

LEVEL: SECONDARY 1

Learning Period: 1 Hour

Learning Goals: Students will be able to

- Link the search for meaning to love —to loving relationships and actions
- Reflect on ways of living that give a purpose to everyday life

Big Idea: The Human Person is meant to LOVE

Core Values: Responsibility, Respect and Integrity

CCE Learning Outcome: Develop self-awareness and self-management skills to achieve personal well-being and effectiveness.

Demonstrate the ability to reflect on and respond to community, national and global issues, and to make informed and responsible decisions as a citizen.

SEL Competencies: Self-awareness, Self-management and Social-awareness

Materials/ Media: Activity sheets, sample sheets

CONTEXT:

Adolescence is a time of searching for self, for some form of identity and meaning of life. It is a time of struggle to find the meaning of self. Having a meaning or purpose in life can alleviate the identity crisis that a person normally faces during this period (Erikson, 1968).

Various school activities and programmes are run to help students understand themselves and their place within society. As a teacher, you may have experienced their hunger and passion to grow and learn more!

This may be a good opportunity for them to discover the vocation of love that is inscribed in every man and woman. Love, is innate in every human person; is a fundamental principle of human life. Without love, nothing else matters. Love is not words, but actions based on truth.

The students' actual and specific situations vary from class to class. The context, therefore, changes and can be made more focused with a particular group of students.

You may want to consider your students concept of loving as translated in the way they interact with one another (among classmates and friends in school, with teachers, family, or other school personnel.) What is the scope of this love?

LEARNING EXPERIENCE:

I. Tuning-in:

Option 1: Share your thoughts (*Activity sheet 1, p. 16*)
Instruction: Ask the students to choose a phrase or saying about LOVE. Invite them to share their thoughts with the class.

There is no right or wrong answers. Let them be free to share their thoughts with the whole class.

Option 2: Loving Others (*Activity sheet 2, p. 17*)
Instruction: Invite the class to be quiet. Tell them that you are going to read a very short story followed by a complete silence of 30 sec. Repeating this process would help the students prepare better for the lesson ahead.

[Introduce the idea of “man’s purpose in life” or of love as a reality given to every human being; of love as inherent in every human person and as fundamental in living life fully. You may also want to give an overview of what you hope to achieve as a class in the next hour.]

II. Learning Activity:

Option 1: House for the People (*Activity sheet 3, p. 18-19*)
Instruction: Invite the students to read the inspiring story of Fr Jorge Anzorena silently. “Jorge is Spanish for George and is pronounced ‘Hor-gay.’ After reading, engage them in a discussion about the material. Link the discussion to the questions below:

Guide Questions:

1. What is your opinion about Jorge?
2. What do you think of his decision to help the poor build houses instead of just working as a professor in the university?
3. How would you explain the meaning of love for Jorge?
4. If you were Jorge, what else would you do to show love?
5. “The human person is meant to LOVE,” would you agree with this statement?

Option 2: The Path of Love (*Activity sheet 4, p. 20*)
Instruction: Invite the students to read the inspiring story of Mother Teresa silently. After reading, engage them in a free discussion about the material. Link the discussion to the questions below:

Guide Questions:

1. What do you think of Mother Teresa and her works?
2. How would you explain the meaning of love for Mother Teresa?
3. Given an opportunity, how would you share your love with the poor —disabled, aged, hungry and the sick?
4. “We need to love without getting tired,” what do these words of Mother Teresa mean to you?

It is hoped that students will be able to realize through either of the stories that a person's purpose in life is made possible in love. This love is best understood in our actions or the way we live our lives with others.

That our nature as human beings calls us to love for it is only in love that we grow to become who we really are.

Take note of the students' answers to the questions. Pay attention to their interpretation of the story; of their understanding of love as translated in the story; of how they love others in relation to themselves.

With the students responses, lead them to a deeper understanding of the human purpose which is to love; connect their sharing to the important points found in the next section.

III. Inspiration/ Deepening: Link the student's learning experiences with the following points:

To be human means to love

1. The human need for love is a given gift and is vital in the process of growing. It is to be lived in daily life, and shared with others.
2. The human capacity to love transcends color, religion, social, economic and educational status. It supersedes anger, hatred, prejudice, hostility and indifference of any form.
3. In daily life, the challenge to love can be overwhelming. The human person must commit him/herself to love, be faithful in love, responsible in love in order to grow fully.
1. Our purpose as human beings is best translated in love. Our truth is love. It is when we love that we become fully human, fully alive.

