

# **Love Is for Giving, Not for Getting**

**by Nirmala**

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Endless Satsang Press

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## Love Is for Giving, Not for Getting

What is love and where is it found? We search for love and try to get love, and yet it seems like we never get enough. Even when we have found love, it can slip away as time passes. What if there is a source of love that never fades and is always available? What if love is as near and easy as breathing? What if we have been “looking for love in all the wrong places” instead of actually lacking love?

Love is both simpler and more mysterious and subtle than we have imagined it to be. Love is very simply the spacious, open attention of our awareness. Awareness itself is the gentlest, kindest, and most intimate force in the world. It touches things without impinging on them. It holds all of our experience but doesn't hold it down or hold it back. And yet, inherent in awareness is a pull to connect and even merge with the object of our awareness.

It is this seemingly contradictory nature of awareness—the completely open and allowing nature of awareness and its passionate pull to blend with and even become the object of its attention—that gives life its depth and sweetness. There is nothing more satisfying than this delicious dilemma of being both apart from and at the same time connected to something we see, hear, or feel.

Awareness is the beginning of all separation. Prior to awareness, there is just “oneness” or “is-ness,” with nothing separate from the oneness that would be able to

experience it. With the birth of awareness, there is the subtle distinction of two things: that which is aware and the object of awareness. And yet, those two are still connected by this mysterious force we are calling awareness, or love.

This flow of awareness and love that connects us to all we experience is the true source of satisfaction and joy. We have all experienced it to some degree. Whenever you fall in love with a person, pet, piece of music, or beautiful object, you have felt this flow of intimate, connected awareness. Unfortunately, we have been taught to believe that the source of this good feeling was in the object of our affection. So, we suffered whenever we lost our apparent source. When our lover leaves, our beloved pet dies, the concert ends, or the bank repossesses our dream home, we feel bereft of that loving, connected feeling.

But what if we are the source of the awareness that connects us to everything? What if the love we have been seeking has always been right here inside our own hearts? What if it doesn't really matter what our awareness is touching, but only that there is awareness flowing? That would profoundly simplify the search for love. Anything or any experience would be a suitable object for our love.

The sweetness of love is in the flow of awareness itself. The completely allowing openness and freedom we might look for from a perfect lover is already here in our own awareness. It doesn't have to try to be accepting because awareness is by nature open and allowing. Awareness by itself cannot do anything but touch. Awareness cannot push or pull or demand something from or limit the freedom of what it touches. And yet, awareness is not an aloof distant observer. Awareness is deeply and intimately connected to the object of awareness. In fact, awareness and the object of awareness are ultimately the same thing.

This connection and intimacy that is natural in awareness is satisfying and fulfilling regardless of the object of awareness. In other words, whatever you are experiencing right now is your true love. Whatever you are experiencing is an opportunity to also experience the depth of your true nature as open, loving awareness. Your true nature is true love. It is the perfect lover you have been seeking, and not only is it always here, but that is who you really are.

You might be thinking, “But wait, I don’t feel like I am in love or loving all the time. Sometimes I feel lonely or angry and cut off from love and satisfaction.” So how can it be that love is here, but we don’t feel it? Is love really absent in those moments, or is it just limited in its expression and flow? Are there really moments when there is no awareness? Or is there always some awareness even if there isn’t a lot? If there truly was no awareness, then there would be no problem because awareness is the beginning of separation, and the end of awareness is the end of separation. Practically speaking, without awareness, there cannot be loneliness, anger, or anything else. So when you are lonely or angry, there is at least some awareness, although possibly not much.

Even when awareness is contracted and tight, as it often is when we are lonely, angry, sad, hurt, or afraid, the awareness has the same nature as when we are happy and excited. Even a single drop of water is still wet, and even a single drop of awareness is still open and allowing of whatever it is touching. The only trick to experiencing the open and allowing nature of awareness is to look for it in the actual experience you are having. When our awareness is contracted by judgment or fear, it is not actually touching the object of our judgment or fear. Instead, it is touching the judgmental or fearful thought we are having. Awareness is completely allowing and open to that thought. That is the definition of awareness: it is the open and allowing recognition of the content of our experience. If awareness is not open to something, then we are not aware of it.

