



Make Love Real

Home Study Guide

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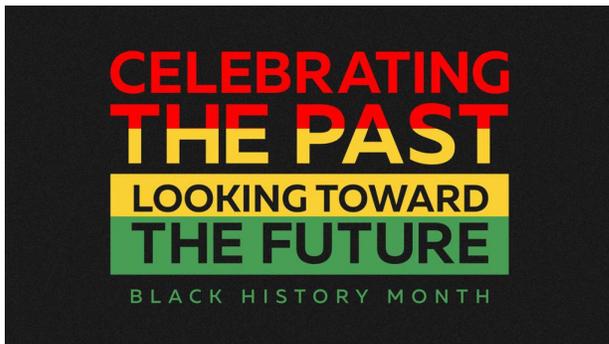
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By Dr Petra

Love is quite possibly the most confusing word in the English language. There are so many ways we use the term, so many different things we mean by it, and so many ways we don't understand it at all. Yet Love is THE primary impulse we ascribe to Spirit/the Universe/Life and in the Science of Mind we say, "Love and Law, this is our teaching." So how do we make love real in our lives – not Hallmarked, not conditional, not Disneyfied, not transactional, not abstract, and not convenient – but real? All month we will be exploring Love as a *Verb* rather than simply a Noun and examining what types of dysfunctional expressions of love we want to disrupt!



How utterly appropriate, or should we say ironic, that the Love Month is also Black History Month. Could any people have been less loved than the enslaved Africans brought to our shores for the expansion of the White man's economic engine? Now we all know the Golden Rule "do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Although it's stated in different ways, it is at the heart of all the world's religions.

Immanuel Kant provided us with a philosophical rendering of the Golden Rule which he called "the Categorical Imperative." It is best known in its original formulation: "Act only according to that maxim whereby you can, at the same time, will that it should become a universal law." A second formulation, less well known but my personal favorite "Act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never merely as a means to an end, but always at the same time as an end." So, it's okay to have employees that are the means to fulfilling the production of the widget you invented, but never to forget that they have dreams and goals and desires of their own and must be supported and empowered as individuals as well.

There is a third formulation of the categorical imperative that contains much of the same as the first two and is too convoluted to quote. However, what it basically means is "we must will something that we could at the same time freely will of ourselves. In other words, it is not enough that the right conduct be followed, but that one also demands that conduct of oneself." In other words, it's not just about how others behave, we must hold *ourselves* to the same standards.

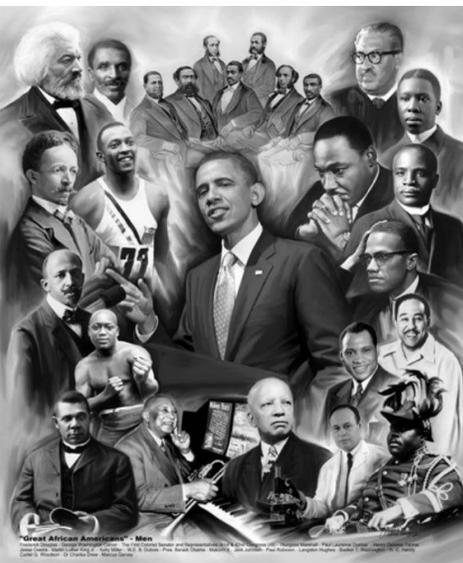
Make Love Real & Black History Month ~



Clearly the Golden Rule and the Categorical Imperative were not applied to those enslaved. Neither those who traded and owned slaves, nor those who were complicit in the slave trade, held themselves to this higher standard. It is imperative that we claim the felt/lived/ embodied experience that African Americans and Black people are, and always have been, human beings who deserve to be seen and treated as equal - people with their own lives, power, and will to create and be rather than being a means for someone else's ends. Seeing someone only *as a means to our own ends* robs that person, or group of people, of their humanity and dignity, reducing them to the level of domesticated animals or machines. While we ourselves may not be actively engaged in using others *as a means to our own ends*, we must recognize the deep personal impact this history has on our family, friends, community, and neighbors who are Black.



Celebrating Black History Month invites us into a truly empowering relationship with each other. Black History Month is an opportunity to celebrate the impulse of Love that has flowered into the creations, inventions, expressions, and lives of people who are Black while acknowledging and respecting the overwhelming damage done by the legacy of slavery by the USA.