Ask the students to read activity sheet 5, p. 22 during their free time.

REFLECTION:

Option 1: (Activity Sheet 6, p. 23)

Instruction: Invite the students to reflect on their own personal experience of selfless LOVE. Ask them to think about an experience of LOVE that stands out. It can be one with their own family, relatives, a friend, a neighbour, a stranger or God. Write a short story about the experience.

Option 2: (Activity sheet 7, p. 24)

Instruction: Invite the students to reflect on their present situation at home, in school, with friends and neighbours. Reflect on the ways in which LOVE can be renewed, shared and made known to all.

ACTION: Love is the Reason (Activity sheet 8, p. 25)

Instruction: Bring to the students' attention the different forms of difficulties we face today, i.e. hunger, poverty, war, natural disasters and financial crises. You may wish to include some concerns/issues that you have in the school.

Ask the students to collect 2 articles/stories/pictures/ or news clippings that speak of love in the midst of adversities. It can be like the story of Mother Teresa, Fr Jorge, a friend on a mission trip to Cambodia, or a mother's love. A sample is provided for your reference.

EVALUATION:

Instruction: Next meeting, invite 2 or 3 students to share stories/pictures/articles that they have collected — on Love is the Reason.

Engage the class on a brief sharing of insights based on what has been presented.

Activity sheet 3 [Student book]

Teacher's Reading

HOUSES FOR THE POOR

Jorge Anzorena is a Jesuit priest who lives and breathes houses. For 35 years he has travelled through Asia, Africa and Latin America, engaging with people who are homeless. He brings with him his ears: he listens to the people he visits and passes on the good things that other groups are doing.



Born in Argentina and working in the Japanese Province, Jorge began a new life path in the Tertianship¹. He had gained a doctorate in architecture in order to teach. As he travelled through India, he saw what Mother Theresa was doing in Calcutta.

“Seeing so many people dying in the streets”, he explains, “I understood that my doctorate would not help them. So I began to look for a way to be involved with so many homeless, even if I continued to be a full time professor at Sophia University.”²

Jorge volunteered to help promote housing for the poor in Asia through the Jesuit Bureau of Asian Affairs. He went to Manila where he visited slums and projects. Jorge began by going to different places looking for people who were doing something interesting for shelter for the poor. The two years stretched to over 30 years. For a long time I would travel for half of the year, and teach in Japan for another half of the year.

JORGE WAY

He soon found his own ways of working. He describes it like this: “Each time I visit a project and found an interesting approach or idea, I would write up what I observed and send that information on to the other groups I had visited. It is such a simple method. Checking the best initiatives that I found, and people’s desires, I would let others share both the information and the inspiration I had received.”

As he visited people, he linked them together. Communities began to meet and develop common strategies. In this way, the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights, which now has hundreds of communities as members, was born.

Linked communities could organize and push governments to respect their basic human rights. But this was not easy. In the 1970’s, the poor were often evicted from their dwellings. Jorge recalls, “In Tondo, Manila after a long struggle thousands of families could remain in their sites. But in Indonesia and Malaysia the movement was crushed. “Defending the rights of the urban poor was a subversive activity and suppressed violently. In Thailand the military declared contact with squatters illegal. In South Korea, many were persecuted for organizing the poor. At the time Fr J V Daly and his companion Paul Jeong Ku Je were living in the slums. They too were evicted. Fr Daly stayed fasting and praying with the people who resisted eviction.”

LEARNING FROM ONE ANOTHER

Even so, ideas and projects multiplied, and those that worked were brought from one continent to another. From El Salvador, for example, came projects for large scale housing projects to which the poor could contribute their labour. The project was so successful in Thailand that the government authorities supported it. Community groups in the Philippines identified a problem facing the poor: the high price of land. One third of the population in large cities was squatters, but they could not buy land. A solution was to organize credit for people to buy cheaper land beyond the hills, where they could build houses. The government later funded the project.

Groups in Karachi (Pakistan) pioneered ways of allowing communities to provide sanitation for themselves. In Africa groups cooperated to form Federations. These eventually grew into the umbrella organization Slum Dwellers International, which spread quickly through Africa.

