

Love on Valentine's Day!

A Ritual

by Diann L. Neu



Love... Love yourself... Love one another... Love the Earth.
Everyone wants hearts and flowers today, but these aren't enough.
Love, like the Divine, is hard to get a handle on. It is tough to name.
But we know it when we feel it.

Read Women's Words on Love

"Love alone matters."

—Therese of Lisieux (1897), quoted in Dorothy Day, *Therese* (1960)

"Love is such a powerful force. It's there for everyone to embrace—that kind of unconditional love for all of humankind. That is the kind of love that impels people to go into the community and try to change conditions for others, to take risks for what they believe in."

—Coretta Scott King, quoted in *The Black Woman's Gumbo Ya-Ya* (1993)

"Love opens the doors into everything, as far as I can see, including and perhaps most of all, the door into one's own secret, and often terrible and frightening, real self."

—May Sarton, *Mrs. Stevens Hears the Mermaids Singing* (1965)

"What we have once enjoyed we can never lose. All that we love deeply becomes a part of us."

—Helen Keller, *We Bereaved* (1929)

"Till I loved / I never lived – Enough."

—Emily Dickinson, *Poems by Emily Dickinson* (1862)

"I venture to say that for women friends, love is an orientation toward the world as if my friend and I were more united than separated, more at one among the many than separate and alone."

—Mary E. Hunt, *Fierce Tenderness* (1991)

"Talking with one another is loving one another."

—Kenyan Proverb

"I love you means let the revolution begin!"

—Carter Heyward, *The Redemption of God* (1982)

Love is concerned / that the beating of your heart / should kill no one.

—Alice Walker, *Love Is Not Concerned* (1983)

"The final word is love."

—Dorothy Day, *The Long Loneliness* (1952)

Your Reflection

What is love for you? Whom do you love? How do you love?

Love Prayer for the World Prayed by People from Four Directions

East: I, Divine Love, share my Spirits with all creatures of every nation.

South: You, your friends, your daughters and sons shall prophesy my gracious love.

West: Your elders shall inspire dreams of healing for our wounded world.

North: Your youth shall actualize visions of justice and peace.

Response: Come, Loving Spirit, continue your passionate love through us.

East: I will give my Spirit to you and you shall prophesy compassion.

South: These friends, faithful to the covenant, pray to this Everlasting Spirit of Profound Love.

Response: Come, Loving Spirit, continue your passionate love through us.

West: Lover of Our Lives,

North: Wise One of Those-Who-Have-Gone-Before-Us,

East: Most Beloved Friend,

South: Refill us with gifts of your Spirit again and again.

North: Breathe our sacred names.

East: Empty us of angry fears.

South: Crumble ancient walls of hatred.

North: Recreate your love through us.

Response: Come, Loving Spirit, continue your passionate love through us.

Amen. Blessed Be. Let It Be So.

© Diann L. Neu, DMin, is cofounder and codirector of WATER.

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