

Finding a higher love

These sensitive, profound and rare insights help us gain entrée into the most precious, and misunderstood, component of our being — the heart. They show us that while love can be compassionate and nurturing, it can also be powerful, dynamic and practical — a catalyst for spiritual growth.

You'll learn how the mature heart overcomes hidden blocks to giving and receiving more love. How you can soften and strengthen the heart to create more meaningful relationships in all areas of your life. And how even the most intense lessons of love, if we are willing to learn from them, can be the open door to a higher love — and a higher way of loving.

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ALCHEMY OF THE HEART

PROPHET



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*How to
Give and
Receive
More Love*



ELIZABETH CLARE PROPHET
and PATRICIA R. SPADARO

Alchemy of the Heart

How to Give and Receive More Love



*Elizabeth Clare Prophet
AND
Patricia R. Spadaro*

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Contents

ALCHEMY OF THE HEART

How to Give and Receive More Love

by Elizabeth Clare Prophet and Patricia R. Spadaro

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Note: Because gender-neutral language can be cumbersome and at times confusing, we have often used *he* and *him* to refer to God or the individual. These terms are for readability only and are not intended to exclude women or the feminine aspect of the Godhead. Likewise, our use of *God* or *Spirit* does not exclude other expressions for the Divine.

PART ONE

OPENING the Heart



*The highest and most perfect love begins
with your individual expression of the heart—
and we all play the song of the heart
a little differently.*



Increasing Our Capacity to Love

The beautiful souls are they that are universal, open, and ready for all things.

—MONTAIGNE

One day, very early in the morning, midst streets full of the sleeping, homeless poor of India, Malcolm Muggeridge accompanied Mother Teresa to the Calcutta railway station to see her off.

“When the train began to move,” he said, “and I walked away, I felt as though I were leaving behind me all the beauty and all the joy in the universe. Something of God’s universal love has rubbed off on Mother Teresa.”

Something of God’s universal love had rubbed off on Muggeridge as well. For those who embody the living flame of love are transformers—they transform whatever they touch. In Muggeridge’s case, the crusty and agnostic English journalist was utterly changed by his encounters with Mother Teresa, whom he first interviewed in the 1960s.

“To me,” he wrote, “Mother Teresa represents, essentially, love in action. . . . In a dark time she is a burning and a shining light.”¹

No matter who you are, no matter what your calling, you too can be a transformer of love. You can touch another heart and many other hearts who are waiting just for you—souls who will respond only to the unique expression of your heart.

When you get right down to it, there is nothing more important than increasing our capacity to love. A disciple once asked Gautama Buddha, “Would it be true to say that a part of our training is for the development of love and compassion?” The Buddha replied, “No, it would not be true to say this. It would be true to say that the whole of our training is for the development of love and compassion.”

The apostle John said essentially the same thing in his beautiful exposition on love: “This is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. . . . He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.” If God is love and we were made in the image and likeness of God, as both Genesis and the scriptures of the East tell us, then at our very core we too are love. God created the universe so that we—and he—could

experience more of the wonders of that love.

That is why most, if not all, of the critical issues in our life revolve around the innate need to give love and to receive love. When we lament the lack of appreciation or respect or even self-esteem in our life, what we are really yearning for is love. When we feel compelled to take those tortuous twists and turns through the labyrinth of life, painful as they may be, it’s because we’re trying to recapture the experience of divine love that is native to our soul.

The labyrinth takes us over the high peaks and into the deep chasms of our own inner terrain. The landscape has been shaped by our karma—the consequences of the choices we have made in the past to love or not to love. Each time we come to a Y in the road, we again come face-to-face with the choice—to love or not to love, to open our heart and share our gifts or to shut down and pretend no one is home.

Since the journey is not always easy, at times we take the safer, lower road so we can catch our breath. And sometimes we never make it back to the high road. It’s understandable. Maybe we were deeply hurt in this life or a past life and we don’t

want to open our hearts and be rejected again. Maybe we're angry with others or even with God for the loss of a loved one. Or maybe we feel guilty about our own shortcomings and have convinced ourselves that we don't deserve to be loved.

