HEALTHY *Relationships*

10 Keys to Happy and Loving Relationships



Krystal Kuehn, MA, LPC, LLP, NCC

Healthy Relationships:
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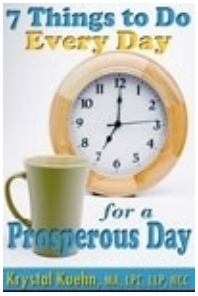


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INTRODUCTION

Joy is the experience of knowing that you are unconditionally loved and that nothing—sickness, failure, emotional distress, oppression, war or even death—can take that love away. ~Henri Nouwen

What is life without love? The source of true happiness and fulfillment can always be traced back to love in one way or another. More than anything else, love is sought after in our lives—within our relationships, occupations, within ourselves. Love gives life meaning and purpose. It fulfills the deepest yearnings of the soul. It quenches our thirst and fills our hearts to overflowing. Love turns darkness to light. Love brings harmony and order out of chaos. Love heals wounds and brings comfort to hurts and pain. Love holds families together. It bonds friendships. Love inspires, revives, and restores.

It is amazing what the power and beauty of love can do. It is fathomless. In the following pages, we are going to look at how our relationships provide the greatest opportunity and evidence of the working and reality of love in our lives. Because love is indefinable and beyond our total comprehension, we can only begin to understand it and recognize it by its attributes and the actions it prompts. Our experiences with others teach us about love and how it operates in our lives.

A chapter is devoted to each of the top ten attributes of love that communicate genuine love most clearly and completely. These attributes of love provide us with ten keys to happy and loving relationships. At the end of each chapter you will be encouraged to reflect on your personal experience of how you communicate love through each of its main attributes. You will be provided with questions for reflection as well as empowering thoughts and affirmations that you can apply to your life. You may discover areas that are strengths for you and others in which you need to grow. You will also discover how genuine love can change you, your relationships, and your life forever.

You can grow in love if you have a heart that wants to expand its borders beyond any limits. This can be the beginning of living your life to the fullest with joy, inner peace, gratitude, confidence and love for life, self, and others.

May you discover all that love can be and how love can change your life forever!

Wishing you a life of happy & loving relationships, *Krystal*

Types of Love

There is only one happiness in life, to love and be loved.~George Sand

Most people can love those who love them in return. They can love much, and they can love little. They can love one person more than they love another. Love can be strong or it can be weak. There are different degrees and intensities of love just as there are also different varieties of love. Love for family is unlike love for friendships. Some love is characterized by greed or vainglory. And there is divine or spiritual love. This is the highest form of love in that it is perfect and supreme. This love comes from God because God is love. The ability to give and receive love is the greatest of all human qualities because its source is divine.

In the English language we have just one word to describe the various types of love; that is, the word "love." In the Greek, there are three distinct words to describe love: eros, phileo, and agape. Each one describes a different expression of love.

- **Eros** love has to do with sensuality. It is physical and erotic. It yearns to have its own hunger satisfied.

- **Phileo** love transcends physical desire. It is normal human affection toward anyone or anything that is enjoyable or satisfying. Phileo is emotional and unpredictable. It lasts as long as it is being gratified. However, once the pleasure or desire is gone so is the phileo.

- **Agape** love is an unconditional and giving love. It is active and motivated by what it can do for others, and it does not expect anything in return. It is not based on feelings, but is constant and stable. It can love when hated. It can give freely regardless of one's attractiveness or worth.

The different types of love help us to distinguish between giving and self-fulfillment. Understanding the different types of love can help us to understand

maturity and motives in our loving. It can also help us to appreciate that a healthy balance of all three of these types of love can be the ingredients of some very happy and successful relationships.

Reflection:

Think about the people you love. What is different in the way you love each one of them?

If you had to make a list of the people you love, who would be at the top of your list? The bottom?

Review the 3 types of love (eros, phileo, and agape). Describe your experience of each. Which one is most dominant in your life and relationships?

Do you feel you have a good balance of the different types of love? Or do you want more or less of one or more type(s)?

If you had to define love, how would you describe it?

♥ **Empowering Thoughts & Affirmations**

There is more than one way to say "I love you."

I can know love in a deeper way as I learn how to discern the attributes of love.

Key #1: Love is Esteem for Self and Others - Why Loving Others Begins with Loving Ourselves

There is overwhelming evidence that the higher the level of self-esteem, the more likely one will be to treat others with respect, kindness, and generosity. ~Nathaniel Branden



You may have heard it said that you can't love others if you don't love yourself. Having self-love means you care about and like yourself in a healthy and balanced way. It means you have self-respect and believe you are worthy of love.

When self-love is lacking in a person's life, it usually indicates that they have a low self-esteem. They do not "esteem" or value themselves as highly as they ought to. They might not really believe they are loveable. And the more they dislike themselves, the more hindered they become in receiving love from others. As a result, they are unable to love others as deeply as they would like to.

