

Love and Forgiveness: Do They Still Exist When I Sever Direct Ties With a Person?

by Timothy©

Q: I have a couple of questions that I would like for you to think on. I have my personal opinion; however it never hurts to hear another point of view.

1. Can love and forgiveness prevail without the benefit of wisdom, knowledge and understanding?
2. If someone is disrespecting you and calling it their truth and you decide you want no part of their so-called truth because you have had enough, would it be considered a failure to forgive if you distance yourself from the person?

A: Dear One, these wonderful questions are fun to answer! Wisdom, understanding and love are exactly the same thing. To truly understand our relationship to another person is to see with the all-wise eyes of God, which is also to love others with the all-forgiving heart of God. In fact, we express our understanding most effectively when we demonstrate our ability to respond with internalized wisdom to life's constantly flowing adventures. Therefore, the only way that we humans can discover and cultivate deep understanding is by moving through our experiences directly, while simultaneously engaging our most intimate emotions with those experiences. Opening our spiritual hearts to the totality of life in this way gains us access to an infinite storehouse of wisdom. These principles are inseparable.

Within the context of human relationships, applied wisdom shows up in us as the ability to be totally immersed in the constantly flowing energies of those relationships while still being able to see clearly which forms of interaction to encourage and which ones to discourage. No matter how much you care for another person, you're never obligated in any way to be a willing receiver of words or actions that are detrimental to your emotional or physical well-being. So if you're in a relationship and you can't figure out what's acceptable for you and what's not, then you haven't yet tuned into your natural wisdom. And while you're being tossed around in that stormy sea of conflicting emotions about your loved one, you're trapped in a downward-spiraling cycle of action/reaction, hurt and vengeance. Certainly you can see that love doesn't reside in that space.

But as soon as you realize that even your loved one's unhealthiest behaviors constitute a blessed invitation for you to pay closer attention to your own perceptions and to the emotional energies that you're sending to others, then you'll discover the dawning of understanding and wisdom in your awareness. And only then will you be able to touch the heart of forgiveness, because you'll know beyond any doubt that you drew the pain that you've felt into your own life experience by misunderstanding the deeper meaning of that relationship for you both.

Regarding your second question, true love has nothing whatsoever to do with time and space. Rather, we can all be fixated on or addicted to someone, but as I said in my answer to your first question, addiction and love can't dwell in the same space together.

I love my wife and sons dearly, but when we're in different physical locations "doing our respective things," my love for them is in no way diminished by the physical distance between us. Likewise, if a person mistreats you consistently for no apparent reason, you can actually more easily sustain your

loving feelings toward that person by not spending much time together. After all, subjecting yourself to that person's emotional abuse is unhealthy for you because the poison of negative judgment can seep into your thoughts and result in you feeling bitter and resentful toward the abuser. Abusive people actually don't know how to respond in healthy ways to real love, so, being afraid of the unknowable quality of the real thing, they feel safer chasing it away. When that happens, the worst thing you can do is to force yourself on that person.

Now if the abuser genuinely demonstrates consistent behavioral evidence of seeing his or her past errors in your relationship, then spending time together can become mutually uplifting. The trick to figuring out whether a person has truly changed is to observe her/him from within a state of loving detachment – also known as loving that person from a distance. Contrary to this being evidence of failure, it's actually the smartest way to handle relationships with people who aren't ready to let go of their severe emotional turbulence!