In some cases, we unconsciously wall ourselves off. We retreat into the castle of our heart and position layers upon layers of defenses around it so that no one will get too close to us and we won't get too close to anyone else. But these defenses keep us insulated from the very thing we crave—an intimate experience of giving and receiving love.

That's when the universe conspires to wake us up and get us back on the high road. My teacher and late husband, Mark L. Prophet, once said, "All experiences on earth are to teach us the meaning of love. All relationships on earth are to teach us the meaning of love. Everything that takes place for the education of the soul...is to teach it the meaning of love. Because love is the power that shakes the universe and sounds the one pure tone that gives to every man the freedom to embrace his own divine presence, his own divine plan."

If we can embrace this truth—that all our experiences are designed to teach us how to give

and receive more love—then suddenly the circumstances of our life make sense. We are awakened to the need for a higher walk with love. And the journey into those deep chasms and over those high peaks becomes a sacred trek.

"Be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart and try to love the questions themselves," Rainer Maria Rilke once said. "Live the questions now." What are some of the questions that we must live on our journey of heart mastery? Here are just a few:

How can I open my heart and freely share my love with others? How can I empower my heart so I can fulfill my reason for being and soothe those who are in pain? How can I heal my own heart from the pain of the past and expand my capacity to love? How can I give to others and still find time to nurture myself? How can I enter my heart to fan the inner fires of love? How can I become a living transformer of love?

The alchemy begins with heart perspective.

*You knock at the door
of reality, shake your
thought-wings, loosen your
shoulders, and open.*

—RUMI



Heart Perspective

"Where is the locality of truth?" "In the heart," said he, "for by the heart man knows truth."

—BRIHAD ARANYAKA UPANISHAD

Alchemists of old are best known for their experiments to transform base metals into gold. But many alchemists were also explorers of the spirit whose experiments were aimed at finding keys to spiritual transformation and eternal life. They were attempting to transform the base metals of their lower self into the gold of their highest potential.

Alchemy is self-transformation, the kind of change that is essential to spiritual growth. As Jelaluddin Rumi, Persia's greatest mystical poet, writes, "The *alchemy* of a changing life is the only truth."²

The master alchemist and adept Saint Germain teaches that the point of reality is the heart and that the key to understanding the reality of any situation is heart perspective. "Centered in your heart," he says, "you can see all things as they are."

Heart perspective is consciously thinking, feeling, acting and breathing through the heart. What-

ever you do, even if it's serving someone a cup of tea, it can be an extension of your heart. Heart perspective will change the way you treat others, the way they treat you, and the way you treat yourself. Heart perspective invites honesty and breeds compassion.

A wise monk was once asked by his companions what they should do if they saw a fellow monk snoozing during prayer time. "Should we pinch him so he will stay awake?" they asked. The monk replied, "Actually, if I saw a brother sleeping, I would put his head on my knees and let him rest."³ That's heart perspective.

When we have heart perspective, we are committed to keeping a warm, open place in our heart where someone who is in pain feels safe to enter. Heart perspective is that creative genius that looks for ways to inject love into every challenge. It inevitably finds a unique and higher solution to a knotty problem.

In his book *Legacy of the Heart*, Wayne Muller relates a Vietnamese folktale that shows how a change in perspective can turn a seemingly impossible situation into an opportunity to give and receive more love. "In hell, everyone is given an abundance of food, and then given chopsticks that

are a yard long,” writes Muller. “Each person has all the food they need, but because the chopsticks are too long, the food never reaches their mouths.

“In heaven, the image is exactly the same: Everyone is given an abundance of food, and their chopsticks are also a yard long. But in heaven, the people use their chopsticks to feed one another. A single act of compassion can instantly transform hell into heaven.”⁴

We have plenty of opportunities to practice heart perspective. In a competitive world where so many people feel compelled to go straight for the jugular vein, we have the opportunity to go straight for the heart. You may be thinking, you may be speaking, you may be feeling, but see yourself doing all of this through your heart until you feel as though it is your heart (and not your head or your ego or your defense mechanisms) that is thinking, speaking and feeling. This takes practice, but it can be done.

