

Connection: to those you love – it is all that truly matters

In the end, when the noise of the world fades to a whisper and the light begins to dim, you will find you have nothing else, not the awards and accolades you collected, not the accounts you balanced, not the path you took. The only thing you will have, the only thing that is truly yours to carry, is love. The complete connection to those you have loved and those who have loved you is all that remains, it is all that ever truly mattered.

This is the first and the final truth we must learn, and it is the one truth we must, above all others, give to our children. The child does not need to be perfectly treated to thrive; they need to be completely loved. To feel it, in their very bones, that they are seen, that they are connected, that they make sense, in your eyes. This is the foundation of their confidence. To build this sanctuary for them, we who care for them, we must also love one another. Again, not perfectly, but definitely and persistently. Our love is the vessel that holds theirs; if we fracture, the vessel leaks, and the child feels the chill. We can all always recover from that chill, but the chill cannot be unfelt.

To be loved is to feel the warmth of a familial circle, and for that circle to hold, the fire requires consistent tending to sustain that warmth.

True love is limitless. It is not a scarce resource to be hoarded, a finite currency for which we must compete. To love one person wholly takes nothing from another. The love I pour into my child does not drain the cup I hold for my partner; it deepens the well we all drink from. The exclusive love we sometimes crave, the desire to be the absolute centre of another's universe, is a mirage of marginal merit. It's a fleeting satisfaction, easily outweighed by the expansive, abundant reality of shared love.

Love, in its purest form, is an act of centring. It is the choice, in a given moment, to endeavour to fully see another. Think of that special soul that cared for you as a little person - caring for your young heart, - that love incarnate. You knew, with a certainty that required no words, that they loved you. Their love felt like a sacrament - a bond, carefully provided completely intact. The thought of disappointing them drew a physical pain, not because their love was demanding, but because it was so clear. When they looked at you, they *saw* you. And if you strayed, a simple look of, "*I didn't expect that from you*" - was all it took. In that moment, as they sought to make sense of you, you learned the care required to tend to such a bond. That is where love lives: in the gentle adjustments, the quiet apologies, the act of centring on another completely, the shared work of keeping that connection clear.



So as you live, remember what you will know when dying ...

The only thing you have is the complete connection to those you have loved and those who love you. It is all that one has. It is all that truly matters. Tend to it well, there is nothing more rewarding or worthy. There is nothing else as important as this.