl, she had already figured out that I had cheated. To be caught cheating was perhaps the most painful experience of my life. If you've been through it, you know what I mean. If you haven't been through it, then I'm not a good enough writer to explain the depth of pain. You might think that my wife was the only one hurting, but I was hurting just as much because, through our Love, we were one.

She threw me out. For days, neither of us could eat or sleep. I barely got out of bed. In time, the razor-sharp pain of our pulsing nerves slowly began to heal. I told her (and firmly believed) that I would never do it again. We got back together, and still, nothing was resolved. Even as we were so badly damaged and nothing would never be the same

between us, the larger problem was that we had still found no solution to the impasse.

Months went by and things began slowly getting better. Just as she began to trust me again, I started having the same strong feelings about monogamy. Only now I had a vivid memory of my recent sexual bliss, and I wanted more. I cheated again. It was much easier for me the next time, only this time I learned to master the art of the lie.

I had come to like the idea of a lover on the side. I found another, and another, and another. In becoming a serial cheater, I foolishly thought I had found the solution. I congratulated myself that I was no longer hurting my wife with my sexuality; rather, I was doing what I needed to do in secret while she was blissfully unaware. She was happy, and I was too, except for one thing: the enormous distance that grew between us and the joke that became of our life together.

If you are considering cheating, please know that, even if you get away with it, the closeness you

feel with your partner will vanish. If you value closeness, then don't cheat. Please try something else.

In a close relationship like I had with my wife, it is nearly impossible to hide such an enormous lie as an infidelity. In my adventures, I had wonderful experiences and met fascinating people. I couldn't talk with my wife about any of it. As I withdrew into my secret inner world, I felt so lonely that I needed the others even more. To create space for the others, I became an actor—telling horrific lies with a tone of sincerity. I told her that she was crazy even as she was exactly right in her accusations. I felt deep shame and guilt, but it seemed there was no end to this addictive spiral. I still loved her and didn't want to lose her.

One deception leads to another until you are in freefall. Relationships with new people suck you in and pull you in new directions. This leads to changes in you that cannot be hidden for long. As you think about these other relationships day after

day, you slowly withdraw from your real world. Then, as your crimes become a normal part of your life, you are increasingly unfulfilled from the fleeting thrills of the ego. You raise the stakes. You get desperate and become even bolder in your crimes. Eventually, you will get caught.

You go through the crying and yelling and throwing things again, only this time it is a little shorter and a little less shitty. You look at yourself in the mirror and hate yourself again. You promise yourself you will never do it again. This time, the promise doesn't last as long. More trust is lost, more closeness deteriorates, and you begin to acknowledge that you are in the painful process of separation even as you buy a new home, have a child together, even as you try to hold on to each other, even as you somehow continue to Love each other and find so many beautiful moments together through it all.

At this stage, the public image of your relationship is still intact, and this becomes the

focus. Your goals, your children, the real-world stuff that never really mattered in the beginning—this is now everything you have. You are empty, and you are lost, lonely in a nightmare of your own creation.

Ours started out as a great, loving, seemingly ideal relationship. What happened? No sex is good enough to destroy everything. Sex can't possibly be the real reason, right? Why, then, are we wired in a way that this kind of thing is at least somewhat inevitable for many people? I have come to believe that we are destroying perfectly good relationships because we are doing relationships wrong.

None of this destruction is necessary because, I dare say, it isn't necessary for Love to be exclusive. Why must Love be monogamous? Why must the inflexibility of marriage leave us no option other than deceit? Even when we resist the temptation, why must we live in a way that makes us feel so cut off and lonely next to the person who was once closest to us? At least between casual lovers, there is openness and honesty. Why can't this kind of

closeness and unconditional acceptance exist in a life-long romantic partnership? Why can't we allow new experiences within Love?

After everything I put her through, now that we are living apart, I don't suppose my wife could ever trust me again. I completely understand why she cannot seem to stop attacking me after what I have done. Those attacks used to control my life. Beneath my huge ego, I hated myself and believed that I deserved the worst. It hurts to hate yourself.

I still Love my wife. I always have and always will. But I do not Love her ego, which seems to have taken over completely. My life went in the other direction—away from ego and toward Love—so the gap between us has widened since our separation.

I remember when we first met, back when she was a foreign exchange student in high school. We got everything right from the start. Our Love was so enthusiastic, so giving. We trusted each other completely. We effortlessly connected through that

higher form of Love—the kind that helps you conquer all.

Through Love, we *did* conquer all. I flew to Slovakia with her after high school, met her family, and convinced them to let her come back with me and to marry me. What a story our Love told. We soon got married and moved from Wisconsin to Colorado for university. Through years of determination and struggle, we both managed to earn graduate degrees. Whatever *has worked* for us through the years, I know that it was Love and not just love.

Our downfall is that, at some point, we forgot what was real. Perhaps this is understandable. From the day after our wedding, we were financially broke in the USA with big dreams (a difficult spot to be in). We felt the weight of our impossible odds and slowly came to understand the very real emotion of fear. We worked too hard and worried too much. We followed too many of society's rules and we put the ego game of life above our Love.

When a couple stresses, yells, fights, blames, then what they are doing is telling each other that the ego game is more important than their Love. In the early days, the force of Love that brought us together was still strong enough to keep us together and still beautiful enough to provide so much happiness. The problem was that we no longer put Love above all else. Indeed, it is a question of priority, and nothing should ever be prioritized above Love.

Prior to our marriage, we had never thought through the idea of a lifetime of monogamy. We had never dealt with the topic of jealousy. It hadn't been an issue yet. Our Love was the biggest thing we had ever known in life, and we had full faith in it.

Almost immediately after we got married, things changed. We wanted to possess each other. We set rules. We threatened to get our way. We expected things of each other. We lost respect for personal boundaries. We took each other for

granted. We no longer saw each other as separate beings; rather, we took each other as property.

From the beginning of our marriage, we began to lose sight of Love—that very Love that had already proven itself because It had already given us the courage and strength to do this amazing, impossible thing together. Instead, we got lost within the institution of marriage as defined by society. Marriage doesn't need to be difficult, but if you follow all the rules of marriage, then it might be.

As my wife frequently likes to point out about herself, she is an amazing woman. Whatever she felt or did was what any woman would have felt or done. What I was asking for sexually felt too much like letting go of me, so she refused. I understand this. What she has never understood is that she never needed to hold onto me to begin with. I was there, and I wasn't going anywhere. I Loved her, and it was only our warring egos that pushed us apart.

You may think, at this point, that the non-jealous, non-monogamous version of Love I am imagining is impossible. You may be starting to suspect that I am naïve, hopeless, and do not understand women. But remember that it is Love who is writing this story, not just Mark Manney. Love has revealed itself to me, and I am revealing its truth to you.

I had always imagined that it was possible to Love in a way that was not possessive, not fearful, and not ego-driven. I have always believed that unconditional Love can endure in a romantic relationship. Through the years, I have briefly seen it, and I have touched it.

For a few years, I had a fun, satisfying relationship with a student who was much younger than I was. We Loved each other unconditionally. She had shown me that this kind of unattached, unconditional friendship and Love were possible. Our relationship existed entirely within the hidden realm, and there were no promises of forever. In

that secret world, everything worked exactly how I had imagined it should work between a man and a woman. I had never thought of her as a real-world partner, though. After all, I was completely invested in my marriage. She eventually moved on, but we remain very close. I will tell you more about her later.

I want to tell you about a very special woman in my life. She is at the center of my life and has been for some time now. Her way of Loving has revealed many of these truths to me. The story of Her proves that it is possible for a romantic partnership to work in exactly the way that this book is describing. Even through the most challenging circumstances, it is also possible for this kind of Love to endure in the real world.

When I met Her, our connection was immediate and effortless. There was no struggle and no resistance. Things happened quickly, and we became as close as two people can be. She responded to me without ego and, in time, my

natural reaction was to treat Her as Lovingly as She has treated me.

As difficult as it is, She has always respected the relationship I have with my wife. Now that She and I are romantic partners, she still encourages me to be close to my family. We Love each other completely just as we set each other free.

This book would not exist without the influence of Her Love. She Loves in the way that I am describing in this book, and through this Love She has shown me the light of Love's truth. This is not a story about how Love should be; this is a story about how *Love is* in my world right now.

When She came into my life, she just did not bring much of an ego. Despite Her relative youth and attractiveness, she doesn't live in her ego in the way that other women do. I don't know how She became the person who she is, but this is how she is.

The only time we disagree with each other is when one of us is trying to Lovingly offer something

to the other; something that we cannot possibly accept because the offer is too generous. This is how couples should argue, right?

She and I are together as a couple, yet we are not possessive, and we are not jealous. We accept each other unconditionally and have set no rules for each other—not even monogamy. I know now that I could never be in a relationship with someone who makes no attempt to move beyond sexual jealousy. Once you have the other kind of relationship, there's no going back.

A jealous relationship is one that is held together by rigid rules, impossible life-long promises, ongoing suspicions, and routine threats. My relationship with Her started off as polyamorous. I was married, and she was a single woman free to date others, so this arrangement made sense. But, even as things have gradually changed and our lives began to merge together, we have decided to always keep our relationship open. We have decided to do this because we want to

maintain the possibility of full honesty and trust. Let me explain.

The moment a couple agrees to monogamy, trust is broken. At this point, it is forbidden to reveal anything that is against the rules. If you insist on monogamy (or on any rigid rule at all), then you will never again know for sure whether your partner is telling you the truth. If you make the price of honesty too high, you might be lied to. You make the relationship brittle. Even if your partner does not lie and deceive, she may have no choice but to leave you if she ever has strong feelings that do not fit into the framework of your rules.

Even if you are not being lied to, strict rules mean you will always live in doubt because you will never be sure. The moment a couple agrees to monogamy, they have decided against unconditional Love, honesty, openness, and freedom. They have said “no thank you” to unconditional acceptance. This is a huge mistake that can easily be avoided by simply agreeing on the

concept of an open relationship based on openness and honesty (i.e. polyamory). This doesn't mean that you must seek additional partners, just that you may do so if there is a strong enough need.

A couple who, on the other hand, practices forced monogamy is basing their relationship on their egos rather than on their Love. This is how the world wants us to do relationships because society has been engineered such that we are expected to live from our egos in every area of our lives.

Unfortunately, true romance starts to die the very moment that ego takes over. One way that this happens is that monogamy becomes the expectation.

Love will create the most beautiful relationship: an ongoing romance.

—Don Miguel Ruiz

Early on in my relationship with Her, we did something crazy that shattered sexual jealousy. I am reluctant to tell you about this because, if you are anything like me, when someone begins telling you

about his sexual exploits, it naturally starts to make you hate him. I will share the bare minimum of this story for the simple reason that I need you to know that my ideas about monogamy are based on actual experiences.

Early on in our relationship, She and I decided to have a threesome with that other young Loving and accepting woman who I was telling you about earlier. Neither of the two women had ever met, nor had ever had a same-sex erotic experience. They were curious but understandably nervous and worried.

I deeply admire their bravery. From the beginning, regardless of whether we would end up going through with this, their openness and willingness to try made me feel so completely Loved. After the two women had agreed that they were open to exploring this, I introduced them to each other through email. We all agreed that the best approach would be for them to become friends and to establish trust through direct

communication. The premise that we were going to have a threesome freed them from the restrictive social norms that usually exist between women. They became best friends almost immediately.

After a few weeks of anxious anticipation, one thing led to another until our bodies and souls were finally united in this extraordinary form of Love, sensitivity, friendship and caring. There was no sin here because Love was present. It was playful, beautiful and harmless. It was so much fun and so completely liberating.

Jealousy did not exist in that room and never has since between the three of us since. From start to finish, our connection was in friendship and Love. Jealousy tends to evaporate when you put the other person's feelings above your own. That's exactly what we all did. To this day, the three of us are close friends, and we have repeated the experience.

By the way, we also attempted another threesome with one different woman. That time, it was a disaster. The problem was that no Love

existed between us. It was insensitive, it was about nothing, and the experience ended in catastrophe.

Sin is where Love is not. While this sexual fantasy originated in my ego years prior, it somehow needed to become real. When any fantasy becomes real, it unlocks you—it replaces the addictive, obsessive allure of fantasy with the knowledge of reality. This sets you free, and you begin to dream about something else. I am so grateful that, when this fantasy had finally manifested, it had moved into the realm of Love. This blissful experience was made possible because of Her, the woman who I Love like mad and will continue to Love and serve.

This is just one story about my extraordinary girlfriend. Perhaps one day I will write a book only about Her. Any person who can let go of sexual jealousy is a person to whom you should open yourself. This is a person who is connected to Love and who is capable of living beyond the boundaries of the ego. The only thing that would stop you from

Loving a person who is not jealous would be the jealousy that is present in your ego. Choose Love, not ego, and you will move beyond emotional pain.

There is a sort of tragic irony in this. During my *monogamous* relationship with my wife, I cheated. During my *open* relationship with Her, I have never felt the need to cheat or even to have sex with others without her company. Other women are no longer as interesting to me. My impulse is to attract any attractive woman I meet into our relationship. What I find is that, other women's egos are incapable of accepting my relationship with Her as something they can deal with. They immediately lose interest in me, and so there is nothing to solve. They are not interested in this, I am not interested in that, and so there is no need and nothing happens. Honesty and openness effortlessly take care of what rules cannot.

You will find a way that works for you, but my open, polyamorous relationship with Her functions in a way that we are essentially monogamous aside

from an occasional gift of a shared adventure. If either of us ever needs an experience that is not shared, it is permitted, and we will try to work through any pain or jealousy. If my wife wants to be intimate with me again, for example, we will welcome her into our relationship openly. Love will find a way for my wife to fit perfectly into the truth of my life (if this is what she shall ever desire). In general, however, we are connected in such a deep way that we are not tempted by others because we seem to have no needs that are unfulfilled within our relationship.