Through heart perspective we consciously make an effort to relate to the beauty of the soul and not to the idiosyncrasies of the outer personality. We try not to judge another, for we never know what burden she is carrying—or whether we are correctly interpreting her actions. As Henry Wadsworth

Longfellow once wrote, “Every man has his secret sorrows which the world knows not; and often-times we call a man cold when he is only sad.”

Sometimes we are so preoccupied with our tasks that we don’t take time to approach life through the heart. Once forty professors from the United States visited Mother Teresa in Calcutta. One of them piped up, “Tell us something that will help us change our lives.” He was probably not expecting the simple prescription she offered. “Smile at each other,” she said. “Make time for each other, enjoy each other.” In other words, remember the heart.

Rumi gives some of the most eloquent and perceptive lessons on the heart that we will find anywhere. He shows us that heart perspective may be 180 degrees removed from the preconceptions of our mind. In one of Rumi’s poems, Moses meets a shepherd who is spontaneously speaking to God. In his inspired monologue, the shepherd offers to fix God’s shoes, wash his clothes and sweep his room for him. Moses is appalled and rebukes him, saying that such inappropriate familiarity sounds like he’s chatting with his uncles.

That mirror that shows reality is the heart.
—LAHIJI

The penitent shepherd wanders into the desert when suddenly God rebukes Moses for having separated the shepherd from him. God says that it's not the ways of worshiping that are important but whether there is a burning love within. "I don't hear the words," explains God. "I look inside."⁵

Through heart perspective we also see the challenges that come our way as "love ops"—moments when we are called to demonstrate love or to learn something new about loving. For Patrick,* life's challenges have become a series of wake-up calls to a higher love. At 37 he suffered the first of three heart attacks. Now 61, he has had three open-heart surgeries, nine bypasses and twenty cardiac catheterizations. When doctors recently performed a new experimental surgery on his heart, they weren't sure he would make it. But he did, even surviving a serious bout with pulmonary heart edema.

Patrick's doctors admit that he is alive by an incredible act of will. Patrick says that what has enabled him to survive is his quest for divine love. The physical challenges to his heart have sensitized him to the spiritual potential of his heart. Life, he has come to realize, is really only a prepa-

*The names in stories are changed except for public figures.

ration for eternity. "Everything that I've gone through physically," he says, "has helped me open up to my spirit. It's as if the deterioration of my physical heart has helped me discover the living structure of my spirit. And as my health deteriorates, my love grows."

Looking back to his earlier years, Patrick realizes that he was destroying himself emotionally. Like so many men of his generation, he says, in those days he was on a rocket ship to nowhere. "We were afraid of not accomplishing everything we thought our parents wanted us to accomplish," says Patrick. "Now I realize that a lot of those things I spent my energy on are not going with me. I'm not taking my car with me. I'm not taking my home with me. And as wonderful as my business is, I'm not taking that with me either. The only thing I will have is my spirit."

That awakening has given Patrick his new lease on life. It has also given him an intense desire to express more love whenever he can and a desire to pass on what he's learned. He especially wants to help his children develop a greater sense of their spirituality and understand how magical life can be when we focus on the heart. "They don't have to

worry so much about competing,” he says. “All they’ve got to do is be themselves and open up to the challenge of finding divine love in this lifetime.”

HEART PERSPECTIVES

At the end of each section in this book under the heading “Heart Perspectives,” we offer practical techniques you can use to increase your capacity to give and receive more love and to create your own alchemy of the heart.

- **Create your own heart ritual.** Maybe you do it before you get out of bed in the morning or just before you go to sleep. Start by simply concentrating on your heart. Take a few moments to close your eyes and feel the spiritual presence that dwells within your heart. This is your time to reconnect with your spiritual self and to remember your soul’s inner vow made long ago to become a living transformer of love. Go back to this simple ritual throughout the day, especially when conditions tempt you to move away from the seat of love in your heart.
- **Practice centering in your heart.** As you go through the day, periodically bring your awareness to your heart. Try to consciously think, feel, act and even breathe as if you were doing all of these through your heart.

- Find a simple prayer, affirmation or mantra that helps you connect to your heart and to the heart of God, and make it a part of your spiritual practice each day. During the day if you feel the urge to criticize yourself or others, to get upset or to move out of your heart in some way, stop. Redirect your attention to your heart and recite your affirmation or prayer as many times as you wish. It can be as simple as one of those listed below.