It is important to note that what appears as excessive self-love in some people is also indicative of a poor self-esteem. These individuals come across as arrogant and boastful. However, they yearn for admiration in hopes that it will satisfy their desperate longing for genuine love.

Loving and esteeming others fully *begins* with loving and esteeming yourself in an appropriate and healthy way.

When you.....

- Allow for mistakes and forgive your flaws
- Are patient and understanding with yourself
- Are not self-deprecating or self-exalting

- Are satisfied with your best effort
- Believe in yourself and don’t give up
- Acknowledge your good qualities and strengths and accept your weaknesses
- Learn to like and appreciate who you are

Then, you will be much better able to do so for others. Love, respect, and appreciation will transfer to all other areas and relationships in your life.

The way you esteem yourself will be directly related to the way you esteem others. That is why a positive self-esteem is an important part of our experience of love. Self-esteem can be built and improved as you acknowledge and receive love in your life and as you love yourself and others as best as you can. In its own miraculous way love increases in our lives as we give it away. The more we give, the more we have to give. So you can start right where you are no matter how little you may feel you have to give. There is so much more love for you to experience.

Reflection:

Explain what esteeming yourself means to you and how you think it relates to loving others.

How can a low self-esteem make it difficult to receive love and to love others?

Review the list of examples of loving and esteeming yourself. How do they apply to you?

Is self-love lacking or excessive in your life? How can you bring it into balance?

Think about the way you feel about yourself. In what ways is it helping or hindering you from loving others?

♥ Empowering Thoughts & Affirmations

Everyone wants to be loved. Everyone is worthy of love.

I can allow the power of love to work in my life. I can accept myself and others as worthy of love.

I choose to appreciate my inner strengths and value who I am.

Love is an expression and assertion of self-esteem. ~Ayn Rand

You really have to look inside yourself and find your own inner strength, and say, "I'm proud of what I am and who I am, and I'm just going to be myself." ~Mariah Carey

You must love yourself before you love another. By accepting yourself and fully being what you are, your simple presence can make others happy. ~unknown

Key #2: Love is Patient - How Practicing Patience Can Improve Our Relationships

People are illogical, unreasonable, and self-centered. Love them anyway. ~ Kent M. Keith



How do you react when you are inconvenienced? How do you handle annoyances? Every day we are faced with new challenges that test our endurance and patience. Through patience we have the opportunity to express love for imperfect people and for life despite all its challenges and difficulties.

Patience is a passive demonstration of love. It is not what you do as much as how you respond to people or situations. Patience is…calmly enduring an inconvenience, not reacting impulsively when a decision needs to be made, hoping in the midst of opposition, staying faithful and believing despite delay, submitting without resistance when it is the best option, and gracefully accepting hardships that cannot be changed.

There is a calm quality to patience. When you are patient, you are in no hurry. You are able to wait for as long as is necessary. You persist in believing without giving up. Your temper is under control. And you are not disturbed by inconveniences and annoyances.

Patience communicates love. It says:

- I love you despite your imperfections.
- I am willing to wait because some things are worth waiting for.
- I will go out of my way if it will help you.
- I will allow you to do things at your own pace, not mine.

- I will think things through before making a decision.
- I will not give up on you; I believe in you.
- I will accept you the way you are and not try to change you.
- I will respect your beliefs and opinions although they differ from mine.
- Patience clearly communicates love in a very special way. Patience is commonly said to be a virtue. It is a quality that can be developed and practiced by every one of us.

Reflection:

How understanding and tolerant am I with people in my life?

Do I persist in the face of difficulties or setbacks? Explain.

How do I manage times of delay and waiting?

What tries my patience more than anything else?
How do I respond?

What do I expect from others that keeps me from being patient with them?

On a scale of 0 to 10, with 10 being "completely" and 0 being "not at all" how would I rate my overall level of patience?

Is there someone in my life that I need to be more patient with? What can I do differently?

♥ **Empowering Thoughts & Affirmations**

Life is filled with obstacles and imperfect people that hinder our plans, slow us down, and annoy us.

I can accept life as being imperfect. I can allow myself and others to have

flaws.

Our patience will achieve more than our force. ~Edmund Burke

Patience is bitter, but its fruit is sweet. ~Jean-Jacques Rousseau

Patience with others is Love, Patience with self is Hope, Patience with God is Faith. ~Adel Bestavros

Patience and perseverance have a magical effect before which difficulties disappear and obstacles vanish. ~John Quincy Adams

Key #3: Love is Kind - Breaking Down Barriers and Opening Hearts with Kindness

Real love pours itself out upon the object of its affection, without demanding any return. ~Florence Scovel Shinn



Saying we love is one thing but showing it is quite another. You may have heard, "If you love me, show me, and I will know it by what you do and how you treat me." Love calls for action. It demands evidence. One recognizable way of putting love into action is through kindness. Kindness is an active expression of love. It is demonstrated by doing something good. Kindness reaches out first. It takes the initiative in being considerate or helpful.

