

# SLOWING DOWN TO THE SPEED OF *Love*

*How to Create a Deeper, More Fulfilling Relationship  
in a Hurried World*

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# I

## WHAT IS LOVE?



THIS IS A BOOK for our fast-paced, hectic times. If you have picked it up because you are wondering how to find time for intimacy in your fast-paced life, if your relationship has lost its luster and attraction, or if your to-do list has intruded on the quality of your life and your relationships, read on. It may sound unrealistic, but by realizing the principles that this book points to, you may be able to solve all these issues at once. Whether in a relationship, or hoping to discover new love, the solution to loving connections may be simpler than you think.

“You never have time to listen to me anymore!” “You don’t really hear what I am saying to you.” “You never have time for me!” “Why do I feel so disconnected from people? I have lots of relationships, yet I feel lonely.” “I can’t seem to find anyone who is ‘right’ for me. What’s the matter with me?” “Does true love really exist?” “I love my mate, we just don’t have time for each other anymore between work, raising kids, and all the other obligations of life.”

Does any of this sound familiar? If so, you may be normal in our contemporary culture of frenzy, fast pace, and multitasking. In this new millennium, we are living our lives more and more in the fast lane, trying to juggle ten balls at once while walking across a tightrope and losing our inner balance in the process. As a result, the quality of our relationships is suffering. It is no wonder that 50 percent of all first and 60 percent of second marriages end in divorce. You might wonder if we have time for love and friendship anymore.

Most of us who are or who have been in committed relationships follow the typical path of being infatuated, falling in love, and then experiencing disappointment, hurt, anger, disillusionment, and inevitable pain. If you are at a crisis point and are reading this, you probably haven't given up hope, and you aren't alone in your struggle. Most couples eventually hit this wall. Even if you aren't in a crisis, you may just want more out of your relationship.

*Slowing Down to the Speed of Love* is about turning adversity and conflict into an opportunity for transformation, as well as rejuvenating an "average" relationship. These insights will also keep a new relationship on a loving track, and, if you're not currently in a relationship but would like to be, show you what true love is.

You may think that you have failed, that you were stupid to think your relationship could ever work in the first place, or that your partner is at fault. Don't be discouraged. You may not realize it, but you are on the brink of change and potential transformation. Crisis and conflict are ways of waking us up to the possibilities that lie dormant in any relationship. Have hope that if you gain the proper perspective and understanding, you can change this present difficult time into a turning point.

For the past twenty-eight years, I have been a couples therapist and seminar leader. I have written this book for all couples and singles who are struggling, as my wife and I did until we gained an understanding

of how to have a healthy relationship. Looking over those years, the catalyst that moved my clients and me out of pain and insecurity and into a new understanding of our relationships and our true nature was *willingness*.

This transforming power is the willingness to be open, to discover who we are and how we can experience love in all of our relationships. It is the difference between choosing to continually move forward and experience more love in our lives and stopping out of fear of letting go of familiar ways of doing and thinking. All it takes is a little willingness. At times, you may feel that it takes courage to let go of the old and familiar; even if it is painful, the familiar can be comfortable. I can truthfully say that in light of what I know now, I would not want any of my old beliefs and habits back. As you read, just ask yourself along the way, “Am I willing to discover love that is timeless?”

My original insight into transforming relationships was triggered by the principles of inner peace and spiritual fulfillment known as *Health Realization*, which was inspired by Sydney Banks in the 1970s after he had a realization about the nature of the mind and human experience. *Slowing Down to the Speed of Love* is a road map to the principles that allow us to understand how life works and how to access our birthright of love and personal fulfillment.

Here is a story from a seminar participant (in her own words) that illustrates the possibility of change for all relationships.

### **Allison and Justin’s Story of Transformation**



Justin and I met twenty-six years ago as colleagues in a youth outreach training program. We were involved in similar work with high school teens for two years, and during that time we became good friends. Gradually, our friendship turned into something much stronger.

We weren't just in love. We were hopelessly in love. After dating for two years, we married. The first seven years of married life were wonderful. We were soul mates and so happy to be together. But in our third year of marriage, we learned that Justin would be unable to parent biologically. We grieved deeply and then moved on, trusting that our lives would be full and rich without children.

