

## Patrick's Ponderance: On The Path to Unconditional Love

Hello my dear friends and welcome to another moment inside my mind. Is it really my mind or is it something much greater? Me thinks... yes! It is something greater. It is the subject of Unconditional Love. In fact, Unconditional love is so much greater than a thought that it feels paltry to simply call it a subject. How could something so massive and all-encompassing be simply a subject? Unconditional love transcends the emotions and holds its own against all other experiences. It is the silent but strong underlying current that flows through this universe and beyond. It is the glue that binds all of creation and in fact is the very essence of all that is manifest. It is the All. It is everything. It is that which we truly are. We have come to this reality to temporarily forget it but it is *that* which we strive to return to. It is Love, and in its true nature, it is unconditional.

While thinking about this article I was pondering on my own experiences of Unconditional Love. If I am going to speak about it shouldn't I be practicing it? The answer is yes and no. There are times when I really nail it and times when I'm terribly off-track. There are times when I witness my lovely wife doing something quirky and I love her all the more and simply admire her for living according to her truth. Which, by the way, she is amazing at! And there are other times when I'm judgy and angry about the silliest things. To be honest, I'm working on it and I spend a great deal of time thinking about its workings. By discussing it with my wife and others I'm getting better at it every day.

Now I would like to point out that this discussion is not necessarily about falling in love or being in love. Being in love is an emotion not unlike anger, or happy, or sad. In-love can come and go with the changing of an emotion. It can be lost when an expectation is not met or when an energetic match has waned. It's usually the giddy beginnings of a relationship and it can soften with time and lead to a greater understanding of true love or it can leave just as quickly when the honeymoon phase is over.

Defining Unconditional Love is easy. It's loving without conditions. *Understanding* Unconditional Love is a bit more complicated. Love has no need to express itself, it just is. Its energy will permeate everything around it. It's a big step forward to express Unconditional Love intentionally but when we truly reach the state of Unconditional Love no effort is needed for expression because true Unconditional Love expresses itself from its own energy.

Now, at first pass, if one was asked to define Unconditional Love, one may say that it is loving someone in spite of their flaws. You could be the type that says, "I wish my husband would stop saying the stupidest things when we're out with friends. It embarrasses me but for some reason I still love the big lug". If you're a man maybe you've thought, "I love Julie and if I buy her some new clothes she will look prettier. Or better yet, I'll buy her some lingerie so she'll look sexier" Well I hate to be the bearer of bad news but that is not unconditional love. That is totally 100%

pure, Grade A *conditional love*! When conditions and judgements are placed on the love it doesn't define who the other person is or isn't but it does define who *we* are and how we feel about ourselves deep down. Here we may see that conditions and judgements go hand-in-hand. First comes the judgement, "She isn't pretty enough". Then hot on the heels of judgement comes the condition, "If she could just try a little harder to be prettier then everything would be okay, then I would really be into her. I could really love her".

It is about here where I would like to let everyone off the hook, sort of. Nearly every single one of us was taught to put judgements and conditions on every relationship we have. The judgements start as soon as we come out of the womb. We are judged on our skin tone, how much hair we have on our little head, can we coo yet or what our first poop looks like. And it continues as we grow up. They will remark, "Why isn't he walking yet? His sister was walking two months earlier". Or maybe, "He's talking but he has a lisp". And as we grow older we are judged on our grades. We may be rewarded if they are good enough and punished if they are too low. We may be judged against a standard set by an older sibling or simply resented for being born the wrong gender. It is in these early years when we believe stories about ourselves that aren't true. We grow old feeling like we are not quite good enough. Even our bosses humiliate us at least once a year by evaluating us on our performance. It seems that no matter how hard we try we're only good enough for a score of 3.5 out of a possible 5. They will say that even though you're a great employee and your performance has brought the company millions of dollars in the past year, it would be better if you could keep your breaks to 15 minutes instead of twenty. And let's not leave out how we have learned to use agendas. We all know a person or two who is always thinking about what they can get out of a relationship. Someone may think, "If I love him he can supply me with security" or maybe, "I'll love her if she will love me back".