Giving is the hallmark of kindness. Kindness is…generosity in giving and sharing of oneself to benefit someone or something. It is freely and willingly devoting one's time and attention to another. It is showing that you understand and want to listen and be supportive. There is something about kindness that makes a person feel good. Kindness arouses all kinds of pleasant emotions. It is tender-hearted and makes people feel loved and cared for. Its warmth comforts and envelops the soul.

Kindness communicates love. You experience it whenever…

- Someone cares enough to help you.
- Someone puts your needs above their own.
- You are given favor without asking.

- You are the recipient of a warm and friendly smile.
- You are given someone's undivided attention.
- You feel understood and cared for.
- Someone is sensitive and considerate of your feelings.

Without kindness people would be more concerned with what they can get rather than what they can give. They would think primarily of their own interests and put them above others. However, where there is kindness acts of love abound. People do amazing things as they give freely and generously. Their kindness begets more kindness and keeps love alive in their lives. You, too, can keep love alive in your life with even the smallest acts of kindness.

Reflection:

Would I describe myself as a kind person? Why or why not?

When I give is it done freely and generously? Explain.

Do I usually take the first step in being kind or do I wait for someone else to take the initiative?

In what ways do I usually express kindness toward others?

Am I sensitive to the needs of others? How do I show it?

How can my acts of kindness show someone I love them?

Is there someone to whom I can show kindness in order to communicate my love for them? If so, what might I do?

♥ Empowering Thoughts & Affirmations

People often seem to be more concerned with what they can get rather than what they can give. I choose to be a giver.

I can enjoy the rewards that come from giving.

I choose to put love and respect into action today.

I choose to speak kind words to others.

Love and kindness are never wasted. They always make a difference. They bless the one who receives them, and they bless you, the giver. ~Barbara De Angelis

Kind words can be short and easy to speak but their echoes are truly endless. ~Mother Teresa

Constant kindness can accomplish much. As the sun makes ice melt, kindness causes misunderstanding, mistrust, and hostility to evaporate. ~Albert Schweitzer

When we feel love and kindness toward others, it not only makes others feel loved and cared for, but it helps us also to develop inner happiness and peace. ~Tenzin Gyatso

Let no one ever come to you without leaving better and happier. Be the living expression of God's kindness: kindness in your face, kindness in your eyes, kindness in your smile. ~Mother Theresa

Key #4: Love is Considerate - Ten Simple Ways We Can Show Others They Matter

The habit of being uniformly considerate toward others will bring increased happiness to you. ~Grenville Kleiser



Everyone likes to be treated with respect. People like to feel that they are important and really matter to others. And if they truly are important and matter, then they expect to be treated accordingly. Everyone wants to know that someone cares enough to think about them and consider their needs and feelings. This can make a person feel truly valued, special, and important.

Consideration is demonstrated in the way we behave toward others. It is not only in what we say and do, but it is also in the way we say and do things. It is in our tone of voice, facial expressions, and gestures. We are considerate whenever we are courteous, thoughtful, respectful and polite in our manner and attitude.

We would not behave rudely or impolitely if we wanted to treat someone with consideration and respect. Rather, we would be mindful of how our behavior would affect them. To consider is to think about carefully. When we care enough about others' feelings and interests, we are considerate of them. And it will show in how we treat them.

Consideration communicates love in many ways, such as when we…

1. Put others' needs before our own

2. Are sensitive to others' feelings

3. Are respectful of the thoughts, opinions and ideas of others

4. Have kind and affectionate thoughts toward someone

5. Validate others and let them know they are heard

6. Use our words wisely and carefully

7. Are polite and courteous without needing a reason to be

8. Show proper respect for people even when we think they don't deserve it

9. Convey generosity that is heard in our voice and seen in our eyes

10. Express genuine thankfulness and appreciation for others in our words and actions

More than anything else, consideration takes some thought. It occurs when we think of others as worthy of our time and attention, and we choose to invest ourselves in them.

Reflection:

To whom and in what situations am I most considerate? Inconsiderate?

Do I believe all people should be respected? Do I think they need to earn respect? Explain.

Do I consider others' feelings and needs when making a decision that affects them? Why or why not?

Would people describe me as polite and courteous? Why or why not?

Who do I feel is thoughtful of me? How does that make me feel?

♥ **Empowering Thoughts & Affirmations**

We spend more time thinking about ourselves—what we want, how we feel, and what we think—than any other person.

I can choose to think of others instead of myself.

I can choose to think of others rather than only myself.

I can choose to consider someone else's needs and desires.

I can choose to consider someone else's opinions and ideas.

I can choose to consider some else's feelings.