After being married for seven years, both of us decided that we wanted to change jobs and remove ourselves from the intense way we had been involved in service to others. Changing careers and coming to terms with his infertility seemed to overwhelm Justin, and quickly and silently, he became depressed. For the next few years, it became really challenging for Justin and me to relate to each other and communicate effectively. For the first time, we felt alienated from each other and unable to get our emotional needs met. We separated for nine months during that time, and on some days the future of our relationship looked bleak indeed.

We eventually got back together and adopted two wonderful children. Although we experienced true joy in our family life, it wasn't consistent and Justin still struggled with depression. He worked to be there for our kids with whatever energy he had, yet he withdrew from me and was non-communicative. I eventually became filled with resentment and anger that I was not living the life I wanted to live. We blamed each other for our misery and felt lost as to where to find help.

Over the course of several years, Justin saw several psychiatrists, therapists, and did an intensive regimen of drug therapy. On occasion, medication worked for a while, but nothing lasted for more than a few months. I participated in my own therapy, did what reading I could find on depression, but there was no relief in my marital situation.

I would become so enraged when I heard professionals tell Justin that he had dysthymia (a depressive mood disorder), along with frequent bouts of major depression, and that all he could do was try to manage it. It seemed as though his fate was cast. I knew deep in my heart that Justin

could free himself from the inside out, but I was having trouble doing that effectively myself and felt trapped.

Depression wreaks incredible havoc on a marriage. I felt like a failure every single day, because although I was living life fully with my children, in my career, and in other aspects of my personal life, my inability to accept Justin and be at peace with his behavior and choices eroded my self-esteem something fierce.

As a last attempt, we saw a highly recommended marriage therapist whom I liked a great deal as a person. Yet she, too, did nothing to help us. I most often left the sessions feeling worse than when I walked in the door. Old wounds were reopened and relived. What good was that?

I began to contemplate divorce. Even though it was almost unthinkable, it seemed the only option. I wanted relief from Justin's darkness, moodiness, and silent brooding. His depression had become such an unruly monster in our lives. It got all the attention that I was starving for. I no longer liked myself and clearly had become part of the problem. Though I, too, became depressed, I knew there was a better way to live, and to stay stuck seemed destructive.

Then, Justin and I attended Joe Bailey's course in September 1999, where Joe taught us a whole new way of looking at our relationship by focusing on one moment at a time. Slowly we began to put aside the past. Looking back, even for a second, did nothing for me—for either of us. We both stayed in the moment, and the resentment disappeared. Resenting the past didn't serve me. Analyzing it was only wasted energy. Who cares what happened then? Who cares how long it went on? It was over, and I had no desire to return there.

We learned about deep listening. We learned about letting our thinking flow. We came to see that when we had negative thoughts about each other or life that they would pass. We began to take walks together again. We sought to enjoy each other, not fix, correct, blame, enlighten, or control each other. As a result, humor has reentered our lives. We laugh more



easily. We no longer try to be right, but seek to be loving. Acceptance abounds. Affection has returned, and daring to trust is a part of our relationship once again.

Before we reached this understanding, depression had us by the throat. Regrettably, most of our other mental health professionals, though well-meaning, had done nothing to aid us. In this new model of therapy, I learned about innocence, which is such a freeing idea. It helped me to not judge Justin and to stop being angry with him. The principles we learned in Joe's seminar have taught us what nothing else could. We now live in joy, lightness, and happiness.

I had always known that I was meant to live fully, regardless of whatever was going on with Justin. I had, in many ways, built as good a life as I was able at the time. I worked for so much and got so much. And yet happiness had eluded me.

I can't say I ever desired calmness. I always thought I was too high-energy for calm. Yet what I've discovered is that when I have a calm mind and a calm heart, happiness settles on me like a butterfly. And happiness, like a butterfly, had eluded me for more than a decade. As we both calm our minds and use this framework to relate to each other, we are slowly healed day-by-day and grateful for each moment we have.

