

# Love: More than a Feeling

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I believe in unconditional love. That's right, unconditional love. I'm not talking about the kind of love in which one person does something that the other person doesn't like and they stop loving that person. That would be called conditional love. I'm talking about something different here, something that doesn't have the same kind of contractual agreements and fine print that conditional love can have. Let me be clear, I'm not critiquing conditional love. I think it has its place.

What I really want you to know is that I think that unconditional love is pretty important and is also quite different in some significant ways from its counterpart. With unconditional love, when a person does something the other person doesn't like, the person still chooses to love that other person – and, if the same thing happens the next day, guess what? The person still chooses to love. I'd imagine that for some folks this may sound like quite the uphill battle and maybe just downright impossible. Frankly, I could understand that. This is why I think that in order to really carry this out, one has to expand upon their understanding of love in at least one key area.



Talking about love as a feeling is one thing, but I'd like to talk about love as a commitment. Understanding love as a feeling is very important and serves a vital role. However, like other feelings, over time there is often a waxing and waning of the feelings of love that one person has for another. Love as a commitment, on the other hand, stays strong and true because it is not rooted in the feelings of love but the commitment to love. You may notice that a commitment implies follow through and action of some kind. In this way, talking about loving someone includes not only a certain emotional state, but also a conscious choice with certain responsibilities attached to it. To be honest, I don't know how a person could unconditionally love someone without understanding love in this way. In this world, I believe that many people are in desperate need of unconditional love. Just imagine waking up in the morning and knowing that, in whatever ways you may fail during the day, you can have the confidence that there is someone who is committed to loving you and will be there for you at the end of your day. Some of you may already have that experience and so have a good idea of what that's like. For others, this may sound like pure craziness, especially for those people whose experience lies more heavily in the domain of a more conditional love kind of arrangement. It'd be great if those folks could get some of the unconditional love. Even if it is difficult to find, hopefully this won't get in the way of people searching for it. At the same time, it's important to recognize that we have the capacity to make our own love commitment to others even if we aren't on the receiving end of getting it from others. And it's a weird thing, in that sometimes if a person makes a choice to do something different it can have a reverberating effect on those around. It's not always clear what shape the effect may take, but you can rest assured that the change you make to choose to love unconditionally will not go unnoticed even if it takes a long time to be noticed.

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Interested in trying out some unconditional love with someone you believe needs it? Again, I don't think this is an easy task and I certainly can imagine that things could get quite tricky. My best suggestion is that, if this is something you're interested in, it's good to be prepared. A specific area of preparation that can be helpful is increasing your understanding of the boundaries that exist between people. The authors Henry Cloud and John Townsend know this well and wrote the book, **Boundaries: When to Say Yes, How to Say No to Take Control of Your Life**, that focuses precisely on this subject. Whether you are choosing to work towards being more loving towards a spouse, child, or friend, I think you will find this book helpful in developing a healthy awareness of where your responsibility begins and ends, which is a great place to start.