

The Practice of Living and Loving Beyond Belief

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conflict with our thoughts and beliefs. This applies to all areas of life.

But If you believe you have a purpose, a mission or calling, or even just a great idea, it will have no value until you begin to take steps to bring it into reality. Sometimes the first step is to cut through the conflicting thoughts and emotions that create barriers to fulfilling your purpose.

A few common examples:

Most people behave according to their emotions first, and then they often wonder why things aren't working well for them. Think about your own actions and reactions; what drives you each day? You probably choose what to wear and what to eat based on how you feel. You may feel inspired to go to work on Mondays if you like your job, or you may dread it if the job is not what you really want to be doing.

Perhaps you think you should lose weight, even your doctor says so. You believe that joining a gym or Weight Watchers will help you. But more often than not you don't feel like going to the gym, and you cheat on your diet. Eventually you will become uninspired and give up.

Your neighbor believes in God. He thinks people should follow the Golden Rule, being kind to each other. But more often than not he can be mean, rude and careless in the way he treats people. Sometimes it's hard to live up to our own expectations.

Where does love begin?

The beginning point of love is mind and body unity centered on a higher purpose. Why? Because emotions are fickle things, they change easily depending on outside stimuli. They are often connected to how the body feels in the moment, or to the thought patterns we've developed about ourselves and others.



It's often said that in order to love others you have to love yourself first. This does not mean a self-centered love, it simply means knowing and believing in your own value and purpose. If you value yourself and your life, you will take care of your body and pursue a productive and good purpose because that is what is going to create joy and fulfillment for yourself and others.

Unfortunately this world is a very confusing place to grow up, and most of us have suffered some degree of lack of love or misplaced values. No one has grown up in a perfect family or a perfect social environment. We see the need for change in the world, and we recognise the truth in Gandhi's words, "*Be the change you wish to see*". But how do we do it?

Developing Your Own Practice of True Love

You are unique and wonderful, endowed with potential that you are not even aware of yet. Get to know your personality traits through astrology, a Myers-Briggs evaluation, or some other personality test. Also, the love language and God language evaluations are helpful. Keep in

It's one thing to believe, but another to live what you believe. Just believing that there is a God, a creator, or a Divine Source of some kind is like stepping forward with one foot but not moving the other foot. To walk you need to move both feet. Likewise, to accomplish your goals or purpose in life you need to move beyond belief by taking the next step.

When we believe in something we need to believe with our actions as well as thoughts or words. That can be difficult because we often have emotions that

mind that personality also has developmental stages. You are designed to keep growing and developing throughout your life.

Be honest in reflection of your own character. Identify the thought patterns and emotions that cause you to behave in a way that contradicts your beliefs. You may want to write them down in a journal. Then work on creating new thoughts and emotional patterns. The great thing about the mind is that you can decide to change the way you think and feel.



This is actually the purpose behind any religious practice in history. Whether it's doing daily affirmations, yoga, meditation, prayer, sermons & worship services, scripture study, journaling, chanting or other rituals, the intent behind these things is to unite the mind and body on a higher state of consciousness, allowing us to become aware of our value, the value of life, and the value of others.

It's easier said than done, but it's worth the effort. Every human being, in their own unique individual way, is capable of being

an Individual Truth Body, and developing a heart of True Love. Each person also will have unique struggles to overcome, so each person needs to create their own practice in the way of true love.

How does love flow in your life?

Based on your personality and habits, and the thoughts and feelings you wish to improve, develop a daily routine that will keep you centered on true love. Here are a few questions you can ask yourself to help you develop a practice that fits your personality, lifestyle and needs.

1. Are you more of an introvert or an extrovert?
2. Are you more active and outgoing or prefer home life?
3. Do you like to read and value scripture or inspiring quotes?
4. Do you enjoy people and group activities?
5. Do you like to serve or care for others?
6. Do you like to contemplate, meditate or write?
7. Would you enjoy yoga, exercise, dance or a sport?
8. Have you had good experiences with prayer?
9. Do you feel inspired by music, or like to sing?
10. Are affirming words important to you?

Methods of Practicing Love for God, Yourself, and Others



Developing a daily habit is the way to practice true love. This habit must involve your intellect, emotion and will centered on your God consciousness. It can change at different times in your life to fit with your growth and development or stage of life. And it should be something that you like to do and feel benefit from.

25 years ago my husband used to read scripture for at least an hour or longer every day. He still reads now, but not for as long. About 15 years ago he developed the habit of walking 5 miles every day and praying or meditating during his walks. He still does this but the length and location of his walk varies by season. He's also developed the habit of making lots of friends and sharing his faith wherever he is; he's a very social person. He's an art teacher and that's also how he loves God and others.

My practice is very simple and natural to me. In the morning it involves making a delicious green smoothie for my husband and I, then a cup of coffee and meditation. Then I go to work. I pray at

different times during the day in response to the people or circumstances I encounter, or inspirations I get. I'm a spontaneous person. Before bed I read from 2 daily devotionals, and the daily quote on the WIZE App (about 10 minutes total), and then pray. I'm far less social than my husband, but I try to serve and encourage people wherever I am. Reading inspirational books, writing and getting involved in the community have also been a big part of my lifelong practice of loving God, myself and others.

Ideas for building your love practice

- Invite God to participate in everything you do.
- Combine internal and external activities.
- Always include some type of personal reflection.
- Always include honest communication with God and others.
- Consider including daily goals, as well as longer term goals.
- Be aware of and grateful for spiritual support (from angels and ancestors) at all times.
- Develop a grateful heart and attitude even during difficulties.
- Develop your unique abilities to care for and share with others.
- Ask God to show you how to reach out to someone, or to help you improve specific relationships.
- Notice the many ways that God's love reveals itself on a daily basis.

Sometimes it's easy to fall into the trap of separating your spiritual priorities from your physical priorities, and then either one becomes overwhelming. It's better to think of your life as an integrated whole and develop both aspects at the same time. Your spirit and body are like your two feet, partners that rely on each other to move forward in fulfilling your hopes and dreams.