

Also by Maureen Whitehouse

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for another person, nor is it loving to expect a partner to do that for you.”

“I never thought of falling in love that way before,” said Kate, growing increasingly pensive.

“The good news is that we can all experience the ceaseless love that we desire. Because there is a ‘being’ that can ‘be there’ for us, 100 percent of the time, 24 hours a day, day in and day out, without any conditions or exceptions at all.”

Kate interrupted, “Don’t tell me. I know. I know. You’re referring to the Soul, right?”

“Yes,” I said, “Exactly! Because Soul has *no body*, it only knows Oneness. Therefore, it doesn’t mind being a *nobody* in your life at all. It is entirely self-less and ‘there’ for you *all of the time!*”

Kate laughed, “Well, it’s not exactly my idea of the perfect dinner date.”

“Are you sure about that?” I said, winking.

She looked at me puzzled.

“Oh Yeaahhh,” she said slowly, verbalizing her dawning realization, “I get it. Soul is the ideal dining companion. Even Jake thought so when he, Soul and I shared our sublime Greek supper the other night.”

“That’s right, Kate,” I said catching the wave of her excitement. “Soul is Love!”

“Oh my God,” she said.

“Yes, and Soul is That too,” I said smiling.

“This is getting more and more mind blowing,” Kate said, shaking her head, but looking ready for more.

“Let’s take it a notch higher,” I said. “Now think of all of the millions of people in the world who feel somehow left out and forlorn because they don’t have an ideal Soul Mate...”

Kate broke in, getting more excited, “...When in fact they do. We all have! But as long as they perceive life through their ego, they can’t know that.”

“Yes, Kate. Yes. This is the very reason I’ve been so insistent,

in everything we do together, to bring you always to one place—back to your relationship with Soul. It's the one and only absolutely unconditionally loving relationship you will ever have. To forsake that relationship, as so many people do, and then to expect that kind of supreme fulfillment to come from someone outside of yourself is to doom all of your other relationships.”

“Why?”

“Because the Soul is the *voice of your own best interest*. How can you be peaceful or happy if you refuse to love that?”

“I get it. It's impossible for any other person to step in, sweep me off my feet and make me live ‘happily ever after,’ if I don't know and love Soul, first and foremost.”

I nodded, “Isn't it ironic then, that so many people are denying Soul and then hope to find all of the love they are ‘missing’ in that one ‘special person.’ That person who they hope to fall in love with, maybe marry and then have a family with so they can continue to feel love by exchanging love with a certain privileged few.”

“What a formula for disaster!”

“So often it is, and one that is almost universally accepted as the way to live—as you say, ‘happily ever after.’”

“How utterly confusing. Now I see why so many people appear to be miserable while living what they thought would be an ideal life with their ‘Soul Mate.’”

“Ah yes, the fated, fatal definition of Soul Mate!” I said smiling. “My one true love.”

“So what is a Soul Mate then? Can such a connection really be possible between two *people*?”

“Once again, great question, Kate. As you now clearly see, to truly love another person means you must first unequivocally love yourself, with all of your heart, mind *and* Soul. When you love yourself this way, you refine your thoughts, your actions, your ambitions until they exemplify your inmost being and align you with joy. When you are centered in yourself like this,

you won't go seeking fulfillment outside of yourself, making someone or something else the center of your existence. Rather, you'll find your center in doing things that bring you a deep sense of connectedness and fulfillment, and then share this loveliness with others. Soul Mates in the truest sense are two people who have found this type of fulfillment in themselves, via self honoring. They are those who choose to live 100 percent authentically to their *own unique* Soul urgings—going with the flow of the unbridled, ever-changing, ever-expanding, ever-creative and ever-new experience of that. Then, while fully accepting of each other's path as they intertwine, they each live their own most genuine lives. I know of only one way that it's possible to do that. Each partner must agree to give up all labels, remain present and communicate fully *with bare-to-the-bone honesty*.”

“Wow,” Kate shook her head, looking a bit awe-stuck. “SCARY.”

I laughed, “Yes, to the ego that is very frightening, but to Soul, as you can imagine, it feels like home, like freedom—like life lived in Heaven.”

I paused for a moment to see if Kate had fully digested all that we'd spoken about. She stared down at the couch cushions for a moment, and when she looked up at me, nodding pensively, I went on.

“In a whole relationship, two partners show up as autonomous beings, knowing that they are complete within themselves. Yet, they sense and honor the Soul as it is expressed in one another—always staying focused on, and true to that. Empowered by this sense of security in themselves, they don't need to impose rules, labels or expectations onto the relationship, other than complete honesty and respect.”

“Wow, that sounds blissful, even if I'm not certain I could do it myself, let alone find someone who could do it with me.”

“The truth is, Kate, that if you are not experiencing unending blissful love each and every day of your life, it has nothing to

do with anyone else. No partner, no friend, no family member or acquaintance is at fault. It's because you don't know yourself, and you've forgotten that you are love."

I noticed that Kate was suddenly looking sullen. She had pulled a pillow into her lap and was hugging it tightly, without even seeming to notice.

"I'm not trying to burst your bubble Kate," I said gently. "I'm hoping only to expand it to include *absolutely everything*."

"I hate to say it, but I think I get it, at least intellectually," Kate said, sounding a bit glum, "but let me ask you something that I think may help clarify all of this for me."

"Alright," I said.

"I met Jake such a short while ago, and already I miss him when I'm not with him. Is that ego?"

"Where do you feel this 'I miss him' sensation?" I asked.

"All over."

"Where, all over?" I prodded further

"In my body."

"So you're feeling separate from Jake now because his body is not in close proximity to your body?"

"Yes, I suppose so."

"That means you are identifying with being a body, and not with being a Soul."

"I suppose I am."

"And what is it that you feel, when you think about him?"

"Like I want to be with him, doing whatever it is he's doing."

"And where are you now?"

"Here," she answered.

"Are you?" I asked.

She stopped, sat back in her chair, took in a deep breath, then turned to me and smiled, "You're relentless, aren't you? You got me... no, I'm not being present at all when I think about Jake not being with me," she conceded. "I'm a million miles away. I'm in fantasy land, not reality."

“I’m happy that you realized that, Kate, because whenever we move out of the present moment willingly ‘for another,’ sooner or later, and most often it’s sooner, we begin to resent them when they are ‘not there’ for us. The truth is, though, as you’ve seen, the resentment begins whenever we are not here for ourselves.”

“So we’re back there again, eh? To Presence.”

“Yes, we are, luckily!” I smiled.

“Hmmm,” Kate said, “I can’t say I like it, but I get it.” She thought about this for a moment and then added, “So, in other words, ‘Snap out of it Kate!’” Tears were beginning to well up in her eyes.

“No, I didn’t say that. There’s no admonishment necessary. In fact, that only causes the ego to want to really dig in its heels and take over, since that sort of judgment is threatening to it. Go on, feel how you feel now, after that little bit of self-judgment, you look distracted, distanced and separate, not joyful at all, as you deserve to be after having had such powerful insights.”

I let her feel her state of being for a moment and continued, “So no, I wouldn’t say, ‘Snap out of it.’ I’d say, just be present with all of the love that you are, in full recognition and appreciation of the fact that your budding love for Jake is just one wonderful aspect of that.”

“That makes sense,” Kate nodded, but still looked a bit confused. “Will you show me how?”

“Stop for a moment, and instead of thinking about Jake, just feel the love that you have for him. And notice how, when you really feel it—it’s not really about him, or limited only to him. Just notice your own capacity to love, and what that feels like to you.”

Kate closed her eyes for a moment, and when she opened them, they were glassy with tears, but her smile was wide. “I feel like I could take in the whole world,” she said. “I feel like I’m here, *and* like I’m everywhere.”

“Always remember, Kate, love is who you are. It’s your most

natural state of being. It can't go anywhere without you. You are its vehicle of extension, and the entire world can know love through you. But love cannot be known by either you or anyone else consistently if it is selectively doled out here and there. *True Love* never ends, it grows and grows and grows, so much so, that one person could never contain it all. Imagine; it doesn't shut off, it's ever-expanding, all-encompassing. It never turns to hate and it only creates feelings of peace and joy."

"I know exactly what you mean," said Kate, "but only because of what I experienced that morning in my garden."

"That's right Kate," I agreed, happy she'd had her own deep personal experience to rely on. I continued, "From the time we are born and come to live on this earth, human nature consistently seeks love. Because so many of us never really experience unconditional love—even from our parents—and are not taught to feel divine love as it is expressed through the Soul, we never *really* know what love is, and yet we know that we want it. Hence all of the fantasizing we humans do around the idea of love. Since it's such a deep and powerful longing, and its fulfillment feels so evasive for so many people, they often unwittingly end up equating love with pain, sacrifice and even hate!"

"So how do *real, true* Soul partners experience love?"

"They experience it with immense gratitude, first of all. Gratitude for the beauty of love itself; and joy for the incredible gift of connectedness that it brings. There is a feeling of complete fullness, so full that they feel a tenderness towards everything. Life lived with this level of love and engagement is extremely vivid. You not only embrace, but thoroughly enjoy *every* experience. And no matter what life 'throws at you' you delight in it, and see it all as raw, unbounded possibility—because nothing is too big or too much to take into your heart. So, although this love may be sparked by a relationship that you have with a particular person, it is in no way confined to that person. It is unlimited. And you have learned now to have

that kind of relationship with everyone and everything in your life. Life is suddenly an adventure, lived in joyous anticipation of the unimaginable. Entirely in the moment—Now, Now, and Now!”

Kate sighed deeply. Then, after a time pondering it all, she said, “I have another question.”

“Good,” I said. “The creation of our lives lies in the questions. I’m glad you have so many. It means you’re alive.” I smiled, “What is it?”

“What is love? I mean beyond the romanticism and everything. I think you may have answered this already but, why is it so all-consuming for everyone?”

“That’s a *great* question. First I’ll tell you what love isn’t, and maybe then you’ll be able to answer that question for yourself. Love is not fleeting. It’s not even an emotion, nor is it an experience. It is not something we can get, or gain, or earn. You can’t know love while seeking it.”

“I know!” Kate broke in excitedly. “Love is the Real Us.”

“Yes. It’s the authentic self that lies beneath all of the layers and labels that the ego has claimed to be our identity throughout millennia. I can also tell you how to know the love that you are,” I said, smiling.

“How?” asked Kate, taking the bait. “No, let me tell you...” she broke in quickly, “You know love by extending it to others unconditionally, no judgments or labels and without doling it out discriminately. And as I’ve realized over the last few weeks, to do this most often requires forgiveness. Authentic forgiveness attained through self discovery, deep-thought, contemplation, presence and deliberate awareness—most especially in situations where you’re inclined to ‘fall asleep’ or revert back to your old patterns and ways of reacting to things.” She paused, “Falling asleep—” she mused, “sort of like ‘falling in love.’”

“Brilliant Kate! You see, knowing all of this doesn’t mean you can’t be in love, it just means you don’t have to *fall* in the process. Why not stand in love?”

Kate laughed.

I went on, “If we begin to live without judgments, labels, needs and conditions with *all* of the many people who come in and out of our lives, we will not only find true love, but remember who we are simultaneously. Then, a sense of indiscriminate reverence for life increases naturally as our self-love grows. At that time, there’s no ‘this,’ no ‘that,’ no ‘better,’ no ‘worse,’ no ‘here,’ no ‘there.’ All of life just is—Love!”

“This is all a bit overwhelming,” Kate admitted, “but now I think I can answer my own question, ‘What is love for?’” Her eyes widened, “Love isn’t *for* anything. Because love is everything!”

“Yes Kate,” I said smiling. “Love is *everything*.”

SOMETHING TO CHEW ON



Here are three of my favorite quotes about love from *A Course In Miracles*. I invite you to take some time today to sit quietly, read them and ponder their meaning to you:

No course whose purpose is to teach you to remember what you really are could fail to emphasize that there can never be a difference in what you really are and what love is.

If you achieve the faintest glimmering of what love means today, you have advanced in distance without measure and in time beyond the count of years to your release.

With love in you, you have no need except to extend it.

SOUL-FULL EATING EXERCISE #25



Eating and Sex

This might be a touchy subject, but I feel today's lesson has primed you for it. Do you want to know *True Love*? Then it's important to realize that there is much more to love than physical attraction and gratification.

For a moment, let's explore an interesting correlation between society's version of "fast food" and "fast love." If you look very carefully, you'll notice that there are many parallels between our relationship with food and our relationship with sex.

Unhealed sexual issues often manifest in a pattern easily recognized by those who overeat. The tendency is to over-

consume, to incessantly need more but still feel dissatisfied, no matter how much you get. “Wham-bam thank you ma’am” and scarfing down an entire meal without even tasting it are essentially the same experience. Because both activities are love-less, they actually promote a sense of emptiness rather than satisfaction. In both cases, a poor decision is made based on instant gratification. Sex without love is just as unfulfilling and dissatisfying as eating food unconsciously. And unfortunately, both experiences have become quite the norm.

It’s important to see that such cravings for temporal satisfaction arise out of deep feelings of emptiness. The need is to fill up on something fast; quantity continuously wins out over “good taste” and restraint.

Life is not meant to be an out-of-body experience, but a *full-bodied* experience that feeds the soul, opens the heart, awakens the senses and is satisfying and connecting on every level. When we have to numb ourselves or “check out,” that’s a sure sign that we are not connecting to anything of true worth and value to us.

