

Love Begins With Me

I have contemplated this statement for several months as I live my daily life. What I know for sure is that it is a two-fold statement, and each phase is equally essential in my life. I shall share my thoughts with you.

Paraphrased, *in order to share LOVE with everyone else, I have to love MySelf joyfully and completely first. Love begins with loving me...mySelf.* Perhaps this is the more challenging phase; it requires looking past what the human picture might be saying at any particular moment. It requires remembering that I AM a beloved child of God, a beautiful, complete God-Being, who is here to fulfill the “mission” I lovingly and enthusiastically have accepted on Planet Earth. This requires me to trust that every moment of my life is full of promise; the desires of my heart are easily and completely fulfilled, for LOVE ItSelf has placed those desires confidently within my heart and trusts that they are being fulfilled through me. What an incredible gift!

Robert Fulghum tells the story of Alexander Poppaderos, on the island of Crete, who as a youth of 11, found fragments of a broken mirror. Having unsuccessfully attempted to put the pieces back together, he decided to choose the largest piece and smooth its rough edges with a rock. He then held that piece of mirror so that it reflected the sunlight. With practice, he found that he could shine light into any dark place, and he got good at it. That, he realized, was his reason for being here. “We are all fragments of a mirror whose size and shape we do not know. But as fragments of that mirror, we are essential to its wholeness, and if we hold ourselves just right, we, too, can shine light into any dark place.” (quoted from a Living Enrichment Center audio tape of a sermon by Rev. Mary Manin Morrissey, *Universal Spirituality – A Practical Approach for the 21st Century*, 1/02/00) We each have everything we need right here, right now, to shine that light...in our own life experience; in the lives of those with whom we come in contact; and, in the lives of those on our planet who are perhaps not seeing the beauty of themselves in any given moment. *I AM whole and complete, with boundless possibilities, an instrument of LOVE in our world.*

Phase two of *Love Begins with Me* says to me: *it is an honor for me to take the gifts and talents which are within me and share those with everyone with whom I come in contact.* Rather than waiting for “someone else” to take a stand, or “show me how,” or “start first,” the responsibility for **loving**

all others is my raison d'être, my reason for being. *Love for all others begins with me.* As I begin to love every person, animal, tree, plant or flower I see, as I express my gratitude for all circumstances which appear in our society...circumstances which may require a consciousness of receptivity to change of former ways of accomplishing tasks...I begin to model LOVE in our world. The “chain reaction” of LOVE from miraculous sources grows from my intention, and our world is blessed.

On a personal note, I “work” with children ages 9 – 14. They truly know that I love them; I remind them of that as I say, “YOU are not a JOB to me; YOU are a GIFT in my life.” And so the cycle continues. I love the precious, innocent children with whom I work. Their LOVE reflects back to me to give me a sense of completeness which is beyond human understanding. I experience an increasing sense of caring about others, of being mindful of how precious those perfect children are in my eyes. The consciousness of their perfection within ME increases THEIR understanding of WHO THEY ARE, and they pass that LOVE along to one another, to younger children in the school, to their friends and families, to their community, to our world.

I love mySelf; I step forward to love and respect every manifestation of LOVE on the planet. How grateful I am to remember this two-fold path:
LOVE BEGINS WITH ME.

Jana