

On Love

The Path of Traditional Vedanta

When I was young, I sought negative attention to fill the emptiness inside. I felt bad and was often "irritable," code for angry. I was allergic to most foods and the environment, which was a form of self rejection. I often created havoc for my family and friends. Of course I was probably perceived as better to some, worse to others. I was by no means a monster but I wasn't an angel either.

My parents where not able to model or show love to my sibilings and me in ways that built self-esteem. However, there was love and I know they did the best they could with what they had. Their challenges and gifts, helped to shape my challenges and gifts. There are no mistakes or accidents, they were both imperfect and perfect, as am I.

In high school, my negative attention seeking reached a climax and events led me to realize that creating trouble was not the best way to get what I needed. So I switched to positive attention getting, or seeking love through being good. This created less friction for me but did nothing to satisfy my feelings of inadequacy.

Freshman year at the University of Colorado, I read the book "Siddhartha," by *Hermann Hesse*, and my spiritual search via the eastern traditions of meditation and yoga began. I explored Western psychotherapy as I was depressed and suffered from binge eating to numb my emotional pain.

Following college and for the next twenty-five years, my search for understanding continued with counseling, Native American Spirituality and Eastern practices. I had a series of short-lived relationships, looking for love but having no idea how to find it. I manifested two very short and painful marriages which ended badly, creating suffering for years after the ink dried on the separation agreements, as children and money were involved.

Why am I sharing all this? To create context.

We all have a story and it's the perfect story for each one of us. However, there comes a time, if we want to evolve, that we have to let go of our story, realizing that what happened to us was perfect and there's no one to blame.

My life changed drastically seven years ago, at 43, when I met Deva. She came at the right time, right place and saved my life. Actually, I was finally ready to save myself and in this readiness, Spirit brought us together for our mutual benefit. When the student is ready, the teacher will appear.

I had suffered enough and was ready to listen and learn. It was time to reveal myself after a lifetime of hiding my true nature due to fear, guilt and shame. Though still struggling with depression, addiction and rage, I found someone who cared enough, to put up with my shit and help me through it.

Several years into our relationship, I had purified my body, heart and mind enough to find my final spiritual teacher, James Swartz and a final spiritual teaching, Vedanta. Though once again, I didn't find the teacher and teaching, they found me, because I was ready. Vedanta has stopped me dead in my tracks. It's teaching me that there is nothing I can do to be more of who I am. Love is not something I can get, because I am love. I can now relax and just be me and that's enough.

I had spent 50 years chasing love through being bad, being good, working hard, hardly working, and through numbing my pain which only created more pain, with no clue that love was always here.

Love has a very quiet voice which can't be heard over the din of a disturbed heart and mind. This is where sadhana (spiritual practice) comes into play. Sadhana neutralizes our binding fears and desires and uncovers our essential nature as love.

The attention, affection, admiration, and respect we seek, are all just secondary forms of love. We can't do, change, or control anything or anyone, including ourselves, to get love, because we already are love.

Love is our nature, our essence. It's that within which all our experiences happen. It illumines the experiencer, the experienced and experience itself. Love truly is what makes the world go round.

As you read these words, love is imbuing every thought, feeling and sensation you are having. In this moment, do you exist? Absolutely. This existence is love. Right now, are you conscious? Yes. This too is love. Is there any edge to your existence and consciousness? No. Does your existence or consciousness ever change? No, though it appears to when covered by the clouds of thought and emotion.

Our love (existence consciousness) is never modified by any sensation, emotion, thought or experience, just like the screen in a theater that is never modified by the images a movie projects upon it. We are this shining light which animates all form.

I used to think my body and mind were me and that I was the sum total of all my experiences in this life. I used to believe I had to do something or be somebody to get love. But now I know, I am this love. I know that my body and mind and all experience are made of love and appear in me - love.

Love is: limitless, unchanging, existence, ever-present, always aware, conscious, forever luminous, beginning-less, endless, and ordinary. It's that which everything in creation is dependent upon. Love is our essential nature.

Thank you to my loving partner in life, Deva, for the powerful mirror she is and to my teacher of Vedanta, James Swartz.

Along with my partner Deva, I own True Nature Healing Arts in Carbondale, CO. A sanctuary in the Rockies for personal growth. Please join me every Wednesday evening 7pm for Meditation, Mantra and Vedanta. Also for Dharma Talk: A Vedanta Study Group, 1st & 3rd Thursday, each month at noon.

In Gratitude, Eaden Shantay

<http://steadywisdom.com/2017/03/08/on-love>

"Extra, extra, read all about it." Breaking story! All news is fake!

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Are the stories that play in our heads or that we hear or read, real? Do they last? Are they true?

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The ancient teachings of Vedanta say that only the self is real?

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My "real" story is your fake news.

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Every thing that arises in our minds, changes, so how can these arising be real?

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All sensation, emotion, and thought are only apparently real. They come and go.

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Echoes of past action, dancing on the screen of awareness.

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They have a beginning and an end and then they disappear, poof!

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Even this body, is just a holographic spacesuit with an expiration date.

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Our stories, are just stories. No matter how compelling they appear to be.

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Told by us, to us, to prop up a false identity - egoji.

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So what is real? What is the self?

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That which never changes.

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That which illumines and animates all changing appearances.

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Limitless, unchanging, ordinary, conscious, existence.

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How does this help?

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Because if we want to suffer less and experience more peace and contentment, we have to stop chasing what's fake or changing, and identify with what's real.

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We are fighting over which news is real and which news is fake, when it's all fake.

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Only the self is real. It's always here and can always be trusted.

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