I am so happy that I did not pursue a divorce. I never wanted to break up our family. Now, we plan to practice the Health Realization principles a day at a time. We've done further reading on these ideas and trust, once again, in each other's innocence and goodness and love. Justin is now free of his depression and is off all medication. Our marriage was saved at the eleventh hour. And our kids, as well as Justin and I, are reaping the benefits!

Justin and Allison did several things that were markedly different from their previous attempts to deal with their marriage problems and Justin's depression. First, they learned that the source of our experience is in our power to think and make our thoughts conscious. We create

all of our emotions, perceptions, and experiences through the principles of *Thought* and *Consciousness*. By realizing these first two principles, Justin and Allison understood that going back and analyzing their past was not only unhelpful, but it also kept breathing life into it, validating the past as if it were still a reality. Dwelling on the past would be as unhealthy as having the flu last week and then proceeding to relive it for days, weeks, and even months later through conversations and memories, thus reminding themselves unnecessarily of something that was long past. Yet millions of people who participate in conventional psychological practices are engaged in a similar rehashing of past events, emotions, and behaviors. These practices muddy the water of the present and keep people from experiencing the feelings of *timeless love*, which can only be felt in this moment.

Justin and Allison also learned about *deep listening*. They learned to hear each other, not through the contamination of past memories and habits, but through the pure filter of consciousness that exists in all of us when we are fully in the present moment. When they learned to be responsible for creating their own experience, they quit blaming each other for their own emotions and behavior. As a result, they transformed their emotions of anger and resentment into compassion and understanding.

As Justin and Allison each learned to tap into his or her true Self—which is the true source of timeless love—they realized that they already had the love they sought. They were able to stop searching for it in each other. When they quit expecting to be fulfilled from the outside, they experienced true fulfillment from the inside.

Fortunately, the couple in this story learned the principles that enabled them to reconnect with their love instead of breaking up, but often that isn't the case. Justin and Allison discovered the solution while already in a failing relationship, and they succeeded in salvaging it. To find the origin of what makes relationships fail, we must explore what

we were initially searching for in it. Though we carry the elements for a healthy relationship within us, our lack of awareness of those elements sets ourselves up for failure before we even meet our mate.

In this next section I will share my own search for love and how it led to a great deal of pain and disappointment.

## My Own Search for Love

As a young man, I dreamed of finding my true love. Sometimes she would be 5 feet, 3 inches tall and would have blue eyes, blond hair, and a beautiful smile; at other times she had long dark hair and exotic features. And she would be madly in love with me, of course. Although my checklist for the perfect mate changed and evolved over time, I always had one. When I met someone who came close to my idea of perfection, I would mentally compare her traits to those on my list, though I was not always aware I was doing so.

I also had many beliefs about the way relationships should be. I thought it was *her* job to make me happy—to take away my emptiness, to make me laugh, to make me feel good about myself, to do the things a “good mate” should do. I had a lot of rules and expectations, most of which were never met.

Almost all of my relationships followed a predictable pattern of stages:

1. Attraction
2. Infatuation
3. Love
4. Expectations based on my past conditioning
5. Unfulfilled expectations
6. Doubt
7. Disappointment
8. Resentment
9. Anger
10. Disillusionment
11. Break-up

This pattern repeated itself numerous times.

I didn't seem to be alone in this process. Most of my friends experienced similar stages, and most of the songs I listened to spoke of similar quests for love. Naturally, I believed that this cycle of love and loss was just the way things were.

Eventually I got married and began the cycle again, but with two additional emotions—I felt trapped and guilty. My wife wasn't making me happy at all. In fact, she was making me very unhappy. She wasn't living up to my expectations of how she should be nurturing and anticipate my needs. I had only one recourse—to try to change her. Needless to say, she didn't exactly appreciate my efforts. So, we spent another seven years together trying to make it work—with lots of marriage counseling, soul searching, and arguments—and eventually came to the conclusion that we weren't meant for each other and we separated.

After my divorce, my quest for true love resumed, though I was a little more cautious, fearful, and mistrustful. Again, I fell in love several times, thinking I had found the right person, only to eventually become disillusioned. By age thirty-two, I was depressed, lonely, and had reached the conclusion that in the new age of liberation of the sexes, marriage and true love were not in the cards for me. I saw that others were having relationship problems too, and no one seemed to have the answers.