Now it is our turn to Make Love Real and follow the impulse of Life as it is seeking to express as us. We Make Love Real when we notice, appreciate, and respect an African American's experience and point of view. We Make Love Real when we explore the ways we may be unconsciously contributing to perpetuating a subtle bias of less than. We Make Love Real when we work to remove institutionalized and systemic biases that play out in so many ways in our nation. This means we commit, individually and collectively, to treat Black people always as ends and never as merely means to an end. While it's doesn't sound like it comes from the heart, it is a powerful commitment and a deep expression of Love.

Exercise 1 – Make Love Real and Black History

What about Black History Month makes you uncomfortable? What about it is important to you? How can you Make Love Real beyond simply having a Black or a White friend? Share in the group or with a partner.

Make Live Real – The Love Month

So, what is Love? My favorite psychological definition, stripped of any romanticizing, is “A positive regard for another which includes wanting what is best for them.” The ancient Greeks were smart enough to have 3 words for Love – Eros, Philia, and Agape. None of which spoke about loving chocolate or things or even experiences but only about the ways human beings relate to each other. And then we come to Science of Mind, which states that “Love is the Self-Givingness of Spirit into Its creation”, “Love is the impulse behind creation”, and “Love is the impulse of Life to express.”

Exercise #2 –

Discuss in the group the questions in the second paragraph, this page on wonder and awe.

Explore how you can practice Seeing Love more.

What behaviors towards others or the planet would you change because of this?

Exercise #3 –

Explore with a partner:

When has someone giving you grace when you really needed it?

How could you be more compassionate with others?

How would you describe “Being Love” in a difficult situation?

We begin by reawakening our eyes to wonder and awe. This allows us to See Love! Or to notice all the ways we don’t see love due to the way we are looking. How do we regard each other, the people around us, and most critically at this time, our beautiful planet? Are we in awe of the Presence of Life? Are we able to wonder at the uniqueness of each being? Do we wonder about the possible, the hopeful, and the meaningful? How can we recreate newness in our relationships by discovering what is wonderful and awe-inspiring in those we love? To find our deeper sense of wonder and awe we need to disrupt our love of comfort, convenience, conformity, and the utilitarian and easy ways to want our engagement in life to be. We Make Love Real by seeing all the ways and places it is already expressed.

Then let us practice Being Love. This is the practice of giving grace and compassion to others and to ourselves. To Be Love we engage in disrupting the patterns of judgement and criticism towards others while letting go of the false sense of self which we often feel as the imposter syndrome. Being Love is to remember that the Life that is living as us IS the Universal Presence seeking to express itself uniquely as you and me. That is how loved we are - we are the place where Love is seeking to Be Itself, as us! It may take practice, but it’s the most important game in town! We Make Love Real by giving grace and being compassionate.

Be Love



Make Love Real – The Love Month

Something that stands in our way of experiencing Love is our inability or unwillingness to let it in. Receiving Love means that we open our minds and hearts to the love that is already, always present. Acts of forgiveness and acceptance of ourselves and others opens the door for reconciliation and love. We must disrupt the patterns of thought, feeling and behavior that come from betrayals and rejections that we have experienced and the resistance to life these have created within us. We Make Love real by allowing it in at every level, even when we are afraid of being hurt.

Finally, we focus on giving Love. Our desire for connection and belonging often leads us to believe that what we need to do is to get love. But the actual, deepest spiritual truth is that we get love by giving it. Connection and belonging are something that we find within ourselves, in our connection to the Whole and our belonging to Life. This deep awareness disrupts our patterns of co-dependence, isolationism, narcissism, and the addictions we use to fill the hole within. The deepest paradox there is, is that we fill in the hole by giving love, not in a martyred or sacrificial way, but in an empowered and holy expression of life, connection, and empowerment. The more we give the more we realized that we are giving from an unquenchable well for we are giving the Love that truly is coming through us, as us, from Source. We Make Love Real when we are an outlet through which Love is fully expressed.

Exercise #4 –

Journal for 5 minutes on these two questions and share if you choose:

How do you resist love – what hurts keep you from trusting and letting love in?

What do you need to forgive and accept – in yourself and with someone else?

Exercise #5 – Discuss...

How do you give love with giving yourself away?

Does it surprise you that the key to experiencing love is to give it?

See Love

Be Love

Receive Love

Give Love

– these are the keys to Make Love Real!