

Eckhart Tolle
on the subject of
Love Relationships



What is conventionally called “love” is an ego strategy to avoid surrender. You are looking to someone to give you that which can only come to you in the state of surrender. The ego uses that person as a substitute to avoid having to surrender. The Spanish language is the most honest in this respect. It uses the same verb, *te quiero*, for “I love you” and “I want you.” To the ego, loving and wanting are the same, whereas true love has no wanting in it, no desire to possess or for your partner to change. The ego singles someone out and makes them special. It uses that person to cover up the constant underlying feeling of discontent, of “not enough,” of anger and hate, which are closely related. These are facets of an underlying deep seated feeling in human beings that is inseparable from the egoic state.

When the ego singles something out and says “I love” this or that, it’s an unconscious attempt to cover up or remove the deep-seated feelings that always accompany the ego: the discontent, the unhappiness, the sense of insufficiency that is so familiar. For a little while, the illusion actually works. Then inevitably, at some point, the person you singled out, or made special in your eyes, fails to function as a cover up for your pain, hate, discontent or unhappiness which all have their origin in that sense of insufficiency and incompleteness. Then, out comes the feeling that was covered up, and it gets projected onto the person that had been singled out and made special - who you thought would ultimately “save you.” Suddenly love turns to hate. The ego doesn’t realize that the hatred is a projection of the universal pain that you feel inside. The ego believes that this person is causing the pain. It doesn’t realize that the pain is the universal feeling of not being connected with the deeper level of your being - not being at one with yourself.

The object of love is interchangeable, as interchangeable as the object of egoic wanting. Some people go through many relationships. They fall in love and out of love many times. They love a person for a while until it doesn’t work anymore, because no person can permanently cover up that pain.

Only surrender can give you what you were looking for in the object of your love. The ego says surrender is not necessary because I love this person. It’s an unconscious process of course. The moment you accept completely what is, something inside you emerges that had been covered up by egoic wanting. It is an innate, indwelling peace, stillness, aliveness. It is the unconditioned, who you are in your essence. It is what you had been looking for in the love object. It is yourself. When that happens, a completely different kind of love is present which is not subject to love / hate. It doesn’t single out one thing or person as special. It’s absurd to even use the same word for it. Now it can happen that even in a normal love / hate relationship, occasionally, you enter the state of surrender. Temporarily, briefly, it happens: you experience a deeper universal love and a complete acceptance that can sometimes shine

through, even in an otherwise egoic relationship. If surrender is not sustained, however, it gets covered up again with the old egoic patterns. So, I'm not saying that the deeper, true love cannot be present occasionally, even in a normal love / hate relationship. But it is rare and usually short-lived.

Whenever you accept what is, something deeper emerges than what is. So, you can be trapped in the most painful dilemma, external or internal, the most painful feelings or situation, and the moment you accept what is, you go beyond it, you transcend it. Even if you feel hatred, the moment you accept that this is what you feel, you transcend it. It may still be there, but suddenly you are at a deeper place where it doesn't matter that much anymore.

The entire phenomenal universe exists because of the tension between the opposites - hot and cold, growth and decay, gain and loss, success and failure, the polarities that are part of existence, and of course part of every relationship.

We cannot get rid of polarities on the level of form. However, you can transcend the polarities through surrender. You are then in touch with a deeper place within yourself where, as it were, the polarities no longer exist. They continue to exist on the outer level. However, even there, something changes in the way in which the polarities manifest in your life when you are in a state of acceptance or surrender. The polarities manifest in a more benign and gentle way.

The more unconscious you are, the more you are identified with form. The essence of unconsciousness is this: identification with form, whether it is an external form (a situation, place, event or experience), a thought form or an emotion. The more attached to form, the more un-surrendered you are, and the more extreme, violent or harsh your experience of the polarities becomes. There are people on this planet who live virtually in hell and on the same planet there are others who live a relatively peaceful life. The ones who are at peace inside will still experience the polarities, but in a much more benign way, not the extreme way in which many humans still experience them. So, the way in which the polarities are experienced does change. The polarities themselves cannot be removed, but one could say, the whole universe becomes somewhat more benevolent. It's no longer so threatening. The world is no longer perceived as hostile, which is how the ego perceives it.

When you live in surrender, something comes through you into the world of duality that is not of this world. When you no longer perceive the world as hostile, there is no more fear, and when there is no more fear, you think, speak and act differently. Love and compassion arise, and they affect the world. Even if you find yourself in a conflict situation, there is an outflow of peace into the polarities. So then, something does change. There are some teachers or teachings that say, nothing changes. That is not the case. Something very important does change. That which is beyond form shines through the form, the eternal shines through the form into this world of form.

The opposites continue to happen, but they are not fueled by you anymore. The "lack of reaction" means that the polarities are not fueled. This means, you often experience a collapse of the polarities, such as in conflict situations. No person, no situation is made into an "enemy."

So, the opposites, instead of becoming strengthened, become weakened. And this is how they begin to dissolve. Living in that way is the beginning of the end of the world.