

**SUMMARY OF CONTENT:** Love is not dependency. In fact, "two people love each other only when they are quite capable of living without each other, but *choose* to live with each other." Dependency forms fierce attachments, but it destroys rather than builds relationships. True love leads to growth—growth of the lover as well as the loved. It is a self-replenishing activity, and in a sense a selfish one.

Love is not cathecting, which is an attachment to objects. We can love only human beings but even human beings can be treated as objects rather than persons.

Love is not self-sacrifice. To nurture the growth of others does not diminish ourselves. Rather, it results in our own nurture and growth.

Love is not a feeling; it is an act of willing, though it is a happy conjunction when accompanied by "feelings of love."

Love is always either work or courage—work when it overcomes laziness; courage when it counteracts fear. It is giving attention, and the most important way in which we can exercise our attention is by listening, which demands total concentration.

Agape love is Christ-like love. It is love of our neighbor because he too is a creature of God. It is disinterested, uncalculated, impartial, unmerited goodwill to every person. Its characteristics are as follows:

- 1) A sense of awe and mystery at another person;
- 2) The ability to see the potential of the other and to believe that this potential can be realized;
- 3) The ability to give oneself in appropriate ways to a particular person in a particular situation (this requires discrimination and sensitivity);
- 4) Helping the other to develop his potential, evoking his gifts by listening, observing, confronting, speaking the truth in love;
- 5) Using my own gifts, fulfilling myself, taking risks, courting the disapproval even of those we love the most and whose opinions matter most;
- 6) Loving a person for God's sake and not for my sake, being willing to let the other grow even though he becomes someone we don't like and even though he comes to be against us; and
- 7) Willingness to be vulnerable—to be hurt—and yet to stay with the relationship, ready to forgive and be open to the other and to new events in the situation or in the relationship.

GORDON COSBY

in the  
urban  
jungle,  
anything  
is possible...  
even love.

OUTWITTED

He drew a circle that shut me out --  
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.  
But Love and I had the wit to win:  
We drew a circle that took him in.

Edwin Markham

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“I love mankind —  
it's people  
I can't stand.”

Charles M. Schulz  
(1922- )  
*Go Fly a Kite, Charlie Brown*

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