

January 25, 2017

Expressions

A Publication of the CLAREMONT CENTER FOR SPIRITUAL LIVING



Thoughts About Love by Ed Graff

I have met cynics who say that love is a selfish act. The reason you fall in love is purely selfish - you do it because it makes you feel good.

I suppose the same could be said for anything else people do, like hobbies, or pursuing a career, or creating art. The real reason is just for the pleasure and enjoyment you get from it. Any benefit to other people is only incidental.

But love is more complicated than that. Sure, people might write poetry or compose songs or cook gourmet meals for the sheer joy of it, whether there was anyone around to share with or not.

But heartfelt love must have an object outside ourselves. Love turns selfishness inside-out. It might be true that the only reason we love someone else is because, ultimately, it makes us happy. But that happiness comes from bringing joy to the one we love.

It's that interdependence, the fulfillment that only comes from the smile of a loved one, that makes love such a conundrum - a lovely, selfless selfishness.

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"You come to love not by finding the perfect person, but by seeing an imperfect person perfectly." - *Sam Keen*

"Love doesn't make the world go round. Love is what makes the ride worthwhile." - *Franklin P. Jones*

Ed Graff, Interim Editor



A Different Approach To Valentine's Day

Offered by Dr. Steve McSwain

I did not so much choose Christianity as this religion chose me. Raised, as I was, in a Christian home, I could no more not be Christian than a child raised in a Muslim home in a middle eastern country would likely be anything other than a Muslim.

Following the Christ path for me is the process of entering “heaven” now — the process of becoming more and more grounded in this present moment — which, for me, is the real heaven. It is that heaven in which Jesus lived, as well as countless other spiritual masters in countless other traditions.

Following Jesus is learning, as he himself said, “To be in the world, not of the world” (John 17:14-15). It is becoming so connected to the “Ground of Being,” as Paul Tillich put it, one discovers him- or herself to be in an uninterrupted state of Divine consciousness — that is, a perpetual state of awareness of God herself.

My ambition is to learn to walk with God. I need no more heaven than this. In fact, when I look back on my life, I’m pretty sure that when I felt the need for something more, it was only ever because I did not feel the Eternal Someone now.

I want to consciously follow Jesus — that is to say, to be aware and grounded in this present moment, what William Blake described as seeing the “world in a grain of sand... heaven in a wild flower... or eternity in an hour.” I wish to hold “infinity in the palm of my hand.”

So, on this Valentine’s Day, here’s a little something different to think about: If you are so fortunate, as indeed I am, to have a special person with whom you share life, why not BE CHRIST to him or her, if you’re a Christian. If a Buddhist, why not BE THE BUDDHA to the person you love?

Or, if you are a professing atheist, why not practice being completely present to this person with whom you are privileged to journey through life?

What better Valentine could you give?
What more could he or she need from you?
What more “eternity” could you ever need?

Excerpted from an article first published Feb. 14, 2013 by Dr. Steve McSwain, an ambassador to the Council on the Parliament for the World’s Religions. www.SteveMcSwain.com

“Love is a symbol of eternity. It wipes out all sense of time, destroying all memory of a beginning and all fear of an end.” - *Unknown*

“When you are in love you can’t fall asleep, because reality is better than your dreams” - *Dr. Seuss*



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Service Guided By Principle

by Clyde Morgan

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in time of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.” - Martin Luther King Jr.

As most of you are aware in recent years the Claremont Center for Spiritual Living has had some significant challenges.

Choosing to serve is important because it allows you to support the principles you believe in. *“Be the change you want to see in the world.” - Mahatma Gandhi.*

The ultimate challenge in serving is when you are presented with circumstances in your service that appear not to be in principle with SOM. This might appear as “This isn’t what I signed up for, maybe I should quit,” and with the justification that others appear not to be living up to principle.

This very challenge is also an opportunity to apply the principles you have learned at this Center, especially when fear is at its height and is False Evidence Appearing Real. It also means Face Everything And Recover. *“My treatment then must not consider the facts. The facts are relative. The treatment must become Absolute.” - SOM pg.275.* Also, *“When things look their worst is the best time to work, the most satisfying time.” - SOM pg.282.*

I have found that the book *The Four Agreements* is in line with SOM: **1. Be Impeccable with your word:** Use the power of your word in the direction of truth and love. **2. Don’t take anything personally:** When you

are immune to the opinions and action of others, you won’t be the victim of needless suffering. **3. Don’t make assumptions:** Find the courage to ask questions and to express what you really want. Communicate as clearly as you can. **4. Always do your best:** It will be different when you’re healthy as opposed to sick. Under any circumstance simply do your best.

