LOVE IS LETTING GO OF FEAR

GERALD G. JAMPOLSKY, M.D.

Illustrated by Jack O. Keeler
Foreword by Hugh Prather
We start to see beyond our old reality as defined by the physical senses, and we enter a state of clarity in which we discover that all minds are joined, that we share a common Self, and that inner peace and Love are in fact all that are real.

With Love as our only reality, health and wholeness can be viewed as inner peace, and healing can be seen as letting go of fear.

Love, then, is letting go of fear.

Replaying the Past

We all manufacture our own dust and static which serve only to interfere with seeing, hearing and experiencing Love within ourselves and others. This self-imposed interference keeps us stuck in an old belief system that we use repeatedly, even though it doesn’t get us what we want.

The mind can be thought of as containing reels and reels of motion picture film about our past experiences. These images are superimposed not only on each other but also on the lens through which we experience the present. Consequently, we are never really seeing or hearing it as it is; we are just seeing fragments of the present through the tons of distorted old memories that we layer over it.

If we are willing, we can with increasing effectiveness use active imagination to wipe away everything from those old reels except Love. This requires letting go of our past attachments to guilt and fear.
Sometimes we put more value in predicting and controlling than in having peace of mind. At times, it feels more important for us to predict that we are going to be miserable the next moment, and then find pleasure in being right, than to have true happiness in the present moment. This can be looked upon as an insane way of trying to protect ourselves. It produces a short circuit that confuses pleasure with pain.

We often believe that the fears of the past can successfully predict the fears of the future. The results of this type of thinking are that we spend most of our time worrying about both the past and future, creating a vicious circle of fear, which leaves little room for Love and joy in the present.

Choice for Reality

We can choose our own reality. Because our will is free we can choose to see and experience the truth. We can experience the truth of our reality as Love. To do this, we must, each instant, refuse to be limited by the fearful past and future and by the questionable “realities” we have adopted from our culture. We can choose to experience this instant as the only time there is, and live in the reality of now.

Because our minds have no boundaries, they are actually joined. In fact, our minds have only the limitations we place on them. For example, when we see value in making a fearful past “real,” we limit our minds to using it as our reality. As a result, our minds can only look fearfully at all that is to come, and cannot pause for an instant to enjoy the present in peace. When we use words such as can't and impossible, we have imposed the limits of a fearful past on ourselves.
Prediction versus Peace

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Singleness of Goal

Peace of mind as our single goal is the most potent motivating force we can have. To have inner peace we need to be consistent in having peace of mind as our single goal. Instead of having a single goal, we are all tempted to try to juggle multiple goals. Juggling can only serve to deflect our focus and increase our conflict. We can achieve consistency in keeping this single goal in mind by reminding ourselves of the singleness of purpose we would have if we suddenly found ourselves drowning in the ocean. We would, in that situation, put all of our attention into the single goal of staying afloat and breathing for survival.
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Themes to Live By

In making practical application of the material covered in this book to everyday situations, it will be helpful to keep the following underlying themes in mind:

1. Peace of mind is our single goal.
2. Forgiveness is our single function, and the way to achieve our goal of peace of mind.
3. Through forgiveness, we can learn not to judge others and to see everyone, including ourselves, as guiltless.
4. We can let go of fear when we stop judging and stop projecting the past into the future, and live only in the now.
5. We can learn to accept direction from our inner, intuitive voice, which is our guide to knowing.
6. After our inner voice gives us direction, it will also provide the means for accomplishing whatever is necessary.
7. In following one’s inner guidance, it is frequently necessary to make a commitment to a specific goal even when the means for achieving it are not immediately apparent. This is a reversal of the customary logic of the world, and can be thought of as “putting the cart before the horse.”
8. We do have a choice in determining what we perceive and the feelings we experience.
9. Through retraining of the mind we can learn to use positive active imagination. Positive active imagination enables us to develop positive, loving motion pictures in our minds.
Words to Eliminate

Another process for retraining the mind has to do with recognizing the impact of the words we use. The words in the list that follows are commonly used in the messages we give to ourselves and others. The use of these words continues to keep the guilty past and fearful future active in our minds. As a result, our feeling of conflict can only be reinforced. The more we recognize that using these words interferes with our inner peace, the easier it will be to practice eliminating them from our thoughts and expressions. You may find it helpful to carry an imaginary disposal bag in your mind; every time you use one of these words, visualize yourself putting the word into the disposal bag and then burying it.

It is important always to be gentle with yourself. If you find yourself continuing to use any of these words, merely regard that as a mistake to be corrected and choose not to feel guilty about making a mistake.
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Here are the words:

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can't

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limitation

if only

but

however

difficult

ought to

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doubt

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All that I Give is Given to Myself

_To Give is to Receive_ is the law of Love. Under this law, when we give our Love away to others we gain, and what we give we simultaneously receive. The law of Love is based on abundance; we are completely filled with Love all the time, and our supply is always full and running over. When we give our Love unconditionally to others with no expectations of return, the Love within us extends, expands and joins. So by giving our Love away we increase the Love within us and everyone gains.
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The law of the world, on the other hand, states that what we give away we lose. That is to say, when we give something away, we don’t have it anymore and suffer loss.