Nothing is lacking, so no rules are needed. Because no rules are needed, no threats are needed, no shaming is needed, and no arguing is needed. We are in Love; yet, we remain free to Love. That is everything. She and I make no promises about the future. We are open to anything (even starting a family), but expecting nothing (she may one day want something more traditional). We will let Love guide us.

I am still completely open to my wife, but only if she is also open to me, unconditionally, in Love (as I am to her). As of now, my wife continues to only be interested in ego-based love, and she wants me to dump my girlfriend as a starting point. I hope that she finds a way to escape her ego because, if she does, she will discover a Love that includes our relationship but extends to every aspect of her universe. Indeed, if my wife is to Love me, this will also need to include accepting Her. I have become who I am through Her. She has now become an extension of me. Why would I, a person who lives in Love, leave a person who I Love in a healthy way to be with a wife who wants to put me back into an ego-based relationship? That isn't Love.

By the way, my young daughter has adjusted very well to this new reality. Even as a parent, I find that if I am communicating and acting in Love, then Love will find a way. Indeed, there just hasn't been a problem. While it was difficult for her at first, my daughter's life has been deeply enriched by this new variety of experience and influence. I see her

once or twice a day, she stays overnight at my place three days per week, and we have grown closer through the beautiful discovery of our own one-on-one relationship free from Mommy's oversight. You don't necessarily have to parent full-time to give your children everything they need. Love is enough. Love will provide.

When I say that Love is not possessive or jealous, I know that this is a bold statement. It is so hard to accept. On the surface, it appears extreme or even absurd. What is truly absurd is that we have grown so conditioned to thinking of Love as jealous and possessive that we no longer even know what Love is.

I am aware that I am taking a highly controversial position (to say the least), but I see no way to escape your ego while leaving room for possessiveness or jealousy as a valid emotion that should be accepted as inevitable. If monogamy is forced or expected, then possessiveness and

jealousy have been made a pillar of your relationship. This will mess up your relationship.

I am not saying that it is necessary for you and your partner to have multiple partners. I would encourage you to have multiple partners if you wish, but my point is that monogamy cannot be imposed, coerced, or even expected from your partner. Just know that you don't own anyone.

Monogamy is something that will be given by your partner if and only if it is desired by your partner. It must be a natural thing that happens within the flow of your relationship. Even if you have a marriage contract, their time and their presence in your life is a gift and a privilege. Even in the most difficult realm of sexual jealousy, free yourself from your ego so you can fully enjoy the full potential of your Love.

Escaping Your Ego

If we have fear, what we perceive will be analyzed with fear. If we are mad, what we see perceive will be perceived according to anger. Our emotions are like a filter through which we see the rest of the world.

—Don Miguel Ruiz

We have covered topics such as fear, pride, possessiveness, and jealousy. Other negative emotions of the ego include anger, stress, regret, shame and stubbornness. I know that it sounds unbelievable, but I am writing from the perspective of Love and I am telling you that you no longer need to feel any of these negative emotions at all. It is ego, and ego alone, that is the source of darkness and negativity.

Negative emotions are the emotions of the ego. They are real for you only because you choose to believe in ego. Ego is a lie. The painful emotions you

feel are nature's way of telling you that you are serving the wrong master. If you did not feel this pain, you would have no way of knowing that you are wrongfully living in compliance with a set of lies. When you begin to align yourself with the truth of Love, these negative emotions will vanish.

Now you know something about FitzMaurice's six roles of the ego (Judge, Prosecutor, Jailer, Defender, Offender, Victim). With this new lens of understanding, you can easily identify moments when you are playing the Ego Board Game. Each time you observe yourself stepping into any of these roles, or when you respond to the attacks or offenses of others, you will step back and remind yourself to Love. When and where you play the ego game, or if you will still play it all, is your choice. I am just showing you the alternative, which is Love.

Pain and suffering are purely of the ego. If you do choose to play the game, you run the risk of getting stung by the negative feelings of the ego (fear, pride, possessiveness, jealousy, anger, stress,

regret, shame, guilt, greed, stubbornness, ambition, and more). All negative emotion is an emotion of the ego. How do you know you are experiencing a negative emotion? Simple: you feel senseless pain even though you are not physically injured. With Love, you no longer need to feel emotional pain.

I don't know whether it is possible to instantly change only because you are reading this book, but I do know that you have surely already begun to change. When truth is revealed, no further justification or argument is required. Truth stands on its own and is immediately accepted as soon as it is recognized. It only needed to be said.

Now, you have already begun to orient your life in a way that permits these changes to happen. The shift away from ego and toward Love happens as quickly as you allow it to happen. It neither can be rushed nor slowed. Your journey is yours, and it will happen in its own time. You have started the journey, and now it is enough just to not stand in your own way. Beyond reading this book and

changing your thinking, there are a few more things that you need to do if you want to shift away from ego and toward Love.

Meditation

Meditation, or exploring mindfulness, is by far the most common pattern across them all (in referring to top-performers).

—Tim Ferriss, author of *Tools of Titans*

The easiest and most essential thing you can do to get outside of your ego is to meditate. Meditation is difficult at first because, if you have never done it, you don't even know what it means to shut down the mind. At first, you don't know whether you're just thinking with your eyes closed or whether you are meditating. It takes a little time, though not more than a few weeks, before you will get the hang of it and start to enjoy it.

I didn't start meditating until two years ago. With this single change, my reality shifted in a significant way. I became calmer and stopped overreacting to every worry or problem. I found myself conducting business without that

rollercoaster of emotion. I was immediately more effective in all areas of life. I was also a calmer, healthier, and happier person.

You may object to meditation because you think that you don't have enough time. If you don't think you have time to meditate, then you *really* need to meditate. After 15-20 minutes of meditation every morning, you will find that you can go about your business, get more done, become more effective, and do everything in a more relaxed state. By the end of the day, you will have accomplished more because you have more energy. You also won't get ill as often.

Trust me, you will get more done. If you listen to the Tim Ferriss podcast, for example, it will become clear that a consistent habit of top performers is meditation. If Oprah Winfrey, Kobe Bryant, Marc Benioff, Russell Simmons, Jeff Weiner, Arianna Huffington, Jerry Seinfeld, Ellen DeGeneres, Rick Ruben, and Madonna find time to meditate, we all can find time to meditate.

Maybe you think that you are more effective in a frantic, stressed, or excited state. It isn't true. When you are in an unbalanced emotional state, you are reactive. You are not in control. You are confused and erratic. You will burn out and will become frequently ill.

When you begin to meditate, you will find that you begin to make better decisions. Your relationships will improve. You will also be able to concentrate longer and get more done. Remember, this is just an added benefit that meditation brings because the larger point is to shift from a life as an ego game to a life of truth, which is Love.

There are various forms of meditation. You can start by spending a lot of money and time taking a transcendental meditation course, or you can start right away for free by looking to the countless varieties of guided meditation. Indeed, the easiest way to start meditating is to find an app or guided meditation online. This is how I meditate.

Find a recorded, guided meditation that you enjoy. You should be drawn to the sound of the person's voice and feel calmed by what he or she is saying. I use Meditation Oasis (she has an app), but a far more popular option is the Headspace app (though I've never tried it). Try a few different options to find out what works for you.

Guided meditations are usually centered on various themes. When you do choose an app or a guided meditation provider, then you will need to look for specific meditations and topics that you enjoy. Some have calming music as a background to the voice. The meditation should last at least 15 minutes (ideally 20 minutes) and should be done once or twice per day.

You can lie down or sit up. I have tried both, but lately, I just lie down. I put on my headphones, start the audio, close my eyes, and lay perfectly still. If I have an itch, I scratch it. Then I easily return to perfect stillness.

I look forward to meditations as something like a power nap. Sometimes, if I am particularly exhausted, I even fall asleep during part of it. If this is what happens to you, then that's what your mind and body needed. Go with it. In meditation, everything is okay.

If you want to begin the journey toward Love, meditation is the essential crack in the door that will allow you to come in and start exploring that inner world beyond your ego. Don't expect a dramatic epiphany or bolt of lightning. Meditation is as gentle and subtle as it is quietly powerful. Meditate before work and ideally at least once more during the day (perhaps after work when you are tired and want to get ready for a nice evening). I work from home, so I meditate whenever I feel tired. Then I come back recharged to continue with whatever I am doing.

You will find a style of meditation that works for you and will surely enjoy this new dimension in your life. It feels pleasurable and improves each day.

Figure out a routine that fits into your schedule and then get started today.

Health

All that you really want in life is to change how you feel.

—Anthony Robbins

How do you feel? Nothing good will happen for you if you feel lousy. The way you feel is the way you think. The way you think is the way you act. If you are going to change your life, the very first place to start is to make sure you feel good. Let's make sure that you are on the path toward optimal health.

Ego doesn't care about the way you feel because ego is not real. Ego knows nothing of life because it is death. If you don't care about the way you feel, then what *do* you care about? What is more important than your experience of life? Is your experience of life not dependent upon the way it feels as you experience that life? Does anyone really need to explain this? It is only through ego-based thinking that feeling lousy is accepted as

“normal” or “inevitable.” You don’t need to feel lousy—not ever!

If you are in great shape and feel great, then you can skip this brief section. If you are not in great shape and you do not feel great, then let me ask you why you accept this. Whatever excuse you are telling yourself, understand that it is a lie. It isn’t real. Whatever excuse you have is the voice of your ego trying to hold its power over you. It knows that, if you do start to feel better, you will rely less on your ego. But with improved health and vitality, you will feel so good that you will crush your ego. Feeling physically good gives you a chance at Love (which is ego’s death), so your ego is going to fight you every step of the way.

What if I told you that it isn’t hard to get in shape and to feel great? What if I showed you that it is easier than what you are doing today? Now you have no excuse. I say to you with the deepest sense of Love, not just for your mind and soul but also your body, let’s get on with it!

Your focus on health today will make you feel great and will touch every area of your life. You will have a positive attitude where you used to have negative thoughts and reactions. You will produce more, earn more, play more, do more with your loved ones, and live longer. Enough, let's go!

Thanks largely to the author Tim Ferriss, I am feeling better than I ever have. I highly recommend his book *4-Hour Body*, which contains a section describing his Slow-Carb Diet. This is not exactly a diet because you don't miss out on anything. You will have a chance to eat everything. Also, exercise doesn't need to involve more than a few minutes of time, three times per week. Too-good-to-be-true is your new health reality. Read the book.

I have been on this diet for five years for the simple reason that it really isn't a diet. The food is great; I'm never hungry. I'm at my ideal weight, and my energy and overall health are perfect.

Sunday through Friday, I eat two or three eggs and coffee for breakfast (no bread or other carbs,

no sugar in my coffee). My lunch takes a few minutes to prepare. I have a vegetable smoothie. I mix carrots, cucumber, tomatoes, spinach, chili, garlic, and ginger. I drink this while I eat a can of sardines in tomato sauce. This super-healthy lunch is just my crazy choice. You will find your own lunch variations that will taste great to you, but it should be something that you can go to almost every day without much thought or effort. Lunch can be a salad with meat at Chipotle, for example. Fill up on whatever you want as far as meat, veggies, and legumes, but no simple carbs or dairy. If you have Indian or Thai food, for example, just skip the rice and bread. If you need a snack between meals, grab a handful of nuts.

Dinner is the time for enjoyment and for more variation. Learn to prepare any kind of meat like a chef, and maybe add sweet potatoes and some vegetables. My girlfriend loves the dinners I cook even though she isn't exactly on the diet. There's no real sacrifice in this diet.

In the evening, you should avoid food. But you can even have red wine. I guess this sounds more tempting than your existing diet or even your non-diet. It gets better.

Let's get real. Nobody should live without beer, bread, pizza, chocolate and ice cream. Diets fail because it isn't realistic to remove all the junk food you enjoy. What's the point of life without croissants and cookies? On the Slow-Carb Diet, you are encouraged (no, you are required!) to go crazy on one day of the week (I choose Saturday).

On cheat day, eat anything and everything you want. Go completely nuts. For the first time in your life, eat like a pig without any guilt. You have full permission. It's good for you. It's fun. You will end up a little sick by the time evening comes (and probably drunk or stoned if you are anything like me). Then you will wake up the next morning and discover that (1) your "diet food" tastes great again and (2) you don't feel good after eating junk food.

Use this diet to gradually lose all the weight you want without hunger. Your energy will be through the roof, you will look sexier, and you will feel great. But don't make the mistake of believing you are ready to start the diet just after reading this; read *4-Hour Body* or you will go off course.

As for overall health, some amount of exercise is also essential. At a bare minimum, you should do 75 reps of the two-handed kettlebell swing (see Tim Ferriss' video on YouTube). Do that three times per week (it only takes a few minutes). You will look great, feel great, and you will be in shape. You may choose to add additional exercises or go to the gym if you have time. What I am describing is the absolute minimum.

I have structured my life in a way that I do have time for more exercise. I run my own business and work from home, so I have time to go to the gym three or four times per week. I start with the kettlebell swings, then I do some abdominal floor exercises and pushups. Then I perform six different

weight lifting exercises using the training-to-failure method with three minutes' rest between sets. Then it's 40 minutes on the elliptical machine at the target heart rate for fat burning.

Not all of this is required for me to feel great. If I had less free time, I would do less. Find an exercise routine that works for you and, more importantly, one that you can stick with. Do as much as you can so long as you have enough time. Don't try to take on so much that you hate exercise. If you try to do too much, you will quit. Don't do that. In life, you need to sleep, you need to eat, and you need exercise. Exercise is an essential part of life. By the way, please don't make the mistake of thinking that, because you exercise, you can eat whatever you want to. It isn't true. Your fitness starts in the kitchen and then, secondarily, it extends to exercise.

By the way, you don't need to be completely rigid about diet or exercise. If it is a holiday or if you are traveling, give yourself a break. I've gone on

weeklong all-inclusive holidays where it was cheat day every day. Then, upon returning home, I went right back to my routine. I returned to my normal weight within a few days. Be free when you are on vacation, but within the structure of your usual routine, you need to be on the path toward great health without much sacrifice.