These are just some projects in which Jorge played a modest part through meeting, listening to, and sharing with people. He sees that the way of the future lies in cooperating, and says, "Today the world wide problems are too big for us and for our institutions. We need to collaborate and support the work of the people of good will. The basic approach of this housing project has been to find these creative and committed people, to support and network them."

A LIFE'S WORK

In 1995, Jorge received the 1994 Ramon Magsaysay Award for international understanding, and for devoting himself to the wrenching human dilemma of the millions of people in the cities of Asia today who lack a decent home.

As he looks back over his life, he concludes, "Over the past 35 years I have rejoiced to witness the creation of powerful grass roots movements from the bottom up. The urban poor, whose problems seem too complex to touch, have been willing to change their approach, ready to incorporate the people with ideas, and little by little big things have been done."

1 Tertianship (in the Jesuit order) means a period of reflection & discipline before one professes final vows.

2 Sophia University is one of the leading international universities in Tokyo, Japan.

Reference: http://www.achr.Net/fr_jorge.htm - *Jesuits in East Asia and Oceania* (Nov 2009)

Activity sheet 4 [Student book]

Teacher's Reading

The Path of Love

A woman lay dying on a Calcutta pavement. Her feet were half eaten away by rats and ants. She had been lying there for days and no one had taken any notice of her.

Then a nun came along. She was a tiny woman, dressed in a white sari which hung loosely about her and covered her head. She walked quickly, for she was always in a hurry. Her name was Mother Teresa.¹

When she saw the woman on the pavement she stopped. Full of pity, she picked her up and carried her into a nearby hospital for treatment. They told her there that the woman was too ill and poor to bother about. Besides, they had no room. Mother Teresa pleaded with them, but they said there was nothing they could do for her. However, she would not leave her patient, and set off for another hospital. But it was in vain. The woman died.

This was not the only person Mother Teresa found dying on the streets. There were many of them. There was an old man who was so thin he looked like a child. It was pouring with rain when Mother Teresa found him lying dead under a tree in a mess of sickness and blood. He was outside a hospital but no one had taken him in.

Mother Teresa opened the Nirmal Hriday (Pure Heart) Home for Dying Destitutes in Calcutta. She and her fellow sisters took in dying people off the streets of Calcutta and brought them to this home to care for them during the days before they died, so that they might be able to die in peace and with dignity.

In serving the people abandoned by society, Mother Teresa put love into action. Her spirit of giving inspired many to follow her, and her work eventually expanded to many other parts of the world. Today over 5000 sisters, brothers, and volunteers run approximately 500 centers worldwide, feeding 500,000 families, helping 90,000 lepers every year and caring for people suffering from AIDs and other illnesses.

In recognition of her efforts, Mother Teresa was bestowed many awards, including the Padma Shri award for distinguished service in 1962, The Pope John XXIII Peace Prize in 1971, the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979, the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1985, and the Congressional Gold Medal in 1997. Mother Teresa accepted all awards on behalf of the poor, using any money that accompanied them to fund her centers.

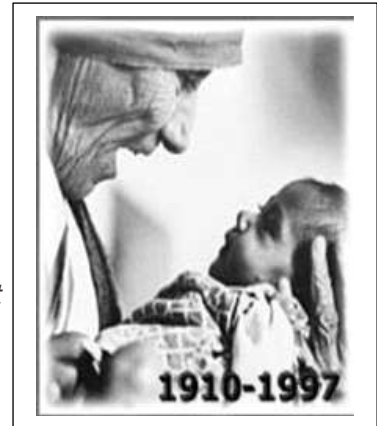
Excerpt from Mother Theresa's Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech:

"The poor people are very great people. They can teach us so many beautiful things. These are people who maybe have nothing to eat, maybe they have not a home where to live, but they are great people. The poor are very wonderful people. One evening we went out and we picked up four people from the street. And one of them was in a most terrible condition. And I told the sisters: "You take care of the other three; I will take care of this one that looks worse." So I did for her all that my love can do. I put her in bed, and there was such a beautiful smile on her face. She took hold of my hand, as she said one word only:

“Thank you” - and she died. I could not help but examine my conscience before her. And I asked: “What would I say if I was in her place?” And my answer was very simple. I would have tried to draw a little attention to myself. I would have said: “I am hungry, I am dying, I am cold, I am in pain”, or something. But she gave me much more - she gave me her grateful love.

