

Compassion

"Perhaps the darkness that we are so attached to reminds us, wrongly, of the safety and security of a mother's womb." -rp-

My Dearest Friend,

You have chosen to enter the world of the uncommon. Your history of suffering up until this time, although perhaps more than many, is common. Your decision to do the work necessary NOT to be that history—that is uncommon.

I am motivated to write to you about compassion and love. I want to give you a framework for compassion and love—to start with yourself and then, when ready, expand it to the world around you.

We start with the recognition that all that we are is *learned* behavior. No one is born with belief, and no one is born a tragedy. At conception, we are as close to a perfect, empty vessel as possible. At birth, we need only the nourishment of the physical and love to flourish. These needs are not optional. Understanding the importance of having our love and nourishment needs fulfilled is the key to compassion and forgiveness.

As an infant, solely dependent upon the world, we attempt to secure nourishment through the IMITATION of the behaviors of those closest to us. On some deep level, we understand that the more like them we are, the more likely they will wish to take care of us. This process of imitation is unconscious. I am sure you have noticed this as you have watched your child's even youngest efforts to get your attention.

We, as children, are sponges, whose only desires are to be loved and nourished. In a vain attempt to receive this love and nourishment, we absorb and become the patterns of those closest to us and to whom we are most dependent. Unfortunately, in our young, naïve, and desperate state, we have NO discernment of which behaviors we are adopting are negative or positive. We suck up ALL the qualities of our caretakers—the light and the dark.

This imitation/mimicry crosses all areas of life: The physical in patterns of movement and posture, breathing and, grace. The emotional with jealousy, hatred, envy, anger, depression, deceit, remorse, and pride. The mental with judgments, criticism, and our ability to concentrate and create. The spiritual with beliefs and doubt about the very creator himself.

By the time we are old enough to have some discernment of these patterns, it is too late. They are ingrained in our system at the deepest of levels.

So my friend, what is to be done? First, we must understand that the way we treat ourselves, our internal conversation/dialogue, is but a playing out of the voices of both adult and child within us—all learned behaviors. One example is when the child rebels—the adult suppresses. The patterns of rebellion and suppression are both learned patterns from our parents. As children, we ran this scenario with our parents, as adults, we supply internally both the voice of the parent and the child. This pattern of negative love, as with basically all our internal dialogue, plays continuously throughout our lives.

Secondly, we understand that the primary focus of human life is to fill this lack of unconditional love and nourishment we needed to flourish and never received.

Thirdly we recognize that we *embodied* these traits of our parents, repeating them over and over in a vain attempt to get this love and nourishment.

Fourthly, we understand that some (read most) of these patterns we use to try to obtain love will result in negative love—tiny crumbs of negative attention, usually leading to the detriment of our sense of self and wellbeing.

Example of the ways our parents used to “love us” and the way we, internalized them to “love” ourselves:

They would hit us to teach us lessons.

They would criticize us, thinking it would make us “better.”

They ignored us if we did unacceptable behaviors.

They would judge us.

They would take out their frustrations on us.

They would show us how to drink, become addicts, manipulate the world, hate, and be jealous

They would use guilt and shame to make us more “like them”

For many of us, this negative love is all we know. We would rather judge, criticize, hate, and doubt ourselves than receive no love at all—such a sad thing—yet ubiquitous through the human condition. One only has to look at our world to understand that it is driven by 7 billion desperate souls, who only need love, and will do whatever it takes to get it—usually through patterns of negative love.

The way we treat ourselves, our children, our relationships and, the world around us is just us, trying our BEST, to love, and be loved, with the limited tools of the negative patterns at our disposal.

Can this be changed? Yes. How can this be changed? With compassion, consciousness, and love.