The world’s law is based on the belief in scarcity. It holds that we are never really satisfied. We continue to feel empty as we vainly attempt to get fulfilled by seeking for Love and peace in whatever external forms we have come to think of as desirable.

The problem, of course, is that nothing in our external world will continuously and totally satisfy us. Under the world’s law, we continuously search but never find. We frequently think our inner well is empty and that we are in need. We then try to fulfill our imagined needs through other people.

When we expect others to satisfy our desires, and they disappoint us, as they inevitably must, we then experience distress. This distress can take the form of frustration, disappointment, anger, depression or illness. As a result we are likely to feel trapped, limited, rejected or attacked.

When we are feeling unloved and depressed and empty inside, finding someone to give us Love is not really the solution. What is helpful is to Love someone else totally and with no expectations. That Love, then, is simultaneously given to ourselves. The other person doesn’t have to change or give us anything.
I Am Never Upset for the Reason I Think

Most of us have a belief system based on experiences from the past and on perceptions from the physical senses. Have you considered that what we believe is what we see? Or, as comedian Flip Wilson put it, “What you see is what you get.”

Because our physical senses appear to relay information from the outside world to our brain, we may believe that our state of mind is controlled entirely by the feedback we receive. This belief contributes to a sense of ourselves as separate entities who are largely isolated and feel alone in an uncaring and fragmented world. This can leave us with the impression that the world we see causes us to feel upset, depressed, anxious and fearful. Such a belief system presumes that the outside world is the cause and we are the effect.
I Am Determined to See Things Differently

The world we see that seems so insane may be the result of a belief system that isn't working. The belief system holds that the fearful past will extend into a fearful future, making the past and the future one. It is our memory of fear and pain that makes us feel so vulnerable. It is this feeling of vulnerability that makes us want to control and predict the future at all costs.

I would like to present a personal example. I was reared in a family where a fearful attitude always seemed to prevail. I bought into a philosophy that said, "The past is awful, the moment is horrendous, and the next moment is going to be worse." And, of course, we were all correct in our predictions since we shared the same assumptions.

Our old belief system assumes that anger occurs because we have been attacked. It also assumes that counterattack is justified in return, and that we are responsible for "protecting" ourselves, but are not responsible for the need to do so.

If we are willing, it is possible to change our belief system. However, to do so we must take a new look at every one of our cherished assumptions and values from
the past. This means letting go of any investment in holding on to fear, anger, guilt or pain. It means letting the past slip away and with it all the fears from the past that we keep extending into the present and future.

"I am determined to see things differently" means that we are truly willing to get rid of the past and future in order to experience now as it really is.

Most of my life I have acted as if I were a robot, responding to what other people said or did. Now I recognize that my responses are determined only by the decisions I make. I claim my freedom by exercising the power of my decision to see people and events with Love instead of fear.

Example A

When I was in medical school, a surprising percentage of the class came down with whatever disease was being discussed. It made no difference what the disease was; it could have been hepatitis, schizophrenia or syphilis.

My thing was tuberculosis. When I was an intern in Boston I had to spend one month on the TB service and I was scared to death that I would catch tuberculosis and die. My fantasy plan was to take one deep breath as I went on the ward and not breathe for a month. I was a total wreck at the end of my first day.

That night about 11:30 I received an emergency call. I ran to the ward where a fifty-year-old woman, who not only had tuberculosis but was also an alcoholic with cirrhosis of the liver, had just vomited blood. She was pulseless. I massaged her heart and removed the blood from her throat with a suction machine. The oxygen machine would not work at first and I administered mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. Her pulse came back and she began to breathe. She made it.

After I went back to my intern quarters I saw myself in the mirror and I was a bloody mess. All of a sudden it occurred to me that I had not been fearful at any time during the episode.

That night I learned that when I was totally absorbed in what I might get, I was immobilized with fear and was a help to no one, but when I was totally absorbed in giving, I felt no fear. By letting go of the past, by putting my full attention into giving in the now, I forgot about fear and could see things differently.
Perhaps it is needless to say I immediately lost my fear of tuberculosis. That patient turned out to be a very potent teacher for me.

Our state of mind is our responsibility. Whether we experience peace or conflict is determined by the choice we make in how we see people and situations, whether we see them as worthy of Love or as justifying our fear.

We do not have to act like robots and give others the power to determine whether we will experience Love or fear, happiness or sadness.

Example B

This book emphasizes that a shift in perception can reverse our way of thinking: that it helps when you put the cart in front of the horse.

I am finding that when personal guidance has established the goal (the cart), all I need do is keep that goal firmly in my mind and the means (the horse) will take care of itself. Most of us expend so much energy in trying to find the means that we lose sight of the goal.

Here is a recent example: The children I work with who have catastrophic illnesses recently wrote a book. It looked as if it would take eighteen or more months to get it published through an established publishing house. Although we did not have any money, my guidance was not to wait but to publish the book ourselves, and to have faith that somehow the money would be provided. (In the past I would never have done anything like this without having the money first. This time, however, I was determined to see things differently.)

