

**Wisdom Circle - Love  
February, 2015**

**PREPARATION**

**Words of Wisdom**

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.

- I John 4:18

What else is love but understanding and rejoicing in the fact that another person lives, acts, and experiences otherwise than we do?

- Friedrich Nietzsche (1844 - 1900)

To love deeply in one direction makes us more loving in all others.

- Anne-Sophie Swetchine

There is no remedy for love but to love more.

- Henry David Thoreau

A friend is someone who knows all about you and still loves you.

-Elbert Hubbard

Kisses are like salt water,  
The more you drink, the more you thirst.

- Rudagi (Persian Poet)

Frequently people think compassion and love are merely sentimental. No! They are very demanding. If you are going to be compassionate, be prepared for action.

-Desmond Tutu

Love makes your soul crawl out from its hiding place.

- Zora Neale Hurston

Love your God with all your heart, soul, and might; and love your neighbor as yourself  
(Matt. 22:35-40)

You know you're in love when you can't fall asleep because reality seems finally better than your dreams.

-Adapted from Dr. Seuss

## **Spiritual Exercise**

What follows is a collection of poetry about love. Your spiritual exercise is to read this poetry and appreciate it as art. It's even better if you read it aloud - to your partner, to your friend, to your dog, to your reflection in the mirror. It doesn't matter who you read it to, but most poetry was meant to be read aloud and can take on deeper meaning when done so.

## **Questions for Reflection:**

Recall a time in your life when you felt the most loved

Recall a time in your life when you felt love the strongest

What is unconditional love? Should love have limits or conditions?

Is there a difference between being "in love" and loving someone? Have you experienced these emotions?

What does the phrase, "God is Love," mean to you?

**Wild Geese, by Mary Oliver**

You do not have to be good.  
You do not have to walk on your knees  
for a hundred miles through the desert, repenting.  
You only have to let the soft animal of your body  
love what it loves.

Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.  
Meanwhile the world goes on.  
Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain  
are moving across the landscapes,  
over the prairies and the deep trees,  
the mountains and the rivers.  
Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,  
are heading home again.

Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,  
the world offers itself to your imagination,  
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting -  
over and over announcing your place  
in the family of things.

**The Meaning of Love, by Rumi**

Both light and shadow  
are the dance of Love.  
Love has no cause;  
it is the astrolabe of God's secrets.  
Lover and Loving are inseparable  
and timeless.

Although I may try to describe Love  
when I experience it I am speechless.  
Although I may try to write about Love  
I am rendered helpless;  
my pen breaks and the paper slips away  
at the ineffable place  
where Lover, Loving and Loved are one.

Every moment is made glorious  
by the light of Love.

### **Sonnet 116, by William Shakespeare**

Let me not to the marriage of true minds  
Admit impediments. Love is not love  
Which alters when it alteration finds,  
Or bends with the remover to remove.  
O no! it is an ever-fixed mark  
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;  
It is the star to every wand'ring bark,  
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.  
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks  
Within his bending sickle's compass come;  
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,  
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.  
If this be error and upon me prov'd,  
I never writ, nor no man ever lov'd.

### **True, by Adam Dyer**

No, the words just don't ring true  
No matter what they're telling  
When you say "I don't love you."

Despite the way they leave me blue,  
Despite the tears I'm welling.  
No, the words just don't ring true.

Earnest looks and gestures too,  
But something isn't quite compelling  
When you say "I don't love you."

There's no compassion, nothing new  
In the oil you're selling.  
No, the words just don't ring true.

I only wish I'd had a clue  
Or chance to do some yelling,  
Before you said, "I don't love you."

You missed the honest cadence as you flew...  
The lingering, the dwelling...  
That would have made your words ring true:  
"I love him, I don't love you."

## **The River Merchant's Wife by Li Po**

While my hair was still cut straight across my forehead  
I played about the front gate, pulling flowers.  
You came by on bamboo stilts, playing horse,  
You walked about my seat, playing with blue plums.  
And we went on living in the village of Chokan:  
Two small people, without dislike or suspicion.  
At fourteen I married My Lord you.  
I never laughed, being bashful.  
Lowering my head, I looked at the wall.  
Called to, a thousand times, I never looked back.  
At fifteen I stopped scowling,  
I desired my dust to be mingled with yours  
Forever and forever and forever.  
Why should I climb the look out?  
At sixteen you departed,  
You went into far Ku-to-en, by the river of swirling eddies,  
And you have been gone five months.  
The monkeys make sorrowful noise overhead.  
You dragged your feet when you went out.  
By the gate now, the moss is grown, the different mosses,  
Too deep to clear them away!  
The leaves fall early this autumn, in wind.  
The paired butterflies are already yellow with August  
Over the grass in the West garden;  
They hurt me. I grow older.  
If you are coming down through the narrows of the river Kiang,  
Please let me know beforehand,  
And I will come out to meet you  
As far as Cho-fu-Sa.

## **(Arabic Poem), by Al-Hallaj**

I am the One whom I love, and the One whom I love is myself.  
We are two souls incarnated in one body;  
If you see me, you see Him,  
If you see Him, you see us.

## **Session Plan**

*This session plan is a suggested guide, not a rigid set of rules. You may adjust this plan as you feel is appropriate in your group.*

*Gathering & Welcome (~5 min)*

*Chalice Lighting (~2 min)*

*Optional Song or Reading-if someone in the group feels comfortable doing so, they might sing the song once through and invite the rest of the group to join in singing the 2nd time:*

There is more love somewhere  
There is more love somewhere  
I'm gonna keep on  
'til I find it  
There is more love somewhere

(Singing the Living Tradition #95) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=08bnDiE7niE>

*Check-In (20-30 minutes)*

*As you feel comfortable, take 2-3 minutes to share one thing that is lifting your spirits, and one thing that is weighing you down. This is a time for sharing, but not for discussion.*

*Business (10 minutes)*

*Use this time for any new business: Welcoming new members; Scheduling future meetings; Revisiting the Covenant; Answering questions about Wisdom Circle processes; Etc...*

*Discussion (60 minutes)*

*Introduce Topic. Take Turns Reading aloud the "Words of Wisdom."*

Recall a time in your life when you felt the most loved  
Recall a time in your life when you felt love the strongest  
What is unconditional love? Should love have limits or conditions?  
Is there a difference between being "in love" and loving someone? Which have you experienced?  
What does the phrase, "God is Love," mean to you?

*Silent Reflection (~2 minutes)*

*First Responses (Share in the order you feel moved)*

*Cross-Conversation (Ask questions that invite deeper reflection; Speak from personal experience, and use "I statements"; Avoid explaining or judging)*

*Final Thoughts (Share in the order you feel moved)*

*Gratitude (5-10 minutes)*

*Share 1-2 things that have been meaningful to you from this session.*

*Closing*

*Optional Chalice Extinguishing Reading:*

May the Love which overcomes all differences,  
Which heals all wounds,  
Which puts to flight all fears,  
Which reconciles all who are separated,  
Be in us and among us  
Now and always.

- Frederick E. Gillis