I can choose to be considerate in my words and actions.

Treat everyone with politeness, even those who are rude to you - not because they are nice, but because you are. ~Author Unknown

When you look for the good in others, you discover the best in yourself. ~Martin Walsh

Do you value people who won't benefit you or only those who might contribute in some way to your success? Great team players truly value others as people, and they know and relate to what others value.--John C. Maxwell

The more you love, the more you are given to love with. ~Lucien Price

Key #5: Love is not Jealous or Envious We Can Have Security and Contentment

Envy is a symptom of lack of appreciation of our own uniqueness and self worth. Each of us has something to give that no one else has. ~Elizabeth O'Connor



Although similar in many ways, jealousy and envy are not the same. Deep insecurities often lie at the root of jealousy. When someone is jealous they are afraid of losing something. They try to guard and protect what they fear losing. In doing so, they may become very possessive, competitive, and resentful. For example, they might be jealous of someone they fear can steal their boyfriend's heart away from them, someone who got the promotion they worked hard for, or the person who got the praise and adoration they felt they deserved.

Jealousy can be fear of losing any of the following:

- self-respect and respect of others
- love and affection
- a cherished relationship
- position or promotion
- a desired opportunity
- a valued material possession
- attention and admiration
- confidence and self-worth

Envy also includes feelings of resentment, but it is rooted in discontent rather than fear. Feelings of dissatisfaction can cause a person to become envious of those who have what they believe they need to satisfy or fulfill them. So they desire the possessions or qualities of another. It could be their appearance, popularity, job, home, reputation, lifestyle, health, experience, and so forth. Just as with jealousy, the envy they experience can cause them to become angry and bitter.

Jealousy can turn into envy and envy can turn into jealousy. Both can be experienced together, and both are potentially destructive. They can ruin relationships and aspirations and make you miserable. They can keep you from trusting others and feeling secure about yourself. They can prevent you from being happy for someone when they get ahead or succeed. Jealousy and envy are common experiences known to all people. Even the most loving people are jealous or envious sometimes. But they do not have to rob you of love in your life. Security can replace the fear that fuels jealousy, and contentment can replace the discontent that stirs envy.



REFLECTION:

What am I most afraid of losing? How have I tried to guard it?

In what area(s) of my life do I feel dissatisfied?

What types of qualities in others do I wish I had?

Recall a time when jealousy or envy has caused you to resent someone. How did you resolve your feelings?

How do I feel when others succeed and get ahead?

How has jealousy and envy kept me from loving others?

When do I feel most content with my life?

When do I feel most secure in myself?

♥ Empowering Thoughts & Affirmations

Comparing ourselves with others often causes us to feel superior or inferior to them.

I can appreciate individual differences and be thankful for what I have and who I am.

I choose to face my fears and insecurities and release them.

I choose to be thankful and content with my blessings.

I choose to be content with who I am as I continually aim to be my best.

The jealous are troublesome to others, but a torment to themselves. ~William Penn

Jealousy is simply and clearly the fear that you do not have value. Jealousy scans for evidence to prove the point - that others will be preferred and rewarded more than you. There is only one alternative - self-value. If you cannot love yourself, you will not believe that you are loved. You will always think it's a mistake or luck. Take your eyes off others and turn the scanner within. Find the seeds of your jealousy, clear the old voices and experiences. Put all the energy into building your personal and emotional security. Then you will be the one others envy, and you can remember the pain and reach out to them. ~Jennifer James

Jealousy injures us with the dagger of self-doubt. ~Terri Guillemets

Envy is the art of counting the other fellow's blessings instead of your own. ~Harold Coffin

Envy is a symptom of lack of appreciation of our own uniqueness and self worth. Each of us has something to give that no one else has. ~Elizabeth O'Connor

Love immediately challenges me to break the fixation I have with myself. ~John Powell, S.J.

Key #6: Love is Humble - Discover True Self-Confidence & Strength in Humility

True humility is intelligent self respect which keeps us from thinking too highly or too meanly of ourselves. It makes us modest by reminding us how far we have come short of what we can be. ~Ralph W. Sockman



A humble person is certainly a pleasant person to be around and that is because humble people are not self-centered or self-seeking. They are modest and not at all arrogant or boastful. They do not draw attention to themselves, but they are drawn to others. They do not need praise and approval to feel good about themselves. When they are overlooked, they are not driven by frustration to make themselves known. When their good intentions are ridiculed, they are able to keep from retaliating. They can humbly submit to one of less stature than themselves, if necessary, without rebellion or resentment.

Humility is love unseen. It is love that is veiled and not directly recognized, yet humility is motivated by love. A person who is genuinely humble doesn't think they are better or more important than other people. They have proper respect for everyone regardless of who they are or what they have done. That doesn't mean that they allow others to take advantage of them. Nor does it mean that they lack confidence and fear asserting themselves. Sometimes people confuse humility with weakness and blind compliance, or even assume that someone who degrades themselves is a humble person. This is certainly not the case. It takes great strength to live a life of humility.