And she died with a smile on her face - like that man who we picked up from the drain, half eaten with worms, and we brought him to the home – “I have lived like an animal in the street, but I am going to die like an angel, loved and cared for.” And it was so wonderful to see the greatness of that man who could speak like that, who could die like that without blaming, without cursing anybody, without comparing anything. Like an angel - this is the greatness of our people.

Let us love one another as God loved us. Let us love him with undivided love. And the joy of loving him and each other. Let us keep that joy of loving God in our hearts, and share that joy with all that we come in touch with.



1. Mother Teresa was born Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu in Skopje, Macedonia, on August 1910. She was of Albanian descent. At the age of twelve, she felt strongly the call of God to serve the poor and the suffering. She was a Catholic nun from the order of the Missionaries of Charity. Website: <http://www.motherteresa.org/layout.html>

Activity sheet 8 [Sample]

A MOTHERS LOVE

A little boy came up to his mother in the kitchen one evening while she was fixing supper, and handed her a piece of paper that he had been writing on. After his Mom dried her hands on an apron, she read it, and this is what it said:

For cutting the grass: \$5.00
For cleaning up my room this week: \$1.00
For going to the store for you: \$.50
Baby-sitting my kid brother while you went shopping: \$.25
Taking out the garbage: \$1.00
For getting a good report card: \$5.00
For cleaning up and raking the yard: \$2.00
Total owed: \$14.75

Well, his mother looked at him standing there, and the boy could see the memories flashing through her mind. She picked up the pen, turned over the paper he'd written on, and this is what she wrote:

For the nine months I carried you while you were growing inside me: No Charge
For all the nights that I've sat up with you, doctored and prayed for you: No Charge
For all the trying times, and all the tears that you've caused through the years: No Charge
For all the nights that were filled with dread, and for the worries I knew were ahead: No Charge
For the toys, food, clothes, and even wiping your nose: No Charge
Son, when you add it up, the cost of my love is: No Charge.

When the boy finished reading what his mother had written, there were big tears in his eyes, and he looked straight at his mother and said, "Mom, I sure do love you."
And then he took the pen and in great big letters he wrote:
"PAID IN FULL".

Teacher's Reading

DEUS CARITAS EST (God is Love) by Pope Benedict XVI

[An excerpt] [Suitable for Catholic teachers]

“God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him” (1 Jn 4:16).

God's love for us is fundamental for our lives, and it raises important questions about who God is and who we are. In considering this, we immediately find ourselves hampered by a problem of language. Today, the term “love” has become one of the most frequently used and misused of words, a word to which we attach quite different meanings. Even though this Encyclical will deal primarily with the understanding and practice of love in Sacred Scripture and in the Church's Tradition, we cannot simply present from the meaning of the word in the different cultures and in present-day usage.

Let us first of all bring to mind the vast semantic range of the word “love”: we speak of love of country, love of one's profession, love between friends, love of work, love between parents and children, love between family members, love of neighbour and love of God. Amid this multiplicity of meanings, however, one in particular stands out: love between man and woman, where body and soul are inseparably joined and human beings glimpse an apparently irresistible promise of happiness. This would seem to be the very epitome of love; all other kinds of love immediately seem to fade in comparison. So we need to ask: are all these forms of love basically one, so that love, in its many and varied manifestations, is ultimately a single reality, or are we merely using the same word to designate totally different realities?

That love between man and woman which is neither planned nor willed, but somehow imposes itself upon human beings, was called Eros by the ancient Greeks. Let us note straight away that the Greek Old Testament uses the word Eros only twice, while the New Testament does not use it at all: of the three Greek words for love, Eros, philia (the love of friendship) and agape, New Testament writers prefer the last, which occurs rather infrequently in Greek usage. As for the term philia, the love of friendship, it is used with added depth of meaning in Saint John's Gospel in order to express the relationship between Jesus and his disciples. The tendency to avoid the word Eros, together with the new vision of love expressed through the word agape, clearly point to something new and distinct about the Christian understanding of love. In the critique of Christianity which began with the Enlightenment and grew progressively more radical, this new element was seen as something thoroughly negative. According to Friedrich Nietzsche, Christianity had poisoned Eros, which for its part, while not completely succumbing, gradually degenerated into vice.[1] Here the German philosopher was expressing a widely-held perception: doesn't the Church, with all her commandments and prohibitions, turn to bitterness the most precious thing in life? Doesn't she blow the whistle just when the joy which is the Creator's gift offers us a happiness which is itself a certain foretaste of the Divine?