You don't need the empty calories of sugar and simple carbs. This is the food of the ego because simple carbs are as empty and worthless as ego. The price you pay for those few seconds of sweet pleasure is just too high. Your body doesn't need it, and you won't miss it. Keep in mind, this isn't about eating *less* sugar and carbs. This is about eating *no sugar and no simple carbs at all* until cheat day. Don't try to make it up on your own or you will get mixed up, and it won't work. Just read *4-Hour Body* and take his advice literally.

On a different note, if you are taking mood-altering prescription medications, stop. If you are addicted to painkillers or any other legal or illegal

substance, get help (and not from the same drug dealer / doctor who prescribed it). The help you need can only be found in a foundation of self-Love.

The pain you are trying to medicate is the pain of living in your ego. That emotional pain you are trying to numb is there for a reason—it is telling you to change your life. Get on with it! If you are trying to numb that pain through drugs and alcohol, then you are trying to cope with a life situation that is intolerable. Why cope when you can just change your life instead? Don't think for a second that it will be a struggle for you to live without your favorite drug. Think instead of everything that you will gain in the absence of that drug.

It would be foolish to think that you will ever feel good or that you will ever become healthy if you are constantly on legal or illegal drugs to alter your moods and feelings. Love is the highest high that will lift you up and remove your pain. You will never experience Love's bliss if your being is constantly clouded in a drugged-out state. Your

doctor (who is directly under the enormous influence of the pharmaceutical companies) will tell you one thing, but you know the truth. It is your life, and so it is entirely your decision. Wipe the mud from the window, so the sun can shine through.

That said, I think that life would be shit without a bottle of wine and maybe even a little weed now and then. I am not a fundamentalist when it comes to some form of recreational substances. I know that alcohol is a bad habit. Anyone who drinks will tell you that at least some of their days have been ruined by getting carried away during the previous night. However, I think that there is nothing wrong with a bottle of red wine at night to lift your spirits after a long day. The question is: how do you feel in the morning? Pay attention to that and then adjust your habits accordingly. No good feeling is worth ruining the next day.

As for feeling good in the morning, aside from getting eight hours of sleep, the most important thing you can do is intermittent fasting. Ideally, eat

dinner at 5:00 PM and then don't touch another piece of food until your eggs at 7:00 AM the next morning. Enjoy your red wine in the evening instead (though it is important to wait a few hours after dinner before you drink any alcohol). One more tip: have a half-spoon of honey before bed (Google "hibernation diet" and decide for yourself, but my experience is that it improves my sleep and helps my body to regenerate).

One more tip: have a few glasses of lemon water in the morning when you first wake up (Google "alkaline water"). This alkaline water will help balance your body to its optimized pH-level. Cancer and other diseases start when your body is in an acidic state. You need to shift to an alkaline state for optimal health. The alkaline water in the morning is a great start, but also drink water throughout the day.

Health is about discipline, yes. But let's also be reasonable. Life is also a celebration and sometimes that requires that we allow ourselves to get a little

out of control. It goes without saying that your days must be sober if you are going to live the life you are meant to live. No prescription drugs, no illegal drugs, no tobacco, no...wait, I do use one other drug: I love coffee.

My point is, be reasonable and try to limit your use of substances. Deep down, if there is a problem, then you will know that there is a problem. You will know it because you don't feel great and you won't be able to think clearly. I only want you to be as great as you can be because I Love you.

If you do wake up with a hangover, drink a lot of water and meditate throughout the morning. It works! Just don't make it a habit.

One more thing: I am a huge believer in saunas and in therapeutic massages. Try to find a sauna. Stay in the sauna for as long as you can tolerate it. Then it is essential to plunge into cold water or take a freezing cold shower so long as you can tolerate it. Alternate between hot and cold a few times. Then, lay on a comfortable chair, close your eyes, and

meditate. This is heaven on earth. Any problems your body is having will be solved immediately. But if you go to the sauna, you do need to plunge into the cold water. Otherwise, you're just making yourself hot, and nothing valuable will happen.

One other tip: find a masseuse. Don't spend a fortune if you can't afford it. Traditional Thai massage works great. Get a massage once a month and make sure the masseuse is rough. If you are in a great state of health and Love, you will experience very little pain during even the most aggressive massage. If you are living in your ego, and if your physical health is not great, the massage will be painful—but go with it, and you will come away feeling much better.

Freedom

For the past five thousand years, people have been largely enslaved by a few select masters who understood how violence, religion, communication, debt, and class warfare all work together to subjugate a large group of people.

—James Altucher

Do you value freedom? Do you want to be able to do what you want to when you want to do it? Do you already work independently or would you like to leave your job? Do you want to travel or live somewhere else? Do you want to be free to say what you really think, to write that book, or to sing that song in front of an audience?

Ego is a cage into which you are put by the fake world around you and its deceitful institutions. That ego game in your head is nothing other than your belief in this fake world and your indoctrination by it. If you are going to escape your ego, if you are

going to rise beyond your ego-based level of being to the level of Love, then you will need to seek freedom in all areas of your life.

Lack of freedom means that you are dependent upon one source of income, dependent upon one person for Love, or dependent upon one source of pleasure for happiness or escape. Freedom does not mean breaking all ties to everything; rather, it means that you have many more ties to many more options so that you may choose freely among them simultaneously. As James Altucher puts it, “Diversification is everything. You can get past ‘this’ by having a lot of ‘thats’.”

You may think that you are free because you can attend any school you choose, select any profession you want to, accept any job that suits you, and you can marry whomever you want. This isn’t freedom. None of these are examples of freedom if the result of those decisions is dependency upon one.

To attend a school is to become enslaved by its predetermined schedule and curriculum. To select a profession is to spend years learning how things are done within that profession with little regard for your unique capabilities. To choose a job means that you are a slave for most of your day. Then, if the job goes away or if you leave it, you are left with no source of income. Some forms of slavery are better than others are, but if you have a job, then you are not free.

To choose a spouse might mean to accept the rules of marriage and to cut yourself off from other sources of Love. In marriage, you become emotionally dependent upon just one person. Perhaps the only way out is to go through the painful legal process of divorce. Even after divorce, if you have not changed your thinking, then you get to choose another person with whom you will try the same thing all over again. If your path involves dependence, then it is not the path of freedom and it is not the path toward Love. Being free to choose

how you become dependent is not the same thing as being free.

If you are not free, you will never be free to Love. That's why freedom is so important. If you are living under your parent's rules, then you should seek to become more independent by getting a job. If you have a job, then you should seek to become more independent by starting a side business. If you have a profitable business, then you should seek to become more independent by acquiring more customers and delegating more of your work.

If you are in a closed relationship, then you should seek to become freer by opening it up. Claiming your freedom is the most difficult part of the transition from ego to Love, but it is a necessary condition to Love. Go on, even in your relationship or marriage, rock the boat.

It has taken me many years to claim my freedom. Now, during this past year, I have lived in true freedom. My journey to freedom started back when I lived in Seattle. While I love the Emerald City

for many reasons, I didn't love my life there because most of it was spent either in traffic or at the office.

During the years after graduating from my MBA program, I had been working in enterprise software sales. My job was to email prospects, to cold call, and to identify sales opportunities. I could easily finish my work in just two to three hours per day, but of course, like any employee, I was arbitrarily forced to sit there for eight hours.

I felt exhausted at the end of each day. What I hated the most is that so much of my day was spent basically goofing off online. Even as I was getting nowhere in my life and killing time, I felt guilty that I was cheating my employer out of the time they were paying for. I was miserable; yet, I didn't see a way to leave that job because I was dependent upon it as my sole source of income.

I was becoming increasingly depressed. My wife even tried to convince me to take anti-depressants. I refused. Instead, I took dramatic action. My

natural response to the pain of depression was to convince her to change our lives entirely. This was the beginning of an amazing adventure that I am still on, more than 10 years later.

She is from Slovakia, a beautiful little country in Europe that we had visited together every summer. I loved her family, enjoyed the company of the people I met in that part of the world, and I adored their traditions. I wanted to live there!

In Slovakia, people work to live rather than living to work. On the weekends, they get together with family and friends to celebrate, hang out at the cottage, drink, dance, and sing. It was *beautiful*, and this is where I wanted to live. Moving from Seattle to Slovakia was an admittedly crazy dream, but sometimes the craziest dreams become the best decision of your life. Don't tell me that you are stuck—that you have bills and you can't do this or that. I've been there, and I did it anyway. You can do anything you want to do.

Years before this, during one of my first visits to Slovakia, I remember walking down the beautiful city center of Kosice and glancing up at one of the apartment buildings in the old town. I remember telling my wife that, one day, when the Internet will be faster, we will probably be able to make phone calls and to work at home over the Internet. “Maybe one day,” I told her, “we will be able to live here and make as much money as in the U.S.”

It was the mid-1990s, and I let the idea pass as quickly as it had entered my mind. But here I was, more than 10 years later, doing exactly that and, remarkably, living in the very same building I had pointed to when I first had the idea. Thoughts are more powerful than we know.

When the time had come to make our move, my wife and I had come up with a great strategy. I was going to tell my boss that my wife had a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to move to Europe, but that I could continue to do my job from there and

that my performance would not suffer. She was going to tell her boss the same thing.

I remember that first day of my adult freedom vividly. We went to work with this great plan, and we came home that afternoon with two high-paying jobs in Kosice, Slovakia. Crazy! Even though we had saved enough money to live in Europe for a while without jobs, now we also had great jobs. That was one of the happiest days of my life.

This is a good time to make one other point about freedom. If you have debt, you do not have freedom. You are a slave to the bank. Get out of debt and stop buying things you don't need. Reducing your monthly expenses and having some money in the bank will go a long way toward releasing you from fear. It might take a few years but start now. Debt is the enemy. It doesn't matter if your friends have nicer homes or cars; those possessions only matter to the ego. You have chosen Love. Pay off your debt and free yourself. When you get yourself out of debt, throw a huge

party and invite your friends. They can help you to celebrate your life of freedom.

Back to my story. Maybe we weren't exactly open and honest with our employers, or maybe freedom is more important than honesty. Sometimes, it seems like honesty is a tool that the powerful use to enslave us and to exploit us through a system of ego-based reward and punishment. Anyway, I didn't feel too guilty about this little trick because I continued to produce the same amount of value in my job even after the move. As it turns out, if you produce a return on investment, then everything will be all right. Now, I was living in Europe and life was about to get very exciting.

For the first few years in Europe, we earned a nice income in a country with a very low cost of living. That was fun. Eventually, the dollar weakened, our jobs went away, and we had to figure out what to do next. By this time, I had become tired of depending upon one source of

income. Losing a job, or even the threat of losing a job fills your life with fear and chaos.

I have already given you a clue by mentioning Tim Ferriss in relation to *4-Hour Body*. Now, I will recommend that you read his first book called *4-Hour Workweek*. The ideas in this book are what inspired me to create my Infobeing Solutions sales agency. I assure you that, like me, you have ideas and expertise that can be turned into a business.

A few years ago, my wife and I were on vacation at a beach in Croatia. I had a contractor job working from my home office in Slovakia for a software company based in Vancouver. It was great, but I still didn't have enough vacation time to accommodate all the travel that I desired during the long, European summer. Therefore, I was pretending to be working from the beach (shame on me). From my iPhone, I had access to email and was on Skype. Whenever my boss tried to reach me, I would go back to the hotel room to respond.

At the same time, I was also reading *4-Hour Workweek*. I remember one moment, standing in the shallow water, I was talking to my wife about the book when she asked, “Why do you have just one job? You could do what you are doing, but outsource most of the work to India and take on five jobs.” I said, after exactly one second of thought, “Well, that’s what I am going to do next.”

The day after I returned home, I received a phone call from my boss that they were letting me go. Maybe it was a twist of fate or maybe he sensed that I was checked-out. Either way, I knew what I would do next. It wasn’t easy to get the business going (nothing worthwhile is ever easy). It took many months to sign the first customer. But now, several years later, my sales agency has proven a far better way to support my lifestyle than a job. Now, I can lose one customer with a shrug of the shoulders because next month I will sign another. This is freedom, and it is wonderful.

My wife has also taken on clients in the cosmetic industry, and she is very much a partner in the business. Even through our separation, we cooperate fully as parents to our happy young daughter, we remain strong business partners, and far more importantly, we are still a family. We celebrate holidays together, we vacation together, and we still see each other almost every day even as we live apart.

Even if you are more financially independent, even if you live abroad and work from a home office, even if you break free from a job and reduce your workweek to 10-20 hours, and even if you are 40 years old and manage to start a rock band, I believe that you are *still not free* unless you are *completely* free. If there is still some amount of dependency or attachment in your life, then you need to get rid of it because you are still not free to fully embrace Love.

Your version of freedom isn't the same as mine, but you need to find your version of freedom. Until

you are free, you cannot escape ego games, and you cannot live in Love. I have said that the process of shifting from an ego-based lifestyle to one based on Love takes some amount of time. It is a gradual process where things begin to improve with each step, but you are not free from your ego until you are completely free. Keep going.

We suffer from indifference and lack of love, but we suffer far more from attachment.

—Thick Nhat Hnah

To be free is to let go of attachments. This doesn't mean that you necessarily lose that person or that thing you are attached to, but you must be *willing to* if this is what is required to be free. For example, if I had asked my boss for permission to move to Slovakia just because I really, really wanted to, then he would have laughed and said no. Because I told him that *I am* moving to Slovakia but am willing to continue working, I managed to keep the job while simultaneously becoming freer. This is

an example of letting go of (but not losing) something.

If a person does not allow you to be yourself, to live in Love, or requires you to play an ego game, then this is a person who you must be brave enough to let go of. It took me a very long time to learn this, and I have paid a huge, unnecessary price by wasting many years of my life. Let go now. Love will take care of everything.

Deep down, I have known who I am and what I believe in for many years. Yet, in fear, I have held back and have kept it hidden. I have kept so much hidden because of social pressure, because of the expectations of family, and most of all, I have kept things hidden because of my wife. I Love her, so didn't want to hurt her and I didn't want to lose her.