In a world gone mad with material consumption, notice that even people have become objectified—like “pieces of meat” that are used to fulfill our body’s “needs.” With the same cloudy eyes, we consume other human beings the way we consume a Big Mac or Whopper. “Super-size me” has become not just a call for a gallon-sized soft drink, followed by two pounds of hamburger and a pound of French fries, but for augmented body parts—super-sized breasts and penises. Our eyes, instead of being “windows to the Soul” have become insatiable, empty, bottomless caverns. Can this “More, More, More” and “Bigger is Better” mentality ever lead us to feelings of greater satisfaction? Can such a thoughtless, soulless lust for life ever fully satisfy?

Society’s tendency to force feed us this brand of happiness—prompting men and women to stuff their every orifice to cope with a numbing existence—is insulting at best. It is demeaning to enlightening individuals and destructive to our

entire evolving civilization, and has caused human beings to distrust their *mighty and humble true hearts*, instead prompting them into a disassociated existence full of myriad useless endeavors. We all deserve so much more than accepting such loveless lives, built on useless regulations, false standards and insufficient or successive rewards, in total ignorance of true and honest, respectful and loving, peaceful coexistence. We all deserve to know and love ourselves and one another better than this. We are meant to experience self-reverence, caring, true connectedness and love like the True Love we all seek, spoken about in today's lesson.

Lovemaking and meal making (and eating) both offer the potential for union—to become one with someone or something outside of yourself. But both experiences can also be anesthetizing, if approached without a connection to Soul. People fall asleep after sex just like they do after a big meal. Some people feel obligated to have sex in the same way they may feel obligated to cook for another, or to eat something when they're really not hungry, or to eat someone else's cooking they don't enjoy. Realize now that both lovemaking and meal making and eating are never satisfying unless there is love present. In the same way that you have learned to savor and appreciate your food instead of grabbing or gobbling it down, now's the time to vow, to the very best of your capacity, to truly appreciate and cherish your partner and relish the experience of *being a being*—to cherish the act of lovemaking as a powerful, creative union. Such a union is a gift to all of life.

When it comes to the relationships you allow into your experience, it's up to you to choose for yourself what you will and won't allow into your world. To help you decide, I've listed the characteristics of a healthy and an unhealthy relationship with food, people—with anything.

Characteristics of Healthy Relationships:

Thoughtful, respectful, reverent, caring, communicative, present, appreciative, giving, honoring, sharing, freeing, fulfilling, enlivening, en-lightening, expansive, liberating, connecting, kind, satisfying, empowering, life-enhancing, divine.

Characteristics of Unhealthy Relationships:

Obsessive, insatiable, gluttonous, selfish, insensitive, needy, grabby, compulsive, unkind, thoughtless, diminishing, self-serving, out of control, domineering, anesthetizing, numbing, addicting, entrapping, consuming, empty, possessive.

Until our cravings for sex and food are transformed into love, we are doomed to emptiness and unfulfillment. This sort of craving for more can never be satisfied by a body's temporal satisfaction. It is a more ephemeral, long-lasting, eternal connection that we desire. It is most certainly True Love that we all crave.

Finally, to ensure that you are receiving the love that you really crave, before you eat and before you enter into a physical relationship with anyone, check in and feel your feelings, ask yourself:

Is this authentic?

Does this experience enhance and suit my *ideal life*?

Does this fulfill me on *every level*?

Does this enrich my experience of living?

Note: If the subject of Soul Mates or Relationships is of particular interest to you at this time in your life, you may find my two audio CD series, *How to Be in Love all of the Time* and *Conscious*

Couples insightful and helpful. For more information about them, visit: www.experienceaxiom.com/store

D A Y T W E N T Y - S I X

Standing in Love

We hunger for harmony more than we do for sustenance.

~ Sarah Ban Breathnach

“YOU KNOW, EVERYTHING we talked about yesterday was very profound, but it also made me feel extremely lonely,” Kate said, as we settled into two chairs outside by her garden. “I mean, I really want to fall in love. It’s been so long since I’ve had anyone in my life, and Jake is a terrific guy.”

I nodded.

“I think what has me feeling on edge,” Kate continued, “is that I don’t even know where to begin in describing all of these insights about love to him. Yet you’ve told me that the only way to have a whole, or conscious, relationship is to disclose everything about ourselves. That is so scary to me. I don’t want to spook him. I feel so much pressure... and it’s really starting to freak me out. I mean, it’s so intense. Can’t I even enjoy the blissful initial honeymoon phase of this relationship?”

She didn’t leave any space for me to respond, but instead continued on in a panic, “And what’s worse is that I’m stuck here facing myself. I have to take responsibility for everything I am feeling. The good, the bad, the ecstasy and the agony! I have

to tell you, and you'll probably laugh at me, but I'm beginning to think I was better off asleep. I'm beginning to look back with longing at my unconscious, layering-over-myself phase because right now I'd take the agony of defeat after having gorged myself on strawberry shortcake to this any day! This SUCKS!"

Kate was right. I did laugh. But only because I could see that she was letting off steam. I knew that she was over-dramatizing her angst to amuse me as much as to make her point.

"Alright, alright," I said smiling. "Breathe."

She looked at me, and her pouty expression dissolved into laughter, despite herself. Then, exhaling with a long, over-exaggerated sigh, she began speaking more rationally and light-heartedly, "I do see a light at the end of this conflicted tunnel, though. Maybe if I say what I'm feeling out loud now, it will help me clarify something. I feel sort of like I'm on the verge of another important revelation."

"Great," I said. "Fire away."

"What's so wrong with falling in love, anyway? I mean, I think I understand what you were saying yesterday, but I'm still a bit confused. If love is all there is and if love is who we are, and it's also the ultimate good and everything we're shooting for, then why not fall in it? How can that be so bad? I don't really know how to 'stand' in love, as you were saying yesterday. It feels like doing that would take so much effort and self-containment that it wouldn't allow any room for spontaneity or surrender. How can I be in the moment with Jake if I'm monitoring myself to be sure I am strong and not 'giving up any of myself' for him?"

"You ask amazing questions, Kate. I'm glad you've been so completely committed to this process from the moment we began our work together, and I'm especially pleased that you want to explore this topic until you feel entirely clear and satisfied. 'True love' is one of the most important and misunderstood topics in all of creation. So let's get right to it."

"Okay!" Kate gave a determined nod.

I couldn't help but smile at her perseverance before

continuing, “As we discussed yesterday, the sensation of *falling in love* as opposed to *being in love* is caused by the collapse of the ego’s typically strong boundaries, which allows you to feel a welcomed release from yourself and a sense of merging with another. While falling in love, the entire Universe seems supportive, and the overall feeling is, ‘life is good,’ am I right?”

“Yes,” Kate smiled sheepishly. “I guess that’s what I like about falling in love so much and what I would hate to miss... the feeling that, maybe this life isn’t all that bad after all.”

“That’s right, Kate. When boundaries collapse, you are instantaneously absolved from all feelings of separation and its accompanying loneliness. You suddenly think, ‘I am no longer alone—my beloved and I are one!’ It feels as though you are born again to the innocence you once knew as a baby, when you could not differentiate between yourself and the world. Only now, a bit older and wiser, you’ve been around the block. You know how torturous it is to feel separate and so you welcome the release of that state of mind. There is elation, feelings of acceptance and satisfaction—all because you’ve found another. You may think this state is all inclusive, but in fact it is self-limiting because it is dependent on another. This is not an expansion of your world and actually has very little to do with Soul or spiritual growth. It’s just a temporary boundary collapse, a tenuous hopefulness not rooted in selflessness at all, but a state of mind that is upheld by illusion. For this reason, it typically ends as soon as an ego boundary is violated. For example, as we touched upon yesterday, you might perceive your partner as being unreliable, when he or she fails to meet your expectations in some way, then once again the walls go up, the energy and interest in the relationship wanes and the feeling of specialness subsides.

“Thing is, this most often happens just when one or both partners are being called to dig deeper within themselves to bring more to the table—to express an even greater degree of

love than they have previously felt the capacity to express. Just as they are about to learn the most about themselves and their capacity to love more, within the context of their present relationship, they get scared and somehow ‘check out’—either becoming emotionally distant, or actually leaving the relationship physically. Thus they continue the never-ending ‘search for love,’ or for the ‘right one’ rather than finding it within themselves right now, and sharing that.”

“Yikes. That really stinks,” Kate interjected.

“True. It’s often very painful for one, or both people involved. As I said, this ‘fall from love’ typically doesn’t take very long, because the ego cannot tolerate being in a state of bliss and in a state of non-controlling, unknowing and unselfish love forever. One or both of the lovers realize that ‘reality’ must be faced, and so judgment sets in.”

“But isn’t there any way to avoid this kind of fall from love?” asked Kate.

“Well, obviously,” I said, “the most effective way to avoid this scenario completely, is to not fall in love at all. And many people—not just celibates—try to do this by avoiding intimacy entirely. Just as you said you were feeling inclined to do yesterday. But that’s avoidance, not embrace, and does not lead us towards joy or spiritual growth. So that’s not what I am talking about. As I said yesterday, it is possible, to *be* in love without falling in love.”

“Really? Alright. Then can you please tell me one more time. How?”

“By realizing that a relationship to another cannot *make* you happy, unless you are already happy. If you root yourself in love first, and cultivate a love of being with yourself, then, and only then, can you authentically love another. The fact of the matter is that your true love comes into your experience once you truly commit to yourself. What’s inside is always reflected outside.”

“There’s that word again. *Authentic.*”

“Yes,” I said smiling. “And only if you can love and honor yourself, can you expect a partner to do the same.”

“How do I know if I am in one of these ‘special relationships’ and not in a *truly* loving relationship?” asked Kate.

“Good question. One tell-tale sign is if you find that you are giving in order to get. That’s seeking special love. By contrast, in true love relationships, you are unified with one goal—to give *of* yourself, *without any strings attached*, in order to grow and learn how to love unconditionally. Only that is pure, Soul-to-Soul, extending, expansive, never-ending love. All such relationships have one thing in common—both partners truly wish the best for each other. They mirror to one another self-honoring, self-understanding, self-love and self-commitment. This kind of Real Love is strengthening, reliable and true. It is Self-expanding and entirely Soul-satisfying, even when it feels challenging to grow past our current labels on love.”

“How can we grow past labels?”

“Well, if you’re in a relationship, the best way is to agree to re-learn what love is, while surrendering to each and every moment entirely, always asking Soul for guidance—by checking in with your feelings, and honoring what feels most peaceful.”

Again, Kate looked uneasy. I continued.

“Don’t worry, there’s no rush. We all have an eternity to learn how to do this. Since we *are* love, you can never terminate true love; however you can abandon ‘special relationships.’ Neither can you lose love; you can only lose feelings of specialness, which is really just the ego’s way of making you feel different and separate from others.”

“Alright, so I realize I don’t want to *fall* in love after all,” Kate said wryly, throwing her hands up. “Whew! I got over that hurdle pretty quickly. And you know what? I feel much better.”

“Good,” I said.

“You know why I feel better? Because what you’ve been describing is pretty much what Jake and I have been doing,

without even knowing we were. I mean it's been a relatively short time that we've known one another, but this relationship is entirely different from all of the other relationships I've been in."

"How so?" I asked.

"Well, we're becoming such good friends. And although I know I said I'm in love with him, and I have a strong attraction to him, I don't feel head over heels for him or anything. I'm not idolizing him. I like that he's communicative, that he's attentive to me. But more importantly, he seems to be attentive to himself, and he appears to be emotionally mature. I mean I've never met a guy who is so willing to talk about his feelings, but not in a 'sissy' sort of way, as my father would say." Kate smiled, "His sensitivity feels more like strength."

"Really?" I prodded.

"Well, when he called me yesterday, he told me that our conversation over dinner the other night got him to thinking and he realized that he has a lot of unhealed past with his family. Not just with his father, but with his mother and sister, too. He told me that since his father was absent so much of the time, his mother put all of her effort towards him and taught his sister to do the same. He said, 'my mother and sister coddled me the whole time I was growing up, and they still do today.'"

"Those are some interesting insights."

"He said that he's realizing now that his relationships with his mother and sister have skewed his perception of all women. That he's basically seen women as possessive, over-bearing and entrapping, yet subservient—even when now, in hindsight, he can see that maybe they weren't. He said, 'Maybe the women I've been in relationships with before this were just being close to me and loving me. But I just couldn't see that. The closer they got, the more I've always wanted to run, kind of like my old man did, I suppose.'"

"He even told me that he'd always had a reputation for treating women badly, that is, except when he wanted something

from them. 'I had no balanced point of reference,' he said, 'I felt like any woman would take any kind of grief from me, and have to just grin and bear it, like my mother and sister always had. I had always been the little lord of the castle. They gobbled up any crumb of attention I showed them like it was a feast. Like father, like son.' He seemed sad." She paused, "And you want to know how I reacted to him telling me all of this?"

"How?"

"Pretty badly."

"Really?"

"Yeah. I mean on the surface, I think I appeared supportive, but inside I was just seething. It was shocking to me that his insights could kick up so much in me."

"Such as?" I ventured.

"Such as I don't even know what it feels like to be coddled by one woman who loves me, let alone two of them. I realized the loss of my mother left a deep void inside me, and feelings I don't even know how to begin to access. I've never known or felt what a mother typically gives. Not that I remember anyway."