But is this the case? Did Christianity really destroy Eros? Let us take a look at the pre-Christian world. The Greeks - not unlike other cultures - considered Eros principally as a kind of intoxication, the overpowering of reason by a “divine madness” which tears man away from his finite existence and enables him, in the very process of being overwhelmed by divine power, to experience supreme happiness. All other powers in heaven and on earth thus appear secondary: “Omnia vincit amor” says Virgil in the *Bucolics* – love conquers all - he adds: “et nos cedamus amori” let us, too, yield to love.[2] In the religions, this attitude found expression in fertility cults, part of which was the “sacred” prostitution which flourished in many temples. Eros was thus celebrated as divine power, as fellowship with the Divine.

The Old Testament firmly opposed this form of religion, which represents a powerful temptation against monotheistic faith, combating it as a perversion of religiosity. But it in no way rejected Eros as such; rather, it declared war on a warped and destructive form of it, because this counterfeit divinization of Eros actually strips it of its dignity and dehumanizes it. Indeed, the prostitutes in the temple, who had to bestow this divine intoxication, were not treated as human beings and persons, but simply used as a means of arousing “divine madness”: far from being goddesses, they were human persons being exploited. An intoxicated and undisciplined Eros, then, is not an ascent in “ecstasy” towards the Divine, but a fall, a degradation of man. Evidently, Eros needs to be disciplined and purified if it is to provide not just fleeting pleasure, but a certain foretaste of the pinnacle of our existence, of that beatitude for which our whole being yearns.

Two things emerge clearly from this rapid overview of the concept of Eros past and present. First, there is a certain relationship between love and the Divine: love promises infinity, eternity - reality far greater and totally other than our everyday existence. Yet we have also seen that the way to attain this goal is not simply by submitting to instinct. Purification and growth in maturity are called for; and these also pass through the path of renunciation. Far from rejecting or “poisoning” Eros, they heal it and restore its true grandeur.

This is due first and foremost to the fact that man is a being made up of body and soul. Man is truly himself when his body and soul are intimately united; the challenge of Eros can be said to be truly overcome when this unification is achieved. Should he aspire to be pure spirit and to reject the flesh as pertaining to his animal nature alone, then spirit and body would both lose their dignity. On the other hand, should he deny the spirit and consider matter, the body, as the only reality, he would likewise lose his greatness. The epicure Gassendi used to offer Descartes the humorous greeting: “O Soul!” And Descartes would reply: “O Flesh!”.[3] Yet it is neither the spirit alone nor the body alone that loves: it is man, the person, a unified creature composed of body and soul, who loves. Only when both dimensions are truly united, does man attain his full stature. Only thus is love to mature and attain its authentic grandeur.

Nowadays Christianity of the past is often criticized as having been opposed to the body; and it is quite true that tendencies of this sort have always existed. Yet the contemporary way of exalting the body is deceptive. Eros, reduced to pure “sex”, has become a commodity; a mere “thing” to be bought and sold, or rather, man himself becomes a commodity. This is hardly man’s great “yes” to the body. On the contrary, he now considers his body and his sexuality as the purely material part of himself, to be used and exploited at will. Nor does he see it as an arena for the exercise of his freedom, but as a mere object that he attempts, as he pleases, to make both enjoyable and harmless. Here we are actually dealing with a debasement of the human body: no longer is it integrated into our overall existential freedom; no longer is it a vital expression of our whole being, but it is more or less relegated to the purely biological sphere. The apparent exaltation of the body can quickly turn into a hatred of bodiliness. Christian faith, on the other hand, has always considered man a unity in duality, a reality in which spirit and matter compenetrates, and in which each is brought to new nobility. True, Eros tends to rise “in ecstasy” towards the Divine, to lead us beyond ourselves; yet for this very reason it calls for a path of ascent, renunciation, purification and healing.

Concretely, what does this path of ascent and purification entail? How might love be experienced so that it can fully realize its human and divine promise? Here we can find a first, important indication in the Song of Songs, an Old Testament book well known to the mystics.