Ironically, I was a marriage counselor and a psychotherapist at the time, which made me feel doubly a failure. I thought that of all people, I should know how to have a successful relationship!

Though I had given up on some level, the yearning for true love continued inside me. I tried to squelch it, but to no avail. After I lost a relationship that I really thought was *the one*, I sank into a deep depression.

Ironically, my pain became a turning point in my search for love.

In my despair, I turned within. I asked God to heal me of my agony. A quiet voice inside whispered, "You already have what you seek.

Accept yourself fully as you are.” That moment I had my first glimpse of what was to be a new phase of becoming who I truly am. From that small first step, I committed myself to uncovering the spiritual essence of my being that had been buried under my ego for most of my life. Although I wavered many times after that day and was unable to completely sustain the awareness contained in that insightful flash, my commitment to finding true inner love and happiness remained unshakable.

For many years I had heard this notion and even taught it to the individuals and couples who came to me for psychotherapy. However, I hadn't truly realized it for myself. Finally, I understood the real meaning of the first guideline to true love:

*You are enough. You are already whole. Don't look to another to fill what is already complete. You are love.*

I felt such relief! All the pressure to find the right person was suddenly gone. The pressure I had put on others to fulfill all my personal needs also disappeared to a great degree. The way I felt and behaved began to change. I was calm and more self-assured. I could just be me, and that was enough. I quit looking for love from others, from the outside. Instead, I fell in love with life! I felt love for everything and everyone that I saw. My experience of love was no longer contingent upon being loved back or getting my needs met. My neediness began to subside and was replaced by feelings of deep contentment. The bottomless hole that I had experienced all my life was no longer empty, so my need to fill it with love from another person was no longer necessary. This “knowing” that the source of love is within me and everyone was enough to sustain me through the times when I became entangled in my old way of thinking and lost sight of timeless love. I was beginning to glimpse another possibility—one that was not a struggle, one that was not bound by limitations. Instead, I intuitively knew I was ready

for a new kind of love, one that was unconditional and timeless. I knew this, though I had not yet experienced it.

## Redefining Love

Now I'd like to set the stage by suggesting a new definition of love. I would like to talk about a love that is eternal, one that evolves and grows over time, a love that is *timeless*. In our ever-accelerating, fast-paced world, we don't seem to have enough time for each other—to listen, to share, and to connect. To experience this new kind of love, we must learn to stop time and live fully in the present. This is a paradigm shift—from the world of finite time and space to a world of infinite time with no boundaries.

Timeless love is quite different from the kind of love I'd spent much of my life searching for. Timeless love is born not of *my* needs, expectations, or desires, but is instead a spiritual love that is the essence of my spiritual nature. You may ask, "How can a love like this satisfy me? How can a love like this be experienced with another person?" Yet, most of us have experienced moments of this type of love, although fleetingly. At times, when we are undistracted by external events and our own mental juggling, expectations, and judgments—when time stands still and we are in the moment—we feel this kind of love. It is like the sun peeking out of the clouds after a month of November darkness. The sun was and always has been there, but it seems so rare. Lovers often speak of "time standing still." When we are in the moment and connected to this timeless feeling, we are filled up with an infinite supply of love.

The contrast to timeless love is what I call *time-bound love*, a conditional type that has expectations attached. Just fill in the blank for the expectation that sounds most familiar to you. "I'll love you if

\_\_\_\_\_” (“you love me first,” “you make me happy,” “you do what I expect,” “you like what I like,” “you believe what I believe,” and so on). When we are involved in time-bound love, we often feel caught up in time—impatient, judgmental, anxious, unfulfilled, and needy.

Conditional love is essentially selfish. In my pursuit of time-bound love I tried to act loving, to act kind, to act like I was listening, but it was only a means to get what *I* wanted. For example, when I was young, if I wanted to receive a compliment about how I looked, I might compliment the other person, hoping that person would do the same. This type of interaction puts an expectation and pressure on the other person that, in turn, leads to tension and resentment.

This next story from one of my clients illustrates how trying to meet our time-bound, ego-based needs can lead to disappointment, hurt, and failed relationships.