She looked at me with deeply saddened eyes, the saddest I'd ever seen them, "Or does a mother really ever give the type of love I am imagining I've always missed? I don't know. I'm so confused. And what's worse is I'm unearthing some terrible feelings."

"What kind of feelings?" I asked.

"I realize how much I hate my mother. She abandoned me! And I don't know if I can ever forgive her for that. No matter what kind of issues she had with my father, she left me motherless!" Kate's face turned bright red and it was obvious that she was growing agitated despite her best attempt at staying calm and collected.

Tears began to well up in her eyes. "Ever since I came to this realization yesterday, I've been desperately trying to purify my perception about this—to forgive it. And it is *not easy*." She raised her voice in frustration. "I see that it's a tremendous

weight that I've been carrying around with me, always inwardly searching for an answer to the ever-present question, 'Why am I rejectable?' And I see I've been searching for the answer for years—in all of my intimate relationships. Typically, I'd either control them so I wouldn't be rejected, or allow myself to get walked all over, in an attempt to be pleasing enough for them to stay. Having dinner the other night with Jake and just going with the flow felt so foreign to me. It was blissful, but very scary at the same time, because I had no idea where the moment would take us. I couldn't control anything. I wasn't thinking about how to impress him, or please him, like I see I've done in all of my past romantic relationships. I've actually romanced illusory love relationships with a pseudo, 'I'll do anything for you' Kate persona. Until of course, it crumbled all around me, as all of my relationships did, the very moment I asked for *anything* from my partner."

I nodded silently and she continued, "But this time with Jake, because of our conversations, I was more focused on being authentic. That was very, very scary, being authentic with a man for the first time. And I admit I was on the lookout for rejection the entire time. I'm afraid to say it, but I actually think if I don't come to terms with all of this... I will cause him to run away," she finished, finally breaking down in tears.

"Oh my gosh," she said, blowing her nose and trying to compose herself, but then breaking down all over, this time her entire body racked with sobs. I let her cry for a very long time, until she spoke again, "And I thought all of my issues that needed forgiveness went down the river with that rock. I didn't even know I had anything to forgive my mother for. I'd blocked her out of my life so completely."

"It's a deepening, Kate. You're now making more room for more genuine love to come into your life. Looking back with hindsight and with the benefit of all the awareness you've gained this month, do you see now how perfect the dance with each of those partners you had was? How each and every one of

them was calling you to love yourself more?

“No one can find genuine intimacy with another without first being deep in their own experience. Addictions of all kinds mask the pain we must first feel in order to heal. Now can you see why you’ve chosen to overeat in the past?”

“Yes. All too clearly. This hurts *so* much. In the past I would’ve just eaten some ice cream or cake or something.”

“Once you come to terms with the pain, Kate, it’s of key importance to communicate your revelations, just as Jake has with you so openly. It looks as though both you and Jake are discovering something very valuable—that real, true intimate relationships bring up *everything* that is not love.”

“That’s for sure,” she managed to blurt out, between sobs.

“It’s emotionally imprisoning to be in a relationship based on the fear of being honest and present, which goes hand-in-hand with denial.”

“Yeah,” said Kate, “now I see how most of my relationships have been based on mutual denial. I was my mother, abandoning myself over and over in life, while I tried desperately to find my father in every man. So guess what, most of them didn’t speak much and none of them expressed their feelings, God forbid! They all expected me to be strong, even while treating me inappropriately. How did I not see that before?”

“I know it may be hard to hear this, but they all did precisely what you needed them to do, Kate—nothing more, nothing less.”

“That’s more than just a bit hard to hear,” she admitted.

“This world would be a much more peaceful place,” I said, “if people knew that relationships are not all about sweets and roses—that they are agents for inner healing and returning to the innocence and joy most people have left long behind. On the way to unearthing that kind of genuine presence there can be a lot of garbage that gets excavated along the way. In far too many interpersonal relationships, people take this inevitable clearing out of past pain personally. When in fact, in a good,

strong, solid, loving and honest relationship, every single emotion must not only be allowable, but welcomed, until we touch the center and know we are love. Only then can you honestly say, ‘I love you’ and truly mean it and not covertly mean, ‘I need you to complete me.’”

“Where do I go from here?” Kate asked almost beseechingly.

“There is no where to go, Kate, other than to return to love, over and over again—until you find you can make that our home.”

SOMETHING TO CHEW ON



*He who binds to himself a joy
Does the winged life destroy;
But he who kisses the joy as it flies
Lives in eternity's sunrise*

~ William Blake

Perhaps, like Kate, you're on the brink of beginning a new intimate relationship, or clearing up past grievances with your mother. Or maybe you're not.

Either way, Kate's experience today is relevant for you, although you may be thinking, "What does all of this have to do with eating?"

Plenty! In her classic book, *You Can Heal Your Life*, Louis Hay states that being overweight is synonymous with oversensitivity, and shows a need for protection, running away from feelings, insecurity, self rejection, seeking fulfillment, and often represents fear. She also states that such fear may be a cover for hidden anger and a resistance to forgive.

As an antidote, she suggests affirming:

I am protected by Divine Love. I am always safe and secure. I am willing to grow up and take responsibility for my life. I forgive others, and I now create my own life the way I want it. I am safe.

and/or

I am at peace with my own feelings. I am safe where I am. I create my own security. I love and approve of myself.

So, no matter what your current experience of life, today's lesson is relevant for you when you realize that, in each and every moment, what we hunger for most is love. Again, we may think it's motherly love or a partner's love, but it's our own

self-love that we crave. And we'll keep on craving it, until we give it to ourselves, no holds barred. Who are you waiting for to love you?

SOUL-FULL EATING EXERCISE #26



We are afraid of losing what we have, whether it's our life or our possessions and property. But this fear evaporates when we understand that our life stories and the history of the world were written by the same hand.

~ Paulo Coelho, *The Alchemist*

What are you afraid of losing?

Could it actually be weight?

Most of us would never imagine that we really do love our excess weight. Consider this: it provides padding against an often harsh world. It allows us to “hide our light under a bushel,” to deny our power, our strength and brilliance and true beauty. It gives us something “uncontrollable” to obsess about, to distract us from our real purpose in life. Conversely, it gives us something to “control” and do battle with, and the ego loves nothing more than to control, dominate and do battle.

Could the excess padding actually feel comforting? Almost like a security blanket? Could obsession with weight and yo-yo dieting really just be a way we avoid questioning the values we hold? A way of stopping ourselves from healing our wounds, from expressing our love, from receiving and giving love, so that we can finally realize just how blessed we are? Only a silly, scared ego would want to “protect us” from that!

Remember this: as long as we are living unforgiven lives, it's as if we are suffering from amnesia. We abandon ourselves by dreaming a dream of separation on a daily basis. We forget that the ego, not love, is fabricating this reality. You are now learning to see love *everywhere*, even in your once painful past, so that you can awaken from this dream of limitation to a world

of Miracles.

Have you been abandoning yourself?

It's time to make peace with ourselves on every level. Today, choose to love, honor and exalt yourself so that you can thoroughly enjoy caring for and nurturing your body—treating it as a sacred vehicle with which you get to share your unbridled love with others.

Ask yourself:

In what areas of your life are you still seeking fulfillment?

Who and/or what are you waiting for?

Who and/or what are you longing for?

Who and/or what do you think can satisfy that need?

How can I give what I most want, to myself?

Remember: Love is. All we ever need do is remove all obstacles to love's presence.

D A Y T W E N T Y - S E V E N

Dear Mom

Human beings are not born once and for all on the day their mothers give birth to them, but...life obliges them over and over to give birth to themselves.

~ Gabriel Garcia Marquez

"I WAS UP MOST OF THE NIGHT LAST NIGHT," Kate said.

"Really? Doing what?" I asked.

"I wrote a letter."

"To whom?"

"To my mother."

I smiled, but said nothing.

"It was slow going at first. I mean, it was hard for me to even write, 'Dear Mom,' so I wrote just, 'Mom.' Then 'Cynthia,' and 'Dear Cynthia.' All of them seemed wrong. I think because I didn't feel that I should write, 'Dear.' I didn't feel like she was dear to me at all. I realized I was writing to a perfect stranger. So I started, stopped, wrote and read about 20 different beginnings, one-by-one throwing them all in the trash. Then I decided to just skip the introduction and write the body of the letter, but nothing came. I sat there, sweating over the stupid thing. It was obvious the heat I was feeling didn't have anything to do

with the temperature in the room. I had the air conditioner on full blast. Since nothing was coming to me, I decided to take a break and get some air. So at about two in the morning, I went into the garden with my paper and pen and just sat. I think I was hoping for an epiphany of some kind.

“The moon was almost full, a sliver of light missing from the milky, iridescent ball. So even without any outside lights on, I could see the perfectly illumined paper and pen I had in my hands. When I put the paper on my lap, the reflection of the moonlight made the paper appear bright and so soft—a ghostly white. I touched my felt-tip pen to it, to see what the ink would look like on the paper under the moonlight. And I was stunned to see that the mark the pen left looked like a dab of deep, blue ocean. A flood of unexpected emotion immediately plummeted me into my past. Suddenly I was reliving a very faint memory of a day in my life long ago, which grew more and more vivid as I just sat very still and watched the scene play out in my mind’s eye.

“I don’t think I was even four years old, but if I remember the day correctly, my mother and I had gone to the beach with my dad. The very first thing I did was run down to the shoreline to put my feet in the waves. That was me, fearless Kate.

My mother yelled, ‘Go get her, Johnny!’ and my father took off after me. I squealed with delight when I saw him chasing me, and noticed he was making the pursuit into a game. He followed me back and forth along the shore with big clunky monster-like steps. I was elated. When I looked to see where my mother was, I saw her putting down the beach blanket and arranging our things on it. I remember she looked up and waved to me, but I didn’t wave back to her. I was too busy running and splashing with my beach monster dad.

“The next memory I have is from that same day. I was with my mother on the beach blanket under a big, multi-colored umbrella. She was holding me in her lap. I was bundled up in a big towel, and she was feeding me pieces of a sandwich. At

one point, she squeezed me really tight and said, ‘Let’s never forget this day, okay Katey-poo?’” Kate paused for a moment and then continued, “I said, ‘I’ll never forget Mommy-poo.’ And we both laughed and she tickled me saying, ‘You faker!’ which was something that I’d forgotten she used to say a lot. She kept holding me as I ate, and she began to hum a song to me. I don’t remember what it was. But I do remember that after a moment or two, I saw a tear drop out of her eye. I asked her, ‘Why are you crying?’ and she wiped the tear right away, and said, ‘I’m not crying honey. That’s just a little drop of salty water from the ocean.’ I believed her for a minute, but then I saw another one and another one fall onto the blanket. One even fell onto my sandwich and I remember tasting it and thinking, ‘It’s salty alright, but it’s not from the ocean.’ I remember feeling confused and really sad for her, and not knowing how to help her, but wanting to. So I hugged and hugged her really tight. Until I think I fell asleep in her arms. That’s the very last memory I have of my mother. I think she must have left us right after that.

“I sat in the garden, in the moonlight, feeling what I think may be the very same kind of sadness my mother must’ve felt before leaving me and my father way back then. So many questions began flooding my mind. So I put my liquid blue ocean ink pen to that cloudy ghost white moonlit paper, and I began to write them all down.”

Kate pulled out a piece of paper from her jeans pocket, carefully folded into four parts, and began to read,

“Why’d you go mom?
Where’d you go to?
Were you scared?
Did you ever miss me, or dad?
Are you happy?
Where are you now, mom?”

Without looking up she continued her story, “And then before I could take my pen off the page, I noticed that the words

I couldn't write before were now scribbling themselves onto it." Again, Kate read from the paper, her hands shaking a bit, but her voice clear and steady,

Dear Mom,

It's me, Kate. Remember that day at the beach before you left, when you held me and called me Katey-poo and I called you Mommy-poo? And we laughed and laughed. I do. I still do, Mom.

I'm just realizing now, that for a big part of me, time stood still that day and I never left the world where I've always felt wrapped up in a big cozy beach towel of your love. Part of me has always stayed feeling happy, safe, loved and contented, while another part of me has wandered for years, trying to find that kind of home. I'm happy to let you know that now, Mom, I'm finally finding it, right where it's always been all along—inside of me—just exactly where my love for you has always been.

I'm not going to lie. I think until now I've hated you, without actually even knowing that I did. I couldn't imagine why you would leave me, when I loved you so much and needed you still. I wondered for so long, what had I done?

But I want you to know I realize that my hating you was only self-defense, because my very worst nightmare would have been to remember how much I really loved you. You left a great, big empty hole in me when you left; a space that used to be filled with all of your love. Maybe I imagined it—I've always had a wildly creative streak—but I could still smell your scent in my bedroom and feel your fingers touching my hair for years and years after you'd gone. You know I made daddy leave my window open just a little every night, no matter how cold it got outside, so I could hear you calling me if you came back and were locked outside. It's funny, I'd forgotten all those little kid things until writing them down just now. I'd made myself believe I never thought of you, or missed you much at all after you left.

Your leaving has caused me to feel a lot of pain and separation

from life. But I'm healing all of that within myself now. And I'm realizing now how difficult our separation might have been for you. I want you to know, that in case you've ever felt any guilt over it all, I forgive you because I have forgiven myself. I feel very lovable now and not rejectable by myself, or anyone else, any longer.