Humility communicates love. Humble people are:

- Ready to admit when they are wrong
- Willing to say they are sorry
- Not afraid to ask for help when they need it
- Patient when misunderstood

- Not fearful of what others think about them
- Confident in who they are and don't feel a need to prove themselves
- Teachable and willing to learn from their mistakes
- Not judgmental of others or backbiters
- Not easily offended

Most people find it difficult to humble themselves or even admit when they have been humbled. It can be extremely uncomfortable and it hurts our pride. It is so much easier to defend ourselves and blame others, and to exalt and try to prove ourselves. Humility is certainly a challenge to most people. It can be a real stumbling block in our love walk, or it can become a stepping stone to greater love if we will allow it to be.

REFLECTION:

Do I have pre-conceived notions of humility that are inaccurate (such as humility is weakness)?

What does it really mean to be humble?

Do I know anyone who communicates their love through humility? Give examples.

What do I find most challenging in expressing love through humility?

What attributes of humility do I most admire? Why?

Do I want to be a more humble person? What areas of my life need the most work?

♥ **Empowering Thoughts & Affirmations**

Nobody likes to be wrong because it forces us to face our inadequacies.

I can admit my mistakes and learn from them.

Love measures our stature: the more we love, the bigger we are. There is no smaller package in all the world than that of a man all wrapped up in himself.

~William Sloane Coffin Jr.

Pride leads to disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom. ~Proverbs 11:2

True expressions of love are said to come from a source which lies beneath words and thoughts. ~W. Timothy Gallwey

Key #7: Love is not Demanding - When It's No Longer All About Me

Only those who have learned the power of sincere and selfless contribution experience life's deepest joy: true fulfillment. ~Anthony Robbins



To be demanding isn't all bad, but there are many ways in which it can be unloving. It is one thing to be persistent in asking or requiring something, but excessively demanding one's own way regardless of others' rights or how they are treated indicates self-centeredness. Overly demanding people are not concerned with what others want because they are mostly concerned with themselves. And they can be very insensitive and uncaring when it comes to getting what they want. Demanding people are often forceful in trying to get their way. They might use manipulation, threats, or any other means to get what they want.

There is a controlling aspect in being overly demanding that actually leads to a lack of control. So the less control a demanding person feels in a situation or over someone, the more demanding they may become. Most people do not like to feel controlled or dominated. There is an old saying, "If you love something, set it free. If it comes back, it's yours. If it doesn't, it never was." Love requires that we give people freedom to be themselves, without any restrictions imposed upon them to meet our demands in our way.

Demanding people feel entitled to what they believe are their rights. They have certain expectations of people, and they disregard their boundaries if they are in their way. They have a difficult time taking "no" for an answer because the goal is to get what they want. As you can imagine, most people are not comfortable being around a person who is overly demanding. Their selfishness communicates a total disregard for the needs and desires of others. It is the opposite of love which is selfless and giving.



To be truly selfless is to enjoy giving others first place. Rather than demanding our own way, we can demonstrate love for others by considering their needs important and putting them above your own if possible. To be selfless is to put our wants and desires aside sometimes and help others get ahead. It is to find true contentment and joy in considering what is in the best interest of someone else other than just us. It is to seek their good. Selflessness also doesn't impose its own expectations and desires on someone else. It allows people the freedom to make their own choices. Selflessness respects others' decisions and loves them regardless of whether or not we agree. When selfless, we treat people properly and respect their boundaries. Selflessness is the essence of love. We cannot have love without selflessness.

REFLECTION

What comes to mind when you think of someone who is overly demanding?

What do you do to get your way?

Has anyone ever described you as controlling or bossy? Explain.

Do you respect others' boundaries? Explain.

How do you react when someone crosses your boundaries?

What does it mean to be "selfless"?

In what ways are you selfless?

♥ **Empowering Thoughts & Affirmations**

The need to have our own way can lead us to disregard the needs of others.

I can be open-minded and respectful of the needs of others.

I choose to be selfless and think of others' needs before my own today.

Love is selfless, yet it invigorates the self. ~Sue Atchley Ebaugh

Only those who have learned the power of sincere and selfless contribution experience life's deepest joy: true fulfillment. ~Anthony Robbins

Real love is when you become selfless and you are more concerned about your mate's or children's egos than your own. You're now a giver instead of a taker. ~Sylvester Stallone

Key #8: Love is not Easily Angered - A Powerful Force We Can Direct and Control



All sorts of things can trigger irritability in people, from minor traffic jams to major headaches. Everyone gets upset or annoyed sometimes. We all have lost our temper and reacted without thinking. We have succumbed to anger that drives us to say and do things we normally wouldn't. And it is when we lose control over our thoughts and feelings, that our irritability and anger can do some major damage to our relationships and lives.