The key to experiencing love is to notice where awareness is flowing right now. That flow of awareness is love, and it is the most satisfying and nourishing thing we can experience. There is naturally a direction to this flow of awareness. It moves from within our being to the objects and experiences we are having. We can only fully experience this flow of aware love as it moves in this direction.

When someone else is lovingly aware of us (not of their judgments or desires regarding us, but simply of us as we are), we can experience the outer expression of their love. We can see the way they are looking at us, the smile on their face, and the responsiveness of their reactions to us. But the awareness of us is arising in them. The love is flowing from them towards us, and so it is filling them with this sense of satisfaction and joy. If we are to feel satisfaction and joy, it will depend on whether we are experiencing a flow of love towards them. It is our own open awareness that fills us with that sense of connection and appreciation. We are filled with love when we are giving it to someone or something else.

Obviously it can be easier to open your heart and allow a fuller expression of your own love when the requirements of your conditioning are being met. When someone who matches your ideal for a lover is exhibiting attraction and interest in you, it is often especially easy to give them that same openness and attention in return. So naturally, when two people are falling in love, they are both feeling the fullness and richness of the free flow of awareness. Yet the contact each person has with the love is within themselves. It is their own love and awareness that is filling them up so richly.

This truth, that we are filled with love when we love someone or something else instead of when we are loved, can free us from the search for love outside of ourselves. If you are still not sure that it is your own love that fills you, think of a time when someone else was in love with you, but you were not in love with that person. The flow of loving

attention towards you was not satisfying, in fact it could have been uncomfortable having someone so interested in you when you were not feeling the same way.

In contrast, when we are falling in love with someone, it can be rich, exciting, and energizing, even if it is not reciprocated. There is an intensity and beauty even in unrequited love. It is the outward flow of love that is filling us in that moment. So, along with the disappointment and hurt of not being loved back, we also experience a fullness and aliveness just from loving the other. In the Renaissance, unrequited love was even seen as an ideal. It is the love flowing out from our heart that fills us with joy and satisfaction. The source is within you.

There is just one awareness and one Being behind all the individual awarenesses. The way we as can reach that oneness of Being is by experiencing the flow of love from within our being. Paradoxically, the place where you are connected to others is inside your own heart. You cannot really connect to another externally. Even if you used super glue to attach yourself to another person, there would still be a sense of separation in your outer experience, not to mention how hard they might be trying to disconnect!

On the inside, you are already connected to everyone and everything. The connection is this flow of awareness that is here right now reading these words. It is in the loving nature of awareness that the sense of connection is found, not in the objects of awareness. We are connected to others in the awareness flowing from within us to them. Connection is not found in the flow of awareness and love towards us as, by definition, that flow is connected to its source inside the other person.

This is good news! We can experience limitless love no matter what anyone else is doing. The only thing that matters is how much we are loving, not how much we are loved. Right now you can be filled to overflowing with the incredible sweetness of love,

just by giving awareness to anything and everything that is present in your experience.

Don't take my word for it, test it out:

*Exercise: Allow your awareness to settle on a physical object nearby. Take an extra moment to allow your awareness to fully touch the object. Just for the sake of this experiment, give as much love, appreciation, and acceptance as you can to that object. Then notice another object. As your awareness rests for a moment on that, give it as much love, appreciation, and acceptance as you can.*

*Now allow your awareness to notice a sound in your environment. As you listen, give that same loving appreciation to the sound you are hearing.*

*If you have any difficulty giving love and appreciation to a particular object or sound, try another object or sound. It will be easier at first to experience loving something for no particular reason if you pick a more neutral object or sound.*

*Continue allowing your awareness to land on various objects, sounds, colors, tastes, smells, and sensations. With each one, allow as much love and appreciation to flow towards it as you can. Take as long as you like with each experience, and if it is difficult to feel love towards something, just move on. It will get easier to love for no reason as you repeat this exercise.*