To gain compassion and forgiveness:

1. Recognize that you became you long before you had a choice.
2. Recognize that the patterns of your behavior, the good and the painful, are ALL behaviors that you adopted in a desperate attempt to gain love. No matter how terrible you think you are and have been up until this moment, you Did **NOT** have a choice, and the very judgment of all these behaviors as terrible is a *learned* behavior as well. 😞
3. Recognize that even as an adult, your deepest motivation still comes from this need for love and nourishment. And subsequently, you automatically repeat those behaviors which you learned in childhood
 - a. These behaviors cross the entire human experience from Gandhi to Hitler
 - b. Each of us desperately trying to obtain love through patterns learned as a child.
 - c. They are reflexive and tied to survival—difficult, if not impossible, to stop.
 - d. The more we are feeling unloved, the stronger the deepest patterns will exhibit themselves and, the more we act out with negative love.
 - e. Acting out these negative patterns, we then judge or criticize ourselves for doing them—making ourselves feel even less loved, and subsequently, we work harder to try

to receive love using the only tools we have—negative love 😞. A painful, lose/lose vicious cycle.

4. Recognize that your parents learned their patterns of negative love from THEIR parents.
 - a. Your parents are no more to blame for who they were and how they treated you, then you are to blame for how you are and how you treat yourself and others.
 - b. Understand that this chain of dysfunction is ancient and primal. As a tool for survival, mimicry dates back to prehistoric times.



So now understand that **we cannot help being who we are**—a simple compilation of dysfunction over the ages.

Understand, too, that our parents/caregiver did the **BEST THEY COULD** considering the dysfunctions of their parents and the parents before them.

Your entire life has been the playing out of patterns you absorbed from your parents—and they, in turn, from their parents. Would it not be interesting to see what your life would be like as the **TRUE** you, unfettered by the lies of the past?

FORGIVE THEM. THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO.

LUKE 23:24

Imagine a being, entity, guide, or God who has watched over you your entire life. Imagine that this being, knowing your history *understands*, absolutely and unequivocally, that even in your worst moments, you were doing the **best you could**. This understanding is called **COMPASSION**.

This compassion is the key to forgiving yourself and the world around you. When you truly understand that not only you but everyone around you are little automatons playing out the darkness of their history, it becomes much easier to forgive—for you/they do not have a choice.

Now you may say as “the adult” that, of course, they have choices. And I would reply that the voice within that says, “of course they have choices” is just another pattern of negative love. People **do not** have a choice of how they act—if they could be different, with less negative patterns, than they would. That innate human goodness with each of us may be buried or trapped in layers upon layers of negative love—but it is there. Each of us, even in the worst possible ways, is doing the best that we can to get the love that we need. They are desperate/we are desperate and desperate people act poorly. How can we have anything **BUT** compassion for ourselves and these folks?

Take a moment to reflect on your relationship, even before the accident, it was clear your partner had taken on his share of negative patterns. After the tragedy, being even more compromised and less able to compensate, his negative patterns of love became and continue to be even more pronounced. Remember that this is not his fault but a manifestation of patterns from generations of life. It will serve you to understand that his actions are the best that he could and can do. The greatest gift you can give your child is to find unconditional love for her father. In doing so, she will mimic you, embody this love,

and have the capacity to forgive not only him but the negative patterns of love she will inevitably absorb from him as well.

So now we, at least on an intellectual level, can create a scenario for compassion for ourselves and the world around us. This compassion frees us from judgment /criticism. This compassion most importantly gives us the mechanism to alter the cycle of abuse, from parent to child, that has created this mess of a world within which we live. We start with ourselves, when we see ourselves in negative love, the ONLY response that will help us transcend those behaviors is having compassion for ourselves. We recognize that we are doing these behaviors to fill our emptiness, and the ONLY way to transcend these patterns is to fill that emptiness with acceptance and love.

Enough about compassion—Now let us talk about love.

When we talk about love, we are talking about unconditional love. All the other loves, as dark and delicious as they may be, are illusionary and transient. These other loves will never provide the constant nourishment that we, as evolving individuals, need to change the patterns of negative love so ingrained in our being.