### A Story of Time-Bound Love



Carey had a very low self-image. In high school she had suffered from anorexia, and in her young adult years she was on a perpetual diet.

When she met Brent, she fell head over heels in love with him. Not only did she think he was “really cute,” but he was also quick to compliment her on her hair or a new outfit or how she looked in a bathing suit. As time went on, however, his compliments became less frequent, and she became very angry.

“How could I have ended up with such a selfish jerk?” she often thought to herself. He was no longer feeding her ego, and she was in withdrawal from her addiction to his compliments.

“Why don’t you just grow up?” Brent blurted out one day. He was sick and tired of constantly having to nurture her fragile sense of self-worth.

Eventually, he threatened to end the relationship and she pleaded for him to come to couples counseling with her.

Through the process of Health Realization therapy, they both learned to look within for the source of their true happiness and love—timeless love. They realized that it wasn't up to another person to make them happy or miserable. They learned that their inner essence was a spiritual core that is experienced as a feeling of love. As a result of this realization, the constant tug-of-war for attention subsided and their love blossomed. By recognizing that the source of their unpleasant emotions was their own thinking, they were able to calm their rampant expectations and accept each other for who they truly were.

Time-bound love takes what the other person does very personally. “What did he mean by that statement?” we ask ourselves. “Why isn't she attracted to me tonight?” “Does he still love me?”

In self-centered, time-bound love, we are always interpreting *everything* the other person says or does. Every word and gesture is fraught with meaning of our own making. We are constantly busy thinking about the state of the relationship and how it is doing. “Is each of us contributing equally to the relationship?” “Is the ledger balanced?” “Does he do as much for the family and me as I do for him?” “Am I being taken advantage of?” Me, me, me, me, me. Self-absorbed love is all about me. It isn't really love at all.

### *Timeless Love*

Unlike the conditional, self-centered nature of time-bound love, timeless love is born of our spiritual nature and therefore has no personal needs. Timeless love is the only type that is permanent and of any real value. It is unconditional and non-ego based; it is effortless and natu-



ral. And it is transcendent, because it has nothing to do with me, me, me.

The essence of each of us is this divine source—love. When we are aware of our true nature, the importance of our individual ego-self fades. As we place less importance on our personality quirks, expectations, and neediness, we open ourselves to our true nature—love.

Love is the core of our being, so what could be easier and more natural than for our true, loving nature to flow in our lives and in our relationships? “Being” is life supported by the spiritual energy of all life—it is our true, natural Self. To *be* does not require effort; it just *is*—a natural way of being.

Note: It is a common practice to capitalize Self when used in the context of *true* Self, in order to distinguish the difference between the concept of a limited self and the concept of our unlimited spirit. In this book, I use the term *natural Self* interchangeably with the term *true Self*.

I know that when I am most relaxed, content, and peaceful, my life is easy. I am present; I am connected to people; I am love and compassion—I am alive. I never knew that in those moments I was experiencing my true, transcendent Self, not my ego-created personality. In such instances, my ego, with its likes, dislikes, defenses, and opinions, disappeared. It is now shocking to me that for all those years I had been confusing my ego and personality for my true Self.

Our true Self is who we *really* are; but we’ve had little experience or awareness of our innate, natural Self. We have more experience relating to our ego-personality—who we *think* we are. Early on we’re all taught, by example, to define ourselves by our opinions and our beliefs. We unconsciously created an image of self-importance, our ego, and we thought ourselves to be separate from our spiritual source and from each other. Our true Self is unlearned; it is natural. When we are aware of who we truly are, it is unnecessary to figure out and label ourselves.

| TIMELESS LOVE<br>(NATURAL SELF)                                       | TIME-BOUND LOVE<br>(EGO-SELF)   |
|---|---|
| Inexhaustible<br><i>My love is endless.</i>                           | Finite<br><i>I'll love you if . . .</i>                                 |
| Eternal, forever<br><i>My love always was and<br/>always will be.</i> | Fades over time<br><i>What happened to the love<br/>we once had?</i>    |
| Unconditional<br><i>I accept you as you are.</i>                      | Conditional<br><i>If you could just change this<br/>one thing . . .</i> |
| Unlimited<br><i>Giving and receiving<br/>are one.</i>                 | Limited<br><i>I'll scratch your back,<br/>you scratch mine.</i>         |

We know that we are not our thinking or our beliefs. As we become aware that we are spiritual beings having a human experience, we express timeless love.