According to the interpretation generally held today, the poems contained in this book were originally love-songs, perhaps intended for a Jewish wedding feast and meant to exalt conjugal love. In this context it is highly instructive to note that in the course of the book two different Hebrew words are used to indicate “love”. First there is the word *dodim*, a plural form suggesting a love that is still insecure, indeterminate and searching. This comes to be replaced by the word *ahabà*, which the Greek version of the Old Testament translates with the similar-sounding *agape*, which, as we have seen, becomes the typical expression for the biblical notion of love. By contrast with an indeterminate, “searching” love, this word expresses the experience of a love which involves a real discovery of the other, moving beyond the selfish character that prevailed earlier. Love now becomes concern and care for the other. No longer is it self-seeking, a sinking in the intoxication of happiness; instead it seeks the good of the beloved: it becomes renunciation and it is ready, and even willing, for sacrifice.

It is part of love’s growth towards higher levels and inward purification that it now seeks to become definitive and it does so in a twofold sense: both in the sense of exclusivity (this particular person alone) and in the sense of being “forever”. Love embraces the whole of existence in each of its dimensions, including the dimension of time. It could hardly be otherwise, since its promise looks towards its definitive goal: love looks to the eternal. Love is indeed “ecstasy”, not in the sense of a moment of intoxication, but rather as a journey, an ongoing exodus out of the closed inward-looking self towards its liberation through self-giving, and thus towards authentic self-discovery and indeed the discovery of God: “Whoever seeks to gain his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will preserve it” (Lk 17:33), as Jesus says throughout the Gospels (cf. Mt 10:39; 16:25; Mk 8:35; Lk 9:24; Jn 12:25). In these words, Jesus portrays his own path, which leads through the Cross to the Resurrection: the path of the grain of wheat that falls to the ground and dies, and in this way bears much fruit. Starting from the depths of his own sacrifice and of the love that reaches fulfillment therein, he also portrays in these words the essence of love and indeed of human life itself.

Fundamentally, “love” is a single reality, but with different dimensions; at different times, one or other dimension may emerge more clearly. Yet when the two dimensions are totally cut off from one another, the result is a caricature or at least an impoverished form of love. And we have also seen, synthetically, that biblical faith does not set up a parallel universe, or one opposed to that primordial human phenomenon which is love, but rather accepts the whole man; it intervenes in his search for love in order to purify it and to reveal new dimensions of it. This newness of biblical faith is shown chiefly in two elements which deserve to be highlighted: the image of God and the image of man.

The Art of Loving

[An extract] by Eric Fromm

Love is not a sentiment which can be easily indulged in by anyone, regardless of the level of maturity reached by him. All his attempts for love are bound to fail, unless he tries most actively to develop his total personality, so as to achieve a productive orientation; that satisfaction in individual love cannot be attained without the capacity to love one's neighbour, without true humility, courage, faith and discipline. In a culture in which these qualities are rare, the attainment of the capacity to love must remain a rare achievement. Or - anyone can ask himself how many TRULY loving persons he knows.

If two people who have been strangers, as all of us are, suddenly let the wall between them break down, and feel close, feel one, this moment of oneness is one of the most exhilarating, most exciting experiences in life.

It is all the more wonderful and miraculous for persons who have been shut off, isolated, without love. This miracle of sudden intimacy is often facilitated if it is combined with, or initiated by, sexual attraction and consummation. However, this type of love is by its very nature not lasting.

The two persons become well acquainted, their intimacy loses more and more of its miraculous character, until their antagonism, their disappointments, their mutual boredom kill whatever is left of the initial excitement. Yet, in the beginning they do not know all this: in fact, they take the intensity of the infatuation, this being "crazy" about each other, for proof of the intensity of their love, while it may only prove the degree of their preceding loneliness. There is hardly any activity, any enterprise, which is started with such tremendous hopes and expectations, and yet, which fails so regularly, as love. If this were the case with any other activity, people would be eager to know the reasons for the failure and to learn how one could do better - or they would give up the activity.

The first thing we have to learn is that love is an art, just as living is an art; if we want to learn how to love we must proceed in the same way we have to proceed if we want to learn any other art. Maybe here lies the answer to the question of why people in our culture try so rarely to learn this art, in spite of their obvious failures: in spite of the deep-seated craving for love, almost everything else is considered to be more important than love: success, prestige, money, power - almost all our energy is used for learning of how to achieve these aims, and almost none to learn the art of loving.

