

What if love isn't what you think it is? What if love isn't just about romance, family, or deep friendships? What if love is happening between you and all others in ways you've never considered?

Today, we're going to expand our definition of love, and more importantly, we're going to practice it. I'm inviting you to join me in The 24-Hour Love Experiment, a challenge to see how much love we can create in a single day through small, intentional acts of kindness, connection, and appreciation.

Love is Not Just Something We Feel But Something We Do

Many people are raised to think of love as an emotion that happens to us. But what if love isn't just a feeling? What if it's an action?

William Shakespeare wrote, "*Love is an ever-fixed mark that looks on tempests and is never shaken.*" Love is steadfast, but it's not passive. It is a choice, something we create, something we can practice in every interaction and moment. And science and spirituality are in complete agreement on this: Love isn't just found in grand, dramatic moments. It's in the tiny, everyday connections, a smile, a helping hand, a kind word.

The Science & Spirituality of Love

Dr. Barbara Fredrickson, a leading researcher in positive psychology, describes love as "*micro-moments of connection.*" These small moments, a genuine smile, a shared laugh, and a deep conversation trigger powerful changes in our bodies:

- Our heart rate synchronizes with others.
- Our brain releases oxytocin, the "*love hormone.*"
- Our nervous system shifts from stress to relaxation.

Love isn't just good for the soul; it's good for the body.

Spiritual traditions have taught this for centuries:

- Jesus said, "*Love one another as I have loved you.*"
- The Buddha taught *Metta*, or loving-kindness, as a practice to extend love to all beings.
- Eckhart Tolle wrote, "*Love is a state of being. Your love is not outside; it is deep within you. You can never lose it, and it cannot leave you.*"

Love is a choice. It's a spiritual practice. It's a way of being.

The 24-Hour Love Experiment

For the next 24 hours, I invite you to practice love in as many ways as possible.

Here's how:

Step 1: Set Your Intention

Before getting out of bed tomorrow morning, say to yourself:

"Today, I will practice love in as many moments as I can remember to do so."

Step 2: Look for Opportunities to Express Love

Throughout the day, practice love in small but meaningful ways:

Express Appreciation

- Tell someone specifically what you appreciate about them.
- Example: Instead of "You're great," say, "I appreciate how you always listen so carefully."

Offer Kindness to Strangers

- Smile. Make eye contact. Hold a door.
- Let someone go ahead of you in line.

Practice Deep Listening

- Put down your phone when someone is speaking.
- Turn your body toward them.
- Ask follow-up questions to show you care.

Perform Acts of Service

- Make coffee for a coworker.
- Pick up litter in your neighborhood.
- Send a text of support to someone going through a challenging time.

Reach Out to Someone You Haven't Connected With in a While

- Call, text, or email a friend or family member.

Practice Loving Self-Talk

- Notice how you speak to yourself.
- If you wouldn't say it to a friend, don't say it to yourself.
- Replace criticism with kindness and encouragement.

Addressing Common Challenges

“What if I don't feel loving?”

Love is like exercise. We don't wait until we feel energetic to work out; we work out, and then we feel energetic. The same is true with love. The action creates the feeling. Try smiling at a barista, wishing a stranger well in your mind, and listening to a friend with full attention.

Watch how these actions shift your emotional state.

“How do I practice love with difficult people?”

This is where love becomes a genuine practice.

- Love doesn't mean being a doormat. You can set boundaries with love.
- Love doesn't mean liking everyone; it means choosing understanding over judgment.
- Start small:
 - Find one thing to appreciate about them.
 - Silently wish them peace.

“What if my connection attempts are rejected?”

This fear holds so many of us back. But here's the truth: Love isn't about controlling outcomes.

If someone doesn't smile back, if a text goes unanswered—it doesn't mean your love wasn't valuable.

It may simply mean the timing wasn't right or the person couldn't receive it at that moment.

Love is like planting seeds. Some sprout immediately, some take years, and some you will never see bloom, but every seed matters.

The Ripple Effect of Love

Every act of love creates ripples. Michael, a high school teacher, once told a struggling student, *“Hey, I see you, and I'm glad you're here today.”* Years later, that student wrote to Michael, saying that small sentence saved his life because he was contemplating suicide that day. We rarely see the full impact of our love. But it's always there.

Victor Hugo wrote: *“To love another person is to see the face of God.”*

And Pierre Teilhard de Chardin said: *“Someday, after mastering the winds, the waves, the tides, and gravity, we shall harness for God the energies of love, and then, for a second time in the history of the world, man will have discovered fire.”*

Love is the greatest force in the universe.

Love as a Way of Life

Imagine a world where we all practiced love, not just occasionally, but in every moment. Imagine a million sparks of love igniting, spreading, and transforming our world. That world is possible. And it begins with you, with me, with each of us—choosing love, one moment at a time.

Affirmation: *I am a channel for love; every moment is an opportunity to share it.*

Now, go out and practice love today, and let's see how much we can change the world in 24 hours.