In contrast to this easy, free-flowing experience of love is the effort and struggle that many of us associate with being in a relationship. Trying to conform to a relationship based on our invented world of romance or the media's idea of love brings with it thoughts of obligation, responsibility, and effort. Inventing a reality based on illusion is unnatural. The ego *invents*; our spiritual nature *is*.

Most of us go through life gaining only glimpses of this true or natural Self. We experience such transcendent moments when we fall in love, at the birth of a child, in moments of ecstasy, and when we are

totally absorbed in the moment, free of our personal thought system of beliefs and personality. We all seek this spiritual essence of our being, but we also fear it and retreat from it because it is a threat to our preconceived notions of ourselves and of the world.

I mentioned earlier that initially I only had a glimpse of the world of timeless love. I hadn't yet *experienced* it. Several years after I quit looking outside for love and began to look within, I went through a very profound experience—an epiphany. My second marriage had reached another crossroads, this time a major one. Insidiously, I had become caught up in my habits of personality and moved away from my true Self. I was talking the talk of love and happiness, but not walking the walk. My wife held firm to her commitment to follow the thread of spirituality in her life, but I was caught up in the world of work, success, and material things. Like many people, I had allowed myself to “fall asleep,” lulled back into this world of illusionary happiness. But my wife confronted me in a way that woke me up, very painfully and emotionally at the time, yet later I realized that what she did was necessary.

We were in a marital crisis and I was afraid. I was afraid of losing her, but more important, I was afraid to “let go” of control. Fortunately, Sydney Banks, my mentor and teacher, was giving a lecture on love and wisdom in San Francisco the weekend following our marital crisis. We both flew out there, lost and extremely unhappy. Though I thoroughly enjoyed and was deeply impacted by the seminar with Syd, I was still frightened and sad. After the seminar, we decided to take a couple of weeks off and drive up the West Coast from California to Washington. The next several days will remain with me for the rest of my life—seared into my memory.

Before we drove up the coast, my wife, Michael, and I stayed with our dear friends for a day. The morning we left, I was playing with their two girls, who were three and five at the time. To this day I don't know what happened while playing with them, but I suddenly felt this incred-

ible feeling of love. I looked at those sweet girls and their innocence, and everything painful seemed to melt away. I felt a deep sense of joy, gratitude, and an indescribable spiritual energy.

As Michael and I began our drive up the coast, I couldn't stop crying. I felt such love for everything, such overwhelming joy that I couldn't contain it. I had to stop the car every few moments just to take in the beauty around me, in me, and in my wife. It didn't matter if we stayed together, it didn't matter if I lived or died, nothing mattered. I felt complete. I felt healed from within. My whole body and mind seemed to be going through a transformation.

For the next four days, I can only describe what I experienced as pure ecstasy. I experienced unconditional love, true love. Those four days had no time. It could have been a moment or several years. It didn't contain an experience of time. It was my first experience with timeless love. No other person could give me that experience; it had to come from within.

Although my experience was profound and complete within itself, it was the beginning of a very significant transformation of my life and our marriage. This insight began to unfold in my everyday life in wonderful ways, but at times I would find myself acting out of old habits and my belief system. This experience had awakened my knowing of what was real and possible, so I didn't mind that I still had one foot in my old habits and one foot in this new world. I could see that as I lived from this new awareness that the old illusionary world of the ego, with its belief system, would automatically wash away.

Not everyone will have the type of prolonged, transcendent experience I just described. Timeless love can reveal itself in many different ways, and no one experience is more valuable or valid than another. One of my students recently shared this story (in her own words) about how timeless love revealed itself in her marriage.

## Love Is a State of Mind, Not an Action



I have always loved my husband, and over the years we have had what most would consider an above-average marriage. However, over time the feelings of love began to fade and were replaced with our habits of relating to each other. We would often argue about the kids, money, and trivial things. Nothing major, just everyday normal bickering.