I believe we stagnated and didn’t set goals with the intention of attaining them. We only made wishes, and so we were presented with challenges of survival instead. I believe we are at the threshold of growth and prosperity at our beloved Center. We must set goals, set our intention, and move forward. Will there be challenges? Of course. Different? Yes. I think, rather than the challenges of trying to get back up on our feet, they will be challenges that come with growing pains. What a great challenge to have, having to manage the process of growth because of love and prosperity rather than have to manage barely getting by.

Whether in your personal life, at work or in service, when you look for a guiding star, look toward principle. It shines even brighter once it has been applied.

In Service,
Clyde Morgan,
Vice President, Board of Trustees

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Calendar of Events for February, 2017

Claremont CSL Events

Ongoing Events:

Sundays -

AA Meetings, 8 AM, Chapel
Meditation, 10 AM, Chapel
Sunday Service, 10:30 AM, Sanctuary
Fellowship Hour, 12:00 PM, Holmes Hall
Apostolic Church, 12:30 PM, Chapel

Mondays -

Somatic Class, 9 AM, Chapel
Man Kind Project, 7 PM, Chapel

Wednesdays -

Somatic Class, 9 AM, Chapel
Meditation, 6:15 PM, Practitioner Room
Wednesday Service, 7 PM, Chapel

Thursdays -

Heart-to-Heart Conversations,
10 AM, Chapel

Saturdays -

Yoga Class, 9 AM, Chapel

Special Events for February:

Foundations Class, Tuesdays, 6:30 PM
Potluck Sunday, Feb. 5, 11:30, H.H.
Sacred Sounds Meditation, Feb. 17,
7 PM, Chapel
Board Meeting, Feb. 19, 12:00
Annual Meeting, Feb. 26, 12:30,
Sanctuary

Sacred and Cultural Events

February is Black History Month

- 1 National Freedom Day (*Commemorates the signing of the 13th Amendment, abolishing slavery in 1865.*)
- 11 Tu B'Shvat (*Jewish New Year's Day for Trees, the first of the year for tithing the fruit of trees.*)
- 14 Valentine's Day
- 15 Susan B. Anthony's Birthday
Nirvana Day (*The day when the historical Buddha achieved Parinivarna, or complete Nirvana, upon the death of his physical body.*)
- 20 President's Day (*Honors past presidents of the United States.*)
- 25 Maha Shivaratri (*Also called 'Shiva Ratri', the Great Festival of Shiva.*)

Feb. 26 - March 1

- Ayyam-I-Ha (Baha'i. 'Days of Ha' are dedicated to spiritual preparation for the fast, celebrating, hospitality, charity, and gift giving before the last month of the Baha'i year.)*
- 27 Clean Monday (*Eastern Christian. The beginning of Great Lent.*)
 - 28 Shrove Tuesday (*Western Christian. Also known as Mardi Gras, a day of penitence and the last day to feast before Lent begins.*)



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Ed Graff, 909-938-9676

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Jeff Harrison, 714-928-7738

Pet Ministry -

Diane Clements, RScP, 909-947-5197

Sunday Hospitality -

Open Position

Volunteer Team Leader -

Micki Daniels, 909-949-1152

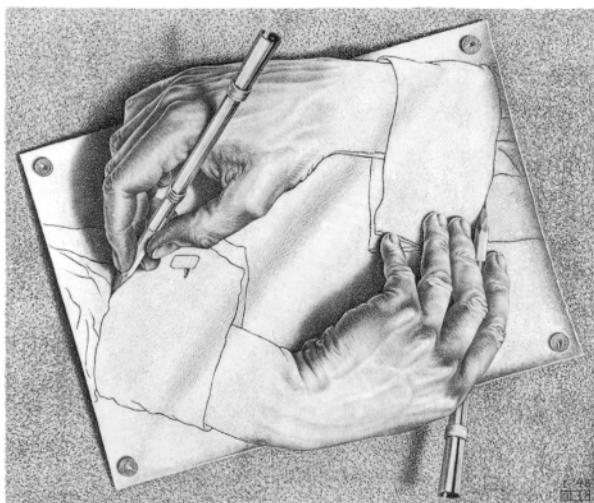
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