Now I have learned, gradually and at this mature age, that there is no good reason *not* to live the truth of Love, *not* to be yourself, and *not* to create the life that you were meant to create. If you are surrounded by the right people, they will Love

you for it. If you are surrounded by the wrong people, they will fight you and will attempt to change you. If this happens, you must let go because their influence will slowly destroy you.

When I have attempted to bend myself into compliance with the feelings of others and their expectations of me, I have lived in stress and fear. So many times, I wanted to talk about something that my wife found offensive, so I kept it to myself. If I said something wrong at a party, I was scolded and shouted at in the car on the way home. If I wrote a song that expressed a feeling that might have made her uncomfortable, I did not sing it.

I tried my best not to speak, to write, or to sing my full truth while living with her. To the extent that I did so I was scolded, blamed, and shamed. I would always find a way to “take it back” or to explain that I did not mean what I had said. I felt stifled, trapped, and I even became physically ill from the stress of it all. Now, in this past year of living on my own, I have not been ill once. When

you are physically ill, it is only because your life is filled with the sickness of your ego.

I don't mean to make this story sound so black-and-white. In many ways, my wife is wonderful. She even did try to accept and tolerate me. She tried to forgive and to make it work, many times, even after the cheating. Most people would say that this should have been enough, and I would have agreed with them. But "trying" to "tolerate" "some aspects" is not the same thing as unconditional Love and acceptance. Why should anyone accept a life that is less than Love when Love is what you are capable of being and giving?

Her way left room for debates, arguments, shaming, jailing, accusing, and all the ugliness of her ego. I Love her, but I do not Love her ego.

To this day, I still think of her as a wonderful woman. She is so completely giving of herself, trustworthy, faithful, and has been willing to sacrifice her own needs for our marriage and for our little girl. She is far more tolerant than most.

She is also very beautiful. People think that I am crazy that we are separated. I Love her, but I cannot accept rules of her ego and neither should you or anyone else. There is no reason to accept anything less than Love because, in doing so, everything true is lost and nothing real is gained.

Most people, if they were crazy enough to move from Seattle to Slovakia, would simply quit their job. I decided not to quit, but to let my employer decide what to do with me. This is a good rule-of-thumb in every area of life. Do your thing, be who you are, and let others decide what to do with you. This is exactly the way that I have approached each impasse in my life. This is letting go. Don't try to control the outcome, just do your thing, in Love, and let others decide what to do with you.

The separation between my wife and I was not my choice. I gave her a choice. We spent more than a year in tearful argument. I attempted to explain and to reveal the way that I Love. I offered her the

possibility of joining me in that Love and finally accepting me because I wanted to live together with her happily until death. If she had accepted that Love, I would have been there each moment with her and our daughter. I would never have lied or deceived again.

I believed, even months after arguing about the idea of an open marriage, after explaining the concept of unconditional love again and again—I believed that we would find a way. But my Love was not enough, and my words were not enough. She wanted something different, something normal, and because of that we no longer fit. I knew that Love was the only path I could walk and freedom is the only way for me to walk it.

No matter how difficult, choose freedom and then move forward without regret. If you do not have freedom in all areas of your life, then Love is not fully possible because you are not free. Freedom is the ability to let go of dependency upon any one person, thing, or source of anything.

Freedom is the creation of multiple sources of everything. The way that you achieve freedom is through giving. We will get to the chapter on giving shortly.

The path toward freedom is deep, often brutal, and Loving honesty. Tell your truth, live your truth, and then let others decide what to do with you. You may lose some people, and your relationships will certainly change. You will also meet new people who you fit with even better. In the end, freedom makes room for a life that fits with who you truly are. You are your own, unique version of Love and your Love must be freed.

Knowledge

The power of reading a great book is that you start to think like the author.

—Anthony Robbins

Throughout this book, I have made book recommendations that I hope will inspire you to walk the path of Love. Beyond this, you will also discover important and valuable books that I haven't read (which I hope you tell me about). In this final section about escaping your ego, the last thing I wanted to mention is that you absolutely need to keep reading.

One of the reasons it took me so long to get to this place is that I wasn't reading consistently. If you want to shift toward love more rapidly, then try to read something that inspires you for at least 30 minutes each day. Your mind needs to be fed new ideas, and you need to be guided by the thousands of years of wisdom available to you in books. If you

try to acquire that wisdom by yourself, you'll never get there in one lifetime. To read is to embrace those thousands of years of truth in a condensed amount of time.

I used to read one book at a time. If it was good and inspiring, then I would put it down and try to live it. In time, of course, much of the material was always forgotten, and I would fall back into my usual routines. In these past months, I have begun reading three to four books at once, and this has made all the difference.

You wouldn't watch only one television show for all your entertainment. You are in different moods on different days and during different parts of the day. Reading is the same. Choose three to four books at a time, covering different topics and in different genres, and then allow yourself to bounce back and forth as you wish.

One additional tip; if you are too busy to read a book, then listen to audiobooks. You can learn a lot while at the gym or while you are stuck in traffic.

You can even do it on a walk or with your eyes closed. Find time to absorb the wisdom of great books, eBooks, audiobooks, Ted Talks, podcasts, documentaries, anything that keeps you growing and inspires you.

Up to this point, this book has been about ego and about the escape from ego. Now you are entering the most enjoyable part. Now that you know what ego truly is and how to let go of it, I will begin to describe your life of Love.

*Bearing and nurturing,
Creating but not owning,
Giving without demanding,
Controlling without authority,
This is love.*

—Lao Tzu

Love is Giving

Life is a gift, and it offers us the privilege, opportunity, and responsibility to give something back.

—Anthony Robbins

You cannot escape your ego just by making a few simple changes. There are no lifestyle hacks that will allow you to conveniently continue to live by the functioning of your ego and yet fully experience the opposite, which is Love. This is a book about how to end pain and suffering by letting go of your ego and embracing Love. The change is radical, and one of the most profound ways Love will change you is that you will become giving.

Ego is taking, negotiating, and getting. Love is giving. Maybe you have seen the film *The Secret* (2006) or have otherwise heard spiritual leaders

such as Wayne Dyer or Deepak Chopra claim that thought, alone, is capable of manifesting everything you want. It is true that you can get what you want by thinking it, but it only works so long as you are primarily focused on giving.

To have, give all to all.

—Helen Schucman

When you are Love, you are concerned only with giving, and you make no calculations or evaluations about getting. In discussing nonviolent communication, the late Marshall Rosenberg told us about what he called “natural giving.” In relation to Loved ones, there is no need to ask for what we want. We certainly do not need to manipulate Loved ones into giving us what we want. In a Loving relationship, we simply state our needs directly and the other party will be grateful to respond with natural giving. Don’t be a jackal. Watch Marshall Rosenberg’s videos on YouTube. He’s crazy; he’s brilliant.

Often, there is no need to even go as far as stating your needs before you get what you want. Your Loved ones already know because you are already connected. But if you attack, negotiate, demand, or manipulate Loved ones into responding to your needs then you are breaking the cycle of natural giving by taking the joy out of the process. You are pulling an otherwise Loving relationship into the realm of the ego, where generosity and giving will not flow.

If you are being guilted, shamed, or manipulated into giving then it is not Love; rather, it is ego-based giving. Love is naturally giving. Love is doing everything you possibly can for everyone you care about without even being asked. Love is serving customers without fear of whether you will be paid for your work. Love is being kind to a stranger or offering help to someone who clearly needs it. Love is helping your son, daughter, parents, or sibling in the best way you can. Love is also taking out the trash without even being asked.

Love makes giving possible by showing us that the universe is abundant. When you step outside of your ego, it becomes impossible to believe in scarcity while living in a universe that is so vast. How do you think that this beautiful, expansive universe cannot provide everything you need? If it does not provide, it is only because you are not aligned with its ultimate truth, which humans experience as Love.

To give freely, you also must understand that we are not separate from each other. In Love, there is no separate you and me competing for the same resource. There is only our shared potential for abundance. If we are failing to harvest that abundance, it is because we are wasting our energies bickering and negotiating rather than planting seeds.

You shall reap what you sow. In Love, know that if you plant seeds today, you will reap the rewards in time. In your ego, you fail to plant the seeds and then attempt dirty tricks to get the food you need

when you are hungry. Give of yourself from within the flow of faith, and you will receive nature's abundance.

Ego tells you that, if you give your brother \$1,000, then you are short \$1,000. Yet, if you are unwilling to give your brother \$1,000 when he needs it, and if this is truly what he needs, then you are cutting off the possibility of helping him because you are selfishly not willing to part with your money. What matters is not the money as much as the Love that is manifested in your willingness to help him.

You might come to your brother and say, "I don't have a lot of money, but if you need help this badly I will give you the \$1,000 that I have. Parting with this money will be hard for me, but maybe you need it more than I do and I want to make sure you are all right." You might add, "While I am helping you financially, I would also like to offer my Love and guidance to make sure that you are making progress in all areas and not just paying this one

overdue bill while continuing to avoid the source of the problem.”

You may be surprised to find out that: (1) he may reject your help because he may know that it isn't truly going to help him or (2) you may establish a stronger relationship and one day you will reap the rewards. If done correctly, with a heart and mind centered in Love, your willingness to invest \$1,000 may ensure you a place to live if you ever need one, or a job if he ever goes on to great success. If nothing more, you will have earned his Love and natural giving in whatever form that takes. It would be foolish and impossible to negotiate this upfront. Love has its own space and time. If you feel the need to give, and if you are doing it for the right reasons, then you must take a leap. Go ahead and give in faith.

If you are a parent, you surely Love your children. Don't you give everything you can to them unconditionally? Why would you not give, in the very same way, to everyone you Love? Why cannot

your Love extend to absolutely everyone? Do you Love your children because you share the same DNA? Guess what; all humans share 99% of the same DNA. We are all one, just as you are one with your children.

In Love, you can give wisely with faith that the universe will return your gift. Think about this: would you give to someone who you knew was never going to give anything back? Probably not. If you are a person who is unwilling to give, do you think anyone is going to give to you? Stop and think about this. Your biggest fear, in giving, is that you will not receive anything back. But if you are the kind of person who is unwilling to give, other people probably have the same fear about giving to you. Now, do you see why the pattern of selfishness manifests the very scarcity you fear?

There are people among us who, in frustration, resort to stealing for the simple reason that they want more and are unwilling to give. If they were willing to give of their talents, their hard work, and

their creativity, then we would gladly purchase their products and services. It is only because they are living in their egos and do not understand giving that they see no alternative other than stealing. A great many of the wealthiest people in the world have made their fortunes through large-scale and systematic theft and looting. They may have made a fortune in paper and gold, but you can also believe that their misery is as vast as their wealth.

You already know that there is no true happiness or fulfillment to be found in the ways of the ego, only pain. As cold-hearted thieves plunder the planet and ruin lives for their own benefit, their egos only grow larger until they collapse under the weight of their own misery. Let them relieve you of your wealth if they are sick enough to do so, for you are too alive in your pain-free life of Love to care about their pettiness. You know better than to fight their attacks.

If you want to fight the system, you will end up right back inside your ego. If you start to identify as

the Victim, if you play the Prosecutor and protest so that you might obtain the attention of the Judge, you will find that you have already lost the game because you have forgotten all about Love. You are playing exactly the game they want you to play; a game you will never win because it is already rigged against you.

There will be no justice in this world until you turn away from the ways of the ego. I know that there is injustice in this world. It is everywhere. You are not going to win if you fight it. Stop fighting and start giving. Stop demanding what is yours and start giving what is uniquely yours to give. As radical as this sounds, it is just as true.

Do you know how they swindle you? How they exploit you? How they screw you? How they do anything and everything to rip out your soul just to squeeze out a bit more profit? That only happens because you are playing their game. You are in their freaking casino. You are going to their banks, shopping in their malls, driving their cars, watching

their news and entertainment, listening to their music, and reading their books and magazines. You are doing it all to fit into their system, which they designed for the precise purpose of exploiting you.

How they must get together to laugh their evil laughs through their dirty, cigar-filled lungs and how they must speak their ugly voices from cognac-drenched tongues. It is obvious to them what a sucker you are. You are losing their game; yet, you continue to return to their table believing it is real. Let them win at the grand, ugly, senseless ego game. You can turn your back and walk forward in Love. If you are Love, they will never be able to exploit you again. Yes, you are being screwed, but the way out of this mess is to give.

When I say give, I don't mean only that you should give what little money you have. Forget money. Think bigger. Your gift to the world is far more valuable. The force of giving is found in the act of creating. The ultimate form of giving is creativity. Everything that *is* has been created. The

universe has been created by some supreme force. The Earth and all its nature have been created as a speck of that universe. Beyond that, we humans have also played our role as creators.

When we create in Love, we invent beautiful technologies capable of transporting us around the world and making us more comfortable. We make art that pleases the senses and expands our capacity to Love. Through creativity, we gradually shape a world in which it is possible for me to spend hours at a time, in total comfort in Eastern Europe, writing this on an awe-inspiring device that didn't exist even decades ago.

The people who matter are the ones who create. Creating is the ultimate form of giving. To create is to become God-like and Love is the energy of creation. When you create from ego, you build something meaningless for some short-term profit. You may come up with a scheme to fool people and to rip them off. You may come up with something

so practical that it is unambitious and boring and doesn't sell very well. Screw that, do something big.

Ego-based creation is petty, silly, meaningless, and as quickly forgotten as the profits are spent. But when you create in Love, you give birth to something that advances consciousness, creates new Loving connections, and makes people happier and more fulfilled. By giving to your fellow human beings in this way, you will profit in the ways of Love.

I think of people like Tony Robbins, who is wealthy beyond our dreams only because he has made a commitment to serve others in his well-financed practice of Love. Watch *I am not Your Guru* on Netflix and tell me you don't see Love in his eyes. That isn't ego. That is Love (okay, maybe it is also a tiny bit of ego too, but it doesn't matter because his Love is so great).