Mom, I just want you to know, wherever you are—in heaven or on earth—I love you. I've never stopped loving you. And that 'you mean the whole wide world to me,' as we used to say to one another. And I hope that your life has been blessed, beyond your wildest dreams.

I'd love to catch up with you some day, Mom. And return the big squeeze hug I remember you giving to me that day on the beach when I was so young. Just like I promised, your Katey-poo hasn't forgotten that day. Maybe my mind did for a while, but my heart hasn't.

*I love you, forever and ever,
Your Kate*

When she looked up, Kate was surprised to see my eyes were as full of tears as hers.

"That's a beautiful letter, Kate."

"I think so," she said. "It's long overdue." She paused to fold the letter back up and set it on the table, and then continued, "I have no idea where my mother is, you know, or even where to begin to find her. But after I finished writing this letter as I sat in the garden and looked up at the moon, I felt a strange sort of communion with her. It was so tangible. I believe she's here on earth still, under that same moon. I feel that Soul will lead me to her, if it's what's best for everyone involved. There's so much to this, isn't there? I mean, beyond healing the separation with my mother. This one action—writing this letter—affects every single aspect of my life, doesn't it?"

"Oh yes, Kate," I said. "There is no better way to accelerate your growth towards Self-embrace than to love and forgive your parents."

“Why is that?” she asked. “Why is it so important to love your parents—even for adults? You’d imagine that when people get past a certain age, it shouldn’t matter any more what their parents did or didn’t do to them. They should be fully autonomous.”

Before responding to her important questions, I wiped my eyes, took a deep breath, and smiled as I rubbed her hand to show my gratitude for her.

“Well,” I began, “in the best case scenario, which very few, highly fortunate people live, our relationship with our parents mirrors *only* unconditional love. But if it doesn’t, then it holds the greatest lessons on love and forgiveness of all. Before I begin speaking about this Kate, I’d like you to be perfectly clear about something. These hurts you are uncovering with regard to your parents are not unique to you. There is no human being who has not felt abandoned, abused, wronged or misunderstood by a parent at one time or another. Very, very few people are completely conscious. So of course there will be times when a parent is not present, or entirely loving with their child, and times when a child will be unaware of their parent’s love, *despite* their parent’s *actual* awareness and presence. All unconscious behavior feels abusive, even if only at a very subtle, almost indiscernible level, and so each person has unhealed experiences that they hold within their minds and memories. It’s just a matter of to what degree they hold them. Some people are more aware than others, but very few are self-inquiring enough to see how their actions today often mirror aspects of themselves that were wounded sometime way in the past. That’s why being present is so important and also simultaneously so difficult when there are unhealed experiences from the past tagging along into your current experience of life.”

“I see that now. I finally see how critical it is to forgive and let go *of everything*. Otherwise it’s impossible to feel free and be present now.”

“Yes Kate, I see you do know that now. You can see how

liberating it is to be free of the past, and why only those who are can be 100 percent Self-honoring. Because only such people really show up to life, fully honoring of who they are—now, today!”

Kate nodded and I continued, “But it goes beyond that.”

“Really, how?”

“A Self-liberated person is free from external mother and father figures, because they no longer *need* their parent’s love to complete them. They’ve found all the love they need within themselves—from within the Soul. As the messenger of God, the Soul’s love so tangibly supersedes all human love that realizing this finally satisfies us on every level. The Soul’s transcendent love can be both ‘Mother’ and ‘Father’ to you—teaching you courage to help you walk through fear, as well as gentle wisdom to encourage you to open your heart. And Soul will always inspire you to heal your relationship with your earth parents entirely, so you can get on with living your own life.”

“I think I get it,” there was a glint in Kate’s eyes as she followed along. “You can never fully ‘Be’ yourself, while you still *need* the love or acceptance or approval of your parents in any way.”

I smiled and nodded, “Yes, that’s correct Kate. That’s how powerful this first human relationship of ours is. It’s not just those who have issues with their parents that feel hurt by their relationships with them, because no matter how good a job of parenting your parents did, no matter how wonderful your life is, no matter how amazing and beautiful or outstanding your accomplishments, deep inside of us all there’s a part of us that very tangibly remembers peace—the Perfect Peace of Oneness. So when we are born, a part of us comes to life that resents having come into this world of separates at all—this infuriating, frustrating world of this and that, and you and me—when it knows ‘there’s something more.’”

“That’s the ego, right?”

“Yes, Kate, Yes! We’re talking about the ego once again,” I

continued. “The ego is the voice of the ‘forgotten one.’ It has forgotten its home in Oneness. And because the ego forgets that this ‘something more’ it craves is eternal—that we *are* one in the eternal—it tries its hardest, in every possible way, to find it, the only way it knows how—”

“—Ah, I remember speaking about this,” Kate broke in, “the ‘more, more, more’ mantra of the ego!”

“Yes! So, our ego will always want more from our parents, because it always wants more of everyone and everything. That is, as long as we forget we are actually One with everything.”

“But I know it’s possible to remember,” Kate ventured, “because that’s what I’ve been doing for these past few weeks.”

“Exactly,” I nodded. “It’s possible to have your home, to have your parents, to have everything—it’s inside you, so you can stop looking for ‘it’ now. It didn’t leave you when you were born. As I’ve said before, you were never meant to find it here. You were meant to *bring* it here. You were meant to bring love, here, just like you did when you wrote that letter to your mother.”

“I didn’t know that’s what I was doing when I wrote it. I mean, afterwards it definitely felt easier to feel love for my mother, like there was less stuck inside of me.”

“You eradicated the root cause of your pain—really the root cause of everyone’s pain—which is our capacity to attack and break off relationships with others, and with Soul, instead of simply loving. Our salvation—the ability to live Heaven on earth—is when Soul reaches down into the world, and into our hearts, inspiring us to reach out to others in love and service, drawing us into relationship simultaneously with other people *and* the Divine.”

“So, now we’re *really* talking about forgiving the past, aren’t we?”

“Yes. Because of your newfound relationship to Soul, you’ve been able to see yourself as more than ‘little Kate.’ You’ve decided to grow up and not wait until ‘someday’ for your life to

begin. You're birthing a new you now."

"Is that why it's felt so painful at times? Like I'd much rather retreat and 'go back into the womb,'" Kate said.

"Another brilliant insight, Kate," I smiled.

"But at the same time, just like for a child being birthed, I know there's this huge, amazing, exciting world out there for me," She chuckled, "I mean, can you imagine how boring it would be if we all just stayed in the womb?"

"Not to mention our poor, perpetually pregnant mothers." We both laughed and then, sobering up, I continued, "Now you see how crucial it is to foster this Self-honoring bond within ourselves and why it's been so key, so vital, to all of the work we've been doing together."

"I understand," Kate said. "It's that Self-honoring, that Self-trust, that has given me the courage to birth myself, every step of the way throughout this process. And I understand now that I'll continue to rebirth myself for the rest of my life. Each moment will be completely fresh, and I feel like I have the ability to welcome that now, instead of running in the other direction."

"We expect so much from our parents, never quite knowing how they could live up to all we want them to be. We literally expect them to be God! But how many parents even know that we're here to wake up from the dream of separation—so how could they adequately point us back to ourselves—back to Soul?"

"They can't," Kate admitted. "The best they can do for us is teach us what they've learned themselves. If it happened to be self abandonment that they've learned, well, then I guess they teach that."

"Yes, but it's entirely up to you what you'll teach yourself. You have the power to transform any lesson to teach yourself greater love."

I continued, "When you are complete with your parents—when you have forgiven them—you'll stop creating intimate

relationships that mirror the pain of your childhood. It's important to let go of any judgments and labels you've put on them to realize that they too are making the journey towards awakening. It's essential for you to honor that, no matter how painful it may seem to be. Remember, nothing is random. You choose all of your relationships—including the relationships you have with your parents—to bring about your most efficient and effective growth towards the unveiling of your True Self. If there's something you need to get over in order to feel whole, you'll spend your entire life creating situations where that issue will once again present itself, in hopes that you'll finally resolve it. So it's imperative to heal, to arrive at a place of equanimity with your parents, and to clear the space for beauty, peace and self-empowered expression. Then you can finally know that you are equal and bless them."

"I feel like I'm doing that." Kate drew in a long, full breath and then slowly released it. "It's not easy feeling all of this buried stuff, that's for sure. But—if I can equate it with weight lifting—I feel as though over the past month, most especially in the past few days, I'm becoming a master at lifting 2,000 pounds. And you know what? I feel like that ton of weight is what's finally being lifted from my heart.

SOMETHING TO CHEW ON



In her beautiful book, *Simple Abundance*, Sarah Ban Breathnach has this to say about hunger...

We hunger and thirst, but it's not for a bowl of ice cream or a glass of wine. It's for inner peace and deeper connection.

*Carl Jung, the famous Swiss psychiatrist, believed that alcoholism was a sacred disease. M. Scott Peck relates in his book *Further Along the Road Less Traveled* how it occurred to Jung "that it was perhaps no accident that we traditionally referred to alcoholic drinks as spirits, and that perhaps alcoholics were people who had a greater thirst for the spirit than others, that perhaps alcoholism was a spiritual disorder or better yet, a spiritual condition." I believe this is also true about compulsive overeating, which is the addiction of choice for many... We have such a passionate appetite for life, we just don't know what we truly need to satisfy our insatiable cravings for Wholeness.*

She goes on to say,

When I first became aware that when I "swallowed" life I was really hungry and thirsty for joy and serenity, it was a turning point for me in learning self-nurturance. Finally, I understood that I wasn't underfed, but spiritually undernourished. I realized I could go within and ask my soul—my authentic self—what I needed. I learned to stop and ask myself the questions, "How can I care for you at this moment? How can I love you? What is it you truly need?"

SOUL-FULL EATING EXERCISE #27



Following Sarah Ban Breathnach's advice, she challenges us, "The next time you reach to put something in your mouth, take one minute to focus your awareness on what you're doing before you do it. Are you eating because you are physically

hungry, or anxious? If you are anxious, a walk around the block, instead of into the kitchen would be better for you and more loving. At the end of the day, are you pouring yourself a glass of wine out of habit in order to signal that it's time to relax? Instead, why not take a few moments to slip into comfortable clothes, sip a glass of delicious fruit-flavored mineral water as you prepare dinner, and enjoy the wine with your meal? Learn to create ceremonies of personal pleasure that can nourish your deeper longings. As you nurture your spirit with kindness, your physical cravings will loosen their grip. Realize today that you hunger and thirst for a reason. Ask your authentic self to reveal your deeper needs, so that Spirit can quench and satisfy your parched and ravenous Soul."

And remember: **The Soul's Food is Love.**

Many wise people talk about becoming present as the very key to living a happy life. Forgiveness is the most powerful, most expedient way to live in the present moment. As Kate realizes, letting go of the past, in the present, gives us a newfound feeling of vastness, of spaciousness and of freedom that effortlessly aligns us with the fulfillment of peace, joy and love.

D A Y T W E N T Y - E I G H T

Overcoming Abandonment

But we need not fear that we can lose anything by the progress of the Soul. The Soul may be trusted to the end.

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

“YOU KNOW WHAT?” Kate asked, as she settled in for our conversation, folding her legs underneath herself on the couch. “I haven’t heard from Jake in two days. Before this, since the first day we met, he’s called me at least once, if not two or three times during the day. You know, just to check in and say hi, or to tell me a funny story about work or something. I really miss him.”

“Why haven’t you called him?”

“I did call him this morning, but his voice mailbox was full so I couldn’t even leave a message.”

She looked at me and frowned. “Feelings of abandonment are beginning to creep up on me. I’m vowing to myself that I am not going to go there, that I am going to stand unwavering

in love, but I feel raw today.”

“What do you mean, raw?” I asked her.

“After digging up all that stuff I’ve held in for so long with regard to my mother and now seeing how I’ve colored all of my relationships with the unforgiven stories of my past, about *both* my mother and father, I’m really not sure where to go from here.”

“Well,” I offered, “now you can stop seeing every man as your father—since you’ve bravely chosen to forgive and come full circle in that relationship. And even more liberating is the fact that you can stop being an abandoned child. You can accept and believe that the unconditional love a mother gives is yours right now, it’s in you, and you can develop loving intimate relationships without holding back and self-protecting.”

“I wish,” Kate sighed, “but that’s not how I feel right now. I feel that at any moment I could put a big insurmountable wall up between me and Jake. Run away and never answer the phone if he ever does decide to call me again.” She paused for a moment and thought, “Yet, I must say, something new is happening, at the very same time there is a big part of me, deep inside, that trusts. A place where everything feels all right, like I’ve known Jake forever, and I feel in every cell of my being that I’ve met my equal, so I can just relax and go with the flow of all of this.” She threw up her hands, “Oh my gosh, I’ve become schizophrenic!”

I laughed, knowing she was dramatizing for me again, but at the same time respecting the fact that she was still feeling somewhat conflicted.

“Well,” I said, “I think you know just what to do here.”

“What?”

“Nothing,” I smiled, “but love unconditionally, and when the opportunity arises, tell Jake what you’re feeling, with the fearless honesty of a loving father and the gentle compassion of a present mother—just as a truly loving, integrated adult does, once they feel adequately parented.”

“I believe I can do that.” Kate seemed to brighten a bit.

