

FEBRUARY 12

*The longest journey you will ever take is the 18 inches
from your head to your heart.*

—Anonymous

Connecting from the Heart

Do you find it easier to have an intellectual conversation with someone than an honest, open, and heartfelt one? If so, you're not alone. Many of us struggle with intimacy, yet we long for it—it is our most powerful need. I worked in higher education for 15 years, so I understand the safety in talking about things from an intellectual perspective. I also truly enjoy conversations with bright, well-read people that stretch my intelligence and outlook. Such conversations meet my needs for learning, challenge, and mental stimulation. Shifting my focus and connecting from the heart, expressing my true feelings to others, even if I think they might not like me afterwards, takes courage. But it is very satisfying. I have never experienced anything more intimate than deep connection with another person. As I have focused on my need for connection, I have created freedom in my life. I no longer have to hide, pretend, or justify myself, and I am surrounded by loving people. This freedom has opened the floodgates to let compassion and love flow from me. It is a blessing.

Take the opportunity to meet your need for intimacy by being fully authentic with at least one person today.



FEBRUARY 22

The best way out is always through.

—Robert Frost

Empowering Ourselves through Our Choices

Every time we do something because we think we have to, or because we think we should, we are motivating ourselves through guilt and shame. How does it feel to do this? It can feel overwhelming and restricting. Sometimes, it can actually feel like there's a heavy weight on our chest. Try a new way—discard the words “I have to” and “I should” from your vocabulary and only do things you value doing. Maybe you're thinking, “That's impossible. There are some things we just have to do!”

Consider your job. Do you go to work in the morning because you have to or because you want to? You are in your job for a reason. Do you need the money? Do you live in a small town that you love, but which offers few good-paying jobs? Or are you working so your spouse can go to school? Whatever your reason, you are working to fulfill some life-enriching purpose. Connect to that purpose and change your language to “I'm going to work because I love living in this small town” or “because I value the options afforded by the money I make here.” Shifting the energy that motivates our actions can bring empowerment and joy to our lives.

Notice today when you tell yourself that you have to do something. Then consider the underlying needs you are trying to meet with the activity.



MARCH 7

The only way to master love, is to practice love.

—Don Miguel Ruiz

Every Angry Message Is a “Please”

Sometimes it is hard to remember, but every time someone speaks or acts in anger or frustration, he is saying “Please!” Consider the please when your child says, “We NEVER get to do what I want to do!” The child is saying, “Please, I want fairness and fun. I want to know that you care about my needs, too.” How about when your wife says to you as you walk in the front door, “Where have you been? I’ve been waiting for you for an HOUR!” Perhaps underneath this statement, she is saying, “Would you please consider my needs for predictability, respect, and trust?”

Okay, maybe these are too obvious. What is the “please” behind your boss’s statement? “This presentation was deplorable. The computer didn’t operate properly, the graphics were juvenile, and the timing didn’t work. I was embarrassed to present this to the Board, and it must not happen again.” Maybe she’s saying “please” to higher-quality presentations and maintaining a certain image with the Board.

The next time someone expresses their disappointment, frustration, or anger toward you, take a moment to consider the “please” behind their words. When you do this, you have a much greater opportunity to resolve conflicts peacefully.

When a person’s communication is difficult to hear, notice the “please” behind it. When you can hear it as “please,” does it shift how you feel?