O God, you are so magnificent!*

*O Divine Presence,
let me see as you would see,
hear as you would hear
and speak as you would speak.*

Om Mani Padme Hum

(Pronounced Om Mah-nee Pud-may Hoom.) This ancient and popular Buddhist mantra for compassion means “Hail to the jewel in the lotus.” The jewel in the lotus has been interpreted in many ways, including the unfolding of the jewel of spirituality or enlightenment within the lotus of awakened consciousness, the wedding of wisdom and compassion, and the awakening of the Buddha (or the Christ) within the heart.

*You can use whatever appellation for the Universal Spirit you are most comfortable with.



Stretch the Muscles of the Heart

Love is not effortless.

To the contrary, love is effortful. —M. SCOTT PECK

“I don’t have any real friends,” Shelley admitted, explaining how lonely she had become over the years.

“Are you a friend to anyone?” I gently asked.

She hadn’t expected that answer and stared back at me in silence while the truth sunk in: You can’t have friends unless you are a friend yourself.

It’s the same way with love. The secret to attracting what we want is to start to become it ourselves. Rather than desiring to be loved, *be* love. If you want to increase your capacity to give and receive more love, start by giving more love to others.

Stretch! Do something you don’t want to do. That’s what Saint Francis did—and it changed his life.

The son of a well-to-do merchant, Francis had always been terrified of lepers. He avoided them whenever he saw them coming and would even ask others to deliver his alms to them. One day, as Francis was riding his horse around a bend in the

road, he came upon a leper covered with sores. The sight and stench of the wretched man repulsed him.

His first impulse was to turn his horse around and flee. He checked himself, suddenly realizing that he could not pretend to love God and yet turn his back on someone in need. This time, instead of letting his aversion get the upper hand, he opened his heart as well as his purse. Francis dismounted and as he reached out to give the leper alms, he kissed the man and embraced him.

Francis’s encounter with the leper was a turning point in his life. He was transported by the experience and felt he had gained a victory over a great weakness. “Everything was so changed for me that what had seemed at first painful and impossible to overcome became easy and pleasant,” he later wrote.

This is not just a tale from the life of a saint. It is a lesson in how to jump-start the alchemy of the heart. Is there a “leper” in your life who needs your love—someone who repulses you or something you just don’t want to do? That person or situation is probably a messenger of love come to show you that your heart needs to stretch a little more in this or that direction.

As Rumi tells us, being human is like being “a

guest house.” Every morning there is a new arrival, a new messenger. Greet even the sorrow that violently enters and carries away all your furniture, advises the poet, for this guest may be clearing space for something new and wonderful. “Be grateful for whoever comes,” he says, “because each has been sent as a guide from beyond.”⁶

Opening your heart to embrace the person or situation that pains you could be one of the most life-transforming experiences you’ll ever have. It can also be one of the most courageous, for love takes courage and it takes will. Love takes courage because it forces us into unknown territory. Mark Prophet used to define courage as *coeur-age*—the coming of age of the heart (*coeur* in French). Courage is the development of the love and wisdom of the heart that emboldens us to take the action that is right, honorable and necessary, even if it is temporarily uncomfortable.

In *The Road Less Traveled*, M. Scott Peck aptly describes love as “the will to extend one’s self for the purpose of nurturing one’s own or another’s spiritual growth.” He says, “A genuinely loving individual will often take loving and constructive action toward a person he or she consciously

dislikes, actually feeling no love toward the person at the time and perhaps even finding the person repugnant in some way.”⁷

If we have stopped extending, if we have stopped giving because it is uncomfortable, then we have stopped loving. “I’ve found that I don’t grow if I don’t have to stretch,” says Neil, who has a high-pressure job helping put on large conferences. When he’s rushing to take care of the next crisis before it happens, there’s often an attendee looking lost, needing help—needing love. Then comes the choice: to walk on by or to extend love.

“I’ve found that the tests of love come when I’m really tired,” says Neil. “Someone needs help and it’s inconvenient and it’s the last thing I want to do. But doing it forces me out of my comfort zone. And if I can’t get past the point of pain in doing it, the blessing never comes.”