Think of Henry Ford. Think of Tesla, Steve Jobs. Think of all the engineers who designed and built that plane that flew you safely last week. Think of

all the brilliant entrepreneurs who built the Internet, all the social media sites. Think of Amy Goodman who has shown up every single day for decades to host the independent Democracy Now! news show. Think of every public figure you know of, Love, and respect. They did what they did and they became who they are because they were willing to give. When you give like this, you are going to get what you need in return—no question. Be Love. Be giving. Be as great as your heroes.

Now, think of the other people—the ones who steal, rob, and take. These people steal because they don't know how to give through creation. The best chance we have at justice is not to protest their wrongdoings, but to reveal to them the ways of Love by giving them your gift. Give them your creative genius and their money will flow toward you. They may be billionaires, spending their days hoarding and trying to protect their fragile empires, but what you can do is far more important and has a greater potential for impact. Create something and sell it to them. Create for them and everyone,

for it is creation that is the source of your abundance.

Even someone like Napoleon, at his peak of power, did not have the wealth and comfort that you probably have today. He may have lived in a palace, but it didn't have air conditioning. He may have owned a thousand horses, but that doesn't compare to modern automobiles. He may have had all the food he wanted, but he didn't have the variety of ethnic food available to us today in every city of the world.

Through creativity, billions of us have a far better lifestyle today than Napoleon did. The advances we have enjoyed are not the product of the ego-based game; they are the product of the human Love and creativity that have arisen despite it. If our selfish "leaders" want more for themselves, then they should offer us more opportunity to create. Rather than sucking us into the black hole of ego, they should set us free from fear and allow us to Love and to create. Through our creativity, we

will deliver new experiences that they cannot imagine.

This is unlikely to happen anytime soon because our leaders do not understand Love. No matter, the universe understands Love and you can begin to walk the path of Love today if you decide to do so. You don't need to ask for permission. You don't need to wait for anyone, and so long as you are free and not in prison, you have nothing to fear because you will not fail. Even if you are in prison, Love anyway. Love will get you out of prison. Love is the truth of the universe. Ego is man's ugly projection of death. Align yourself with truth and ignore the lies, however loud and repetitive they may be.

Be generous with your smile. Be kind to strangers and encouraging to colleagues. Overwhelm your lover or spouse with gestures of caring and generosity. Give more than you take, even in bed. Cook more, clean more, dance more, play more music, light more candles. Tell someone you are thinking about them. Tell them what you

admire about them. Ask if you can help with anything. Thank them. Make something and give it as a gift. Play with your children without being asked. Dance with your children. Get silly. Take them to the park. Start a snowball fight. Tell them you love them as much as you can because it will never be too often. Listen.

In your work, help your colleagues. Make your boss look good. Tell customers and even bosses how much you appreciate them. Do more than you are asked. Give credit. Serve customers without pride or selfishness.

In your life, you can give by writing that book, poem, or song. You can paint that picture, draw, or make your art. Write down your inventions. Share your ideas freely. Get up on that stage. Give that speech. Become an entrepreneur. Lead a tribe. Teach a class. Change an industry. Give everything to create something that makes you feel excited.

Give, but don't give in response to someone who is using ego games on you. By giving on your

own terms, you know that you are giving exactly what the universe wants you to give. You are giving in Love, and you know that you will receive.

Love is Oneness

Hope and fear are both phantoms that arise from thinking of the self. When we don't see the self as self, what do we have to fear?

—Lao Tzu

Happiness built on the notion of a separate self is weak and unreliable.

—Thick Nhat Hnah

For a long time, I struggled with the spiritual concept of oneness. I mean, we are all different people who are obviously walking around with our own minds and in our own bodies. If we are physically separate from each other in an observable way, how can it be said that we are one?

When you believe that something is true, you see it as true, and then it becomes true for you. While a person who is living within the realm of the

ego is separate and cut off from meaningful connection with others, a Loving person is open to becoming one with other people and is aware of our shared connection to one planet that spins around one star in one universe.

The oneness of nature includes things that are connected as well as things that are disconnected. If the cells inside your body were capable of belief, and if they clung to the belief that they were separate from the other cells in your body, what difference would that make? Would that change the fact that they are still part of the oneness that is your body?

If one hypothetical rogue, independent cell was capable of thought and could claim its independence from other cells, doing so would only ensure its own immediate destruction because the cell would no longer serve any useful function.

As a Loving person, I see that I am nothing other than one insignificant cell—a unique, genetic mutation playing my tiny part in this well-

choreographed dance of evolution. Nothing I create is truly new; it is a mutation that was destined to happen and only has happened after I have absorbed what has come before. Then, after I put something out into the world, it connects with the oneness of humanity to become whatever it will become.

We see each other. We touch each other. We work together. We create together. We trade. We entertain. We write for each other, and we read. We sing, and we listen. We raise our children in separate families, and then we encounter each other's children in the same space and time. We are networked and connected in a very real, messy, and yet, beautiful way. We are sharing the same environment, eating from the same sources of food, drinking from the same pools of water, and spinning around on the same rock in space.

If you enjoy the feeling of being separate from me as you watch your favorite show with a glass of wine on your couch in the evening, then good for

you. Enjoy that time alone as something that you, who is indeed connected to the universe, gets to enjoy. Just don't go so far as to believe you are truly separate from the rest of us because, if you were, you would have no access to food, water, oxygen, or even the wine that sustains you. This is the oneness—all of it, even the illusion of separateness is part of the oneness.

We all went through birth in the same way, we all Love in the same way, and we will all die in the same way. You can enjoy your comfort and can make your own decisions about anything you want, but the consequence of those decisions is still bound to reality by life's truths. You may be in control of your thoughts and actions, but never lose sight of the fact that those thoughts and actions are taking place within the oneness.

Your actions affect me, and my actions affect you. When we compete, when I attempt to achieve my success at the expense of yours, then, everyone is attacking each other. Everyone suffers in one area

even when they are winning in another. But by knowing the truth of oneness, Love embraces only that which helps everyone.

The opposite of oneness is separation. When you believe in separation (which isn't real), you put too much faith in your own abilities. You forget that nothing in the universe comes from nothing and nothing returns to nothing. Every fiber of your body has already existed in some form before you were born and it will decay into some other form after you die.

Think of yourself 10, 20, or 30 years younger. Back then, did you play any sport, instrument, or did you learn some unique skill? If you tried to perform that skill today, I bet you wouldn't be as good as you once were at it. But, you would still be able to do it much in the same way that you used to. Now, consider that every single cell in your body dies and replaces itself every seven years. So, if everything about your body is completely new and nothing about you existed back then, how is it

possible that you are still the same person capable of the same skills? How can you have memories and skills from decades ago, even if every part of your body has died and has been replaced in that amount of time?

Now that you have begun to escape your ego, you will find a great deal of mystery within yourself and within the universe. You will become fascinated in documentaries about space. You will look at the stars to ponder the vastness of it all, and then you will consider that the dimensions in size are just as vast in the other direction—toward smallness. Do you still think that everything true is observable? Do you still want to place all your faith in an observable realm, even if science shows that the vastness of reality goes far beyond the realm that is observable to you?

You might ponder the idea that no cell in your body is selfish. They all must die so that your larger organism can live. The only type of cell that is designed to live forever is cancer. Cancer is death.

You should become like a cell or like a drop of water, serving its purpose only when it merges with the larger whole to serve its function.

Oneness is as true in life as it is in death. Know that your soul, your consciousness, your thoughts, your feelings—these things do not merely exist inside your body. Your real significance, your genuine concerns, and your passions extend so far out from your body that they might surely cover the entire world. Your soul is far bigger than your body because it is infinite.

Scientists can look inside your body in search of the exact location of the soul, but they will never find it. You are life, and that means you are Love. If life leaves your body, then your body remains just as it was. But in death, life no longer exists, and the body will begin to decay. Life has gone somewhere else. Wherever it has gone, it cannot have disappeared, and it cannot be separate from the universe. It is impossible for anything to enter or

leave the universe. Within the oneness of reality, what exists can only change form.

Do not fear death because it does not exist. Do not feel that you are alone because you cannot be alone. Do not try to compete with others because the universe is abundant. By attacking others, you are attacking yourself. You are not separate, alone, fearful, or misunderstood (as you may think you are). You are understood, you are oneness, your fears are misplaced, and you are Loved. You are Loved because you are Love. By finding Love within yourself, you know that Love exists everywhere. It is truth, and it is infinite.

You may believe that you are separate because your ego needs you to believe you are separate. This belief in separation has caused you so much pain. It is painful to live in a way that is against truth.

At this moment, I suspect that your pain has begun to ease. If you still do feel some pain, then let go even more until you are Love completely. It is

possible to let go of ego completely—for there is nothing good about it, and it serves no purpose. Nothing that you are afraid of can hurt you; not fear, not guilt, not jealousy, not regret, not the death of a Loved one, and not even your own death. You are part of the oneness, and everything is exactly how it is meant to be. You are Love and Love is truth. Let go of everything untrue and stop resisting. Let the pain float away as you feel yourself merge with the oneness.

There may be people in your life who you feel you are not one with. Let's face it, you may not want to imagine yourself as "one" with everybody. You may question the very idea of oneness because you do not believe you could be one with a person who is so different from you, who holds opinions you detest, and who lives in a way you do not understand. It is enough to remind yourself that what you detest, what you perceive as separate, is only that person's ugly ego.

If other human beings appear ugly, then you are either perceiving that person through your ego, or you are looking at their ego. Look beyond this. See in Love. Now, when you imagine the possibility of that person without an ego, relating to you in Love, you can surely imagine enjoying each other's company over a cup of coffee. We are one with each other, and only ego causes the false perception of separation. Ego causes it, then perceives it, then believes it is true.

When you let go of ego, you will know that everything is one. You are one with all people, one with all of nature, and one with all the universe. Imagine what is possible when we connect with each other in Love.

We have to put ourselves "into the other person's skin" and become one with him if we want to understand and truly love him. When that happens, there is no "self" and no "other."

—Thick Nhat Hnah

Love is Acceptance

Suffering is when we resist the moment.

—Kamal Ravikant

If I love the other person, I feel one with him or her, but with him as he is, not as I need him to be as an object for my use.

—Erich Fromm

One of the ways to know that you have escaped ego is that you are practicing acceptance. To become accepting is not the same thing as to become weak or passive. Ego tells you that you must fight for what you want, that you are too good to accept anything less than the best, and that you must demand respect and accept nothing less. As common as this attitude is, this is a perspective of the ego.

Through Love, it is possible to accept everything that is happening by reminding yourself that it is not an attack on you. Even what may seem like a direct attack on you is not, in truth, an attack on you at all. An attack cannot mean anything about you unless you believe it means something about you. Any insult or attack made by another person is only about that person.

Anthony Robbins tells us, "It's not the events of our lives that shape us, but our beliefs as to what those events mean." You can accept what has happened, you can even Love that it is happening, for the simple reason that it *is* happening. Whatever you believe about something, that is the decision you are making. You can be grateful for the opportunity to respond to a situation in Love or, if you prefer, you can choose not to respond at all. Either way, if you have escaped your ego, you will feel no pain and everything will be all right.

Ego resists. Ego thinks that it is reasonable to express shock and outrage about what is. To resist

what is is to believe that your ego is more real than *what is*. Does refusing to accept something make it not so? Does fighting the truth about *what is* make it somehow not true? Do shock and outrage accomplish anything, or do they merely start a painful ego game?

Now you are practicing Love, which means you cannot possibly assume any of the roles of the ego—Judge, Prosecutor, Jailer, Defendant, Offender, or Victim. If you do find yourself playing any of these roles, stop right away because you are playing a game that isn't going to help you. You have turned your back on Love, and you are not aligned with the truth of your existence.

Love cannot be passive because Love is giving and creative. Therefore, you can accept everything because you have faith and knowledge about the power of Love as a set of actions that will easily melt away any problems. Love accepts what is, then it creates something new to change it. When you accept reality, you allow Love to happen. When you

resist reality, you resist Love by clinging to your ego. This is how you get stuck. To tolerate is not enough, it is only by accepting something and embracing it with all your being that you embody Love and end pain.

Acceptance is a necessary condition for Love. Only by accepting all truth and all lies, all beauty and all tragedy, are we able to live in Love. Much like Love, acceptance starts with acceptance of yourself. Look in the mirror and fully accept that this is your face and your body as it is right now. Accept what you have done in the past. Smile, because not to smile solves nothing.

Accept everything that has happened to you. Accept everything that others have said about you as something meaningless that has naturally happened. Do not accept that everything is accurate or that everything is true; just accept that it has happened. Everything is as it must be because this is the way that it is. Resistance is a painful feeling that serves no purpose. Let it go. Accept it

all, even that unspeakable stuff that has happened long ago. If you still feel resistance, then accept even the resistance (but don't hold on to it).

Let us imagine even the most extreme things that might happen in your life. What if your spouse tells you that she wants to sleep with your best friend? You may not want your spouse to sleep with your best friend, but in a moment, you can easily make the decision to accept the truth that she wants to do so. Whether your spouse or best friend respects your feelings and whether these relationships are right for you is one thing, but something that is true (her feelings) cannot be against you. Do not take it personally.

You can easily accept that the other person is acting wrongly, from ego, and that he or she is making a mistake. But you cannot fight what is. The only thing you can do is to express your feelings, to state your thoughts and ideas, and to do so Lovingly and without expectation, force, or manipulation—without taking control and without ego games.

If you are expressing Love, and if that other person is capable of Love, then the natural giving of Love may change the situation. But if you go crazy, attempt to resist, or start a fight, then the other person will surely do as he or she pleases without any regard for your feelings. You must first accept, then begin to open up and to understand it. If you show Love and understanding, then the person you Love will feel it. The person's natural reaction will be Love toward you, and the situation may resolve itself without any effort. This is the power of Love. You cannot control the outcome, and you cannot be sure what it will be, but Love gives you the best chance for the best outcome.