Could it be that only these things are considered worthy of being learned with which one can earn money or prestige, and that love, which ONLY profits the soul, but is profitless in the modern sense, is a luxury we have no right to spend much energy on?

Man can only go forward by developing his reason, by finding a new harmony, a human one, instead of the pre-human harmony which is irretrievably lost.

Man is gifted with reason; he is life being aware of itself. This awareness of himself as a separate entity, the awareness of his own short life span, of the fact that he will die before those whom he loves, or they before him, the awareness of his aloneness and separateness, of his helplessness before the forces of nature and of society, all this makes his separate, disunited existence an unbearable prison. He would become insane could he not liberate

himself from the prison and reach out, unite himself in some form or other with others, with the world outside.

The experience of separateness arouses anxiety; it is, indeed, the source of all anxiety. Being separate means being cut off, without any capacity to use my human powers. Beyond that, it arouses shame and the feeling of guilt. This experience of guilt and shame in separateness is expressed in the Biblical story of Adam and Eve... who, by recognizing their separateness they remain strangers, because they have not yet learned to love each other; Adam defends himself by blaming Eve rather than trying to defend her.

The deepest need of man, then, is the need to overcome his separateness, to leave the prison of his aloneness. The absolute failure to achieve this aim means insanity, because the panic of complete isolation can be overcome only by such a radical withdrawal from the world outside that the feeling of separation disappears - because the world outside, from which one is separated, has disappeared.

In society the union with the group is the prevalent way of overcoming separateness. It is a union in which the individual self disappears to a large extent, and where the aim is to belong to the herd. If I am like everybody else, if I have no feelings or thoughts which make me different, if I conform in custom, dress, ideas, to the pattern of the group, I am saved; saved from the frightening experience of aloneness.

The dictatorial systems use threats and terror to induce this conformity; the democratic countries, suggestion and propaganda. But in spite of this difference the democratic societies show an overwhelming degree of conformity. The reason lies in the fact that there has to be an answer to the quest for union, and if there is no other or better way, then the union of herd conformity becomes the predominant one. One can only understand the fear to be different, the fear to be only a few steps away from the herd, if one understands the depths of the need not to be separated.

Most people are not even aware of their need to conform. They live under the illusion that they follow their own ideas and inclinations, that they are individualists, that they have arrived at their opinions as the result of their own thinking - and that it just happens that their ideas are the same as the majority. The consensus of all serves as a proof for the correctness of "their" ideas. Since there is still a need to feel some individuality, such a need is satisfied with regard to minor differences; the initials on the handbag or sweater, the belonging to the Democrat rather than the Republican Party, to the Elks instead of the Shriners become the expression of individual differences. The advertising slogan of "it is different" shows up this pathetic need for difference, when in reality there is hardly any left.

Union by conformity is not intense and violent; it is calm, dictated by routine, and for this very reason often is insufficient to pacify the anxiety of separateness. The incidence of alcoholism, drug addiction, compulsive sexualism, and suicide in contemporary society are symptoms of this relative failure of herd conformity.

This desire for interpersonal fusion is the most powerful striving in man. It is the most fundamental passion, it is the force which keeps the human race together. The failure to achieve it means insanity or destruction - self destruction or the destruction of others. Without love humanity could not exist.

Mature love is union under the condition of preserving one's integrity, one's individuality. Love is an active power in man, a power which breaks through the walls which separate man from

his fellow men, which unites him with others; love makes him overcome the sense of isolation and separateness, yet permits him to be himself, to retain his integrity. In love the paradox occurs that two beings become one and yet remain two.

Spinoza arrives at the conclusion that virtue and power are one and the same. Envy, jealousy, ambition towards any kind of greed are passions; love is an action, the practice of human power, which can be practiced only in freedom and never as a result of a compulsion.

Love is primarily giving, not receiving. Giving is the highest expression of potency. Giving is more joyous than receiving, not because it is deprivation, but because in the act of giving lies the expression of my aliveness.

Whoever is capable of giving himself is rich. He experiences himself as one who can confer of himself to others. He gives of himself, of the most precious thing he has, he gives of his life. He gives what is live in him; he gives his joy, his interest, his understanding, his knowledge, his humour, his sadness, he gives of all the expressions and manifestations of that which is alive in him.

