

## **Creating Love from One Generation to the Next**

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### **The Love of Music**

My wife and I became parents 25 years ago and it's clearly a vast world, requiring long-term learning and growth. It's apparent now that the next 25 years of our lives will be full of opportunities to learn things that we don't yet know.

But there's one experience that I have in my family which from time to time seems to capture this parental realm of heart in a special way. It's when my son and I play music together. But I need to go back a little, first.

Basically, sometime after I accepted the idea of marriage and parenthood, I began thinking of how I would relate to my children. It came to me that I'd want them to learn martial arts (for practical self-defense as well as for the internal art/dō aspect) and also music.

That latter idea came to me because I had heard stories about American country music stars and their exposure to music from an early age within the family. Their love for it was what led to their life's work. These stories were related with a fondness and affection that was unmistakable.

In this increasingly digital age, how wonderful it is to create something together in real time, with real instruments and voices. Making music together encourages people to listen to each other, to support each other, even tease and challenge each other, so that together they can make something wonderful come to life. Out of the thin air, on the porch on a summer's evening after a hearty day's work an unknown tune might be born.

### **Music Lessons in Love**

Long story short: I helped my son learn violin, then later fiddle, then later mandolin, then finally even singing. There's one song that's become our favorite duet; it's called "Now It Belongs To You" and it's about a new Dad who inherited a fiddle from his Dad, who'd in turn been given that fiddle by his Dad, who'd made it 3 generations back. So the 2nd Dad left that fiddle with his boy when he went off to war and didn't come back. Now, that boy's grown and become a young Dad himself and looks forward to teach his new son how to fiddle, on that very instrument that's passed through three generations of family. So you see there's a lot of love in that old fiddle....

Well, one time my son and I were playing that tune, it suddenly dawned on him that what it actually meant was that everything I'd ever inherited from my own Dad was in fact waiting for him, in full, whenever he wanted or was ready for it, regardless of any missteps he might have made growing up. That realization hit him pretty hard, so he played the ending solo in a way he'd never done before: he said that every note was meant for me. So now, whenever we play that song, the reality of the parental realm of heart and the children's realm of heart can crystallize into 5 minutes of transcendent clarity.

### **Loyalty & Filial Piety**

Unification Thought refers to parental love as a love that flows "downwards", from parents to their children. The love of children for parents is the type of love that flows "upwards". In the Divine Principle, the two virtues that most fully represent this kind of love are named as loyalty and filial piety. Loyalty in particular, I learned through the teacher-student relationship in martial arts.

But first, it's illuminating to look past the English translations of these two words to the ideograms which depict these virtues. I know I'm repeating myself here, having written this in previous articles, but I'll take it a little further this time.

In the ideogram for loyalty, there are two characters, one atop the other. The one above is a box with a vertical line through it and it represents the idea of "center". The character below looks like what it is: a heart. So loyalty is a heart with a center; it's a heart that's devoted to, anchored in and has a focus on something outside and above itself.

For most of my early life, I admired loyalty from a distance. I thought of soldiers and of other servicemen and women who gave their loyalty as a matter of conscience and duty. So loyalty was something difficult, a sacrificial denial of self which was noble because it was difficult and unnatural.

But that all changed for me, through martial arts. Through the years of study with my teachers — and especially with our grandmaster — we experienced a consistent depth of concern and a breadth of generosity that slowly but inevitably crept into our hearts. There was discipline and hard training of course, but as we were guided and encouraged through all the difficulties of the martial arts, we discovered the underlying commitment of heart that

our teachers had made to us. It's part of that teacher-student tradition and in our school, it was the core. In fact, the motto that we recited daily was "loyalty" and "filial piety".

### **My Experience**

As we progressed in skill and belt levels, the realm of children's love was opened to me: I discovered that loyalty is the natural expression of a grateful heart that has been blessed with months and years of benevolent love.

I remember being at an international students' convention in Asia with the president of my student association. He happened to be the grandmaster of my martial arts school as well. As we were standing together, the president of another country's student association struck up a conversation with my president. And then he said something remarkable. He commented "I don't think Gerry is your member, I think he's your disciple."

My teacher and I were quite surprised, because the conversation was not necessarily going in that direction. It just came out rather spontaneously, as an aside. But it told us that the bond of heart we had found was actually noticeable. We said nothing, but only looked at each other in quiet pleasure, and pride. Loyalty, it's not just an admirable duty, but a grateful expression in the children's realm of heart.

Within a year or two of that occurrence, I had another experience which confirmed this understanding. I had been teaching martial arts for a couple of years and I was walking on a city street with a colleague in the middle of a business day. The sidewalks were crowded and the vehicular traffic was heavy.

Through all the street noise, we became aware of an insistent call of "Teacher! Teacher!" Like other pedestrians around us, we wondered where this unusual shout was coming from. And then I spotted two of my students on the other side of the road, stopped on the sidewalk with people walking all around them. They were waving and when they caught my look of recognition, they smiled broadly, then straightened up and gave me the bow that all martial arts students give their teachers in the studio. Everyone around looked at us as I smiled and waved back. When I finally resumed walking, I again felt what loyalty can be: an expression of gratitude from hearts that have been blessed with benevolence.

God gives us animals that are loyal to us to teach us something about heart. But when people give their loyalty willingly, it is remarkable, eye-opening and... it can be heart-warming.

### **Caring for Mom & Dad**

The other virtue that encapsulates love that flows upwards in the Children's realm of heart is filial piety. The two words from Latin represent the reverence that a child feels toward its parent. But the Chinese ideogram shows two characters, one atop the other. The one above is the character for parent or elder; the one below is the one for younger or child.

Placing one below the other visually suggests the image of a child carrying its parent on its back. Which brings to mind images I've seen in films of Eskimos, Asians and Native Americans: when they're migrating from one place to another, the young person carries their aged parent or grandparent on their back. The gesture is one of returning respect, care and love to one who has given care, love and life itself for many more years than the child has.

As a result of all these learning experiences, Unificationism brought me to a very different level of relationship with my father and mother. I remember one turning point in my life when Rev. Moon said in one sermon: "Bring your parents to live in your home. But if you can't bring them to your house, go out and find some old people and move them in instead!" As it turned out, my dad and mom finally moved into our home and we lived as three generations together until each one of them passed on.

My wife is a traditional Confucian girl from a 4-generation family and so she knew that her responsibility would be to someday take care of her husband's parents. So when the time inevitably came, she did that for both of them, especially my Mom, whom she cared for 24/7 for several years in our home. As for me, knowing what the family could be from this perspective of "realms of heart" made all the difference in my experience.

Near the very end of her life, when she was in hospice, my Mom and I were in the master bedroom and I told her "when you get there, save me a seat". She laughed and said "I will". I replied "Don't forget; I'll come looking for you." And we laughed together. She passed within days and I plan to keep my promise, assuming they let me in.

**"Children's realm of heart"** – these are just words; but I never knew just how much warmth and joy was wrapped up in these simple words. Romantic love? It's wonderful; it's a gift, a treasure and a blessing. But there are whole other realms of love out there that are as profoundly rich and as powerful in their own unique ways.