When you are Love, you understand that you cannot know what is good or bad. Think of something "good" that has happened to you in your life. No matter what it is, you can also think of several "bad" things that resulted from it. Perhaps you got that job you always wanted, but then you ended up with a terrible boss. Likewise, perhaps something "bad" may have happened to you, and

then many “good” things have flowed from it. Perhaps you broke your leg and spent some time in the hospital, where you met a handsome doctor and fell in Love.

If you fail to accept everything that is, you are living in your ego because only ego thinks it knows what is in your best interest. It doesn't. Ego believes only in its own certainty, which shifts and changes like the wind. Ego knows nothing other than confusion. It is funny to watch ego from the higher perspective of Love.

Pain results from forcing something to happen that is simply not going to happen. Resistance is paddling upstream. A great deal of pain is created by trying to force something into your life that isn't going to fit. Acceptance doesn't mean that you should let someone take advantage of you. Acceptance doesn't mean giving your car to your friend just because he asks for it. To the contrary, it is possible to practice acceptance while choosing

not to take part in the ugliness of the other person's demanding ego.

If an arrogant colleague at work is sexually harassing you, you can choose to have a Loving conversation with him. You can explain that you accept and understand how he feels, but that you are not interested in him in that way. You can tell him that there is no problem, that you feel nothing bad about him, but that this just isn't something you want in your life. You can begin to teach him to see women as human beings, with feelings that should be respected. That's the Loving response, and it will melt away the problem if you let your ego get out of the way.

Your Loving response may not work every time because you may not always succeed at melting away the other person's ego. That's all right, practice Love anyway because it is still your best chance. Even if it doesn't work on the other person, what is important is that it is working for you. The ways of Love don't always work, but the ways of

ego will never work. In Love, you cannot go wrong and have nothing to lose. If nothing else, in the end, you are still standing on higher ground, and your existence will be devoid of suffering.

By fighting what is, you are only trying to shield your ego from the pain of attack. Now that you have escaped ego, you know that there is no pain that results from the attack of another person. It isn't personal. It means nothing about you.

Even in tragedy and death, practice acceptance and let go of all resistance. If you have lost your home in a flood, walk away calmly and embrace a new future of possibilities. If you have lost a person you Love to death, know that he or she is still part of the great oneness of the universe and that you will never truly be apart. Who knows, you might even meet again in heaven or in future lives. You don't know because you were not designed to know about these things. Accept even this. Perhaps death—the returning to one's source—is the most beautiful and pleasurable gift. Accept everything

that has happened, is happening, and will happen. But do not be passive. Respond to everything with the full strength of Love.

Love knows that good and bad isn't real; this is only an illusion of ego. What is just is because it is. You can either accept it or you can retreat into the pain of resistance, but resistance has never made something true suddenly become untrue. This may sound passive, but it isn't. Acceptance is a strength because it creates room for the transformative power of Love.

We don't have the right to change anyone else, and no one else has the right to change us. If we are going to change, it is because we want to change, because we don't want to suffer any longer.

—Don Miguel Ruiz

Love is Forgiveness

You who want peace can find it only by complete forgiveness.

—Helen Schucman

It doesn't matter what others did to you, you are going to forgive them because you don't want to feel sick all the time. You will forgive because you feel compassion for yourself.

—Don Miguel Ruiz

Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.

Luke: 6:37

Forgiveness is a topic on which everyone agrees in theory, if not in practice. Forgiveness is a form of

acceptance; yet, it deserves its own chapter.

Forgiveness is the acceptance of a whole person. By saying “I forgive you,” you are saying “I remove the resistance that has been preventing our Love to flow.” It is impossible to know Love if you cannot forgive.

It isn't enough to forgive some of the people some of the time. Forgiveness isn't something that can be negotiated. Apologies help, but sometimes a lifetime of apology is never enough. Forgiveness is something you choose, not something you wait for the other person to give you the ability to do. To forgive at all means to forgive completely. To forgive completely means to forgive everyone for everything he or she has done regardless of any other considerations.

Remember, ego has nothing of value to offer. For it to continue to exist, it needs to claim some sort of advantage over Love. The advantage that ego claims over Love is that it preys on you trying to be reasonable. While Love offers everything, it

requires absolute, crazy, unreasonable faith. If you are unwilling to go all the way toward Love, then you come up short because you have not escaped your ego. Ego still has control over you, and it will continue to make you suffer. Your ego is a dangerous parasite that uses fear and pain to prevent you from fulfilling the purpose of your life. Unless you have placed all your faith in Love, your ego is still in control.

If you are trying to be reasonable, you may have decided that, for example, you believe in Love but you cannot accept the idea of an open relationship. By giving jealousy its power, you have chosen possessiveness over Love. You have chosen fear over faith. You have chosen a false sense of control over acceptance. In this book, I attack sexual jealousy directly because it is essential that you root out all forms of ego. This is the most difficult form, so it deserves a primary focus. If you believe that it is reasonable to demand absolute monogamy from your spouse, then you are saying that it is reasonable to live in the ego. It isn't.

Similarly, if you claim that it is reasonable to forgive one person for the minor offense of swearing at you, but you cannot forgive your father for abusing you, then you have decided that you do not want to escape your ego. You would like to continue to play the ego game, to continue to live in pain and misery, to continue to be less than you can be, and to continue causing misery to yourself and others. Why? Is it pride? Do you think that the act of forgiving makes you somehow less, when in fact, the path toward Love makes you the greatest person you can possibly be?

Love is the most powerful force in the universe. It is so powerful that it makes humans God-like. When we fail to embrace the element of Love, then we are like an apathetic and uncaring God. Understand your power and understand how urgent it is that you become what you are meant to be. You are meant to be Love and, if you surrender yourself to it, then your reward is the fading-away of pain as you enter what Jesus called the “kingdom of heaven.” What we decide to call it makes no

difference. It is the same damn thing. I've entered the kingdom, and it is real. I just call it "being Love" and I hope to meet you there (either in this world or beyond).

You may think that Love is asking too much of you. You may think that it is asking you to be perfect. After all, you are human and should not be expected to be perfect. I agree completely. All of us will invariably make mistakes and will almost certainly slip back into our egos at times. But now you will see it, and you will just as easily slip right back out.

Forgive everyone completely, all the time, and mean it completely. Understand that their actions have nothing to do with you. They have been acting in the ignorance of the ego and do not know better. Maybe you can hate their ego, but you cannot hate them. If you want to destroy that ego, do it through Love. Kill the parasite with Love to save the person. Now that the parasite has gone, you can freely love the person. This is forgiveness.

No matter the offense, you know the same sources of pain that your offender knows. You know what Love is. Somewhere deep inside, your offender must also know it. This person has made a huge mistake and has caused you pain and suffering. Perhaps partly through that pain and suffering, you have come to the point you are at right now—the point of finally seeing what an evil master ego is and finally choosing Love.

When you choose Love, you will show it to everyone, including those who have wronged you. You will Love even them, with no expectation of anything. You will feel nothing about what they do or don't say in response, how they do or don't change, and you will be God-like in your understanding that every person has their own free will. It doesn't matter who is wrong or right, you are Love completely, and so you will forgive completely.

All communication is either a loving response or a cry for help.

—Anthony Robbins

Love is Freedom

Envy, jealousy, ambition, any kind of greed are all passions; love is an action, the practice of human power, which can be practiced only in freedom and never as the result of compulsion.

—Erich Fromm

If you are looking at any of this from an ego-based perspective, you may believe that it is difficult to be giving, to accept oneness, to be accepting, and to forgive everyone. In truth, there is nothing difficult about it.

When you shut down ego, the energy of Love makes all of this as natural and effortless as breathing. The previous sections have focused primarily on how Love requires you to act and to react to the world. The remaining sections are purely about what Love gives you in return.

In Love, you can finally breathe because you are finally free. Take a deep breath right now and let down your shoulders. You no longer need to carry your burdens. Now that you are no longer reacting to ego games, you are free to decide what *you* want to do with your life. If you are sure that you have escaped ego, then you can be just as sure that everything you do is exactly right. If you have a creative or business idea, now is the time to give it a go. If you want to ask someone out on a date, do it. If you want to quit your job to travel the world, then I guess that is what you should do.

In Love, you are free to do whatever excites you and free to ignore whatever makes you feel bad. If you are acting in Love, it doesn't matter what anyone says. All the rules you thought existed, they have been removed because now you are ruled by Love. People may not understand you or agree with your next steps, but those are the very steps that you were meant to take.

Others choose to spend their entire lifetime in pain trying to adhere to the “inevitable” rules that you now have so easily shrugged off. Think about this. Are you really expecting to obtain their agreement? Do you think they are going to support your freedom when they have chosen slavery? No way. Instead, they are going to tell you that you are making a huge mistake. They are defining your life from the perspective of their ego (which sees only what it wants to see and knows nothing in its false certainty).

Love’s reward is that you are free, but be careful with this freedom. If you are acting upon your freedom in Love, that freedom will bring great success and bliss. But if you lose sight of Love, you will end-up as an Offender, back in your ego, and you will face enormous consequence and great pain.

You can do anything you want to if it is done patiently and in Love. Whatever excites you is what you are meant to do. If you see good reasons why

you should wait a while, then wait. If you don't have the money for a trip, then figure out how to patiently earn it first. There is time.

If you do experience your fantasy and find that it no longer interests you, then go do something else. If you feel like doing nothing at all, then do nothing at all. Now you are free. Nothing was ever holding you back but your belief in your ego. Be free.

Be cautious, be smart, do what excites you, but don't forget about everyone you Love or you will lose that Love. Because you now understand Love, I am sure that there will be nothing you want to do that does not accommodate everything you want to give to those who you Love. You will see, in time, how to Love yourself while simultaneously chasing your wildest dreams. Even as you take care of your own needs, you will never lose sight of your calling in Love—to be there for the ones you Love. Nothing in Love is conflicting, and nothing feels like a compromise. In Love, everything you want is in

perfect alignment. Do not let anyone attempt to divide you into pieces.

Whatever you decide, you can finally let go of the burden of trying to figure everything out. Only in the arrogance of the ego do we think there is anything to figure out to begin with. If what the ego figures out is different from Love's truth, then it is wrong. Ego would only align with Truth if it could figure out that Love is truth. But if it did that, ego would serve no purpose, and it would cease to exist.

Ego is never able to stumble upon truth on its own. It needs to be let go of completely for any truth to exist in your life. Now that you have been freed from the burden of trying to figure things out, you can expend that energy on doing what you want to do. That natural *want* inside of you will guide you from this day forward.

Now your wants are no longer desperate, needy, or destructive. In Love, everything you want feels great, but it is also giving. Your new wants are

no longer fearful. They are accepting. Nothing you want is prideful; rather, humble and forgiving. Your deepest want will reveal itself as something you didn't even know was there. It could never have been heard through the conflicting, confused voices of your ego.

Now you can do what you want to do without ever needing to be certain of some calculated result. To think you can figure out the result is to think you can figure anything out, which you can't. In Love, you can only do, act, experience, and create.

Maybe what you want to do is as purposeless as visiting a nude beach. Do it, and as soon as possible. Maybe after five days of enjoying your naked body in the sun, you will come back with the most brilliant business idea of your life and then act on that. I wrote my best album mostly on a nude beach. I didn't plan it exactly that way. Maybe you'll stay there for 50 days, or maybe you won't even want to drop your shorts at all! Don't over-think it

and don't plan it. Don't expect anything. Set no goals. Just go.

Now that you have aligned with Love, know that Love isn't going to send you off-course because the only off-course that exists is the loss of your faith in Love. If you need to explain something to your husband that he will reject, explain it in Love and do so again and again—but do not let him take away your freedom to do what you need to do. Your life is your creation. No one has a right to tell anyone what they can and can't do with it. He is free to state his feelings and, after you have felt his truth and considered his feelings fully, you will make the right decision about your life with no shame or guilt. Give him the same freedom.

Whatever you do, it is essential to show Love during each step. He may attack you. He may question you. He may try to shame you. Show Love anyway and do what you need to do anyway. You are not rebelling or acting out, you are only existing,

and you have every right to exist regardless of anyone's feelings.

If you need to move out to create a space of peace and quiet, then this is what you need to do. If he cannot accept who you are and if he does not value and respect your Love, this should not take you off your course of Love. Move forward and see what happens. To practice Love is to play the long game. Have the courage to be Love because anyone who Loves you will come around. Show some faith and show some leadership.

To exercise your freedom is to let go of your attachments. This is the hardest thing to do because it requires so much faith. It is true that, by exercising your freedom to Love, you may lose a job, you may even lose a lover, friend, or a spouse. But if you understand Love, you know that no attachment could possibly be considered more important than it is.

At this point, you know that it is not all right for you to be imprisoned within the painful framework

of your ego. Forget about that sense of respect for “what you must do” or who you must obey. The thing about escaping your ego and choosing Love is that you will never get anyone’s permission. They will fight you and they will kick and scream every step of the way. Do it anyway.

Then, when all is said and done, they will see that you haven’t gone anywhere. They will finally truly see you, and may even like you more than before. They will start to become intrigued by what you are doing. They will move in the direction of Love along with you. They, too, will feel free to do what they’ve always wanted to do but have lacked the courage to do. They will feel even more secure in your Love for them. They will understand that there is no need to trap you or to trick you. They will be shocked to find out that what they thought would hurt, doesn’t hurt.

Have strength and have courage. You know that you are right; rather, you know that Love is right. Have the guts to lead. Start talking about this stuff

openly. Start living it even before you get permission. Do what excites you because, in the end, it is going to work out perfectly. If it isn't perfect yet, then it isn't the end yet. Keep going.

There is also a chance that you might lose someone. In Love, I may have lost my wife. That story isn't finished yet, and I'm playing the long game. As it stands, she has been unwilling to forgive, unwilling to accept, and if we spend any amount of time in the same space, then her ego will invariably and relentlessly attack. I try to be Loving in my response, which she takes as insensitive to her feelings. In fact, I am only trying to avoid the old ego game, which would bring back those senseless feelings of shame and guilt.