*Now notice other things that may be arising within you: an uncomfortable sensation, a thought, a feeling, or a desire. Take an extra moment to send loving attention towards it. Just for now, you can love each sensation, thought, feeling and desire that appears within you.*

*As you get the hang of this, you can just allow your awareness to move naturally to whatever it touches next, either inside or outside of you. Whatever it lands on, give it love and acceptance. Just for a moment, let it be the way it is.*

*What is it like to give simple awareness and love over and over to things that appear in your experience? How open and full does your heart feel when you are able to give love in this way? If you come to something that is difficult to love or accept, just notice that it is difficult and then love that it is difficult right now. You can even take a moment to simply love the way some things are harder to love than others. Then move on to whatever is in awareness next.*

Just go ahead and love whatever is in front of you, and in that way be filled with love. It is that simple if you remember that the essence of love is awareness and space. The ideal human lover is someone who gives you lots of space to just be yourself but somehow connects with you as you are. Awareness is like that. It doesn't limit the object of its awareness, but it makes contact.

Awareness is easy to give, and it doesn't cost anything or deplete you in any way. We sometimes withhold love and awareness because we think that true love requires more than this simple, open attention. Our conditioning suggests that love requires things like compromise, sacrifice, and unconditional giving of our time and effort. Perhaps some of these are necessary for a relationship, but not for the essence of love.

This is an important distinction, as we sometimes confuse love and relationship, which is another example of how our conditioning leads us to believe that the outer object of our love is also the source of our love. If we recognize that the true source of love is within us, then relationship can be seen in perspective. Relationships are important, but they are not as important as the essence of love. This is clear when you consider how a relationship without love is not satisfying, but the experience of this inner flow of love is satisfying either with or without a relationship. You can experience it with a beautiful object of art in a museum, a moving piece of music, an exciting moment in a

sporting activity, or in the deep connection of a relationship with another person. The love is what makes relationships and everything else worthwhile.

What a rich possibility: that all of the love you have ever wanted is available right now, just by giving it to everything you encounter both within you and in the environment. Love is for giving, not for getting. And the more you give, the more fully it fills your heart to overflowing.

*I may think I feel love  
but it is love that feels me  
constantly testing the woven fibers  
that enclose and protect my heart  
with a searing flame  
that allows no illusion of separation*

*and as the insubstantial fabric of my inner fortress  
is peeled away by the persistent fire  
I desperately try to save some charred remains  
by escaping into one more dream of passion  
I may think I can find love  
but it is love that finds me*

*meanwhile, love becomes patient and lies in wait  
its undying embers gently glowing  
and even if I now turn and grasp after the source of warmth  
I end up cold and empty-handed  
I may think I can possess love  
but it is love that possesses me*

*and finally, I am consumed  
for love has flared into an engulfing blaze  
that takes everything  
and gives nothing in return  
I may think love destroys me  
but it is love that sets me free*

## CONTACT INFORMATION

For information about Nirmala's satsang\* schedule and to download free copies of his other books and publications, visit:

<http://www.endless-satsang.com>

You can contact Nirmala at *Nirmalanow@aol.com*.

For information about Nirmala's teacher, Neelam, visit: [www.neelam.org](http://www.neelam.org).

For information about Nirmala's teacher, Adyashanti, visit: [www.adyashanti.org](http://www.adyashanti.org).

For information about Nirmala's wife's books, visit [www.radicalhappiness.com](http://www.radicalhappiness.com).

Nirmala has also been profoundly inspired by the teachings of A.H Almaas and his work, The Diamond Approach: [www.ahalmaas.com](http://www.ahalmaas.com).

\* *Satsang* is a Sanskrit word that means coming together to speak about and share Truth.