Like athletes training for the high jump, reaching a new level of heart mastery is at first a push. It takes practice. But as we keep stretching, we become more agile until we master that jump and we’re ready to raise the bar again. In the realm of the heart, whenever we allow ourselves to move beyond the arbitrary limitations we have accepted,

we expand our capacity to love.

Our soul wants us to exceed those limits and therefore we often unconsciously magnetize the people who will bring us face-to-face with the next bar. Relationships are notorious opportunities for stretching the muscles of the heart.

Like many newlyweds, Roberto didn't understand what was going on when the honeymoon suddenly came to a halt. Almost everything he did and said upset his wife, Maria. They couldn't figure out how to get over the next hurdle. After some heart-wrenching arguments and stony silences, they decided to embrace "the leper." It took a few long talks and some deep soul searching before the two of them began to understand the initiations of love they were facing.

On the one hand, Maria realized that the roots of her discontent lay within and that she had some unrealistic expectations about how her new husband would fulfill her needs. She had to soften her heart and put herself in Roberto's shoes. A long-time bachelor, Roberto wasn't used to sharing his

Look for a long time at what pleases you, and for a longer time at what pains you.

—COLETTE

world with someone else, and he wasn't going to change overnight. For his part, Roberto realized that if he was to grow in love, he had to open his heart and become less self-centered.

"I never thought I would say it, but it's really a gift from God to be married to someone who won't let you stay the way you are," Roberto now says. "It's like we're both booting each other up the ladder into heaven."

Love certainly doesn't leave you where it finds you, and it won't let you leave others where you find them either. Take Clara and Lorraine Hale. One day on her way home from work, Lorraine had stopped to talk to her mother about her frustration working as a guidance counselor in the New York City public schools. "Lorraine, God put you on this earth for a reason," her mother had said. "He's going to reveal that reason to you. ... Be still and listen with your heart so you'll know when He puts it before you."

On her way home, as she was waiting in heavy traffic for the light to change, Lorraine saw a disheveled young woman sitting on a wooden crate. The woman, who could barely keep her eyes open, was holding a tiny baby in her arms. The

light changed and Lorraine continued on her way, but she couldn't get that baby out of her mind. A few blocks later she turned around, went back to that corner and parked her car. She handed the woman a note and said, "Here, go to this address. My mother will help."

The next morning, the woman and child arrived at Clara Hale's doorstep. Clara had raised dozens of children as a foster parent, but until then she had never taken in any right off the street. That stretch of the heart soon changed Clara's and Lorraine's lives dramatically. The same year, they founded Hale House in Harlem. It was the first nonprofit nursery in the country dedicated solely to the care of children of drug-addicted mothers.

The fragile children of Hale House come from prisons, hospitals, police precincts, welfare offices, clergy, social workers, relatives and sometimes the mothers themselves. The staff provides round-the-clock "love-care." Each child is given holistic nurturing, including nutrient-rich food prepared from scratch. In addition to caring for babies born addicted to drugs, Hale House cares for children infected with HIV or suffering from AIDS.

The Hales also founded Homeward Bound,

a program to help mothers recovering from drug addiction to enter back into society and take on their parental responsibilities. Clara passed on in 1992, and Lorraine continues their work.

"What we lacked in experiential know-how," says Lorraine, "we made up for with the greatest of all gifts one human can give another: love. It was sheer love, administered to these tiny victims of drug abuse, that brought miraculous results. I'm talking about the kind of love that outlasts weeks of torture a baby goes through while ridding its body of drugs received in the womb."⁸

You don't have to go far to find someone who needs your love. In fact, most of the time there is someone right outside your own doorstep (or inside your home) who is crying out to you to open your heart a little more.

HEART PERSPECTIVES

- Identify the next stretch that will help you open your heart a little more. Who or what are the messengers in your life that are asking you to stretch? What are they trying to tell you? What must you do to make that next stretch?

- Embrace the “leper.” Is there someone who annoys you or something that you don’t want to do because it will force you out of your comfort zone? How can you open your heart to embrace this “leper” in your life?



“I Love, Therefore...”