“And remember, no one can abandon you but yourself.”

“I know that.” She shook her head gently, “Man, do I now know that.” But after a slight pause Kate began again, as if she couldn’t help herself, “But let me give you a worst case scenario just for the heck of it...” She laughed and I joined her. She continued, “Now, I don’t believe this is what’s happening, but *what if* Jake did run from our relationship now, and never, ever wanted to speak with me again, never picked up the phone when I called or allowed me to contact him at all. What would I do then?”

“You could completely accept his behavior, and feel free to move on in your life to experience greater fulfillment in other relationships. Or, if you found that impossible to do, you would experience the pain of not being present, until you eventually realized that you were, and still are, abandoning yourself in very cruel ways in that relationship. Otherwise, the lesson Jake is offering you would never be quite so challenging and severe. Recognizing this, you could then choose to forgive any abandoning tendencies you have towards yourself, so that you could move on into the next phase of your life entirely free of such patterns.”

“Okay, so let me get this straight... you mean, if I have somehow deserted myself or lost presence, I can regain that through forgiveness? Wow. And so does that mean, if I were to forgive myself, the people I had perceived as having abandoned me—my mother or Jake—might actually return?”

“Maybe yes, maybe no. That’s not the point I’m making, Kate. People seemingly get abandoned all of the time in life. That is, when they believe in separation and their orientation is solely ‘I am a body.’ People move, acquire new interests, make new friends—even die. You can never experience unconditional love if you believe in any way, shape or form that feeling love has anything to do with someone’s physical proximity to you. So, for instance, if you choose to love your mother now,

unconditionally, she is right *here*,” I said, pointing to her heart. “*Always*. There is no where you can go that she isn’t.”

Kate exhaled deeply, and said, “Then I choose to have Jake be with me right here and right now... and while I’m at it, I’m going to make it a party and have both my mother and father join us too. And I am going to surround us all in one big, joyous, peaceful and loving ball of light, and just kick up my feet and relax in this love bubble right now, while admitting, ‘I don’t know what it is, any of it, and I love it!’”

“Yes!” I said. “I’m glad to see you’ve remembered that perception purifier at this pivotal time. You have quite a few forgiveness and perception purifying tools on hand now, Kate. You can choose any one of them that resonates with you most, any time you feel you need to become more present, and embrace peace. But I have to say, you look pretty darn peaceful to me right now.”

“I am. You know why?”

I smiled, knowing she didn’t have to hear my response to share her insight.

“Because” she said, “I am hearing Soul say, ‘Don’t worry about it, Jake’ll turn up. And in the meantime, enjoy the liberated feeling of accepting everything just as it is, without having to change a thing.’” She literally did kick back in her chair and put her feet up on the coffee table, to show me she really meant what she said, and laughed.

“Amazing Kate,” I laughed along with her. “I can see you are finally feeling at home in the moment.”

“Yes I am!” she said. “And the very happiest thing is that I honestly feel as though I’d rather just embrace peace now than stir up all those mucky waters like I continually have in the past. I now choose to be peaceful, no matter what anyone else is, or isn’t doing. No more love-drama for me. It all feels like a whole lot of commotion over nothing. So why even think about anything but this moment I am in?”

“Bravo Kate! Bravo,” I clapped.

Just then Kate's phone rang.

She looked at me and I said, "Go ahead, answer it."

She did, and then after smiling a wide-as-the-sun grin, said, "Hey stranger!" And mouthed to me, "It's Jake!"

I excused myself to go to the bathroom and when I returned Kate was off the phone, still beaming.

"He said he's been going through a lot over the past couple of days, thinking about everything he's been discovering about his relationships with his father, mother and sister—and everyone else in his life for that matter. He said he went off into the woods by himself, to come to terms with everything. And that he wanted to tell me all about it later if I'd come with him this afternoon to a secret spot that he'd discovered. I said sure. Then he said, 'By the way, my mom and sister told me to tell you thank you.'

"I asked him, 'For what?'

"And he said, 'For bringing more love and honesty into our lives.'

"When I asked him, 'How'd I do that?' he answered, 'I'm not sure Kate, you just seem to live that way yourself, and so I took your lead, and my mother and sister had no choice but to follow.'

"Then I laughed and said, 'Well then, speaking of honesty, I wanted to rip your head off for not calling me over the past two days. But don't worry, that only lasted for a few minutes.'

"He sounded surprised and said, 'Really? Are you okay?'

"I laughed and said, 'Oh yeah, I'm fine.'

"Then he asked me, 'How'd you get over it so fast?'

"And I said, 'Well, let's see... I listened to my heart and it told me you were fine. And then I realized it's so much more fun to wait and see what you'd have to share with me about what you've been up to, than manufacturing some crazy story about it. So then I thought about you for a moment, which always makes me happy. Then I wished you love, peace and joy, and I instantaneously felt all of those feelings myself.'

“He laughed, and said, ‘You’re really somethin’.’

“I teased him, ‘I know.’

“So,” Kate finished, her hands in her lap as she leaned back into the couch cushions, “it looks like I’m going to a secret spot with Jake this afternoon. I guess I’ll tell you all about it tomorrow morning.”

SOMETHING TO CHEW ON



*Come, come whoever you are.
Wanderer, worshipper, lover of leaving, it doesn't matter.
Ours is not a caravan of despair.
Come, even if you have broken your vow a thousand times,
Come, yet again, come, come.*

~ Jlaluddin Rumi

SOUL-FULL EATING EXERCISE #28



Are you a “lover of leaving?” Of abandoning yourself and others—sometimes just as you feel you’re on the cusp of a breakthrough, a “new life,” or when things are about to get easier? Sometimes when we sense the unknown—even if it may bring positive change—we feel tempted to remain in the comfort of our routine, even if it has been painful and stifling. Deserting ourselves and our best interests in this way always begets feelings of hopelessness and despair.

Notice that overeating, especially binge eating, is one common way that people abandon themselves. As we’ve already seen, we can stuff emotions—and both the desire and fear of change—with excess food, and find ourselves running to the fridge to escape that next step.

You are meant to shine. Soul knows this. Soul knows you are created perfect and whole, and that the *Real You* remains so, even today. Deny this Self, and you can’t help but want to hide. Admit it today: you do know who you are. You came here as a gift to the world. You came to bring Heaven to earth.

If any self-abandoning thoughts arise today that speak to you of your inadequacies, choose to clear away these cobwebs. Let yourself see how fragile these “chains” are, that keep the knowledge of your *True Self* from you.

Living in Heaven is your choice. But as long as you still

hold a belief that “life can be hell,” living in Heaven *all of the time* is an impossibility for you.

Today, begin your day affirming, “**I choose to live in Heaven, and I will not change my mind because it is the only thing I want.**” Throughout the day, repeat this powerful affirmation anytime you notice yourself feeling anxious or upset. Use each meal and each snack as a practice of presence, a reminder that it truly is possible to live fully in the moment, to live in Heaven.

And finally, close your day with the affirmation, acknowledging that you always have the authority to choose what it is you want to experience.

D A Y T W E N T Y - N I N E

The Blissful Bare Naked Truth

My obligation is this: To be transparent.

~ Pablo Neruda

We are ashamed of everything that is real about us; ashamed of ourselves, of our relatives, of our incomes, of our accents, of our opinions, of our experience, just as we are ashamed of our naked skins.

~ George Bernard Shaw

“DO YOU MIND IF I GIVE YOU A PLAY-BY-PLAY description of my trip yesterday with Jake to his newfound ‘secret spot?’”

“No, not at all. Go right ahead,” I said, seeing that Kate appeared eager to tell all.

“He came to pick me up around two in the afternoon. It was the first time he’d ever been to my home so I showed him around. I must say, he was most impressed by the orderliness of my cabinets and closets,” she joked, and then added, “No

seriously, I showed him everything!

“He and Ralph fell in love with one another—which I think is okay, since neither of them know about standing in love yet, but I’m sure they’ll get the hang of it, once I teach them,” she winked. Then Kate began her story in earnest, excitedly relating the events, as I poured myself a glass of water, leaned back in my chair and listened...

“After the house tour, I took Jake to my garden. We picked some green beans and peas since it was obvious they were ready, and I gave him a big bunch of basil, because he said he loves it. He couldn’t get his nose out of it. But you know what I loved most about showing him my garden? He immediately spotted the bench in the corner that I’d made from an immense stone slab, which I’d placed over the two stumps cut from my neighbors’ fallen tree. That’s my favorite spot too! And without knowing, he went directly over to the bench, sat down and held the edges of it with both hands while rocking back and forth, feeling the sturdiness of it with all of his body. Then he ran his hands along the smooth bluestone, just appreciating the texture of it. I don’t know why, but that impressed me so much, realizing that he was present enough to notice even the tiniest details of my sanctuary.

“We went back inside and I packed us a bag of snacks—some fresh fruit, nuts and homemade organic popcorn. And we were on our way. He wouldn’t tell me where we were going specifically, but I knew it was up in the mountains, which was about an hour and 45-minute drive. So we had a good long time to talk before we arrived at our destination.

“He began to relate what he’d lived the past two days with his sister and mother. He said, “You know it all started the other night when we had dinner—which now, by the way, seems like 10 years ago. So much has happened since then.”

“Tell me about it!” I said, agreeing with him. “I feel like my whole life is racing ahead of me, and yet it’s standing still, simultaneously. It’s so weird.”

“Yeah, exactly!” He looked relieved that I understood him, and continued, “So I didn’t tell you about this yet, but our dinner together the other night started an avalanche of tumultuous events. Once I started thinking about my dad, it was like a dam burst or something. I began having feelings I didn’t even know I could have.”

“Like what?”

“Like hatred,” he said shaking his head, as if all of the emotions he’d been feeling were still unbelievable to him, “Not only because he was an absent father, but because he didn’t show me how to be a better man. And then all of these feelings of self-loathing came to the surface. I thought about how I’d always thought of my father as being such a schmuck in all of his relationships and how even though I swore I’d never be like him, I’d become the very same. I’d been self-centered, arrogant, demanding, domineering and absolutely ungrateful in so many of my relationships. What surprised me most is how realizing all of this actually made me want to lash out at my mother and sister. I didn’t though.” He took a deep breath, “Instead, I felt like for the first time, I couldn’t treat women the way I always had. You know why?”

“Why?” I asked, really curious to know.

And he said, “Because I thought of you.”

“Really? I was shocked. Why would thinking of me stop you from being mean to your sister and mom?”

He replied, “Because I just *knew* for the first time that it was wrong. I could never live with myself if I ever treated you badly, and I felt that if I didn’t stop that pattern now, it wouldn’t be long before I’d show my schmucky side to you too. And I really didn’t want that to happen, Kate.”

“I’m glad,” I smiled, feeling touched as well as relieved.

Then he told me that when he tried to communicate a lot of what he was discovering and feeling to his mother and sister, they took it the wrong way and began sulking and pouting. He said, “Just like they’ve always done when they want to guilt me

into doing something.”

He told me, “That’s when I decided to go into the mountains, to sort out all of my feelings alone, and to get solid with myself before attempting to talk with anyone else about anything. When I told my mother and sister I was going and wasn’t sure when I’d be back they *freaked out*. They wanted to come along and when they realized that was impossible, they wanted to keep me from going altogether.” He started to roll his eyes, “It’s a story we’ve gone through a thousand times: refuse to let Jake grow up, so we won’t feel abandoned, but pretend it’s because we have his best interests in mind. I don’t think they have a clue that they’re doing it, but it’s true that I’ve basked in that kind of smothering, undying, obsessive attention for too long now.”

He continued, “I’ve always loved to hike whenever I feel the need to take a break and just get real with myself, so I got in my car, drove up here and then climbed to my favorite spot on top of Mt. Suncook.”

Here he stopped to say, “Again, I’m sorry I didn’t let you know I was going, Kate, but you get the picture. I felt like I was running for my life!” We both laughed at that.

“I thought at first I’d just be staying up there for a few hours, he went on. But since I brought my gear along with me just in case, I decided to camp out overnight. That freaked them out on the home front, as you can imagine. And I don’t even live with them! We all live in separate homes, they’ve just always had ever-ready access to my life. Geez,” he said, shaking his head. “Looking at it now, they don’t even knock when they come over, they just walk right in. No wonder I’ve always had long distance relationships. My mom and sister leave me no boundaries and no space. They try to own anyone who comes into my life.”

I could tell this wasn’t easy for him, but boy was I happy that he was realizing and releasing so much.

“I did get a lot of clarity up there in the mountains,” he

said, pointing ahead to the breathtaking site of the immense peaks stretched before us. “I did what you told me to do at dinner, Kate. I forgave my father. I know he’d always done the best he could do, and even if that was sucky,” he smiled, “I can respect that and move on with my life. As far as my mother and sister go... when I got back, it was still challenging and intense, because at first they didn’t want to hear any of what I had to say. But I stood my ground, and finally set some boundaries—not by being rude or a schmuck,” he assured me, “just by communicating with them and reminding myself that I really loved them—which worked way better than being a jerk ever did. I told them that I knew they loved me, but that the way they had been acting towards me didn’t feel very loving. I told them that paying less attention to me would actually give them more time, energy and clarity for themselves. They cried a little bit, but they agreed to stay out of my business and to stop coddling me. So we’ll see.” He looked at me for a moment and smiled.

