

6 Ways to Get More LOVE in Your Life

by Karen Wyatt MD

The Beatles said it best: “Love is all you need.” But do you feel you have *enough* love in your personal life? According to a 2010 survey by the Fetzer Institute, 68% of Americans say they need more meaningful love in their lives and 95% believe that we need more love in the world.

Since love is one of the most basic human emotions, how can it be that so many of us find it lacking in our lives? We see the word “love” used everywhere these days in advertising for material goods like hamburgers, cars, shoes, eyeglasses and cosmetics. But the genuine love that so many of us long for in our lives involves so much more than the excitement we feel over our favorite footwear.

True love is a powerful, creative force that can inspire humans to write symphonies, trek for months on foot, build massive mausoleums, and make superhuman sacrifices. But love also leaves us feeling vulnerable and opens us up to possible rejection. Love requires courage, patience and effort, which are difficult to maintain in our fast-paced, superficial society.

While many of us are searching for romantic love, remember that true love comes in many different forms and circumstances. Getting more love in your life requires more than dating tips; you’ll have to work at it and make some inner changes to find love that has deeper meaning. Here are some steps you can take to help you cultivate true love:

1. Love Yourself First

Before you can share love with others you have to feel it within yourself. That means you need to find practices and routines that help you genuinely love who you are, just as you are right now.

Try taking yourself on a “date” once a week and spend time alone, doing something you thoroughly enjoy. For example:

- Linger with a latte and a good book at your favorite coffee shop
- Take a walk in nature
- Visit an art gallery or museum that inspires you
- Attend a concert
- Watch a [video](#) about love

As you spend this time with yourself, focus your intention on truly loving YOU and filling yourself up with positive feelings and energy. The more you concentrate on loving yourself the more you will radiate positive feelings of love toward others and attract their love in return.

#2. Recognize Your Barriers to Love

The Sufi poet and philosopher Rumi wrote: “Your task is not to seek for **love**, but merely to seek and find all the barriers within yourself that you have built against it.”

Whether you realize it or not, you may have barriers hidden within you that prevent you from giving and receiving love. Perhaps you have been hurt or betrayed by a past relationship or you fear being vulnerable to other people.

Spend some time in contemplation and write in your journal about your past experiences with love and how you feel about giving yourself over to love. Once you identify your own internal barriers to love you will be able to heal your wounds from the past and rise above them. This is an important step if you want to deepen your ability to genuinely love others.

#3 Practice the Lovingkindness Blessing

This Buddhist blessing (also called “Metta”) can be a powerful reminder to love yourself and others if you use it as a daily practice. Here are the 5 phrases of the blessing:

- May I be at peace.
- May my heart remain open.
- May I realize the beauty of my own true nature.
- May I be healed.
- May I be a source of healing for this world.

Repeat this blessing every day as part of your daily practice and you will begin to feel your heart expanding with compassion for yourself and others. Next change the “I” in each phrase to “you” and use the blessing to send love to someone else.

#4. Give For the Sake of Giving

One of the best ways to bring more love into your life is to give your time and energy to others who need your help. Volunteer at an animal shelter, Head Start program, homeless shelter, or nursing home and you will find ample opportunities to share your love with others who need to be loved.

When you give of yourself with no expectation of return, you will find that you are blessed in many ways and love will begin flowing through you freely. You will begin to attract others into your life who can appreciate your loving and generous behavior.

#5. Open Your Heart

The HeartMath Institute teaches a simple method for opening your heart to love called the Inner Ease Technique. Use this practice as part of your daily routine (along with the

Lovingkindness Blessing) and you will soon be able to overcome the barriers to love you have identified. Here are the steps:

- Place your hand on your heart area and imagine you are breathing in and out through your heart
- Breathe slowly and gently until your breathing feels smooth and balanced, not forced
- With each breath draw in a feeling of inner-ease, balance and self-love into your heart

You can do this practice in any place at any time to reduce anxiety and open yourself up to others.

#6. Find Love In Every Situation

As you open your heart to love and expand your capacity to express love for yourself and others, you will begin to see love everywhere you go. Then love can become your “default mechanism” so that you will choose love whenever you are in a situation of doubt or uncertainty.

For example, if a conflict arises with co-workers or a friend, choose the solution that contains the most love. If you face a crisis and must decide on your next steps, let love be your guide. When you need to give feedback to another person, be motivated by love rather than anger.

As you practice embodying love in your life in various ways, you will discover that you have always had all the love you need—you just couldn’t see it before. When you become a walking, talking vision of love you will become irresistible to other people who will be drawn to you by your beautiful presence.

The entire world will benefit from the love you put into practice, as you radiate love out to others and create more happiness and joy wherever you go. The love the world needs is right there inside you—now, *go find it!*

About the Author:

(Dr. Karen Wyatt is a hospice and family physician and the author of the award-winning book “What Really Matters: 7 Lessons for Living from the Stories of the Dying.” She is a frequent keynote speaker and radio show guest whose profound teachings have helped many find their way through the difficult times of life. Learn more about her work at www.karenwyattmd.com.)

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