In thus giving of his life, he enriches the other person, he enhances the others sense of aliveness by enhancing his own sense of aliveness. In giving he cannot help bringing something to life in the other person, and this which is brought to life reflects back to him and they both share in the joy of what they have brought to life.

Love is a power which produces love. You can exchange love only for love, confidence for confidence, etc. If you wish to enjoy an art, you must be an artistically trained person; if you wish to have an influence on other people you must be a person who has a really stimulating and furthering influence on other people.

In the Book of Jonah, God explains to Jonah that the essence of love is to labour for something and to make something grow, that love and labour are inseparable. One loves that for which one labours, and one labours for that which one loves.

Care and concern imply another aspect of love. Today responsibility is often meant to denote duty, something imposed on one from the outside. But responsibility, in its TRUE sense, is an entirely voluntary act; it is my response to the needs of others. The loving person responds.

Responsibility could easily deteriorate into domination and possessiveness, were it not for a third component of love, respect. Respect is not fear or awe; it denotes the ability to see a person as he/she is, to be aware of the unique individuality. Respect means the concern that the other person should grow and unfold as they are. Respect, thus, implies the absence of exploitation. I want the loved person to grow and unfold for their own sake, and not for the purpose of serving me. If I love the other person, I feel one with him or her, but with them as they are, not as I need them to be as an object for my use. It is clear that respect is only possible if I have achieved independence, without having to exploit anyone else. Respect exists only on the basis of freedom, for love is the child of freedom, never that of domination.

To respect a person is not possible without knowing him; care and responsibility would be blind if they were not guided by knowledge.

Knowledge would be empty if it were not motivated by concern. There are many layers of knowledge; the knowledge which is an aspect of love is one which does not stay at the periphery, but penetrates to the core. It is possible only when I can transcend the concern for myself and see the other person in his own terms.

Care, responsibility, respect and knowledge are mutually interdependent. They are a syndrome of attitudes which are to be found in the mature person; that is the person who develops his own powers productively, who wants only to have that which he has worked for, who has given up narcissistic dreams of omniscience and omnipotence, who has acquired humility based on inner strength which only genuine productive activity can give.

If a person loves only one other person and is indifferent to the rest of his fellow men, his love is not love but a symbiotic attachment, or an enlarged egotism. Yet most people believe that love is constituted by the object, not by the faculty. In fact, they even believe that it is proof of the intensity of their love when they do not love anybody except the "loved" person. This is the same fallacy which I have already mentioned above. Because one does not see that love is an activity, a power of the soul, one believes that all that is necessary to find is the right object - and that everything goes by itself afterward. This attitude can be compared to that of the man who wants to paint but who, instead of learning the art, claims that he just has to wait for the right object - and that he will paint beautifully when he finds it. If I truly love one person I love all persons, I love the world, I love life. If I can say to somebody else, "I love you," I must be able to say, "I love in you everybody, I love through you the world, I love in you also myself."

The most fundamental kind of love, which underlies all types of love, is brotherly love. By this I mean the sense of responsibility, care, respect, knowledge of any other human being, the wish to further his life. This is the kind of love the Bible speaks about when it says: Love your neighbour as yourself. Brotherly love is love for all human beings; it is characterized by its very lack of exclusiveness. If I have developed the capacity for love, then I cannot help loving my brothers. In brotherly love there is the experience of union with the whole of mankind, of human solidarity. Brotherly love is based on the experience that we're all one.

The differences in talents, intelligence, knowledge are negligible in comparison with the identity of the human core common to all men. In order to experience this identity it is necessary to penetrate from the periphery to the core. If I perceive in another person mainly the surface, I perceive mainly differences, that which separates us. If I penetrate to the core, I perceive our identity, the fact of our brotherhood.

Love of the helpless, the poor and the stranger, are the beginning of brotherly love. To love one's flesh and blood is no achievement. The animal loves its young and cares for them. Only in the love of those who do not serve a purpose, does love begin to unfold. Compassion implies the element of knowledge and identification. "You know the heart of the stranger," says the Bible, "for you were strangers in the land of Egypt;... therefore love the stranger!"

The greatest impediment of mankind is not disease... it is despair.