

The meaning of love

There are many kinds of love – erotic love, platonic love, the love of a parent for their child, or grandparents for their grandchildren. Towards one's pet, or one's home or garden. For one's friends and companions. A love of mystery, or exploration. Towards one's God. And many more.

What do these all have in common?

Connection. There is something not-you, other than you, that you see and value for its own sake. You are aware of them: they are on your radar, part of your world. You would want them to be well. You are concerned when they show distress. You care for them. Is this unconditional love?

The connection creates a line of sympathy between you. When it is reciprocated, it becomes a bond. The bond may endure only for a short period, or last a lifetime. When it happens at all it is a joy and enrichment to both parties.

Love ennobles the giver and empowers the receiver, in whom it instigates confidence and self-belief. A child riding their bicycle unaided for the first time, looking back at their loved ones proudly watching on; wobbling and nearly falling off in the process. A horse and rider, both smartly turned out, confidently stepping forth. When one has felt that love from another, then one has the confidence to follow one's own loves.

It allows us to become more human.

When a person feels restricted by the declared love from another, they are experiencing possession, not love. Love has to flow. What about obsessive love? Unrequited love? Or being afraid to love? Does one have to love oneself, at least a little, in order to be able to offer love to others?

Someone once said, you can only keep a thing by giving it away. Is that the case with love?

The meaning of love: when you love something or someone else, do you offer them the opportunity to find their own meaning? If you love Exmoor, does Exmoor feel the love? Does that love from generations of people make it easier for yet another person to discover a love for Exmoor? To continue the chain of living light, on and on?

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