



Pause With Purpose

...to refresh

...to grow

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Living Your Heart

February 14, Valentines Day. The day of hearts. The day we set aside to share in special ways the love in our heart for those closest to us. Cards are written, candy is given, flowers are sent. It's a wonderful tradition not to be missed.

Yet, all the focus on love and specialness leads me to wonder. What else do we hold dear in our heart? Besides certain people, what else do we love, value, and care about? As wonderful as our Valentines Day expressions are, the strength and breadth of our true loves are actually revealed by our actions over time.

If someone looked over your shoulder and viewed your behavior over the past year, what loves or values would they identify? Your family? Your friends? Your job? Power? Success? Money? Generosity? What is it that you most value? What values drive your behavior?

You see, love is not a static concept. It finds life through action. We reveal what we love through our behaviors, day in and day out. For many of us, this is an unsettling notion, since our behaviors frequently do not reflect what we describe as our highest values.

Why is this? Let me suggest two possible reasons. First, what we state as our values might not really be what we value. They may be felt obligations, someone else's values, or even just nice sounding principles. But if they aren't *our* values, they will lack the power to motivate us to consistent action. This is why it is so important to identify, label, and claim our highest values, our 'true loves.'

Second, even if we have identified and prioritized our values, our consistent expression of these values can be sabotaged by our own neediness. Yes, I know; that's not a particularly pleasant word. But I use it respectfully as a description of our natural state as humans. We have basic emotional needs which, when unmet, tend to dominate our thinking, decisions, and behavior.

I reduce these needs down to three. First, the need for the security and significance of being loved and valued. Second, the need to belong and have an identity. Third, the need for competence and knowing that we can make some difference in our world. When these needs are unmet, they cry out for fulfillment. They become powerful enough to distort expressions of love into exercises of selfishness. Living out

what we value becomes living to obtain what we need.

This shift carries powerful implications for relationships, both personal and business. It opens the door to self-centeredness, insensitivity, manipulation, dishonesty, and loss of integrity. To resist this path, we must boldly look at our selves - our values, our needs, our actions - and seek out *healthy* ways of filling our unmet needs.

Self care is vitally important here. In healthy self care, we respect who we are and honor what is best for us personally, relationally, and professionally. We minister to our body, mind, and spirit, recognizing the strong bond between each. Spiritual resources are particularly useful for us in emotional self care, since they are uniquely empowered to meet the deepest needs of the human heart.

Ultimately, our goal is to become increasingly 'heart healthy', so that we are free to *consistently* live out our love, free to *consistently* reflect our highest values, and yes, free to be the fulfillment of what we were designed to be.

Happy Valentines Year!



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CONTACT INFORMATION

Your thoughts and comments are warmly welcomed. I would also be happy to share with you more about life coaching and how it can help you take on the challenges of life and bring new vitality into your life relationships.

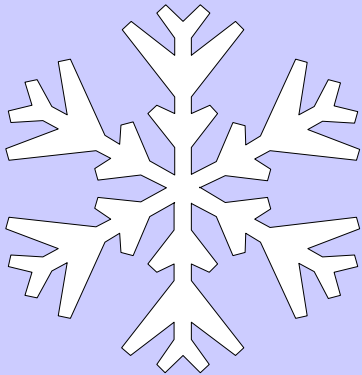
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Listening to Your Heart

Has someone's name ever popped into your head 'for no apparent reason'? Have you ever been unexpectedly drawn to contact someone or to do some act of kindness without knowing why? If so, what did you do?

Most of us haven't been trained to listen to our heart. We have been raised to be logical, rational, and prudent - great qualities, but somewhat limiting. I encourage you to add to this mix the exciting activity of listening to your heart, particularly when it involves an act of kindness toward someone else.

Listen to your Spirit talk to you, and then **act**. Act right away! The Law of Diminishing Intent states that without action, your best intentions will be relegated to the 'I wish I had' files of regret within 72 hours.

Don't wait for a logical reason or explanation. *Listen to your heart*. Respect what you hear. Act...and be amazed!



'God, why do I storm heaven for answers that are already in my heart? Every grace I need has already been given. Oh, lead me to the Beyond within.'

-Macrina Wieherkehr