I am fully committed to my Girlfriend. I also Love my wife. That doesn't mean that I would ever agree to turn my back on Love so that I can pay my penitence in Jail for having been an Offender who has left her a Victim. No matter, everyone is treating me fairly. I think that my wife is beginning

to see that I am a better person than I used to be. She is beginning to understand that the damage I originally caused is the damage that was done by my ego as an Offender. I have changed now because I have chosen Love. She will see it, or not. This is beyond my control.

If the story were different and if I was still living in my ego, by now she would probably have nothing to do with me. I wish that I had chosen Love long before committing those crimes of the ego. She might have been able to come along with me if everything had been done in Love from the beginning. Don't make the mistake of trying to fulfill your needs within the realm of your ego. Trust Love, or you will end up with the painful consequences of ego.

As for my daughter, our relationship has never been better. Despite the struggle, she has faced with her parent's recent separation, she and I have bonded in a way that we otherwise never could have done. Young children know Love better than

any of us could hope to. What a gift it has been to connect with her in Love before she begins to face society's great ego-based indoctrination and domestication process. I hope that this Loving bond we have created is strong enough that it fills her entire life with its truth. Right now, our relationship is strong, and I am grateful every day for this. I know that, no matter what challenges we go through in our relationship as father and daughter, if I am acting purely in Love then it will be okay.

I might mess up by saying or doing something I shouldn't have, but then just as quickly Love corrects me. I apologize, and my daughter's light heart so easily forgives. This is how it is supposed to work. If you have children or ever plan to, I sincerely hope that you experience the purity of this kind of Love with your children. More importantly, I wish this for your children. This ego-based world is hard enough. They need something different from you. Look into their eyes, and you will know that they need Love. Give Love, only Love, and don't doubt this.

In my relationship with Her, my wonderful girlfriend, I have found everything a man could possibly desire. Every possible need that a man might have is being met in this relationship; yet, I don't remember asking her for a single thing. I don't ask for her sacrifice, for her time, for her to cook, clean, or to perform any sexual favor. I have never made her promise that I would be the only one or that we would be together forever. Yet, she has given everything I could possibly want—beyond what any man might possibly hope for or dream of. In a thousand years, I could never have negotiated this if I were trying to negotiate it. She offers me complete Love and complete freedom at the same time. What most people believe are in direct opposition are, in fact, the same thing.

As you might have noticed, I am far from perfect. Sometimes, I am too forceful in my ideas. Lately, I've been talking about Love and ego a bit too much. In the endless sea of conversation, any couple might sometimes say things that aren't quite right and need to be corrected. But I think She likes

the way that I set her free, the way I perceive her feelings and needs, the way I cook and clean and give everything I possibly can to her without it ever being expected, the way I ask her how she is feeling and do what she wants to do as often as I possibly can. If we ever disagree, it is only about who is going to do what for whom. It's like this, "I want to watch your movie. No, I want to watch your movie!"

We also have our bad days, when we sit on the couch and have nothing interesting to say...when one of us didn't get enough sleep or maybe drinks too much (referring to myself here). Even on one of those days, we avoid taking it out on each other. We understand that it is okay. Everything is all right. You are free; I am free. We don't know what we're going to do or what we will be. We don't try to figure out whether this will last forever. None of those details matter because we have Love and that Love is perfect and free. Love will answer any questions we have, in time. I wish everyone could

experience Love like this and then manage not to screw it up by turning it into that lower-case love.

Through Love, I am free, and everyone in my life is free to be what we want to be and do what we want to do. My wife, by her choice, now lives alone and often travels alone. I don't know what she is doing, where, or with whom. She is free to tell me about it if she wants, but if not, that's perfectly all right. In work, she is free to try her own projects or to take on new clients. I, too, negotiate my own business deals and test various strategies. I write books that are perhaps too honest, record any song that I want, and I am never limited by anyone who I Love.

My Girlfriend currently has a job. She also knows that she is free to go off on her own, possibly to pursue her paper art (check out this amazing book cover) or do whatever else she wants to do. She never asks for me to pay for anything, to buy her anything, and she never concerns herself with my business unless I feel like talking about my

business. In freedom, I am sure that everyone in my life is on the path toward success—the topic of the next chapter.

Love is Success

This is about a new phase in history where art, science, business, and spirit will join together, both internally and externally, in the pursuit of true wealth.

—James Altucher

There are no idle thoughts. All thinking produces form at some level.

—Helen Schucman

If you still believe that ego has something interesting to offer, you might think it is a success. You might think that choosing Love over ego is a choice between either fulfillment, on the one hand, or success, on the other. Nothing could be further from the truth because Love does not require the sacrifice of anything valuable. You have been taught in the ways of the ego for your entire life. You have

been made to believe that it is necessary to adopt the ways of the ego because its ways are the path toward success and prosperity. I will peel back some assumptions to show you that this is untrue.

It would be wrong and deceptive to suggest that it is *impossible* to become successful through the ways of the ego. After all, the world has grown accustomed to the ways of the ego. Even if an ego-driven person might embarrass himself from time to time, he may also become skilled enough in using ego to achieve wealth or fame.

Success in the ego game depends upon how you are exploited and how effectively you exploit others. In the grand ego game, all of us are located somewhere on the exploitation spectrum. There are some who are exploiting us (above us) and some who we exploit (below us). The further you move up on the spectrum (i.e. the less you are exploited and the more you exploit), then the more successful you are in the ego game.

In this grand ego game (i.e., the economy), other egos find a way to manipulate you so that you serve them. Through an elaborate system of reward and punishment, they will teach you to insincerely smile at the customer, to pretend, and to do exactly as you are trained—not as a free human but as a subservient ego-slave living in fear. If you do this well, you keep your job, and you might even earn a bit more income.

The egos above you may respect your ego's unquestioning dedication to its own self-preservation. The corporate ego, which oversees hiring, may appreciate your ambition to have earned that degree and to have worked for so many years. Congratulations, you have prepared yourself to become trapped in that new life that they are prepared to offer you (which they hope you will accept, from an assumed position of fear).

If you are extraordinarily good at obeying the ways of the ego, then your ego may succeed by unnaturally humbling itself. If you have few skills,

little financial capital, and no other options, then you are destined to become an ego-slave for life if you do not choose Love.

On the other hand, if you have certain important advantages in the grand ego game—such as powerful family connections, wealth, a superior education—then you can achieve success by exploiting others. Congratulations, you are higher up on the spectrum. Now, it is you who must perpetuate the ego game if you are going to, indeed, maintain the status or economic success you desire. Your concern is not whether your life has meaning. You are not concerned with creating anything of value or giving anything back. If you are in this advantaged position, then you are primarily concerned with maintaining that privileged position for yourself and for your family.

If you believe in ego, and you consider your place on the ego spectrum as real, then you are like an actor who is paid to perform a part in a play—a play that means nothing. You believe that your

character is real to the extent that you have forgotten what you are—which is Love. Your character role begins from the moment you wake up, and it doesn't end all day unless you are perhaps so intoxicated that you step out of character. If you live in a socially privileged position of obedience to the grand ego game, then you must learn not to feel and not to think.

If you believe the ego game is real, then you must resist your humanity at each moment. If you succeed at this game of make believe, then you believe that you will have nothing to worry about. You are earning a living, after all. You can have the house you always wanted. You can give your family what you think they need. Who cares if you pop a few pills to make it through another day? That is just the price you pay, right? What choice do you have?

Once again, imagine this grand ego game (i.e., the economy and all its laws and institutions) as a board game. Maybe you have played the classic

game called Monopoly. Let's imagine we are all at the same party, and we are all expected to play Monopoly. The difference between us is that some of us know it is just a game (that it isn't real) and others believe that it is real (that the game is truth and that what happens in the game means everything).

Whether you believe the game is real or not makes no difference with respect to your chances of winning. The difference is that, the people who know that it is a game have much more fun. They don't stress out through the ups and downs of the game. They may even choose to play another game or to create a new game board. To believe in ego is to believe that the game is real. To live in Love is to know that you are playing with toy money, going around an imaginary board and that you can stop the game and do something else at any time you choose. This perspective makes life a lot more fun.

If you have a job today, then imagine yourself in that factory or in that office. Now, imagine yourself

standing up and slowly walking out the door. Imagine that you no longer feel any struggle or resistance, that your heartbeat doesn't increase even slightly as you take each bold step in your own direction. Now, imagine that you look back and see your colleagues from a distance. Observe how meaningless the work is. It is meaningless, isn't it? You know that it is a silly game, right?

Think of your colleagues. Feel the weight of their worries, the stories they tell themselves to justify another day without freedom. As you walk through the parking lot, look at the cars that they believe are worth the price of being trapped in debt. Think of the pills they probably take to numb the pain, the stories they tell themselves to make this seem all right. They will never be all right if they believe that any of it is real.

Your boss is just the same. His boss is also the same. Three or four levels up from that, the guy who grew up rich—as a member of the board, he sees himself in some sort of privileged position to

exploit you purely for the interests of the shareholders. Think of the shareholder, who tries not to think about what their money is doing to you.

Now, imagine yourself walking through the streets of your town, perhaps through the wasteland of rundown factories and buildings that no longer serve a meaningful purpose. Look at the shopkeeper who is worried about the price of her next order of inventory and her increased rent next month. See the college student, oblivious and unaware. Think of your children, who right now are in school and missing you as they have no idea why they are being forced to learn whatever nonsense they are supposed to be learning.

Now, imagine that you walk up some hill and look down on your town or city. Look at the cars and the people rushing around to get nowhere, thinking that whatever they are trying to do means something when it doesn't. Now, look up at the sky. Think of the vastness of this planet, the wind, the

birds. Close your eyes and try to imagine the faraway rocky coasts you dream to explore. Think of the ancient world and all the “important” rulers whose names have been either remembered or forgotten.

Think of the entirety of the universe. Life must surely exist out there in some other realm. Imagine, as far away as the edge of the universe is, there is also an invisible smallness in each drop of water that scales as vastly in the other direction. From this perspective, do you still think that everything you thought was true when you woke up this morning is true? Do you think that reality is only that which is observable to your eyes? If so, what is so special about your eyes? Do you think that your lifestyle and situation is inevitable? Can you still manage to take anything seriously, even when you realize that in a few years your company will no longer exist and in a few decades your entire way of life will have been forgotten?

Love provides perspective beyond what you might think is real. But Love isn't arrogant enough to ask you to ignore the game. Love embraces the game and helps you have fun with it. Love starts now, where you are. Love embraces your current reality and makes things better with each new day.

Now, for lack of any other options currently available to you, imagine yourself walking back into that office or factory. You are calm, and you smile at everyone you pass. Once again, you are thinking about how they struggle to pay off that debt, how they feel pain so deep that they swallow those pills. Now, you are fully aware. You know exactly why they repeat those ridiculous stories just to survive in a realm that is inhospitable.

Glance into the eyes of your colleague; listen to the fear in your boss's voice. Connect with them on a deeper level, if only in your mind. Understand that their attacks are not against you. Like you, they are also beautiful people who are in pain. Accept it all. Embrace it all. Accept that you have chosen to be

there, if only for this moment on this day. You could still be on top of the hill, but you chose to walk back into it because this is the game you have decided to play today. Now, how do you react to what goes on around you?

Now, you will probably do more than what is expected of you. You will probably try to solve problems before you complain about them. You will probably understand that your colleague's annoying comments are only an expression of his loneliness and his need to connect. You will wonder what they think about, what they read, who they love, and what they might one day become. The hate and frustration you once felt for other human beings is fading away. Now, everything is all right.

The phone rings. Perhaps for the first time, you talk with the customer as though she, too, is a human being who is in pain. Her complaints are not so much about your product as about her lifetime of disappointment. You make her feel, if only for one moment, that someone understands her. You fix

the problem in a way that no one has expected. It feels good, effortless. You feel satisfied and smile. You are at work, and yet you smile?

Your boss notices your positive attitude. She is already checked out from this company, working in the evenings on her own thing. You heard rumors that the whole company is about to be acquired. Your boss has started her own company—in fact, she has already been building it for years. She is looking for someone who she can trust, someone with the right attitude. She discreetly calls you into her office and offers you a new job—with a pay raise and the opportunity to work from home. Your life just got better. You accept this generous offer without fear. You call your friends. You celebrate tonight. You enter an unknown future with faith that Love will provide. Yes, act in Love and good things will happen.

Even if you are starting from a position of desperation, your best move is a Loving move. Love does not ask you to suffer. Love does not punish

you for your faith in it. You will not fear anything now because now you know that the universe is not scarce. You are taking your first steps on the path toward complete freedom, and you will smother all the people along the way with Love.

Love is good business. You don't just play the game as well as before, but better. Now, you have an advantage. Love has provided you with strategies of which others are unaware. Good business is giving and being generous with customers, partners, and employees.

As I began to put my faith in Love, it became clear to me that my ego had been holding me back for a long time. Until then, I had a hard time trusting my customers. I worried whether they would pay, so I demanded payments upfront. While this seemed reasonable to my ego, now, I wonder how I could expect them to trust me when I wasn't allowing myself to trust them. Silly.

Nothing builds trust like being trusting. If you want to establish a profitable, long-term business

relationship with someone, then serve them and trust them fully. Let go of your need for control. You have none. Show your customers Love and they will Love you back. Don't try to negotiate what you want to get unless you are first willing to give. Just give, and don't hold back. Be thoughtful, generous, and caring. This not only generates repeat business but also word-of-mouth.

If you fail to trust new people, you will be stuck exactly where you are. It is only through trust that a new relationship can start and a new game can begin for you. Trusting a new person is like rolling the dice at the very start of a new board game. You don't know whether you will win at this game, but there is no way to find out unless you roll the dice. Trust removes barriers to your success because it gets you into more games. The more games you play, the greater your chances of winning.

Good business is also accepting. A successful entrepreneur must be willing to unemotionally embrace the truth. Is there really demand in the

marketplace for your products? Are your prices too high? Have you been profitable with the current strategy? Are you looking at the numbers, or does it cause you so much pain that you don't want to deal with it? Are you investing in the future, or are you clinging to your capital as your business falls apart? Fear and denial is no way to run a business.