“Wow, Jake. How’d you get so smart?” I teased him, but was genuinely impressed by his strength and sensitivity.

“I don’t know, Kate,” he said. “It was like a little bird was sitting on my shoulder or something, always prodding me on.”

“Sounds like it was a love bird.”

He smiled and took my hand, “Yeah. A love bird.”

We drove a while longer in silence. It felt like Jake was feeling the same deep appreciation for me that I was feeling for him. Then he said, “This looks like it.” We turned off the main road and onto a narrower dirt road. “This is where it gets rough,” he said, as his car shifted into four wheel drive. We did hit some muddy spots on the trail, but all in all it was pretty smooth.

After about five more minutes of driving, we arrived at a lush, grassy knoll that perfectly framed a smooth, graystone quarry, which was filled to the brim with shimmering aquamarine water. The water was so clear that you could see straight down to the

bottom, even in the spots where it was over 15 feet deep.

“Ohhhhhh!” I exclaimed as I jumped out of the car. “How beautiful!”

“Yeah,” Jake beamed at my enthusiastic reaction. “I discovered it yesterday, just for you.”

I laughed and hugged him really hard and kissed him all over his face and then ran to stick my feet in the water. He ran after me. There was not another soul in site and before we knew it, we were both hit by the very same wave of inspiration and spontaneously ripped off all of our clothes and jumped right into the water.

We were absolutely naked in broad daylight! Splashing and playing like little kids. I didn't feel one bit of embarrassment. That is an absolute first for me. I've always been super shy about my body, always trying to cover up my excess weight. But there was no room for that. I couldn't have felt more bliss. We didn't mind at all that the water was absolutely freezing, but it felt so nice to come out onto the rocks that were so incredibly smooth and warm under the sun. Jake brought two big fluffy towels and a blanket, so after our swim/splash we laid out the blanket and wrapped ourselves up in the towels and just cuddled and kissed. Our lips were like magnets, drawn to each other's, with a spark of energy between them when the polarities caught and held. It was like all the layers between us just dissolved into this deep peacefulness. It was a new experience for each of us, just having a feeling of deep friendship with no struggle, no games, no lust, no grabbiness, no definition. A feeling of oneness. Not just with each other, but with everything—the entire world. A perfect moment, shared. I'd never had that experience before.

And then you know what he said, as he held me? “I don't know what it is about you, Kate, but I want to give the whole world to you, and I feel like you would actually be able to receive it. I believe there's room in there,” he said pointing to my heart, “for all the world.” And I realized then that he was holding me, all wrapped up in a big towel, just as my mother

had. When I looked up into his eyes, I saw a tear just at the edge of one of them that couldn't seem to fall and I knew why. That tear wanted to remain part of the ocean—that's how deep his eyes seemed when they looked into mine."

Back in the kitchen, Kate and I sat still for a moment, in full appreciation of all of the many miracles that had transpired in Kate's life, and now apparently in Jake's life too. Then I spoke, "Thank you for sharing all of that with me, Kate. It's a big gift for me to have witnessed you come so far this last month."

"Yes," she nodded. "So far... to go nowhere... but to come back right here," she said, touching her heart. She looked at me, tears in her wide, innocent, child-like eyes, now full to the brim with wonder and said, "Thank you, with all of my heart and Soul. Thank you."

I nodded my acceptance and embraced her deeply saying, "Thank you Kate, it's been my profound pleasure."

"You know, if I didn't know about presence, I'd tell you now that I'm really going to miss our days together, but somehow I don't feel that's true. I know you'll always be with me." She paused and looked at me, smiling, as if to take all of me in with her eyes, and then said, "I've never been closer to anyone in my whole life."

"You've never been closer to *you*," I replied.

SOMETHING TO CHEW ON



Some people never go crazy. What truly horrible lives they must live.

~ Charles Bukowski

Is life not a hundred times too short for us to stifle ourselves?

~ Friedrich Nietzsche

Be Yourself!

It's only when we fracture and fragment our lives into little episodes, mini-dramas with story lines that have only bits and pieces of peace, sanity and hope here and there, that we lose sight of the big picture. Embracing unconditionally all events and people, as well as our ideas about them, allows the space for infinite possibility in our lives. How big is your world? Today, hold your world in your heart. Then share all of it with others so that it can expand exponentially.

SOUL-FULL EATING EXERCISE #29



Can you be naked?

Today, I am going to ask you to be brave, very brave, and stand naked in front of a full length mirror (or the biggest mirror you have). Then, find 7 things you love about yourself... and the trick here is, they can't be physical attributes. Your standing in front of the mirror is just for effect. I'd like you to notice how much more difficult it is to be aware of Soul qualities while focused on your physical body.

If, by chance, you find this exercise terribly difficult, be kind to yourself. But do revisit it frequently over the next few months until you can stand fully naked in front of the mirror while looking yourself square in the eye, with great love, noticing your brilliance.

If you do find it hard to love yourself while looking at your physical body, you may want to try the exercise with your eyes closed at first. Take a deep breath and *feel* your body from the inside, and then, when you feel comfortable, open your eyes to look at yourself, face-to-face.

Before leaving the mirror, tell yourself this one liberating truth: “I am Soul.”

See your blessed body as a sacred garment, in complete alignment with this truth—a vehicle with which to shine and share your light. Feel this. Know this.

Then, after you get dressed and go about your day, if ever an obstacle to your peace should arise, simply remember this truth, “I am Soul.” Each time you practice such awareness, the reality of your Real Identity is brought nearer and nearer to you.

Today become intimate with and make love to life.

Let these words echo round the world as you say with Soul:

“Spirit am I, free of all limits, safe and healed and whole, free to forgive, free to live, free to love and free to liberate my world.”

D A Y T H I R T Y

Gratitude

The Fullness of Love

Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend. Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow.

~ Melodie Beattie

WHAT A "LITTLE BIRDIE" TOLD ME...

Kate sat in her garden, growing increasingly impatient and agitated. From time to time, she rearranged the exquisitely wrapped gifts that she had stacked on the wrought iron table, next to a very large and artfully arranged bouquet of wild flowers.

"She's late," Kate murmured quietly to herself. "It's the first time she's ever been late. I wonder if something happened to her."

As Kate lifted her gaze to tighten a bow on one of the

packages, she spied a small, frail figure walking towards her. Thinking at first that it was her teacher, she sprang up from her chair, anticipating a fully enthusiastic welcome to kick off their final session together. Kate was planning to shower her teacher with appreciation and gifts, and could hardly wait to get started. But as she shielded her eyes from the sun and peered at the approaching figure, she noticed that this was not the lively gait of the woman she'd grown so accustomed to sharing time with this past month, but the measured, tenuous step of a frail-hearted sort. As the figure approached, Kate realized this was no woman, but a teenage girl. When she arrived at the edge of the garden, within ear shot, Kate stepped forward and said, "Hello. Can I help you?"

"Hi, I'm Angela," the girl said tentatively, raising her hand to wave and then shyly hiding it behind her back. "I was told by my aunt's friend that I should come to this address at 10 o'clock today and give this note to someone named Kate. Are you Kate?"

"Yes I am," Kate smiled and stepped forward to take the envelope from the girl's hand. As she did so, she muttered under her breath, "Well, this is certainly mysterious—good thing I love surprises." Then, a bit louder, she said to the girl, "Won't you sit down?" as she waved Angela towards the empty seat just beside her own.

Kate settled herself back into her chair and opened the envelope. Angela looked around, meekly but appreciatively, drinking in the bright colors and heady fragrance of the garden.

As soon as Kate glanced at the words scrawled on the paper, she immediately recognized the handwriting of her teacher. Before she even read a word, tears spontaneously welled in her eyes. Angela noticed and quickly looked away, deliberately focusing on the birdhouse in the corner of the garden, alive with the comings and goings of an active feathered family.

Kate read the note to herself,

Dear Kate,

I know you were expecting me to come to your home so we could chat today, just as we have for the last 29 days... and I apologize if you've prepared for me (despite the fact that you know that's impossible, and was never part of our 'spontaneity agreement'), but I thought you might enjoy a little change of pace.

Meet Angela. In case you haven't already introduced yourselves, she's the girl who delivered this note to you. She could use some loving guidance. Of course, the very first person I thought of to help her was you.

"Me!?" Kate exclaimed out loud, and then, realizing what she'd done, looked up at Angela who was watching Kate out of the corner of her eye and shifting uneasily in her chair. "Sorry," Kate said.

Angela smiled meekly and Kate immediately went back to the note, eager to read more from her teacher.

Angela is 17 and has a history of anorexia and bulimia. She's been under a lot of stress lately at school and at home, and she's been binge eating.

"No." Kate said flatly, dropping the paper into her lap, again without realizing she was speaking aloud, "You *cannot* be serious."

Catching herself again, she glanced towards Angela who was now perched on the edge of her seat, pretending to be absorbed in other things.

I know what you may be thinking, 'How can I help her?' And to that I have only one thing to say, How can you not help?

Kate stopped reading and looked up from the note, not at Angela, but into the distance, towards a patch of forget-me-nots just beginning to bloom. She sat there, silent, her indignation

and panic turning into sullen contemplation.

After a few moments, Angela—now growing used to this strange woman who spoke to herself—heard Kate say, almost in a whisper, “I don’t know.” She then watched Kate’s expression transform almost instantly from brooding confusion to elation. What Angela did not know is that Kate had inwardly heard something, louder and stronger and more tangible than she had ever heard it before—the Voice of the Soul, saying, “You do know...” It continued, “Look to your heart... right there Kate... you do know. And it’s time for you to share that.”

With one last snuffle, Kate pulled herself together and said, “You’re right.”

Sitting straight up and exhaling deeply in an attempt to center herself, Kate looked Angela directly in the eye, and laughed, “I’m sorry Angela. You must think I’m a nut case or something, sitting here ignoring you, reading this note and *talking* to myself. I’m not really crazy.” She paused, laughing again. “At least I don’t think I am.”

A small smile broke across Angela’s lips and she said, “That’s okay. Sometimes I talk to myself too. It doesn’t bother me.” And then after a pause, she continued with a slight shrug, “Besides, I think everyone’s a little crazy.”

“You’re right,” Kate nodded her agreement. “And you’re brave, you know that? Coming to my house this way, without even knowing me, or what to expect.”

“Yeah right. That’s me—*brave!*” The thought of which made Angela burst out in defeated laughter. Then, catching herself, she let out a long sigh and again turned sullen, staring at the grass by her feet. “I’m not brave at all,” she shrugged. “I think it’s more that I just don’t really care anymore, you know? I mean, I feel so done with everything. Have you ever felt that way, just *done?*” As she said this, tears sprung to her eyes. Kate smiled.

Angela continued, wiping her eyes with the corner of her sleeve, “But it feels so peaceful in this garden, like such an

oasis, away from it all. I haven't felt like this since... well... I don't know if I've ever felt like this. So the truth is, no matter how nutty I think you are, I just can't tear myself away."

"You're honest," said Kate. "I like that."

"You know what they say. When you have nothing to lose..." Angela shrugged again, and the two of them smiled at each other appreciatively.

It was Angela who spoke next. "Are you having a party?" she asked, pulling herself up a bit straighter in her chair.

"What?"

"A party."

"What makes you think that?"

"Those," Angela said, pointing at the perfectly stacked presents.

"Oh," Kate had almost forgotten the morning she had planned. "Well, no." But then she caught herself and said, "I mean, yeah. Yes, a party—that's exactly what this is—a welcome party. For you."

"For me?"

"Yes! And these gifts are for you."

"Why?"

"Because."

"Because why?"

"Just because. Haven't you ever not known why... and just decided to love it?!"

Angela looked confused, "I can't..."

"You can't what? Accept gifts when you don't know, 'Why?'" Kate made quotation marks with her fingers in the air. "Where the heck's the spontaneity in that?"

"You are so weird." Angela shook her head in disbelief, her small smile growing.

"Yeah, I am," Kate said, which made them both laugh.

"But a good weird, I'd say."

"So you want to have a party?"

"Yeah, I guess. I mean, why not? Even if this is the most

bizarre day I've ever had. Showing up at a complete stranger's home, to find this amazing garden and all these gifts... for me? I don't know if I can accept such... I don't understand."

"Angela, I've learned something very powerful recently, from a very wise Soul. You don't have to understand *anything* in life. You just have to love it."

Angela looked at Kate, stunned, pondering her words but not knowing at all how to respond.

"That's when you realize that life is full of sweet surprises," Kate went on, "and that every day's a gift. And it feels to me, Angela, like it's high time you learned how to receive."

"Okay, okay." Angela laughed and threw her hands up in the air, "I don't understand any of this... but I guess I love it!" She paused as her smile grew even bigger, and her eyes widened with surprise, "Wow—that felt pretty good."

"Yeah, it does, doesn't it?" Kate was obviously delighted. "You catch on pretty quick." Kate gestured towards the chair Angela was seated in, "So, luckily you're already seated in the 'place of honor.' But before you open your gifts, I'd like to tell you a bit about each of them."

"Okay," said Angela leaning forward in her seat.

"Now," Kate began, "these are very important gifts, for one reason only. There's more thoughtfulness to them than there may appear to be on the surface. Each was carefully selected as sort of an 'inside joke' between me and my teacher—I'll let you in on them as you open each one."

Angela nodded.

"Okay, are you ready?"