## **About Nirmala**

After a lifetime of spiritual seeking, Nirmala met his teacher, Neelam, a devotee of H.W.L. Poonja (Papaji). She convinced Nirmala that seeking wasn't necessary; and after experiencing a profound spiritual awakening in India, he began offering satsang and Nondual Spiritual Mentoring with Neelam's blessing. This tradition of spiritual wisdom has been most profoundly disseminated by Ramana Maharshi, a revered Indian saint, who was Papaji's teacher. Nirmala's perspective was also profoundly expanded by his friend and teacher, Adyashanti.

Nirmala offers a unique vision and a gentle, compassionate approach, which adds to this rich tradition of inquiry into the truth of Being. He is also the author of several books including *Nothing Personal: Seeing Beyond the Illusion of a Separate Self*. He has been offering satsang throughout the United States and Canada since 1998. Nirmala lives in Sedona, Arizona with his wife, Gina Lake.

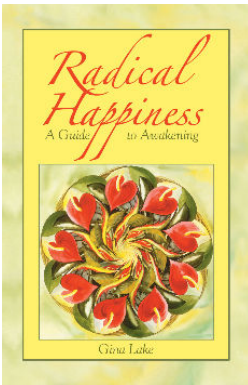
## **About Nondual Spiritual Mentoring**

Nondual Spiritual Mentoring with Nirmala is available to support you in giving attention and awareness to the more subtle and yet more satisfying inner dimensions of your being. Whether it is for a single spiritual mentoring session or for ongoing one-to-one spiritual guidance, this is an opportunity for you to more completely orient your life towards the true source of peace, joy, and happiness, especially if there is not ongoing satsang or other support available in your location. As a spiritual teacher and spiritual mentor, Nirmala has worked with thousands of individuals and groups around the world to bring people into a direct experience of the spiritual truth of oneness beyond the illusion of separation. He especially enjoys working with individuals in one-to-one sessions because of the greater depth and intimacy possible.

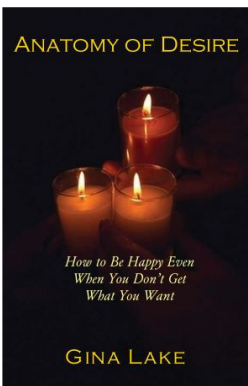
Mentoring sessions with Nirmala are an opportunity for open-ended inquiry into whatever is arising in the moment. In your session, you can ask any questions, raise any concerns that are meaningful to you, or simply explore your present moment experience, which is a powerful doorway into a deeper reality. Regular weekly, biweekly, or monthly mentoring sessions can be especially transformative.

These mentoring sessions are offered either in person or over the phone and typically last an hour. You can email Nirmala at [Nirmalanow@aol.com](mailto:Nirmalanow@aol.com) to arrange a time for a spiritual mentoring session. Please include your phone number and location in your email. At the arranged time, Nirmala will call you if you live in the United States or Canada. If you live in another country, you must initiate the call to 928-282-5770.

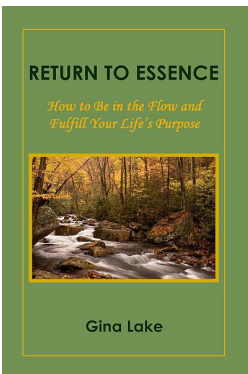
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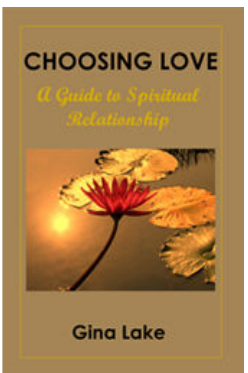
***Radical Happiness: A Guide to Awakening*** by Gina Lake provides the keys to experiencing the happiness that is ever-present and not dependent on circumstances. This happiness doesn't come from getting what you want but from wanting what already *is*. It comes from realizing that who you think you are is not who you really are. This is a radical perspective! *Radical Happiness* describes the nature of the egoic state of consciousness, the mind's role in maintaining it, how this interferes with happiness, and what awakening and enlightenment are. Exercises are included to help you apply the information and transform your experience of life—and become happier! \$13.95



