

The Power of Invisible Love: A Reflection

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Hello! My name is Y. Ang, and I'm an 18-year-old currently attending the gap year program, Generation Peace Academy (GPA). As part of the program, we were offered to contribute to various nonprofit organizations, and I selected Women's Federation for World Peace. I wrote this article based on inspiration from a conversation I had with my father, after a long day of this (due to Covid) at-home program. In this program, we actually focus on growing a deeper, more substantial relationship with God as well as building our character. It was during that day where I started to think and ask myself, "What is love?" and "I'm doing everything I can to love and connect with my family, but why don't I feel connected to them? Why do I feel like it's not working?" I am sure these questions have passed through many people's minds -- especially parents' minds, might I add -- and I wanted to offer some insight on a different, rather "quiet" and hidden perspective.

In GPA, we are urged every day to serve others at home or in our community and, through this, grow our hearts. It's a beautiful idea and a wonderful practice. On the way, I realized a few things about love that are small, but surprisingly revolutionary. I thought, and I'm sure many people also think, that love is only a strong force that can be felt with warm fuzzy feelings and that it's instantly rewarded.

Love can be fun, like when I'm cleaning my sister's room with her, or jamming out to old tunes with my mom. I think about intimate moments with my brother, cherished memories of laughter shared with him, or something as minute as the small moments when my siblings and I weren't fighting. This kind of love is so visible, so obvious, and often the more pleasant and heart-warming side of love. This is the typical image of what love looks and feels like.

However, I know from personal experience that although these momentous moments of bonding with your family member or loved one may seem like the only way we can connect with each other, there is another aspect of love that isn't seen in the movies or that isn't exactly emphasized or taught in school.

I believe there's a love that is more powerful and goes beyond the easy, even jubilant moments.

From my experience with my younger sister, for example, it may mean holding back my tongue, knowing that what I want to say will hurt her. And on the other hand, I remember that I grew up really oblivious of the love that I received from people in my family. I've completely overlooked my mom, our family's invisible housemaid, who magically washed our dishes without us noticing! I wasn't even aware of the

consistent presence of my dad, and rarely thanked him in my life. However, he never gave a second thought to his staying up late with me to help me finish that math project I procrastinated on.

Sometimes, love isn't obvious. Even when it is obvious, it can be hard to appreciate. And even when it's appreciated, sometimes it is never returned -- maybe because of fear, reluctance, doubt, or even distance within the relationship. Either way, sometimes people just don't reciprocate. However, I believe that's the journey of love. I think that when it gets hard, I need to motivate myself to find new ways to invest and connect to the people I love, because love that invests is true love.

And as I reflect on the past month on why I have been feeling so burned out, it is because I have been practicing a deeper kind of love: a persevering, unconditional love that gives without seeking recognition and then continues to give more. It reminds me that the gentle and consistent love my parents has allowed me to become the woman I am today. My parents never kept a tally of all the times they changed my diaper. That's not obvious love. No one gets a Nobel Peace Prize for constantly serving and taking care of his or her child, but still parents tend to invest and give everything for their child.

My point is, if you happen to be struggling in your relationship with someone, try to just simply, quietly love them. Maybe you have been trying to get closer with your little sister, or you just want your parents to know that you appreciate and love them, but no matter how many times you tell them this, they don't seem to really feel or appreciate it. But your small ways of showing your love to them, like making their bed or offering a glass of water when they are thirsty, go a long way. Basically, this isn't calling for anything big or flashy, and you certainly aren't buying them that new car they wanted. But through these small acts of love, you are mending your relationship; you are strengthening that bond every day, and slowly, they will open up and you may even experience a new love for them that perhaps you haven't felt before! I know I experienced this with my younger sister, and I encourage others to try it as well. This is the kind of love that a car cannot buy.

I want to leave you with a quote from the co-founder of WFWP, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon: "To experience true peace, we must first practice true love without expectation of reward."

Let's take part in creating a world of peace, starting first within ourselves and our own families.

God bless you! And good luck on your journey of love.