For the most part, irritability is likely to occur when we feel under pressure. Therefore, one of the best tests for measuring our irritability is to observe how we behave when having to manage stressful circumstances or people. If we can remain graceful toward others when under pressure, then we are probably exercising self-control. Our temper is well-managed and good. We are not allowing agitation to anger us or disrupt our relationships. If, on the other hand, pressure and stress bring out the worst in us, then we probably need to work on our self-control and temper.

When irritable, we are very likely to become easily angered at others, sometimes at the slightest provocation. We might even become hostile and behave in ways we will later regret. Gaining control over our thoughts, feelings, and actions when irritated and angry is the best way to keep from acting out in unloving ways.



Self-control communicates love. It can be seen whenever we:

- Take responsibility for our reactions
- Do not accuse or blame others for the way we feel
- Treat others graciously although they irritate us
- Keep from saying something hurtful and unnecessary
- Do not take our anger out on those around us
- Think things through before we react
- Allow ourselves a time-out to gather ourselves together
- Do not expect more from others than we should

The disposition of love is self-control and a good temper. Having self-control and a good temper is easier said than done, especially for those individuals who are more prone to irritability for various reasons. Even so, we can all learn to gain greater control over our tempers and how we react under pressure. Irritations will never cease, nor does our love need to when they come.

REFLECTION:

What makes me most irritable?

What do I do when I am under more pressure than I feel I can handle?

How do I treat others when I am irritated?

Do I have to have the last word? Explain.

On a scale of 0 to 10 with 10 being severe and 0 being nonexistent, how would I rate my temper?

How would those closest to me rate my temper?

Review the list of how self-control communicates love. Which one(s) do I do often? Which one(s) do I need more work on?

♥ Empowering Thoughts & Affirmations

We may not be able to control stressors and pressures in our lives, but how we respond to them is up to us.

I can accept responsibility for my temper and exercise self-control.

When anger arises, think of the consequences. ~Confucius

An angry man opens his mouth and shuts his eyes. ~Cato

It is wise to direct your anger towards problems -- not people; to focus your energies on answers -- not excuses. ~William Arthur Ward

Take note! Every sixty seconds you spend angry, upset, or mad, is a full minute of happiness you'll never get back. ~unknown

Anger is a great force. If you control it, it can be transmuted into a power which can move the whole world. ~William Shenstone

When you are offended at any man's fault, turn to yourself and study your own failings. Then you will forget your anger. ~Epictetus

All human failures are the result of a lack of love. ~Alfred Adler

Key #9: Love is Forgiving - How the Power to Forgive Frees Us to Love

Forgiving is love's toughest work, and love's biggest risk. If you twist it into something it was never meant to be, it can make you a doormat or an insufferable manipulator. Forgiving seems almost unnatural. Our sense of fairness tells us people should pay for the wrong they do. But forgiving is love's power to break nature's rule. ~Lewis B. Smedes



One of the greatest challenges in loving others is to forgive them when they have wronged us and caused us pain. Every time we are wronged, we have to choose how we are going to deal with the hurt. Ultimately, we have to decide if we will forgive the person or persons who have wronged us, or if we will hold on to the hurt. If we hold on to the hurt, it will keep us from loving them. It will keep us angry and upset. We will not be open to release the hurt. Instead, it will continue to fester and grow. Unresolved hurts that are not forgiven continue to cause pain. We don't want the one who wronged us to get away with it. We want them to be punished and our anger toward them is oftentimes the only way we know how to make what is wrong seem right or fair. The problem is, it rarely makes things better. It only deepens our hurt and frustration and eventually turns to bitterness.

Forgiveness sets us free to love again. When we decide to forgive, we let go of the attitude that "You owe me." Our anger fades. Bitterness doesn't have the opportunity to take root. We do not use what happened against anyone. Resentment gives way to acceptance of another's flaws. We no longer feel a need to retaliate.

When we forgive, we do not always have to understand why we were wronged. Nor do we have to wait for an apology in order to forgive. Forgiveness does not justify or make the other person right. What it does is make us free. Forgiveness frees us to say, "I will not use this against you or keep a record of how you have

wronged me. I will release you of any punishment I think is due. I will no longer hold on to anger and resentment toward you. I will release it from my heart. I will make allowances for your flaws and give you grace. I will forgive you unconditionally."

Forgiveness is one of the most powerful demonstrations of genuine love. It has the power to mend broken hearts and set captives free. It has the power to bring healing and restoration to relationships. It is the ultimate expression of grace. It is something we grant others even when they do not deserve it, knowing that we ourselves have been recipients of forgiveness countless times. As long as we are imperfect, we will be in need of forgiveness.

REFLECTION:

Why is forgiveness important to our life and relationships?