If you are living in your ego and think the game is real, then you probably would experience a great deal of fear and emotional agony with these types of questions. If you believe in scarcity and that the competitive marketplace is real, you will try so hard to keep playing even if you have a losing hand. You don't see the vastness of your other options. However, by trusting in Love, you can easily walk away and start another game. You know that the outcome of each individual game isn't real, you are not attached, and conducting business becomes a lot more fun.

Schools aren't very good at teaching entrepreneurship or leadership. Schools are good

for teaching the ways of the ego, but they completely fail in teaching the ways of Love. Only Love will prepare you for true, sustainable, long-term success.

By the way, what is true success? Is it measured only in wealth and fame? No. Love's definition of true success embraces all areas of life. In Love, you will always have enough money so that you have everything you need and can do everything you want to do. You will also have success in your relationships. You will have success in that your life is balanced. You will have control over your own time. You will have time to pursue your passions. You will have time to read, to play, to exercise, and to do absolutely everything you want to do. This is success. This is prosperity beyond what even the most successful corporate vice president knows.

My uncle is a successful heart surgeon. He is brilliant. He is rich. He has a house on the water, boats, and all the toys that he wants. He also works too hard, and he basically hates his job. I recently

had dinner with him, and we got to talking about my life. I told him that I work just a few hours per week and it is enough to pay the bills, to allow some travel, that basically it is more than enough to afford the lifestyle I want and to save quite a bit of money.

I told him about my band and my writing. I talked with him about the places I have traveled, about meditation, and about the books I read. What I saw in his eyes was doubt about his life path. He is rich and successful by all of society's measures; yet, in many areas of his life, he is poor. He is not free in his work, in his time, or in his marriage. This is not true success.

His money only buys status (which is only concerned with what other people think and has no value) and toys (which he has little time to use anyway). I deeply admire him for the life-saving work he does as a heart surgeon. I am sure he has saved hundreds of lives and will go on to save hundreds more. But I sincerely wish there was a

way for him to continue his work while also achieving the success he desires in all areas of life.

Can it really be true that ego undermines success in business? Don't you need to be competitive and ruthless? No, why would you think that? If you make your customers feel Loved, who can compete with that? If you are generous in your attention, they will have no reason to switch vendors. If you faithfully invest in the future of your company, will your short-term focused competitor stand a chance in the long-run? If you are consistently more creative and innovative than your competition, then you will have no competition.

Love wins fair-and-square even without competing. Love effortlessly raises you to a standard of excellence that cannot be attained through whatever discipline ego can muster. Love removes pride and makes you more likable. Love creates superior products and services from a position of generosity rather than ambition. Love gives you the courage and flexibility to try new

things and to walk away from things that aren't working. Love is the ultimate competitive advantage.

Love also makes better art. Art created with the ego's perspective of ambition and fear of failure is safe, often rushed, and usually mediocre. Art inspired from the ego's pride is shallow and meaningless, safe in its calculated appeal to an imaginary audience. Fear kills expression and suppresses creativity. Ambition is a form of expectation, which inevitably leads to failure and frustration. An ambitious artist is one who plays it safe, attempts to appeal to a large audience, and then quits when reality fails to meet expectations.

Art created with Love is unique, brave, and meaningful. It is a playful expression of truth. It feels light, approachable, and makes people feel good. An artist creating in Love has no ambition and is in no rush. She can master any skill, in its own time, because she knows that there is no goal or finish line to sprint toward.

An artist creating in Love proceeds without doubts and without stress—even when he has no idea what the next step will be. As I write this book, I have no idea what sentence will follow this. In Love, I feel free to let it flow. In my ego, I would overthink, overcalculate, try to be cleverer than I am; yet, I would avoid risks. That would be silly. To be clever is to take risks. Art created with Love feels more authentic, more inspiring, more unique, better. Art is play. When ego attempts to play, it comes off as ugly, inauthentic, and forced.

Finally, before you can succeed at anything, you must master your skills. Mastery requires learning. No one can learn under the stress of the ego. As Helen Schucman puts it, “It is impossible to learn anything consistently in a state of panic.”

Let go of your ego to become more successful. It serves no purpose, even in your work and in your art. Love is truth, and its truth is large enough to embrace all the knowledge you will need to

possess, all the skills you will need to master, and all the strategies you will need to employ.

Love is not so fragile that it cannot enter the realm of the ego and win, even there. Love allows you to enter the doors of any institution, any corporation, or any venue as a *master*. Love understands ego and can work with it, but ego does not understand Love and cannot manipulate it. Now *this* is a competitive advantage. If you want to become more successful, practice Love anywhere and everywhere.

Love is Eternal

Nothing ever disappears in the universe, only changes form.

—Anthony Robbins

We're not human beings that have occasional spiritual experiences. We're spiritual beings that have occasional human experiences.

—Deepak Chopra

To operate from ego is to build castles in the sand. Love, on the other hand, is eternal.

Ego is the force of death; sucking inspiration from a room, demotivating the hopeful, stealing from the world only to gratify itself, hoarding all that it can until it ultimately collapses in its spectacular errors and is forgotten. Ego is a black hole, sucking up light and turning it into

nothingness. In all its noisy pain and struggle, ego remains hollow and empty. Ego sucks.

Love is the force of life. While ego seduces and moves on, Love brings people together. Love inspires people to have children and then to spend their days doing what is best for those children. Love is a gentle hand that lifts up those in need, feeds the hungry, and nurses the sick. Love naturally gives so that life may thrive.

Love not only creates and nurtures life, but it also creates and nurtures everything good that life does. Love is the source of new ideas that change the world. Love produces beautiful new songs, new books, and new films that will live forever in our hearts and minds. Love leads enduring movements of social justice, equality, and fairness. Love is truth and beauty. That which is created in Love goes on to live forever because it changes lives for the better. Love is eternal because it inspires, it heals, it fixes. Love is the invisible force that makes it possible for life to do what life does best.

If you act in Love, you will never die. You are Love's energy. As you spend your life spreading that energy, you are spreading your unique soul, your essence. You are expanding your being until you are immortal. You are immortal because your Love, your creations, your essence goes on to live within the soul of others. Those people pass that Love to still others, and in this way, your soul continues to expand and will never die.

In this life, we will never know exactly what happens after death. But, if you are Love, and if you live in a way that makes it possible for the truth of your Love to touch others, then, in a very real way, you are immortal. Whether your name will be remembered or forgotten doesn't matter because you can know that your best contributions to life will be remembered. Your best contributions are your best self. Your best self is the unique way that you Love, which is a response to your unique circumstances. Love is universal, but the way *you* Love is unique. The universe needs your Love

because it needs you to deal with the unique challenges that only you can address.

Many ambitious people have attempted to become immortal through the ways of the ego. They may have conquered and killed only so that they might erect their own statues in stone. Even as their statues may still stand, they have already been forgotten. How embarrassing! To win a war, to build a monument, or to rule over a country means nothing if you have not acted in Love. That which is done of the ego is meaningless and has no true value to anyone. Therefore, despite your ambition, ego-based actions will be forgotten in time. Immortality cannot be accomplished through the ego. It is a fool's errand.

Every family speaks mainly of those deceased relatives who have given Love. We read the books and listen to the music that was created in Love. We celebrate nations that have permitted freedom because that freedom has created the possibility of Love. We celebrate justice and liberty because

those are the ways of Love. There is a dark side to history (ego), and then there is the bright side (Love).

Love conquers all, and it is eternal. In Love, you have nothing to fear because you will never die.

If you are not afraid of dying, there is nothing you cannot achieve.

—Lao Tzu

Living in Love

Without love, humanity could not exist for a day.

—Erich Fromm

This book, written entirely in the voice of Love, has already changed you more than you know. Like me, you have probably spent a lifetime unaware of so many of these simple, yet most fundamental truths. Now you have been given a new lens through which you will begin to view yourself and the world around you. You will see that what you thought was real is not real. There is something more.

I have called “Love” what others have called “God,” but once again please don’t confuse this with any religion. Any religion that sets rules is a religion of the ego. Any religion that allows its members to judge others is the religion of the ego. Any religion that coerces you to give to it is a religion of the ego. Any religion that wants you to

believe that God is up there somewhere and not right inside of you is a religion of the ego.

Avoid all such religions. Quoting Kevin FitzMaurice, “Spiritual pride is the most dangerous of all, because those who have it are doing some good that they can hide behind forever.” You have Love and Love is the highest form of truth. My wish for you is simply that you will now begin to choose Love over ego.

Now, you will easily recognize the prideful Judge in action. You will remember that each time ego judges, it judges incorrectly because ego does not know truth, only confusion. You will recognize every situation in which you are confronted with a Prosecutor. Know that you are being drawn into an ego game, which invariably takes you away from Love.

Now, whenever you are oppressed by the Jailer and his attempt to restrict you, shame you, or make you feel guilty—you will know that you have Love’s

acceptance and that none of those negative emotions are real.

Each time you come across a Victim, you will do what you can to save that Victim with the message of Love and forgiveness. And if you ever find yourself in the insensitive, pleasure-seeking role of the Offender, you will ask yourself whether you are acting in Love or whether you are, instead, merely trying to gratify the ego.

The consistent expression of love tends to be able to melt almost any negative emotions it comes in contact with.

—Anthony Robbins

Love wants you to know the lightness and bliss of living outside the boundaries of the ego. In Love, you will indeed feel no pain. As you have already noticed, negative emotions will have vanished from your being like heavy clouds that have lifted to reveal the sunshine. Without any effort, your soul will shine into the world as a life-giving source that will never die.

Even your physical pain will fade because illness is of the ego. A sick body is the result of a sick mind. A sick mind produces fear and anxiety, which stresses the body and destroys the immune system. A sick mind is also willing to poison the body with garbage food, drugs, and too much alcohol. A sick mind attacks others, which causes stress and violence in your life. Ego provides endless sources of sickness and pain. A healthy mind aligned with Love produces only feelings of pleasure, well-being, and other positive emotions such as curiosity, excitement, and empathy. Love is the universal source of life, and you are free to connect with it at any time. You can practice Love alone or with others. In the next chapter, I will tell you about how to join the Belove Tribe.

The Belove Tribe

Thoughts increase by being given away. The more who believe in them, the stronger they become. Nothing real can be increased except by sharing.

—Helen Schucman

I would like to invite you to join our global tribe based on Love. Love lifts us up as individuals, but imagine what happens when we actively connect with each other, help each other, and create things together in Love. The Belove Tribe is the place where you can go to form new relationships. You can start new businesses or creative partnerships with others, like you, who have escaped ego and who are following the principles of Love.

This Belove Tribe is my greatest passion and my life's work. The purpose of this community is not for me to connect with an audience or to build followers; rather, for you to connect directly with other beautiful, wonderful, good people who are

aligned with Love's truth. The Belove Tribe is social media that facilitates safe, person-to-person connections that will change your life. This is a warm, accepting, Loving place where you can hopefully begin to practice this new way of existing starting today.

If you are creating art or music, for example, we will try our best to connect you with a community who will embrace your art. Think of this community as a pact. We will do our best to be Loving people who will support each other and guide each other. Come without fear, be free to write about your life, your relationships, your pain, your struggles. Tell us about your passions, dreams, successes, and failures. Let's listen to each other, build trust, and ultimately let's do things together in the world. Let's create. Let's form partnerships and start profitable ventures. Let's travel together. Let's meet each other through local meetups, book clubs, and discussion groups. Let's start living!

Please email me at mark@belovetribe.com and will tell you exactly how you can join this community. If you are committed to escaping your ego, ending your pain, and living in Love, then you don't need to do any of this alone. Let's open ourselves to each other. Become part of a global community of beautiful people who are living outside of their egos.

I am doing my best to lead this movement, but this has very little to do with me. After all, I am only following Love and Love is our leader. Love has awakened me. My pain has vanished. My ego has been destroyed, and it is a beautiful thing. I have embraced Love's energy and have offered my full faith in it so that I will never slip back into the empty, foolish, flawed, painful, harmful ways of the ego.

In Love, I know that I cannot judge. We, as a community, cannot judge any other human being as being too egocentric. We must remind ourselves how we were before we discovered this faith in

Love. Even on my best day, I know that I am still far from perfect. Let's just do our best and, when that fails, let's practice forgiveness.

This is not a war against ego. No matter what we believe, ego will persist in a world that is intentionally designed to perpetuate it. We will always encounter ego in our governments, our militaries, our corporations, and in our schools. We will recognize it in strangers, in family members, and in loved ones. We will not fight ego because Love never attacks and it never fights. Nothing is preventing you from Loving, and so there are no enemies to eliminate. Let our thoughts, actions, and words be positive, uplifting, and creative.

If I ever make the mistake of holding myself above anyone, then I am a snob, and this is of the ego. If I judge others for their ways of the ego, then I am a Judge and this is of the ego. If I see myself as a Victim to the grand ego game, then my identity as a Victim who is oppressed by some Offender is also of the ego. If I should ever wander back into the

ways of the ego, then I am wandering back into a world filled with pain, struggle, and confusion. I also know that it may not be easy to stay on Love's course. If I fail, please forgive me. I will do the same for you.

May your faith in Love provide you with the strength to stop caring about the opinions of others. May you give without any consideration of receiving. May you fully accept even that which seems to be not in your best interests. May you choose freedom even when it feels like your life is falling apart. May you feel Love even when you are alone and by yourself.

Love is truth. Anything that is not Love is a lie. Love is strong enough to carry you through this life and into eternity. Love is all you need, but it is far more powerful and infinitely more beautiful and blissful if it is shared. Share your Love like crazy. Start by sharing it with the people who you Love most. At the same time, let's connect on a larger

scale so that humanity can finally begin to connect with its source, its truth. Be Love.

Please write me at mark@belovetribe.com to receive an immediate auto-response with instructions about how to join the Belove Tribe. Please share this book with others who are in pain or suffering. You are also encouraged to share your thoughts and feelings with me about what this book has meant for you. I will try my best to respond. No pressure. No expectations. No matter what, I Love you and accept you completely.