



**Recovery from Love-Obsession in Women
3 CEUs**

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About Love

Teachings on Love by Thich Nhat Hanh

Summary: Four Elements of true love:

Loving kindness: The primary meaning of love is friendship. Loving kindness is the intention and capacity to offer joy and happiness. To develop that capacity, we have to practice looking and listening deeply so that we know what to do and what not to do to make others happy.

Compassion: The intention and capacity to relieve and transform suffering and lighten sorrows. To develop compassion in ourselves we need to practice mindful breathing, deep listening and deep looking. Compassion contains deep concern.

Joy: True love always brings joy to us and the ones we love. If our love doesn't bring joy to both of us, it's not true love. We rejoice when we see others happy but we rejoice in our own well-being as well.

Equanimity: non-attachment, non-discrimination, even mindedness, or letting go. It contains the wisdom of equality, the ability to see everyone as equal and not discriminate between ourselves and other people. Without equanimity, your love may become possessive. It allows you to preserve your freedom and the freedom of your beloved.

Lower forms of love. Human love is encircled by a number of obstructive factors such as infatuation, lust, greed, anger and jealousy. In one sense, even these obstructive factors are either forms of lower love or the inevitable side-results of these lower forms of love. Infatuation, lust and greed might be looked upon as perverted and lower forms of love. In infatuation a person is enamoured of a sensual object; in lust he develops a craving for sensations in relation to it; and in greed he desires to possess it. Of these three forms of lower love, greed has a tendency to extend from the original object to the means of obtaining it. Thus persons become greedy for money or power or fame, which can be instruments for possessing the different objects that are craved. Anger and jealousy come into existence when these lower forms of love are thwarted or threatened to be thwarted.

The lower is the enemy of the higher. These lower forms of love obstruct the release of pure love. The stream of love can never become clear and steady until it is disentangled from these limiting and perverting forms of lower love. The lower is the enemy of the higher. If consciousness is caught in the rhythm of the lower it cannot emancipate itself from its self-created ruts, finding it difficult to get out of them and advance further. Thus the lower form of love continues to interfere with the development of the higher form, and has to be given up in order to allow for the untrammelled appearance of the higher form of love.

Love and infatuation. The emergence of higher love from the shell of lower love is helped by the constant exercise of discrimination. Therefore, love has to be carefully distinguished from the obstructive factors of infatuation, lust, greed and anger. In infatuation, the person is a passive victim of the spell of conceived attraction for the object. In love there is an active appreciation of the intrinsic worth of the object of love.

Love and lust. Love is also different from lust. In lust there is reliance upon the object of sense and consequent spiritual subordination of the soul to it, but love puts the soul into direct and co-ordinate relation with the reality which is behind the form. Therefore lust is experienced as being heavy and love is experienced as being light. In lust there is a narrowing down of life and in love there is an expansion in being. To have loved one soul is like adding its life to your own. Your life is, as it were, multiplied and you virtually live in two centers. If you love the whole world you vicariously live in the whole world, but in lust there is an ebbing down of life and a general sense of hopeless dependence upon a form which is regarded as another. Thus, in lust there is the accentuation of separateness and suffering, but in love there is the feeling of unity and joy. Lust is dissipation, love is recreation. Lust is a craving of the senses, love is the expression of the spirit. Lust seeks fulfillment but love experiences fulfillment. In lust there is excitement, but in love there is tranquility.

Love and greed. Love is equally different from greed. Greed is possessiveness in all its gross and subtle forms. It seeks to appropriate gross things and persons as well as such abstract and intangible things as fame and power. In love, the annexation of the other person to your individual life is out of the question and there is a free and creative outpouring that enlivens and replenishes the psychic being of the beloved independently of any expectations for the self. We have the paradox that greed, which seeks for the appropriation of another object, in fact leads to the opposite result of bringing the self under the tutelage of the object; and love, which aims at giving away the self to the object, in fact leads to a spiritual incorporation of the beloved in the very being of the lover. In greed the self tries to possess the object, but is itself possessed by the object. In love the self offers itself to the beloved without any reservations, but in that very act it finds that it has included the beloved in its own being.

RECOVERY FROM LOVE-OBSESSION

Three ways to recover:

1. A radical change in the Primary Self System
2. New ways in handling loneliness
3. Time