

Being Fully Present

In celebration of Valentine's Day, notice your relationships, especially those people you're closest to. Are the people in your life a priority or do you allow diversions to keep you from connecting with them? Are you taking time to be fully present when you are with them?

We are offered no greater opening for discovering the truth of who we truly are than in relationship. Relationships are such powerful catalysts because they mirror the aspects we most need revealed for our soul-growth. What we react to in another, we possess within ourselves. Thus both the fear and love we see on another's face is the reflection of both our own humanness and divinity. Even during the most challenging times our soul is able to thrive since our encounters with others are our greatest opportunities for growth.

Our relationships flourish when we are willing to be fully present. Too often, we divert onto other things when we're around the people we love the most. How often, after many years of being together, do people simply seem to grow apart? When our relationships become stale and predictable, it's often because we have stopped being fully present, open armed, open hearted, and willing to connect. Sometimes when we feel bored with the relationship it's not because there's anything wrong with the relationship, but because *we* have stopped showing up. When we take the other person for granted (not appreciating), are too busy talking about what we deem is important (not listening), or are distracted by other things that we think are more important (not paying attention), then it's no wonder our relationships wither and become stagnant.

This Valentine's Day, celebrate your life and relationships by remembering that every day is an opportunity to be fully present with a loved one. Below are some simple steps for practicing being in the moment with others:

1. Add "pauses" in your togetherness. Slow down and take a few extra moments when hugging each other.
2. Take time to do absolutely nothing, just enjoy being together.
3. Make eye contact, really make the effort to look at each other.

3. Listen to one another, hear what the other person is saying with an open heart.
4. Sit down together and discuss each other's dreams and passions.

While as individuals, we may walk, talk and experience life differently from one another, when it comes to being fully present with each other, all those differences melt away. Only the Oneness remains. It is here, in relationship, that we must learn to walk this path, to be fully present. Abide in the love that circulates between you. Since we are all connected, the giving and receiving of your full presence is truly the greatest present that keeps on giving. Happy Valentine's Day!