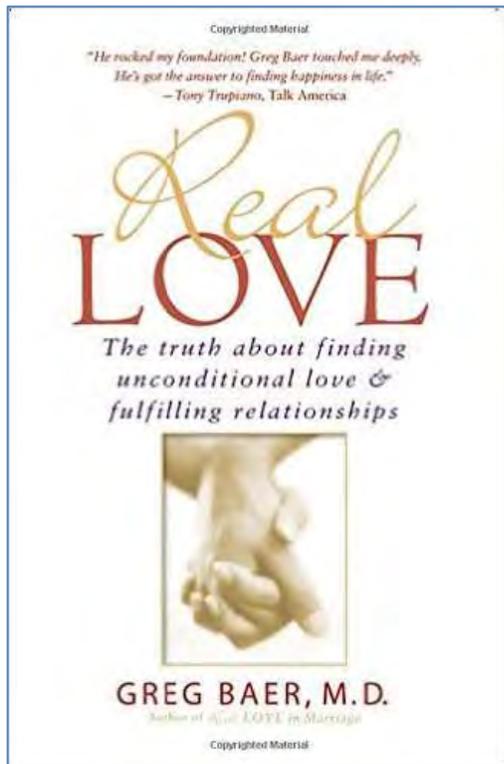


## A book review: Real Love

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*(Not just a book review, but a life review)*

My graduate degree is in counseling and psychology, so I have read many books dealing with improving your personality, your marriage, yourself, and how to have a more loving and meaningful life. A couple of years ago at a *Project Phoenix* event held at UTS, Barrytown one of the presenters was a psychologist from the group run by Dr. Greg Baer and her presentation focused around his original book entitled *Real Love*.

I found that group experience valuable, but it was only recently while having a discussion with a friend from San Jose, California that I actually began to re-read the book. My friend told me that *Real Love* had dramatically changed his life and his marriage. Re-reading the text, I can unequivocally say that I would recommend it to anyone who is interested in understanding their life and their love. I believe they answer almost every question that anyone may have about life and love.

- Baer subtitles his book, “the truth about finding fulfilling relationships.” His basic premise is that very few

people have ever experienced real love. He defines this as when one is totally living for the benefit and welfare of the other, never thinking of any benefit for oneself.

- We have always settled for artificial love—which is what satisfies us in the moment, e.g. sex/money/status/food/academic or educational success, a good job, a big house, (seemingly) good marriages, family, friends, nice vacations, or simply getting our own way. None of these things will necessarily bring us real happiness.
- Baer believes that the only way to happiness is through experiencing real love, which he explains can only be obtained by being totally honest about everything and with everyone—including ourselves. So, we must always tell people the truth about ourselves.

Dr. Baer shares that by age 30 he had accomplished everything he had ever set out to do (academic, professional and financial success, a good marriage and a happy family) but in the meantime he had become addicted to painkillers and was on the verge of suicide.

This story resonated with me, because at age 29, on the verge of getting my Ph.D., I looked around and saw that nobody I knew was really happy, and I began to understand that even my Ph.D. and 8 or 9 years of college was not about to make me truly happy. That was the point when I abandoned my studies; I went on to meet members of the Unification Movement.

Dr. Baer’s findings:

- People usually act out of getting and protecting behaviors.
- Blaming and anger have kept us from feeling helpless.
- Only feeling real love will eliminate this.
- We must not have expectations of others.
- Our greatest fear is to be unloved and alone.

When we are angry the rules are:

- Don't vent (in fact, don't say a word at all).
- Feel loved by someone.
- Defending yourself will never make you happy.

Steps forward:

- You can't demand that someone else change
- People are only angry because they feel empty and afraid
- Most things we like about others are really about what they can do for us
- Few people can admit when they are wrong.
- People who can admit that they are wrong are the most precious people in the world – It is very difficult to attack someone who is apologizing
- Always tell the truth about yourself—to yourself and to others

No one has ever received Real Love—not from our parents, our spouses, or our friends—so you have to find, what Dr. Baer calls, “a wise person” in order to receive real love—then and only then will we be able to love others.

More steps:

- Do all that you can do to be loving
- Take responsibility for your own behavior—do not blame others.

Dr. Baer acknowledges that everyone has problems; problems with family, with friends, and with co-workers. It is normal for us to blame someone else for our problems and our unhappiness.

He totally believes that real love (unconditional love) is the only thing that can bring us happiness. Whereas anything else will leave us disappointed, only real (totally unconditional) love can bring us the happiness that we so deeply desire.