As I began to live more in the moment from the spiritual core of my being, things between Jon and me gradually changed. When he said something I didn't agree with, I would listen deeply to him with openness instead of fighting for my point of view. I would see his total innocence and fall in love with him all over again. [The concepts of "deep listening" and "seeing innocence" are explained in detail in Chapters 4 and 5, respectively.] The deep feelings of love returned to me, and he too began to change. He was more present with me and the kids and started to show his caring more overtly, in little acts of kindness. His true essence began to shine through—the part of him I fell in love with in the first place. That part had never really left; I just stopped seeing it. Instead, I had focused on what he was "doing wrong"; in other words, what he was not doing my way.

Nothing big really changed between Jon and me, but the feeling of love is so strong that some days I feel as though I might burst with joy. I feel this love equally with my children and the many people I encounter each day. I have come to know that love is a state of mind—not an action.

Timeless love is constant. It is not dependent upon whether someone is acting in a way that pleases us. It doesn't diminish over time, but strengthens and deepens.

We may occasionally experience timeless love in a passing moment, but soon we forget it and do not recognize it for its profound importance. It may be present in a glance at our partner, where our eyes meet

and we see his or her beauty and feel a surge of love. However, it is just a passing flash of truth, because as we move on to our busy and distracted lives, we push aside the quality and effect of that deep feeling and replace it with our habitual beliefs and emotions. As we grow wiser and more peaceful, however, the fullness of timeless love is revealed to us. We begin to know that love is an undercurrent that is always there, it is the source of all things including us. We feel its power and influence, though we cannot see it with our eyes. We begin to cherish and savor those passing glimpses of truth and beauty, and thus they become more lasting. They shift from the background to the foreground.

As you read these ideas about the nature of timeless love, you may think that it is unattainable. You may be wondering what this kind of deep spiritual love has to do with finding intimacy in your own life. However, if you can first open yourself to an understanding of the nature of timeless love and then consider the possibility that everyone, even you, is capable of realizing it, you will be on your way to experiencing this love yourself. You must have hope and faith to begin this journey, but above all, *willingness* is the first prerequisite. It is a journey worth taking, because timeless love will give you many gifts.

With timeless love:

- You will love unconditionally.
- Your experience of love will continue to grow.
- Insecurity and fear will drop from all your relationships.
- You will be present in your relationships—you will listen deeply, talk from the heart, and appreciate the moment.
- You will be able to forgive.
- You will see conflict as an opportunity for personal transformation.
- Your love will last.
- You will find your own true love within.

I have discovered eight guidelines (although that is an arbitrary number, at the root of each guideline is the same timeless truth) that have helped me and many others realize timeless love in our relationships and within ourselves. I didn't learn them in a book, though many books have spoken of them. I didn't learn them from my teachers, though they tried to direct me to these guidelines. I found them written in my heart, as they come from the innate knowledge available in everyone—waiting to be discovered by each of us. The experience of my own relationships has been my greatest teacher. I am grateful for what I have learned from those who have blessed me with their gifts of love and friendship. Insights about the nature of love have guided me, leaving clues along the way as I traveled the course of my relationships.

I'd like to share with you the eight guidelines of true love that I will explore in detail throughout the rest of the book. I have already introduced the first guideline in this chapter, but it, like all the others, is meant to be reaffirmed in every moment.

## The Eight Guidelines of Timeless Love

1. You *are* the love that you seek—look within.
2. Love can only be found in the present moment.
3. Listen deeply to yourself and to others.
4. Recognize that we all live in a thought-created separate reality.
5. Be aware of your true feelings and emotions as a guidance system.
6. Learn to speak from the heart rather than the intellect.

7. Understand how to let go of the past, through the art of forgiveness.
8. Transform conflict into wholehearted resolution.

As you read about these eight guidelines and the stories of couples who have realized the importance of them in their relationships, open yourself to the possibility that you, too, can have a love that lasts, extends, expands, and grows.

In the next chapter, I will talk about the first guideline, “You *are* the love you seek—look within.” Before you can experience love, you have to know where it comes from.