Finding a source of love, that understands our entire lives, has absolute compassion for us, AND loves us unconditionally can require a bit of work.

God bless those of blind faith. When one believes, without doubt, it is a hop, skip, and a jump to imagine a source of unconditional love.

Unfortunately, for the rest of us, raised by cynics, zealots, or agnostics, we have either nothing, severe doubts, or perhaps the most damaging of all—the rock-solid belief that there is no God.

My friend—I know that you doubt the existence of a source of divine, unconditional love. Unfortunately, doubt, although a useful tool at times, will NOT provide for the changes you seek.

Somewhere, sometime in your life, you may have taken on beliefs that keep you from experiencing an unconditional source of love. Perhaps you believe that you are not worthy of God's love or that God does not exist. Or it has been difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile the significant darkness and pain of your life with the concept of an all-knowing, loving, and compassionate God. Take a moment to appreciate that these beliefs/theories have no meaning—they are ALL merely imitations/mimicry of the lonely souls who were your parents and caregivers.

As a cynic and doubter myself, finding a way to connect with something greater than myself has always been a struggle. I constantly was looking for proof. During one of the darker periods of my life, when I was awake enough to see my patterns, but not awake enough to change, I was introduced to Swami Baba Muktananda. Baba was a *Sad Guru*, an individual who could permanently awaken the divinity in others. The event took place in a large building in Oakland, California, in the '70s. Entering the hall, I went to the back of a line that I swear had a thousand people stretched out into the street. Over the next hour, as I edged closer, I became more and more altered. As a child of the sixties, I was not

unfamiliar with altered states, and things were definitely in flux. About 100 feet away, I could see the man himself, dressed in all orange and red, sitting on a throne, waving and whacking a handful of peacock feathers as people would come forth to greet him. Even at this proximity, I felt prepared to ask him questions, the meaning of life, and resolution for my despair. As I approached even closer, the entire room about him shimmered, and the next thing I knew, I was on my hands and knees in front of him. As he whacked me over the head with those peacock feathers for what felt like a very, very long time, all thoughts and questions were gone.

The next three months were spectacular; I became a devotee—I was in love with the divinity incarnate. As time progressed, however, the negative patterns of doubt and cynicism returned; I again became depressed and miserable, pretty much my baseline. I had become a regular at the nearby center for meditation. And asked one the more experienced devotees what I should do—I had lost all faith, my connection to my guru, and I was again in despair.

This individual then said to me—and this is what I would like you to hear—whether you have faith or not is not as important as *your intention* to be loving and loved. He recommended that I should just fake it. Pay attention to the actions, thoughts, and prayers of those that had true faith and, even if I did not believe it, act as if I did. Much later, I realized that in the act of faking, on a much more refined level, I was asking for help in the most sincere, yet doubting, way I could.

Lo and behold by this dedicated pretense, powered by the desperation of an aching heart, I received the experiences that cemented in me an awareness and connection to a source of divine and unconditional love. Over the next 40 years, the shape, form, and belief systems projected onto this source has often changed. I have found it is irrelevant as to how my smallness perceives the ONE TRUE GOD. It exists and is committed to the evolution of every sentient being.

So, my friend, with the understanding that the existence of a compassionate, unconditionally loving being that permeates all of the aspects of life is a possibility, you have an opportunity to make a conscious choice. Would you prefer to go through life, repeating your patterns of negative love, or, SUSPEND YOUR DISBELIEF and connect to an unlimited, unconditional source of love?

If you went for the first option—not much more to say about that 😞, If, however, you have the courage to at least explore this option of a truly benevolent universe, then pick a god, any god, and put all your heart and soul into pretending that you believe. Every day pretend to pray with absolute commitment. If you are looking for a sample prayer, see below and feel free to make modifications if needed.

_____ (*deity of your choice*),
*I will do WHATEVER it takes to transcend my patterns of negative love
and manifest my most evolved, most loving true self.*

With regards to picking a God...that is a subject for another day

I hope this helps.
Richard