

There are only two feelings.
Love and fear.
There are only two languages.
Love and fear.
There are only two activities.
Love and fear.
There are only two motives, two procedures,
two frameworks, two results.
Love and fear. Love and fear.
(Leunig)



An Ocean of Light (excerpts from the Preface) - Martin Laird

Love makes us real. Love creates us and sustains us in the process of realizing who we already are. Love breathes us into being (Gen. 2:7). God is divine breath breathing. Humanity the divine breath breathed.

There are some things that Love alone can do. Love plumbs the depths that our thinking mind cannot, and so must take Love's word for it. This distinction does not imply a separation between loving mind and thinking mind. It simply designates areas of expertise. The fourteenth century author of *The Cloud of Unknowing* acknowledges the distinction (not separation) between what our love can do and our thinking mind cannot. "God is forever beyond the reach of the intellectual faculty; but by means of the loving faculty, [God] can be fully grasped by each individual being." "God can well be loved but God cannot be thought."

The practice of contemplation cultivates stillness in our thinking mind, so that it does not dominate the time for prayer. The more we give our lives over to the practice of contemplation, the more our thinking mind is trellised by silence. Contemplation is the consummation of what it means for us to be made “Real” by love. This consummation includes all our jagged edges—everything about ourselves, published or unpublished, which we resent but God seeks out as His own abode within us and among us.

Contemplative presence, contemplative living is our birthright, a natural capacity of every human being. To be attuned to God’s presence in the stillness of the heart is to become who we really are. We humans are created to realize the fullness of our being in conscious, participative communion with God. The practice of sitting in silence, willing to let go of thoughts and images so that one can lean into the Presence of Love seems to be an essential starting place. And then every moment of our daily life in all its ordinariness becomes the way we bring this gift to the world.

John 17:26, (The Message Translation):

Abba, I have made your very being known to them—who you are and what you do—and continue to make it known, so that your love for me might be in them exactly as I am in them.

For Reflection:

To be made “Real” by Love through contemplation includes welcoming everything about ourselves—all our jagged edges. How would it help you to take some time in prayer daily or weekly to hold your jagged edges in Love’s Presence?

Thomas Merton (New Seeds of Contemplation)

“In practice the way to contemplation is an obscurity so obscure that it is no longer even dramatic. There is nothing left in it that can be grasped and cherished as heroic or even unusual. And so, for a contemplative there is a supreme value in the ordinary routine of work and poverty and hardship and monotony that characterize the lives of all the poor and uninteresting and forgotten people in the world.”

“Before enlightenment, chop wood and carry water.
After enlightenment, chop wood and carry water. ”

“After the Ecstasy, the Laundry.” (Book title by Jack Kornfeld)

Authentic contemplative engagement is a way of living that can be practised with each breath that we take. No matter what our life circumstances are, at any moment we can send the energy of love into the universe and that energy of love contributes to the transformation of all creation. It is how the Holy One is “doing something new.” There is no more important activity in which we can engage than contributing to this flow of love in the universe. Moreover, this can be done anywhere, anytime, under any circumstances—it is quite simply about being deeply present to the moment, doing whatever we are doing in love.



In the silence of our hearts, may we surrender to the Mystery of Love which sets us free from the tyranny of fear.

Elaine