***Anatomy of Desire: How to Be Happy Even When You Don't Get What You Want*** by Gina Lake will help you relate to your desires in a way that reduces suffering and increases joy. It is essentially about how to be happy regardless of your desires. It points out many of the myths about desire, which keep you tied to them and the suffering they create. So, it is also about spiritual freedom, or liberation, which comes from letting the Heart guide you instead of the ego. It is ultimately about becoming a lover of life rather than a desirer because these two things—love and desire—are at odds, and you must choose between them. What do you really want? Do you want what you want or do you want love? – *from the Introduction* \$12.95

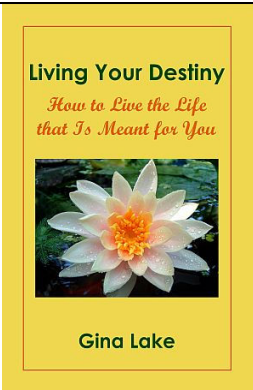


***Return to Essence: How to Be in the Flow and Fulfill Your Life's Purpose*** by Gina Lake describes how to get into the flow and stay there and how to live life from there. Being in the flow and not being in the flow are two very different states. One is dominated by the ego-driven mind, which is the cause of suffering, while the other is the domain of essence, the divine within each of us. You are meant to live in the flow. The flow is the experience of essence—your true self—as it lives life through you and fulfills its purpose for this life. Exercises throughout provide an opportunity for practicing and integrating the understanding. \$13.95

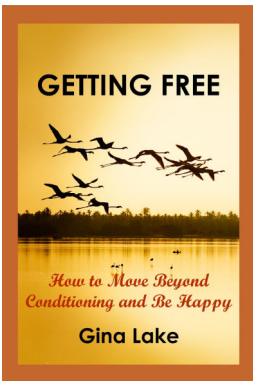


***Choosing Love: A Guide to Spiritual Relationship*** by Gina Lake Having a truly meaningful relationship requires choosing love over your conditioning, that is, your ideas, fantasies, desires, images, and beliefs. *Choosing Love* describes how to move beyond conditioning, judgment, anger, romantic illusions, and differences to the experience of love and Oneness with another. It explains how to drop into the core of your Being, where Oneness and love exist, and be with others from there. Exercises throughout provide an opportunity for practicing and integrating the understanding. \$13.95

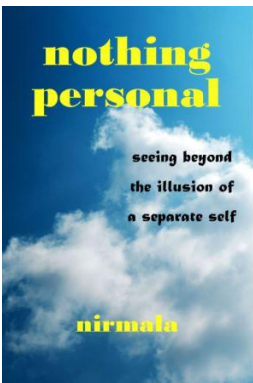
***Living Your Destiny: How to Live the Life that Is Meant for You*** by



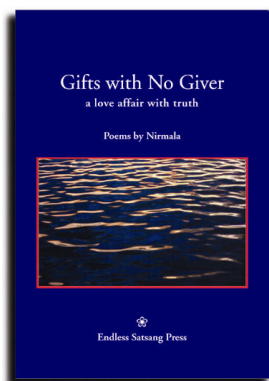
**Gina Lake** Your life is a dance between you as the Creator and you as a human creator, and it is not choreographed by improvised. Behind all life is an Intelligence, and you are part of that and a unique expression of it and the means by which it experiences and explores life. Your life purpose is the intent of this Intelligence as it lives through you. *Living Your Destiny* will help you identify this purpose and inspire you to be true to it. It explains the variety of life purposes; how to recognize yours; how you are led to it; how the Heart speaks to you; how to develop a connection with the Heart; how to become free of your conditioning; and how to live your life purpose fully. \$12.95



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truth is too simple for words  
 before thought gets tangled up in nouns and verbs  
 there is a wordless sound  
 a deep breathless sigh  
 of overwhelming relief  
 to find the end of fiction  
 in this ordinary  
 yet extraordinary moment  
 when words are recognized  
     as words  
 and truth is recognized  
     as everything else

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