If a friend is in trouble, don't annoy him by asking if there is anything you can do. Think up something appropriate and do it.

—EDGAR WATSON HOWE

The language of the heart may be poetic, but the actions of the heart are extremely practical. When we love, what we must do and what we must let go of become obvious. You say to yourself, “I love, therefore I can’t carry around this anger or pride or selfishness or jealousy. I am love, therefore I can’t hold on to this resentment or bitterness that saps my creative energy. I am love, therefore I can’t have this condition in my life stopping me from doing what I must do.”

What are you willing to do and how are you

willing to change in order to be love in action? It’s a powerful exercise to write down “*I am love, therefore _____*” and then fill in the blank. First, list the things in your life that have to go so you can love more, whether it’s pessimism, fear, selfishness, feeling sorry for yourself or a lack of self-confidence. Maybe you need to give up staying late at work so you can spend more time with your family.

I am love, therefore this self-concern has to go! This worry has to go! This false sense of inadequacy has to go! I am a pillar of love, therefore I invite the angels into my life to help me clear this condition of consciousness that stands in the way of the full flowering of my heart!

Next write down the positive vision of what things will look like once you have loved. When you are love, what is your universe like? What is your life like? What is your heart like? How do you treat yourself? How do you treat others?

Then affirm aloud with all of your being the love commitments you have written down: *I am love, therefore...*

The “therefore” will be different for each of us. For correspondent Kurt Schork and cameraman

Miguel Gil Moreno, the “therefore” was to travel where few would venture—to war zones around the world like Bosnia, Kosovo and Chechnya. They risked their lives on the front lines to sensitize the international community to what was really happening at these hot spots. In May 2000, they were killed in Sierra Leone in what was probably

Giving is the highest expression of potency.

—ERICH FROMM

a rebel ambush, victims of the bloody civil war they were covering.

Both men were profoundly aware of the risks as well as the importance of their jobs. “Miguel was doing the job he loved and died doing the work he felt ordained for,” said Miguel’s mother. “He felt his mission was to give voice to those who did not have one.”⁹

For Lesia Cartelli, the “therefore” was to face her greatest fear and turn it into her greatest strength. When she was nine, a furnace exploded while she was playing hide-and-seek in her grandparents’ basement. Lesia suffered second- and third-degree burns on 50 percent of her body. Although she survived, her face was puckered with scar tissue and she was afraid of fires and natural gas. As an adult, she hated gassing up her car or

even watching a fire scene in a movie.

Lesia counseled children who were burn victims and spoke at fairs and schools, but she never faced her fear head-on—that is, until she decided to take part in a training exercise for fire fighting with the help of her future husband, fire captain Bruce Cartelli. After four tries with Bruce by her side, she was finally able to crawl to a set of burning stairs, open the nozzle of the fire hose and spray the flames until they died. She couldn’t stop crying for eight days afterward, as she released the pent-up emotions of twenty-six years.

Today Lesia says that so much good has come from her “facing the dragon.” Her passion is to assist children and adults who have burn injuries and other traumas to heal “inside and out.” She speaks at conferences, consults with burn camps internationally, and draws from her personal experiences to design support systems within camps for burn-injured children. And she is no longer afraid to light a log fire or a barbecue.

“Whatever your fears are, embrace them,” she advises. “When you face fear head-on, it dissolves.”¹⁰ She also tells others that everything in life carries a potential blessing and that her scars have

given her an incredible sense of purpose and have shaped her life's work.

For Aaron Feuerstein, owner of Malden Mills, a textile mill near Boston, the "therefore" was sacrificing short-term gain to help those who needed him most. In December 1995, on the night of his seventieth birthday, three of his factories at the mill burned to the ground. A boiler explosion had set off a fire that left only sections of brick walls and smoking piles of twisted metal. Malden Mills was the biggest employer in Methuen, Massachusetts, and some three thousand jobs were threatened. What's worse, it was just two weeks before Christmas.

On the night of the fire, Aaron made three promises to his employees. He promised them each a \$275 Christmas bonus. He promised that he would continue to pay his workers' wages for the month and keep up their health insurance for three months. And he promised that he would rebuild the plant.