What do I do with the hurt when someone wrongs me? Do I retaliate? Nurse the hurt? Release it? Work through it?

How often do I bring up past issues that were never resolved?

What makes forgiving someone who wronged me most difficult?

Did I ever want to be forgiven for something I said or did, and I wasn't forgiven? How did it affect me?

Do I expect others to forgive me when I hurt them? Why or why not?

♥ **Empowering Thoughts & Affirmations**

Unforgiveness keeps us imprisoned in pain and hurt.

I can give up resentment and be free.

I choose to release the hurt I have been holding on to.

I choose to forgive myself for making poor choices and hurting others.

I choose to accept myself and others, knowing that we all have flaws, make

poor decisions sometimes and hurt one another.

We must develop and maintain the capacity to forgive. He who is devoid of the power to forgive is devoid of the power to love. There is some good in the worst of us and some evil in the best of us. When we discover this, we are less prone to hate our enemies. ~Martin Luther King, Jr.

To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover that the prisoner was you. ~Lewis B. Smedes

Forgiveness is the sweetest revenge. ~Isaac Friedmann

Forgive all who have offended you, not for them, but for yourself. ~Harriet Nelson

Love cures. It cures those who have it and it cures those who receive it. ~Karl Menninger

Key #10: Love is Sincere - Being True to Ourselves & Others



Can love be real without sincerity? Most would agree that sincerity is what makes love what it is. Genuine love is true. And it is true love that we all want. We want to know we are sincerely loved for who we are. We want to know that it is with sincere motives that those who love us say and do the things they say and do for us. We want to know a love that enables us to trust without fear of being unloved and rejected. We want a love that remains loyal and faithful to us no matter what happens. We want to be loved sincerely. And that is how others want to be loved by us as well.

Sincerity is most evident when we are honest and truthful with others. It requires us to be our true selves rather than manipulate others into believing we are someone we're really not. No one likes to be lied to or deceived. Lies and deception destroy trust. Betrayal of trust is probably the worst relationship pain we can experience. Without trust, relationships do not have a strong and solid foundation upon which to be built. Without trust we may question and doubt that we are truly loved. It is only when there is trust that we feel safe enough to open up our hearts to others and grow more sincere in our love.

Sincerity communicates love. When we are sincere we:

- Can be counted on to be honest and trustworthy
- Remain faithful and keep our word—making only promises that we can keep
- Are dependable and consistent in our words and actions
- Mean what we say and do not mislead with lies
- Are motivated by love that is genuine
- Can be our real selves and not be phony
- Will not deceive others for our own selfish means

- Do not flatter others to get our way
- Do not take advantage of others' ignorance or innocence
- Have integrity and exemplify good morals

Love that is sincere is the real thing. It remains faithful in the face of betrayal. It is trustworthy regardless of others' dishonesty. Its motives are pure and not corrupted by self-centeredness. Sincerity is a profession of love that is true.

REFLECTION:

What does it mean to be loved sincerely or genuinely?

Do I believe I am sincerely loved? By whom? How do I know?

Can love be true without honesty? Why or why not?

What motivates me most to say and do the things I say and do for others?

In what ways am I not my true self and give a false impression of who I am?

Can others trust me to mean what I say when I compliment them or share my thoughts and feelings?

Think about people you would describe as sincere. Does their sincerity enable you to trust them more? Why or why not?

♥ Empowering Thoughts & Affirmations

A relationship built on anything but trust and sincerity is like a house built on shifting sand.

I can be true to myself and others.

I choose to keep my promises or not make them if I cannot keep them.

I choose to be real because people who really like me will like me for who I am.

I choose to be faithful and not compromise my values.

I choose to be honest in my compliments and avoid flattery and insincerity.

Character is much easier kept than recovered. ~Thomas Paine

It's impossible to be who you're not, so why not just be who you are? ~unknown

This above all: to thine own self be true. ~Shakespeare, Hamlet

Always be a first-rate version of yourself, instead of a second-rate version of somebody else. ~Judy Garland

It takes courage to grow up and become who you really are. ~e.e. Cummings

The most exhausting thing in life is being insincere. ~Anne Morrow Lindbergh

Only the person who has faith in himself is able to be faithful to others. ~Erich Fromm

Conclusion

Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; …bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.~1Corinthians 13:4-8, NKJV

Can we ever really understand the very source of truly happy and loving relationships? Even as we learn of its many attributes we are left in wonder and in awe of its beauty and power. Just as hope is like the air we breathe, love is our lifeline. Sometimes it flows so freely and abundantly in our lives and relationships enabling us to be fully alive and connected to others. At other times it is lacking or weakened and we struggle to feel its presence.

