



Temple Rodef Shalom

Cantor Allen Leider
Yom Kippur 2017/5778
Putting Love in Where Love is Missing

Respond to Senseless Hatred with Senseless Love
Sinat Chinam & Ahavat Chinam

Introductory videos:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yui4oSfdqkQ> Jackie DeShannon, 'Put a Little Love in Your Heart'
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2NeUbYuBwf4> Noah Aronson, 'More Love'
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ctP9cLRbnE> Baby saying "I love you"

I love this video! It's not so difficult to say "I love you," particularly when we are with those we love.

I also love bourbon pecan pie, Ben & Jerry's Coffee Heath Bar Crunch ice cream (sometimes both together!), I love my daughters, and I have been blessed to have been *in* love a few times in my life. All wonderful, but such an inadequate vocabulary we have for so many different kinds of love! Sanskrit has 96 words for love, ancient Persian has 80, ancient Greek has four, but English *only one*.

Though we use the word "love" in so many ways, love is simply our natural state of being; it's only our insecurities and fears that get in the way of our living lives of love. I want to share with you two lessons I learned on a meditation retreat I attended in Costa Rica two years ago.

Lesson 1: The extent to which you can love yourself is contained in your capacity to love others. What we don't like about others is often a reflection of what we don't like about ourselves. Fear of failure, fear of not measuring up to our expectations, fear that we are not good enough, too stupid, too conceited, too thin, too fat, too self-centered, too shy... We feel like we've messed things up and we fail to love ourselves. To love yourself simply means being o. k. in the present moment, without judgement. You are worthy. You do not deserve to mistreat yourself or to be mistreated by anyone. Give up self-judgement, forgive yourself, be compassionate to you. And, behind everything is love.

Here's a simple, but challenging, exercise I learned and practiced on retreat: Every day (or several times a day), look into a mirror and say "I love you" to yourself. That's it. It may be hard to do at first. What I found over time, is that the exercise is about accepting who I am, with all my flaws and imperfections, to say that I can love myself at this place where I am on my life's journey. You are beautiful, lovable and amazing right here, right now, just the way you are. Let go of self-judgement, let go of fear. This day is all about forgiveness. Forgive yourself for anything that is past. Love yourself as you are. Be love.

Lesson 2: Put love in where it isn't. It's not difficult to add your love when you are among friends and family, where you are loved. It's not difficult to add your love when you are communicating with those who agree with you, who share the same values, interests, or political ideas, and we should. But what we need to do, on a deeper level, is to add love where love is not present. With love we can diffuse. With love we can calm. With love we can connect or reconnect. With love we allow for understanding and empathy. When we connect heart to heart anything is possible.

It's hard to do. Try to remember a time you were angry and said something you wish you hadn't. Or imagine an angry or critical social network message you posted. Now, take a deep breath and imagine yourself in the same situation, but with the intent to add love, empathy, or connection. What could you have said or written differently?

Only three weeks ago, we had Christian Picciolini speak at the Temple. It was one of the most powerful presentations I've ever seen. For those of you who missed it, you can view it in our archive files on the website or watch him on YouTube. Christian was one of the founders of the Skinhead movement, a white racist hate group. Over time, he found his way out and now spends his life helping others to leave hate groups and denounce hate.

Here's what he said about his transformation: "Compassion from the people I least deserved it from is what changed my life. I was forced to humanize people. So now I want to teach people that compassion and empathy is what can change this world. Love is best weapon we have to respond to hate and break down walls between people. The only way to show others that there's nothing to hate is to show them that there's something to love."

There's a Jewish concept called *sinat chinam*, reacting to what we see as negative qualities in others, baseless hatred. The Talmud teaches that the Temple was destroyed from *sinat chinam*. It can be so easy to hate or put down others. What we need more of is *ahavat chinam*, baseless love. Respond to negativity with love. As we learn from *The Little Prince*, "It is only with the heart that one can see rightly." The most important way to affect change in our fractured society is to heal it with love; love on a human to human, humane level.

On this Yom Kippur, let us begin with ourselves – to forgive and love ourselves. And let us choose to put love in where it isn't. On this day of return, let us return to love, and be a source of love in the world.

Kein y'hi ratzaon – may this be God's will.

Closing Prayer:

Rabbi Jonah Pesner, Director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, said, "Our world is imperfect, so we respond with hope. Our world is full of darkness, so we respond with light." I would only add that our world is broken, so we respond with love. Let us sing together...

OTHER RESOURCES

<https://youtu.be/NYmrjhjaRU4>

Maya Angelou, Love Liberates

“Hate can only flourish where love is absent.”

— William C. Menninger, American psychiatrist

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=04jzPSwzNF8>

Am I spreading love, fear or hate?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2a1cQhMaCmU>

Budda lesson on love

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=japs2Svb4LU>

Be a lighthouse of love

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AaKsJpD6oT8>

What babies teach us about love

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4z7gDsSKUmU&t=98s>

Kid president changing world 1:20

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VkpuHvG5B44>

Store responds to hate

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=03fHvuzgfnM>

Christian Picciolini

Song: Put a Little Love in Your Heart

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6f5HQgdEsF4>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Rdj1BKy1qw>

Jackie DeShannon ([Jackie DeShannon](#))

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CMj7UcjPZ0U>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yui4oSfdqkQ> Jackie DeShannon (short version)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kx8VlxAh33I> kid

‘Put A Little Love In Your Heart’

Think of your fellow man

Lend him a helping hand

Put a little love in your heart
You see it's getting late
Oh, please don't hesitate
Put a little love in your heart
And the world will be a better place [x2]
For you and me
You just wait and see
Another day goes by
Still the children cry
Put a little love in your heart
If you want the world to know
We won't let hatred grow
Put a little love in your heart
And the world (and the world) will be a better place
All the world (all the world) will be a better place
For you (for you)
And me (and me)
You just wait (just wait)
And see, wait and see
Take a good look around
And if you're looking down
Put a little love in your heart
I hope when you decide
Kindness will be your guide
Put a little love in your heart
And the world (and the world) will be a better place [x2]
For you (for you)
And me (and me)
You just wait (just wait)
And see
People, now put a little love in your heart
Each and every day
Put a little love in your heart
There's no other way
Put a little love in your heart
It's up to you
Put a little love in your heart
C'mon and
Put a little love in your heart
Songwriters: Jackie De Shannon / Jimmy Holiday / Randy Myers
Put A Little Love In Your Heart Lyrics © Sony/ATV Music Publishing LLC

Love in your heart isn't put there to stay. Love isn't love till you give it away,

- [Oscar Hammerstein II](#)