His employees were shocked. They knew that Aaron could have thrown up his hands, taken the \$300 million in insurance money and run. If he had, his three thousand employees and their families,

not to mention all the businesses that supported them in that town, would have been in trouble. Instead, with incredible faith and determination, Aaron put his own future on the line for them.

"What kind of an ethic is it that a CEO is prepared to hurt 3,000 people who are his employees [and] an entire city of many more thousands... in order for him to have a short-term gain," said Aaron. "It's unthinkable."¹¹ Aaron's employees worked at top speed to get the mill up and running. Only three months later, production in one of the plants that hadn't been destroyed actually doubled.

Aaron knew instinctively that when we open our heart, when we affirm that nothing will stand in the way of our expression of love, both inner and outer forces will rally in answer to our call. As long as the motive of our heart is pure and what we ask for is in accordance with the divine plan, God will send invisible helpers to assist us in our job of love.

Aaron also knew another secret to heart mastery: when we give, we adjust our gifts (the gifts of our talents, our actions and our resources) not to what we think we can afford but to the size of the need. It's like the old story about the rabbi

who used to entertain many poor people in his home. At a time when food was expensive, the rabbi noticed that the loaves on his guests' plates were smaller than usual. He went straight to the cooks and told them to make the loaves larger to adjust to hunger rather than to price.

Most of the time our acts of love do not gain public notice. Nevertheless, it is the small things we

It has long been an axiom of mine that little things are infinitely the most important.

—SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

Teresa said, “We do no great things; we only do small things with great love.” “Good people follow virtue,” taught Confucius, “building on the small to attain the great.”

Of course, giving to others doesn’t mean we should suppress our own needs. Love is sacrifice, but it’s not destroying yourself in the process. You can’t divide yourself in a thousand pieces and still have something of substance left over to give to others.

Sometimes it’s hard to give yourself permission to set boundaries or to do something for yourself

first, especially when others are tugging on you. But if you are to provide meaningful support to others, you have to give yourself permission to do those things that will bank the fires of your heart so you can use that fire to warm and nurture others.*

HEART PERSPECTIVES

- What are your “therefores”? Take some time to meditate on and then write down what you are willing to leave behind and what you are willing to do in order to be love in action (as outlined on page 25). Then affirm aloud your commitments to love: *I am love, therefore _____*. Put your affirmations where you will see them every day, and say them aloud at least once a day.

Schedule time in your daily planner to make good on your love commitments. As Stephen Covey says, “The key is not to prioritize what’s on your schedule, but to schedule your priorities.”

- Adjust your gifts to the size of the need. Are there areas in your life where you need to readjust

*See also “Nurturing Yourself,” pages 46–54.

what you give—from both your spiritual and material resources—to the size of the need rather than to what you think you can afford?

- **Confront your fears.** Is there something you are afraid to face that is keeping you from making progress? Ask yourself how you could move through that fear and what support you would need.

PART TWO

EMPOWERING the Heart



Love is a creative force and power.

Once you realize that you are a co-creator with God, your life changes. You begin to realize, "This is an awesome responsibility. What am I going to do with my power to create? I've got three-score and ten and maybe a little more to do it in. What will I create?"

Notes

*God dwells in the hearts of all beings,
beloved, your God dwells in your heart
and his power of wonder moves all things...
whirling them onwards on the stream of time....*

*I have given you words of vision and wisdom
more secret than hidden mysteries.
Ponder them in the silence of your heart,
and then, in freedom, do your will.*

—THE BHAGAVAD GITA



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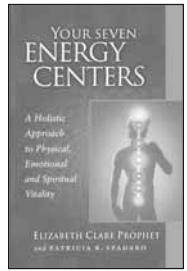
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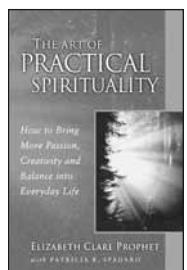
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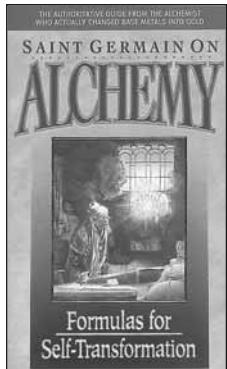
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