Love is the greatest of all gifts. There is nothing else that can transform our lives and relationships the way love can. Love doesn't just happen all the time. Love is practiced. We all have the lifeblood of love in our souls. It is where patience, kindness, sincerity, and all goodness come from. To experience love fully we must first receive love, knowing that we are loved. We may not feel we deserve to be loved at times, but that doesn't have to keep us from receiving love. Genuine love is freely given. It is to be freely received if we are to experience it in its fullness. It is a gift to all who will take it.

Love has many amazing qualities as we have seen in the previous pages. There's something miraculous about love in that its supply is endless. It never runs dry. As long as you keep giving it away you will be filled to overflowing. And as you practice the presence of love in your life and apply the principles discussed, your love life will be forever transformed. Your relationships will grow stronger and bring greater fulfillment in your life than ever before.

You can experience love that is more genuine and far deeper than you have ever known. There is so much love for you to receive and so much love for you to give. Now that you know the ten keys of how true love is best communicated, you can express love in every area of your life and allow it to change you and your relationships forever.

Love never fails. All else may fail, but love never fails. Love is powerful. It makes miracles happen. Love is eternal. It will never end. And this is just the beginning… May you grow more and more each day in discovering and experiencing love as you practice the 10 keys to happy and loving relationships and allow the power of love to transform your life!

No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us. ~ 1 John 5:12

Everything that love is can be summed up in three words: ***God is love.***

When we walk in the attributes of love, we are actually allowing God's love to work in and through us. We are abiding in God and he is abiding in us. **The clearest evidence of God's love in our lives is seen in our relationships.** If we love one another, we will live a life of genuine love. And how do we love one another? We show respect, patience, kindness, and understanding. We give and share of ourselves and our possessions. We are considerate, caring, and forgiving. We do not judge, slander, and manipulate others. Instead, we love as God loves. **God is the source of all human love and he gives us the power to love.** When God's love abides in us, we can love him with our whole being. We can have healthy self-love. And, we can love people whom God created in his own image. There is something beautiful, special, and unique that God put in each and every one of us that is his personal signature. And, he has so much love for each of us to express and experience.

Is something keeping you from loving others? Sometimes we want to hold on to our anger, hurts, and attitudes. We might not want to show respect for someone who has not earned it, or forgive someone who has hurt us. We might think others owe us, or we have unfair expectations of them. We might allow jealousy and envy to keep us from loving others. We might have established bad habits of criticizing, gossiping, and slandering people. **If anything is keeping us from loving others, it is keeping us from living with the joy of true love.** It is something we must deal with if we want to experience the fullness of God's love.

Do you want to live a life of love? **If you are in God and he is in you, you can be assured that you have all the love you will ever need.** It is not more love that we need; it is less hate, fear, judgment, criticism, selfishness, disrespect, bad habits, rebellion, unkindness, and so on, that we need. To live a life of love requires us to choose love and let it change us so that all that is hurtful to our relationships and opposes love in us no longer has power in our lives. The best way to do this is to know God is love, and to put his love into practice. **Each**

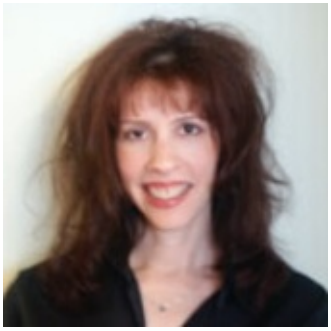
new day is a new opportunity to practice love and experience the wholeness and joy it can bring. Love is the greatest of all life's gifts. The power of love is amazing and never-ending. It can motivate, energize, inspire, and strengthen. **Love can do in a person what nothing else can do.** Love has the power to revive and change lives, restore relationships, and bring healing. All else may fail, but love never fails.

Understanding the attributes of love and putting love into practice is what *The 10 Keys to Happy & Loving Relationships* is all about. It is founded upon the principles of God's love. And it is the key to true and lasting happiness.

Wishing you a life of genuine love & joy,

Krystal

About the Author



Krystal Kuehn, MA, LPC, LLP, NCC is a psychotherapist, best-selling author, teacher, songwriter and musician.

Krystal specializes in helping people live their best life now, reach their full potential, overcome barriers, heal from their past, & develop a happiness lifestyle. Her inspirational and empowering approach has been helping people all over the world for over 20 years. Krystal's articles, poetry, and songs have been published locally and internationally. She is also the author of many books (For a Complete List: click here).

Krystal has a passion for encouraging others. She believes everyone has untapped potential for greatness and everyone can live a life of fulfillment and true happiness. Krystal is the co-founder of New Day Counseling in Michigan. Her web sites include:

NewDayBooks.com
NewDayCounseling.org
Be Your Best Blog
BeHappy4Life.com
Facebook.com/WordsofInspiration
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It is my hope that *The 10 Keys to Happy & Loving Relationships* has blessed you and provided you with some insight, inspiration and tools to help improve your relationships and your life! I would love to hear your testimonials and how you have been helped. You can send your testimonials, feedback and comments to me at:

 maxpotential312@gmail.com

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