

Good evening. And welcome to everyone who is joining us on the internet.

Last week we talked about something very important, not just the value of Love, but the practice of Love.

I said repeatedly, love one another . . . love one another. Make a point more than you've ever done before to love one another instead of what you spontaneously tend to do when you're preoccupied with yourself or your situation or with your distress with others that you're called upon to love.

Tonight I'm going to speak about one particular practice that effectively gets in the way of loving one another. And as a result, our Gathering tonight is likely to be shorter than usual. I'm only going to discuss this one facet, because if you will pay attention closely and watch yourself during the coming week, you will find that avoiding this practice will take up a great deal of your time and will also provide the – I'm going to say – engine for transformation, for making changes so that you are more able to love one another well.

Now tell me . . . when you're involved with someone and you say something and they respond and it's obvious from what they said that they didn't hear a thing you had said, it doesn't leave you with a feeling of being loved, does it. It leaves you with a feeling of being estranged, of somehow standing outside of what appears to be a relationship you're involved in because you are supposedly communicating with each other – conversing.

And so the correction to this problem lies in making a point of staying present, staying present with those you are with so that you do not leave them feeling estranged.

Staying present is another way of saying: Look at your brother with innocent eyes. Listen to your brother with innocent ears . . . not with preconceptions.

If you will pay attention during this coming week, you will find that a lot of your time when you are involved with others is spent thinking. In fact one of the modes of thinking that you bring into play when you're with another is to interpret what your brother or sister is saying. You see? You listen to what is being said and in your mind you think, "well, based upon her background or based upon his experience, he's likely to be meaning this or that or the other thing." And then you respond not to what they meant but to your interpretation of them.

And so you're having this conversation with yourself and leaving your brother out because you're not present with your brother.

One of the greatest disservices you can bring into play in your relationships is to interpret what another means.

Now there's a benefit to this. If you interpret what they mean based upon your assessment of their background, their upbringing, their life-style and so on, you are not present with them. Not being present with them means you're incapable of loving them. You're not in the space or the frame of mind to actually love one another.

Being present means not using interpretations to distance yourself from your brother or sister – to keep the involvement minimal and therefore less messy. You don't want to get too involved.

And so you will come up with an interpretation and then usually your response will be some sort of cliché or thought that talks away what it is you thought they meant.

To love one another means really being present with them. It means listening to them without thinking. It means listening to them so that you might simply grasp what they are simply meaning. And I promise you they are simply meaning something. You might believe that there are complex psychological factors coming into play behind what they're saying and you might think that in order to be truly loving you must discern what the complexities are so that you can bring out the answers that reduce the complexities.

But once again, you're not present with them and they know it. Just like when they do that to you, they aren't present with you and you know it.

You don't need to protect yourself against intimacy by not paying close attention to what your brother is sharing about himself. You don't need that. That just keeps the separation going. That keeps the dissonance of no love going. It's not what you want. And it's not only unnecessary, it's destructive. You understand?

Interpreting what your brother means disconnects you from your brother. It disconnects you from each other. That is not the definition of loving one another.

Oh, I know . . . if you really allow intimacy to occur, things are really going to get messy, because of course – and here's your mindset – your brother is nothing but a collection of psychological habits and concepts themselves and they're unclear. And if you're going to be intimate with them, you're going to be intimate with their lack of clarity, their confusion. And you're likely to get sucked in.

Well, unless you let yourself get into that place where your fear of being sucked in can happen, you won't find yourself experiencing real clarity about your brother . . . clarity that is simple and that allows you to speak to your brother so that your brother recognizes that you understand, that you're not a stranger, that you're not from some other planet or some other foreign mindset. And so you don't have the chance to find defenselessness brought into play by virtue of the innocence with which you're being present with your brother or sister. And so, no healing occurs.

And if you thought that your brother in his confusion was stubborn, you will be further convinced that he is stubborn because he obviously doesn't recognize the value of what you're saying. Of course he doesn't, because again, you're responding to your interpretation rather than being in response to an actual connection with your brother in the simplicity of his Being.

Now all of you are going to have to get past this. You are going to need to pay attention so that you can see that, indeed, you do this. You will be amazed to find out what kind of clarity and simplicity will come forth from your involvement with others when you abandon indulging in interpreting what they mean.

Be with your brother. And when your brother says something, whether it's pleasant or unpleasant, no matter what it is . . . when your brother says something, remember that you're not there to immediately think of an answer that addresses what you think they said. Let yourself hesitate before you open your mouth and say a word. And remember that unless you are willing to look with innocent eyes or hear with innocent ears, you're not going to have a fair chance of understanding.

You know, sometimes all that's needed is to be understood. Sometimes providing a correction is not what heals. Sometimes innocent non-judgmental presence that can be felt as being

genuine is all it takes. It certainly is all it takes in order for a meaningful relationship to grow that isn't weighed down with your great intellectual capacity to reason and interpret. You see?

Love . . . love means being with your brother, not knowing how to see his innocence but realizing that that is your purpose in that moment. And that the way to experience it is to stay out of the way yourself and let your . . . well again, your innocent vision provide you with the means to be in your peace and in your genuineness from the tips of your toes, because you have no agenda, no agenda created by your fantastic interpretations.

Love one another. Love one another by neglecting to insert your thinking in between the two of you. It's that simple. But you're going to have to risk the chance of getting that intimate might cause you to be in a place you don't like because your interpretation of it lacks clarity, period.

Do it! So that you might find that in your innocence and in your genuineness, your brother's innocence and genuineness can come forth in ways you could never have logically or intellectually imagined or come up with as a result of great skill at interpreting.

Simplify your involvements with each other by daring to be present with each other without thinking, but with a desire to Know the truth – to know what's really happening.

It's an easy practice to engage in. Nothing complicated about it. Every single one of you can do it. Don't even ask yourself why you're not, when you find that you're not doing it. Just take it as a signal that you need to return to your innocent perceptions by abandoning interpreting your brother.

A simple lesson. It will keep you busy. And it will cause a lot of growth – a lot of learning – which will move you beyond anything you thought you could accomplish in a week. And I will be with you, all of you, as you go through your week, loving you and supporting you in your fearlessness at practicing innocence.

I love you very much. And I look forward to being with you next time.

Raj Jesus