"Yes," Angela said, as she sat up straight in her chair. She no longer looked small and waif-like, as though she wanted to be invisible, but more like a princess on her throne, awaiting her due splendor.

"First there's this," Kate pushed the outstanding bouquet of wildflowers, bursting from their vase, towards Angela.

"Oh, I love them," Angela clapped with delight. "I noticed

them the minute I stepped into your garden and I thought, ‘anyone who can arrange such gorgeous flowers can’t be all that bad—even if she does talk to herself.’”

They both laughed at that, and Kate said teasingly, “Yes I see that this unstructured expression of beauty is entirely appropriate for you—natural, free spirited and exquisitely unpredictable!”

“Thank you, Kate,” Angela was clearly touched, even more by Kate’s observations of her than by the gift. Suddenly feeling embarrassed by all of the unsolicited attention, she looked away from Kate. But unable to help herself, she touched the flowers lightly, slowly leaning forward in her seat to drink in a deep, long sniff of their incredible fragrance. “They’re gorgeous.”

“And then,” Kate pulled a flat package from behind the others, “there’s this.” Angela took the present from Kate and very carefully untied the bow and unwrapped the paper, revealing an oil painting of what she immediately recognized to be the very garden they were now seated in. Kate’s garden, but bathed in moonlight. To Angela it seemed alive with light and color, but what struck her most was its incredible, unearthly essence of deep warmth. She was unexpectedly, profoundly moved.

Nearly breathless, she whispered, “Who painted this, Kate?”

“I did,” she replied, with a Cheshire cat-like grin.

“Oh my God. Kate! This is spectacular,” Angela looked up and swept her arm over the area surrounding them, “It’s this garden, isn’t it? But at night. And what a night!”

“Yes,” Kate smiled. “I’ll tell you about that night sometime.”

When Kate saw that Angela had fully absorbed the little masterpiece, she took another gift from the table. This time it was the largest box. She placed it on Angela’s lap, and the two of them laughed in unison. As Angela looked at the box, she suddenly felt overcome by all of it—Kate’s unexpected show of love—and it brought tears to her eyes.

“I got this present last week,” Kate said, “the day after my first date with my new boyfriend, Jake. We saw it while we were window shopping, and I just had to go back and get it. To me it had my teacher written all over it.”

“Oh Kate, are you sure? I mean it sounds to me like this is meant for you—”

“No, no. It’s for you,” Kate replied firmly. “I’m certain. All of these gifts are for you.”

Angela smiled and gingerly, but eagerly, untied the smooth blue satin bow. She took the lid off of the wooden box to find a delicate, hand painted tea set. “It’s one of a kind,” Kate said. “Go on, touch it.” Angela did, very carefully, grazing her fingertips over the surface, almost reverently. It felt buttery smooth.

“The artist who made it is a really wonderful person. There’s a short bio about him in the box. It even states that he makes everything with love—something my teacher would most definitely appreciate.” Again it looked like Angela was about to protest the gift, but Kate stopped her, “You know, now that I think of it, she already has an amazing tea set. So although I didn’t know it at the time, I’m certain now that I bought this set for you.”

“Oh my God. Kate, I can’t. I mean this is way too much. It’s practically the nicest thing I’ve ever seen in my whole entire life and, and—”

“And it’s yours. I insist. Although, you can’t bring it home until we christen it together first. We’ll have our own little tea party, you and I,” Kate said with a certain gleam in her eye.

Kate didn’t leave Angela a moment to continue her protest. Instead she pulled from the table a small, brightly patterned cloth bag, which perfectly matched the colors in the tea set, saying, “So you will most definitely be needing this! I dried some mint from my garden. For tea. Specifically to christen that tea pot with. Here, smell it.”

Angela leaned over the bag and inhaled such a deep whiff of the herbs that Kate thought she might fall off of her chair.

“Oh my God. Oh, wow.” Angela collapsed back into her seat, swooning. “That’s soooo wonderful!”

This was just the reaction Kate was hoping for. She smiled broadly adding, “And... I’ve made some lemon squares from scratch, with my *special recipe*, to go with the tea.”

“Oh.” Angela suddenly looked deflated, as if her entire world had just crumbled, then she said tentatively, “I don’t eat sweets.”

“You don’t?” Kate said cheerily. “But these aren’t just any sweets. These lemon squares have a special ingredient.”

“Really?” Angela was intrigued despite herself, “A special ingredient?”

“Yes, these lemon squares are prepared, from start to finish, with love!”

“Oh.” Angela was, again, taken off guard, not knowing what to make of Kate’s statement, “Really?”

“Yes, and even if you don’t care to eat any of them today, I’ve decided that I’m going to share this recipe with you, so that just like me, you’ll realize the secret of masterful food preparation and eating too.”

“Uh, okay...,” was all Angela could say.

“Great! So then, last but not least...”

“Oh no,” Angela laughed. “No more. Please. I can’t take any more!”

“I know just how you feel, Angela, and why it is you feel so full. Do you want to know?”

“Of course I do. I mean, is there any reason why I’m finding all of this so overwhelming other than the fact that I am feeling things I’ve never felt before in my entire life. I didn’t even know it was possible to have feelings like this.”

“Well,” Kate said craftily, “I’m going to let you in on another little secret.”

“I love secrets,” Angela said.

“Good,” Kate replied.

Leaning forward until she was just a few inches from

Angela, Kate whispered, “In case you haven’t noticed, Angela, I’ve touched upon every one of your five senses with these gifts now. Sight—with the flowers and painting. Touch—with the tea set. Smell—with the mint. And taste—with my lemon squares. Now there’s one last sense to bring into play.”

“Hearing.” Angela piped in.

“Yes, hearing!”

“But, I don’t get it, why the five senses?”

“My teacher taught me many valuable things. But one of the most valuable was how to put yourself in Heaven.”

“What?!”

“That’s right.”

Now it was Angela who leaned forward and whispered, “How?” as if she were asking for forbidden fruit, wanting with all of her heart to devour it.

Kate smiled, happy that Angela had so eagerly taken her bait. “Well... whenever we use all five of our senses simultaneously, we automatically become alert, awake and alive—*more conscious*, as my teacher would say. That throws us into our sixth sense—into Heaven, which I now know is a state of love.”

“Hmm.” Angela closed her eyes, leaned back in her chair and sighed a long, deep as the ocean sigh. Such a release appeared to be a first for her. “Wow,” Angela repeated, “Heaven is love.”

Kate took full advantage of the moment and before Angela could open her eyes said, “Just stay right where you are, don’t move a muscle. There’s one final gift. But this one I have to read to you, to enliven your fifth sense, the sense of hearing.”

She leaned over and picked up the card from the table that had been lying under all of the gifts, and opened it. “This is something I found that touched me so deeply. It’s from a book that you may have heard about, *Tuesdays with Morrie* by Mitch Albom. He wrote it about his teacher, who he visited each week. And I feel like his experience of meeting with his teacher was in many ways like mine.” Kate cleared her throat and read,

Have you ever really had a teacher?

One who saw you as a raw but precious thing, a jewel that with wisdom, could be polished to a proud shine? If you are lucky enough to find your way to such teachers, you will always find your way back.

When she finished reading, Kate wiped a tear from the corner of her eye and looked up, just as Angela sat straight up in her chair.

“That’s beautiful. I love it, Kate. What a dream,” she swooned. “I’ve never had a teacher like that, or have even known anyone like that. But *you* have?”

“Oh yes,” Kate smiled. “I have.”

And without having to hear Kate say it, Angela knew that Kate was thinking of the woman who she referred to as ‘my teacher’.

After a slight hesitation, not wanting to interrupt the profundity of the moment, Angela asked, “It says if you are lucky enough to find your way to such teachers, that you will always find your way back. Back to where?”

“Well, I’m not sure if this is what Mitch Albom meant when he wrote that, but to me it means,” she leaned over and pointed at Angela’s heart, “back to here.”

“Oh,” said Angela.

Then, despite herself, Kate began to dreamily reminisce, thinking over the past month as she closed her eyes and sank into her chair.

Angela sat quietly for a moment, first studying Kate appreciatively then surveying her gifts and their beautiful garden backdrop. She sighed deeply, and when Kate opened her eyes and looked at her, she couldn’t help but ask, “Do you mind if I come back again, to see you Kate?”

Kate reluctantly shook off her reverie and, remembering the fullness of the present moment, turned to Angela and beamed, “Of course you can, Angela. I’d love that. And besides, I still

owe you a tea party, remember?”

“Oh yes!” Once again, Angela clapped her hands together. “You know what, Kate? I feel like I’ve known you forever. And this might sound crazy, but this has been just about the best day of my whole life. And to think I almost didn’t come here today. It was so outside of my normal, well-protected box, to come see a total stranger, to deliver something to her not even knowing why.”

“Why did you come then?”

“Now you’re really going to think I’m crazy, but it was like a little voice inside of me just wouldn’t take no for an answer. It was almost like I was compelled to come.”

“No,” Kate smiled. “I don’t think you’re crazy at all. As a matter of fact, I thought that’s what you were going to say.”

“Really?” Angela shook her head in disbelief. “I’m glad I came. You know how I said I was feeling like I had given up before? Now I just feel gratitude. Like I’m full of it, and it feels good.”

“I remember feeling the same way, the first day I met my teacher. But you know something else? I also remember that when we began our work together, I couldn’t wait for it to be over. You see, she was teaching me sort of a ‘non-diet,’ and I wanted to lose weight *now*! No dilly dallying for me. I wanted to be skinny yesterday. Isn’t that hilarious? Now I feel as if I could revel in the month that we spent together forever.”

“You mean you’ve had problems with your weight? Wow, I’d never have known that. You look so beautiful. I’d say, *just right*.” Angela said sincerely, and with a hint of envy.

Kate smiled, “Thank you. But believe me, that wasn’t always the case. It’s true though, now that I hear you say it, if I had to put it any way I’d say that I finally feel ‘just right.’ Although I have to tell you, I have no idea what I weigh now. I only know that I fit into jeans that I haven’t worn since 11th grade, when I was my most fit and healthy. I think I was a size 8. So that means I am now the weight I feel happy and free at. Although

I think that even if I was a size 10, 14 or whatever now, I'd still feel this happy with myself. Weight to me has become such an afterthought, if any thought at all. Now I just feel healthy and wise and so, so full!"

"Full." Angela savored the word on her tongue, as if she was hungry to experience it. "I'd love to feel that way—the way you're describing that you feel now."

Kate smiled at Angela appreciatively.

Then, not knowing if she was venturing into delicate territory, Angela asked, "What happened to your teacher, Kate? Did she die or something?"

Kate looked at Angela squarely and laughed, "Oh her, she'll never die. She's all love, and if she taught me anything, she taught me this," Kate folded her hands in her lap and breaking into her best teacher imitation said, "Love is eternal."

That night, Kate sat on her bed, stroking Ralph and looking out the window at her moonlit garden when she suddenly remembered that she hadn't finished reading the note from her teacher.

She reached into her jeans pocket to pull out the carefully folded paper and smiled while opening it. Then read,

In case you hadn't guessed, I'm passing the torch now Kate, because the very best way for us to truly know what we've received is to give it.

I'd like you to have a perfect mirror to reflect your beauty, just as you were for me, and I can't think of a better reflection than a lovely, bright 17-year-old.

Cherish your time together Kate, just as I have cherished my time spent with you.

Kate folded the letter and, on an impulse, put it in the pocket of Ralph's big, bulky red sweater bed. She let out a big, contented sigh and smiled.

I heard that Kate and Angela became fast friends. That Angela visited Kate often, and Angela is now happy and thriving. She is about to graduate high school with honors and will attend a school of culinary arts come fall.



Kate and I never did have our 'final' meeting. Which I feel is most appropriate, in a world only ripe with bright new beginnings.

SOMETHING TO CHEW ON



It is not the function of God's teachers to evaluate the outcome of their gifts. It is merely their function to give them. Once they have done that they have also given the outcome, for that is part of the gift. No one can give if he is concerned with the result of giving. That is a limitation on the giving itself, and neither the giver nor the receiver would have the gift. Trust is an essential part of giving; in fact, it is the part that makes sharing possible, the part that guarantees the giver will not lose, but only gain. Who gives a gift and then remains with it, to be sure it is used as the giver deems appropriate? Such is not giving but imprisoning.

It is the relinquishing of all concern about the gift that makes it truly given. And it is trust that makes true giving possible. Healing is the change of mind that the [Soul] in the [student's] mind is seeking for him. And it is the [Soul] in the mind of the giver Who gives the gift to him. How can it be lost? How can it be ineffectual? How can it be wasted? God's treasure house can never be empty. And if one gift is missing, it would not be full. Yet is its fullness guaranteed by God. What concern, then, can a teacher of God have about what becomes of his gifts? Given by God to God, who in this holy exchange can receive less than everything?

~ A Course In Miracles

SOUL-FULL EATING EXERCISE #30



You've done it! You've completed this journey. Almost.

In this world there are no endings, only new beginnings. Now the rubber meets the road. It's time to share, because "what you give, you receive." And it's not until we show ourselves gratitude—via sharing our gifts—that we can know what it is we have received.

Actually, sharing the gifts that you have received these past thirty days will happen automatically, since you have changed

quite dramatically since day one—if not externally yet, most definitely internally.

Whether or not you feel ready to extend advice and wisdom to someone with an eating disorder like Angela, there is one thing that you can share with everyone and anyone you meet—something which is often more valuable than straightforward advice—unconditional love.