So I ask you, Is it any wonder we put conditions and judgements on our love? It has been beaten into our heads from day 1 from people who have also been brain-washed into feeling that they need to judge. All this behavior has taught us, is the fear of being deemed not good enough for the love of others. Once we understand the fears we carry deep inside of being judged then we can begin to see why we put such conditions on others who seek love from us. We find that judgements of any kind that originate from our negative thoughts about ourselves pull us back from UL. Judgements of this type come from our inability to accept who we are deep inside. These judgements are what we find distasteful about ourselves and we judge others for these things as a way of projecting the negative thoughts about ourselves onto others so we don't have to face them about ourselves. No healing can come from this. For example: if I am judging someone else for being a little chubby that's a clear sign that there is an element about myself that is insecure about being chubby or maybe I'm afraid of becoming chubby because of the fear of being judged by others. To the egos reasoning, if I project that judgement onto another person I can keep the fear under control so I don't have to look at the

truth about myself. Now I know we're here to discuss UL but these judgements and fears pertain to every type of relationship be it romantic, or friendship, or workmate, or the girl at the checkout lane, or the other driver on the road, or a snake or spider. If we are judging a spider for being bad and icky then there is a fear deep inside that can be overcome. When that healing occurs a love for spiders will follow.

But don't worry, by giving ourselves the experience of having the judgement and fear of conditional love we learn all the opposites of Unconditional Love. It is only by living through the opposites of something that allows us to know it completely. The first step is to know the concept of unconditional love. Next is to go through all the experiences of conditional love. Concept and experience will allow us to have complete knowing of unconditional love.

Now, as so called New Agers, it is often felt that we need to go out of our way to show love to as many people as we can. We will even accept the hurt visited upon us and simply say "Well, they hurt my feelings but I'm just going to send them love". Well I'll agree that that is better than delivering a punch in the nose but what happens here is that we retain the hurt and gloss over the fact that if we are feeling hurt it is because there is something deep inside of us that feels less than adequate. It's an unhealed part of us that has just experienced a trigger event designed to allow us to recognize the need to bring attention to our hidden pain. It is at this time when it may be for our highest good to honor it, find the origin of it, clearly see the reason for it, and then forgive and heal it. If we simply dismiss our pain, soon it will fade into the background of our subconscious but I assure you the pain will surface again at a later time and usually with a little more intensity. If swept under the rug again and again there will come a time when the hurt will be so great that a breakdown of sorts will occur that will have to be dealt with before you can move on. We can only put our fingers in the dike for so long before the whole damn thing falls down around us.

This brings up the next point and that is the need to forgive. Most would say that there is a need to forgive everyone who has ever hurt you. I won't disagree but I would like to take it a step further if I may. Before worrying about forgiving others, look deep inside yourself. Truly look at yourself objectively. Look at the good stuff as well as the dark and scary stuff. See the reasons for your pain. When you see it clearly you will most likely find that your thoughts, feelings, and actions were a result of how you're really feeling about yourself. For instance: if you have a tendency to lash out at others perhaps it is a need to push people away because deep down you feel unworthy to be loved. If you tend to scheme and plot to get ahead it may be an indication that you feel inadequate because you were told you would never amount to anything. I know now that my personal experience of always having to be the best at my trade was because of the imbalance of my ego that was created when my older siblings told me I was stupid and couldn't do anything right. Now with greater awareness of this fact I have taken great strides to heal the hurt inside. I have forgiven them for their cruelty but also I have forgiven myself for any actions that were caused from this imbalance. I understand that they

were responding from the damage done to them and I was responding from the damage done to me.

When we start to forgive ourselves and others something magical happens. A new energy slowly creeps into our experience. Usually a person will see the world as being brighter. A new happiness and contentment begins. Expressing gratitude becomes a must. We feel better about our friends. We no longer get our feelings hurt and in fact we stop drawing drama and chaos into our lives. Maybe a new mate shows up and the relationship, for the first time, goes wonderfully. All of these positive experiences occur not because we have fixed the outward situations in our lives but because we have found true love of self. As we practice this new love of self it can only grow stronger. When it does it will eventually become Unconditional Love of the self. When a person experiences Unconditional Love of self he no longer has to practice expressing that to others because relationships are only a mirror to reflect the way we feel about ourselves. If we have Unconditional Love for ourselves what will the world reflect back to us? You got it! Unconditional love! I assure you it can be no other way.

Peace, Joy, and Unconditional Love to You! Patrick