I did make a personal commitment to the printer that I would borrow the money from the bank if we were not able to raise the necessary funds. On a Friday at noon, the 5,000 copies of the book, *There is a Rainbow Behind Every Dark Cloud*, were delivered. We had raised less than 10 percent of the money required.

I felt as if I were at the end of a high diving board and someone was about to push me off. However, one hour later we received a phone call from the Executive Director of the Bothin Foundation, stating that they had approved our grant application and we would immediately receive a check paying for the books in full.
I Am Not the Victim of the World I See

Have you noticed how often you feel that you are a victim of the world in which you live? Because most of us perceive many aspects of our surroundings as insane, we are tempted to feel helplessly caught in a trap. When we allow ourselves to think we are living in an unfriendly environment where we must fear being hurt or victimized, we can only suffer.

To be consistent in achieving inner peace, we must perceive a world where everyone is innocent.

What happens when we choose to see others as free from guilt? How can we begin to look at them differently? To begin with, we might have to look on everything in the past as irrelevant except the Love we have experienced. We could choose to see the world through the window of Love rather than the window of fear. That would mean we would then selectively choose to see the beauty and the Love in the world, people's strengths rather than their weaknesses.

What I see without is a reflection of what I have first seen within my own mind. I always project onto the
Today I Will Judge Nothing that Occurs

Have you ever given yourself the opportunity of going through just one day concentrating on totally accepting everyone and making no judgments? Most of us think we would find that a very difficult task, since it is a rare occurrence to spend a few moments, let alone a whole day, with someone without making a judgment. When we think about it, many of us will be appalled at how often we condemn others and ourselves. We may even feel that it is almost impossible to stop being judgmental. However, all that is really necessary is our willingness to begin practicing being non-judgmental, without expecting instant perfection. The relinquishing of old habits that we do not want comes with repeated and sustained practice.

Most of us manifest a condition which could be called "tunnel vision." We do not see people as a whole. We see just a fragment of a person and our mind often interprets what we see as a fault. Most of us were brought up in a home and school environment where emphasis was placed on constructive criticism, which actually is usually a disguise for faultfinding.

On those occasions when we observe ourselves repeating this same mistake with our spouses, our chil-
This Instant is the Only Time There Is

I have often thought that we have much to learn from infants. They have not yet adapted to the concept of linear time with a past, present and future. They relate only to the immediate present, to right now. It is my hunch that they do not see the world as fragmented. They feel that they are joined to everything in the world as part of a whole. To me, they represent true innocence, Love, wisdom and forgiveness.

As we become older, we tend to accept the adult values which emphasize projecting past learning into the present and anticipated future. It is difficult for most of us to have even the slightest question about the validity of our past-present-future concepts. We believe that the past will continue to repeat itself in the present and future without the possibility of change. Consequently, we believe we are living in a fearful world where, sooner or later, there will be suffering, frustrations, conflict, depression and illness.
It allows for an instant of healing where Love is ever present, here and now.

It is our investment in wanting to control and predict that keeps us attached to the painful and guilty experience of the past. Guilt and fear, which are allied and which our minds make up, stimulate us to believe in this continuity of time.

If we feel that someone rejected us, criticized us or was unfair to us in the past, we will see that person as attacking us. This reinforces our fear and we attempt to attack back. Releasing the past means not blaming anyone, including ourselves. It means holding no grievances and totally accepting everyone, making no exceptions. It means a willingness to see only the light in others, and not their lamp shade.

Fear and Love, guilt and Love, cannot co-exist. Only if I keep reliving the past in the future am I a slave to time. By forgiving and letting go of the past, I free myself of the painful burdens I have carried into the present. Now I can claim the opportunities for freedom in the present without my past distortions.

Example

In 1975, I conducted a seminar on A Course in Miracles a few months after I had become a student of these writings. At the intermission, a couple in their sixties came up to me and said that they were going to visit their thirty-five-year-old son, a chronic schizophrenic, in the state hospital the next day. They asked my advice about how to apply the principles of the Course to their visit.

I didn’t really know what to say, so I asked my intuitive self for guidance. What came out of my mouth surprised me. The words didn’t seem like mine, although they will be familiar to you because they have since become part of me and therefore part of this book. I responded by saying:

“Spend as much time as you can before tomorrow ridding yourself of all the past, painful, guilty, fearful thoughts and experiences you have had with your son. Release yourselves from any guilt you have about your son’s condition. Use active imagination and put all your fears, guilts and pain in a garbage can and attach the can to a yellow balloon filled with helium. Print on the balloon, I forgive my misperceptions. Then watch the balloon and garbage can disappear into the sky. Pay attention to how much lighter and freer you feel.

“When you go to the hospital and the doctor talks to you about your son’s behavior, do not be attached to what he has to say. Look past what your eyes and ears report. Choose to see your son only through the window of Love. Choose to see your son only as light—the light of Love. See the light of Love in your son and the light of your Love as one light. Feel the peaceful bliss
and know that the function of Love is to unite all things unto itself."

A week later I received a beautiful gift, a letter from the parents saying that they had experienced the most peaceful visit with their son they had ever had.

Today I choose to claim my release from past pain and suffering by living only in the immediate present.