Now that you have completed the program, you have the unique opportunity to share your experiences with others. In the epilogue you'll find information about how to stay involved with the *Soul-Full Eating* community and share these lessons with your own family and friends. But today, just notice how each and every interaction you have—whether with strangers or intimate friends—has the ability to affect not only your experience of life, but another's. Just as Kate's open generosity helped Angela learn to receive the gift of Heaven on earth, you can also give—with no strings attached—the gift of love.

Happiness cannot be traveled to, owned, earned, worn or consumed. Happiness is the spiritual experience of living every minute with love, grace and gratitude.

~ Denis Waitley

E P I L O G U E

Count Your Blessings, Not Your Calories

... and the place which may seem like the end may also be only the beginning.

~ Ivy Baker Priest

TODAY, IT'S MY TURN TO EXPRESS MY GRATITUDE TO YOU.

I'd like to thank you from the bottom of my heart because, like Kate, you have been brave and true to yourself. You've committed to staying with the process these past 30 days, so candidly and consciously looking at yourself, your relationships—in essence, your entire life—with your eyes and heart wide open, willing for transformation. I am very happy for you. There is no goal to reach, no “end” to attain that is more important than this.

As I said yesterday, although this is the apparent end of the program, you've actually just begun. And now that you know the “rules” of this game of life, you can begin to *really play*.

SUMMING IT UP

This story of Kate's *30 Days of Soul-Full Eating* is a universal metaphor for awakening.

Over the past 30 days, you have learned to fully honor your Self and live in the present moment. We've used eating, food, forgiveness and love as the focal points for liberation from the pain-promoting identity of the ego. By learning to hear and feel the Voice of the Soul, you've been awakening from the dream that you are separate from the Divine.

You followed along with Kate as she began her journey by learning to distinguish between the ego and the Soul. Slowly but surely, through experiences like the "tea party" with her teacher, and her moonlit early morning in the garden, Kate learned to recognize the deep-seated peace and security that comes with living from the Soul—a sharp contrast to her ego-fueled "pudding parties" and struggle with food and dieting.

As Kate discovered the power of forgiveness to remove obstacles to love's presence, a massive clearing ensued—of her cabinets, her closet and her past—an "undoing" or unlearning of all the patterns that promoted feelings of isolation, separateness, and fear. Aided by her keen sense of humor and newfound ability to surrender ("I don't know what it is, but I love it!"), Kate showed an uncompromising willingness to question—not just her dietary habits, but every value that she held.

With a heavy emphasis on relationships, Kate began to heal her past, starting with the key players in everyone's life—Dad and Mom—working all the way up to the present, until she found herself in a blossoming, entirely new and baggage-free relationship with Jake.

Finally, Kate learned that the ultimate key to receiving love in her own life was to express love unconditionally to others, which in turn opened her up to *receiving more* than she ever could have imagined.

So let me ask you, how could any diet—or any path—based

on deprivation, that asks us to manipulate, contrive our lives, constrict and constrain ourselves, or that prods us *to give up* what we love, prepare us for that?

Instead, the *Food: A Love Story* path has focused on one theme consistently—Self Love—*accepting more* from life by being appreciative and present. This path teaches us how to make choices based on love, that heal inner conflict and bring about a state of absolute, uncompromising authenticity. By now, you have surely realized that this spirited path of learning is not an “other-worldliness” to be attained, but a series of practical changes in the arena of day-to-day living which make us happier, healthier and more whole. As we make these changes within ourselves, we automatically begin to have a healing influence on the world around us.

One of the miraculous things about a life lived with full attention and presence is the opportunity this affords us to dig deeper and experience the revelations that continually unfold, in every moment. (So there really is no end!) Now, having experienced this past month, you’ll be much more aware of *opportunities disguised as obstacles*, and be able to use them to grow in relationships and to connect to life in more powerful and profoundly fulfilling ways.

I wrote this program based on my 15-plus years of experience working with clients from all over the world. The journey that Kate undertook closely mirrors the same path that I have seen other clients traverse—though I must admit, very few people have completed this journey in such a short period of time. But having witnessed Kate’s complete transformation, you’ve seen for yourself that it is possible to live Heaven on earth. And that, to learn how to do this is, in fact, our very reason for coming into human existence.

For the purpose of our 30-day program, I condensed Kate’s journey of awakening into one whirlwind month. But how long each individual takes to complete this process is unique and varied. While it is possible to reach a state of liberation

in 30 days, it could also take 30 weeks, 30 months or even 30 years depending on each student's personal situation, focus and commitment. But really, how long it takes someone to awaken is of little importance, because there really is nowhere to go. Everyone is on the path to their own Self-liberation, whether they are aware of it, or not. In fact, you're already there—that's the blessed irony of the situation. We just need to wake ourselves up, via unconditional love, to know that.

Food: A Love Story illustrates the most important Truth of all, that we are already perfect and complete. No matter how many layers of pain and denial we pile on top of our perfection, we are at our core already, entirely, whole.

DEVELOPING A REGULAR PRACTICE

Now that you have completed the program, I encourage you to go back and look at your answers to the “Are you Soul-Full?” questionnaire that you filled out at the beginning of your *Food: A Love Story* journey. Enjoy answering each of the questions again, noticing how you've changed.

I also suggest that you revisit the lessons, now taking the time to read through each one of them at your leisure, letting each day's message *soak in* as you even more deeply explore its meaning in the context of your life. You may choose to focus on one lesson each week, reading that story each morning, meditating on it, and then doing the exercise until you feel you've mastered it—whatever feels best to you. I also encourage you to continue to listen to the meditation recording—in the morning when you first wake up, in the car on the way to work, before each meal or at night when you're about to fall asleep.

However you choose to integrate *Food: A Love Story* into your daily routine, it is important to create a practice around this intention to form a deep connection with Soul. And although you'll now be striking out on your own, have no fear! We are

still here to offer support and encouragement as you carry on with this most delightful, sometimes difficult and ultimately joy-filled journey.

And the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time.

~ T.S. Eliot

How far you've come—you and Kate together! Each day, you've allowed your doubts and fears, one by one, to perish, while revealing to yourself everything you truly treasure. You've released yourself to the subtle, inner-glow of life, allowing yourself to, often quite unexpectedly, unearth gladness and wonder and the miraculous right here on earth in the midst of your everyday, "ordinary" life. In short, you've been awakening.

You arrived via fearless Self-inquiry, allowing yourself to believe, no matter how difficult it may have been at times, that love will never fail you.

There's no more shirking from life for you. Be bold. Be joyous. Be brave. Be steadfast as you continue to traverse the worlds within and the worlds without, even in the face of obstacles and pain.

Now you can relax, and enjoy the journey. Along with *eating with love, what's grown with love, prepared with love and served with love*, explore some new self-nurturing pastimes—walking, writing, meditation, singing, yoga, painting, eating sumptuous meals by candlelight, creative movement, roller skating, dance, slowing down, bubble bathing, finding balance in your work and play. Give to yourself often. Bask in a perfect sunrise, take a dip in a freezing river or a walk in the misty rain, scratchy sand or shimmering, powdery snow. Wiggle your toes over a mountainside or toast them in warm wooly socks by a raging fire. Make every day fulfilling, extraordinary, delight-full, while you bask often in solitary moments that whisper, "This is just

for you.”

Isn't it easier to know we are all headed home? And when you reach your destination, you'll find you remember what you've always known. You'll see life as *you* are.

You are the one you've been waiting for—a Brilliant Soul, come to life.

Count your blessings, not your calories (or money, titles and possessions), and don't be shy to ask for the greatest gift of all—a grateful heart. Let every day deepen your Divinity and don't ever, ever stop until you are *completely full*.

I cannot wait to see where this journey takes you, and I look forward to sharing with you further, as we all bring Heaven to earth!

Abundant Blessings to you always.

My Most Sincere Gratitude,

Maureen Whitehouse

WHAT'S NEXT...

You've followed along with Kate on her fantastic food journey from "I'm not" to "I am!"

You've discovered, right along with her, some powerful keys to living a joyous and deeply fulfilling life.

But Kate's story of awakening to discover the power of Soul was just the appetizer... now you're ready for more... you're ready to make Kate's realizations your own.

Food

Your Love Story

THE MAIN COURSE

www.eatwithlove.com

STAYING INVOLVED

So how do you feel to have completed the *Food: A Love Story* 30 Day Program?

I mean *really*, how do you feel?

Right now, sit back, close your eyes and notice your feelings...

Here's how *I* felt when nearing the end of this process of putting *Food: A Love Story* onto the page. For me, it was uncharacteristically difficult to write this epilogue. Quite odd, I thought, since the rest of the program had so effortlessly flowed from my pen. So I sat back to feel where this sudden writer's block was coming from. As I did so, I felt a tinge of melancholy well up from within me and I heard its small, dejected voice say, "Every good thing must end." Then I noticed that this naysayer's pronouncement was accompanied by a subtle, yet growing feeling of sadness, deep in my belly.

Obviously, my ego was having a hard time accepting that this program was over, but the Soul, on the other hand—with its opposite and equally liberating interpretation—reminded me, "There is no end! All change is not only good, but necessary—the way to usher in bright and new beginnings."

So I've decided once and for all to nix that unproductive belief in sad endings, and instead focus on the new start we have before us, affirming, "Every ending brings with it new, and *even more fulfilling*, beginnings." That's why I am now working with my awesome (and dedicated to bringing Heaven to earth) team of creatives to develop a *Food: A Love Story* online/offline community. So really, we *have* all just begun! There'll be plenty more developments so stay tuned to hear about them all.

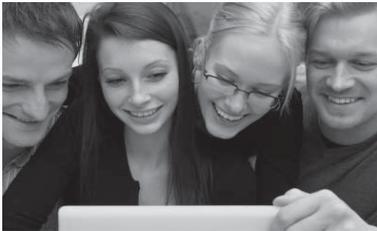


Welcome!

You are receiving this newsletter because you are a person who is on the path to living a deliberate and conscious Soul-Full life. We Hope you enjoy it and feel free to [forward it to friends.](#)

Among other things, if you so choose to receive them, we'll be sending you a *Soul-Full Living Newsletter*. These emails are meant to inspire you as well as help keep you focused and on track, with

recipes, restaurant reviews and other food for thought. Visit: www.soul-fulleating.com to sign up for our newsletter now, to keep abreast of and be involved with our progress. (We keep all email addresses completely confidential.)



To insure that this program continues to be successful for you, set up the conditions for success in your life. One simple way to do this, if you're so inspired, is to share with friends and family the *Food: A Love Story* link: www.eatwithsoul.com, so that they too can experience the journey

you have begun and better relate to you through their own process of self-discovery. (For information about becoming an affiliate, partnering with us to promote the program, visit: www.soul-fulleating.com/soul-support/affiliate-program.)



Just as Kate has begun to build a community of like-minded friends and confidants, including Jake and Angela, growing a group of trusted people who are traveling along the same path can make this journey easier

and more fun-filled. As Kate learned, it can be wonderful to

enjoy a meal alone, but the joy of creating, cooking and sharing food with others is unparalleled. To share this experience with others in a way that will keep you involved with the *Soul-Full Eating* lessons and journey, we encourage you to start a *Soul-Full Eating* Support Group. Visit:

www.soul-fulleating.com/soul-support/soul-support-groups.

Gather a like-minded group to go through the program together in your home, at your local temple, church, yoga studio, meditation center, school, hospital, library or healthfood store. Start with a few close friends, and watch the fullness grow. Or, like both Kate and Angela did, step out of your “comfort zone”—just put up a notice and see who synchronistically shows up! (For info about Group Discounts, visit www.eatwithsoul.com/group.html.)



However you choose to continue exploring the lessons and exercises of *Food: A Love Story*, we hope that you will stay in touch by emailing us your questions, thoughts, feedback and suggestions.

Last but not least, we invite you to send us a testimonial about your *Food: A Love Story* experience. If you have experienced a health and wellness realization, or a diet or spiritual success while following this program, we hope you will pass that gift along to others by sending us your personal story at: www.soul-fulleating.com/soul-support/success-stories.

or at: info@experienceaxiom.com. With your permission, we would like to share such inspirations with other program participants. Write whatever you like—including epiphanies, life changes you’ve made, how you now see yourself and the possibilities for your life.

Feel free to check back in over time and send us your stories as you experience the blessed “ripple effect” that this program is sure to have on your life.

We LOVE Hearing from you!

All links and resources referred to in this book can be found at
www.eatwithsoul.com/links

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



MAUREEN WHITEHOUSE, the founder of *Axiom* and author of *The E³ Transformational Triad™*, has helped thousands of people to radically shift their perception of challenge, transition and change.

She teaches a brand of “practical-spirituality” as she speaks from her Soul about her real world experience as an international model, actress, feature reporter and talk show host. In 1996, she experienced a profound awakening and since then she has lived her life helping others realize their full potential. She is an authentic guiding beacon in the fields of human consciousness and personal transformation.

Promoting the principles of *Soul-Full Eating* is just one highly-regarded aspect of her work. When not coaching clients, writing and working on projects from her home on the ocean in Hollywood, Florida she travels the world extensively, leading groups on Miracle Journeys to sacred places.

For more information about Maureen’s other books, CDs, programs and services, or to bring Maureen to your event or corporation to speak, visit: www.experienceaxiom.com