



« You cannot make everyone happy, you're not a waffle. » Anonymous

Altruism

Waffles, like any cake or sweet, bring comfort and a fleeting moment of well-being thanks to a sugar influx in our body, a bit like a gustative cuddle. If we are able to take care of those we love like the living teddy bears we all are, it is nevertheless impossible for us, without jeopardizing our physical and mental integrity, to meet everyone's expectations, which are, by essence, different and contradictory from one person to another.

When we were children, adults rightfully lectured us to be less self-centered, less selfish, and to think about others before ourselves; Unfortunately, what we most often retained from this injunction, once we reach adulthood, is to forget ourselves in favour of others. While we can credit ourselves to put the needs of others before our own, it is also important that this gesture is not made to the detriment of our own well-being or balance: "charity begins at home" as the old saying goes.

Indeed, in order to "deserve" the love of others, whether consciously or unconsciously, we sometimes tend, to please them or by willing to help them, to accept certain behaviors without claiming our limits or to do certain things that we don't really want to do or even, sometimes, that put us in physical or psychological danger. We all have had, at least once in our lives, risky behaviors so as not to displease or disappoint someone we loved, such as being a passenger in a lightly intoxicated driver's car, tasting drugs/cigarettes/alcohol to be "like everyone else", not using a condom when having sex with a new partner or simply going camping in the woods with a bunch of friends when we hate sleeping outside and are terrified by insects...



Similarly, in order to please the greatest number, when we lack self-confidence, we often adopt a different attitude depending on the people we are with: we put a social mask on to avoid being rejected. For a long time, I have been that kind of chameleon who automatically adapted to match with what I imagined those around me expected from me. In doing so, I was never really myself with anyone and, as a result, I was never appreciated for who I really was.

One thing to understand is that, since a day only lasts 24 hours and some people can reveal themselves extremely toxic, it is clearly impossible to love everyone; therefore, it is just as impossible to be loved by everyone.

The second thing is that love is not something we deserve, it is meant to be given without any expectation in return. Every gesture of love is a taken risk not to be loved back, but it feels so good when you give, it is so rewarding that it doesn't really matter whether you receive something in return or not... However, to be sure that our gesture will be well received, it is important to be able to listen to others' needs. Indeed, in order to feel useful or loved, we sometimes tend to try to help people who, even though, according to our own criteria, seem to be needing our help, do not wish to be helped or have not yet reached the point on their life path to be ready to receive our help.

Altruism and benevolence towards others must necessarily undergo through self-knowledge and self-benevolence. Indeed, how could we understand someone, if we are not able to give attention to the most important person in our life, its hero/heroine, that is to say us? When we are able to listen to ourselves – and I'm not talking here about listening to our tyrannical ego but listening to our inner self – we have the ability to truly listen to others; if we understand the whys and wherefores of our needs and desires, we are better able to understand others' and offer them advice and tips that are adapted to them.

In addition, if we are able to know precisely what we need and, inversely, what does not suit us or hurts us, we will also be able to put limits on what we are able to give someone without hurting ourselves and to end a romantic or friendly relationship if it is toxic for us. In the same way, by listening to others and what they have to offer us, we will be able to naturally attract people who suit us and/or have things to share with us while avoiding people whom we don't get along with or who might hurt us.

To give love, it is also essential to be able to receive it ourselves, which inevitably involves some capacity of benevolence towards ourselves. Love is an energy that lives inside of us and that we can either grow, like a pretty plant, or suffocate through negligence or fear : how can we grow a plant we ignore the existence of or which thorns we fear?...

This inner love comes from our ability to be compassionate with ourselves, not to judge each and every actions we take negatively but to look at them simply for what they are: enriching life experiences sometimes successful, sometimes not so much so. We are perfect imperfect beings and no one expects us to be otherwise, except ourselves.

Over a day, a week, a life, we all experience moments of genius and moments of fatigue, joyful



moments and melancholic moments, moments of weakness and moments of great tenacity... The essence of our human condition is precisely to experience all of these states without us being able to really control them, so why judge them? Wouldn't it be wiser to try to understand those moments to get the best out of them? Moreover, life being in perpetual motion, we can keep in mind, when we are struggling with a complicated situation, that it will not last because nothing does, allowing us to wait peacefully for sunshine's return.

When we are at peace with ourselves and filled with unconditional love, not only can we give more love to others because we become an inextinguishable source of it, but we do not expect anything in return of this love and do not fear of being disappointed or rejected. This does not mean, again, that we have to love everyone, it just means that we are able to give love to all the people we want. And, if the way they act hurt us in anyway, we will be able not only to set our boundaries but also to understand someone else's ones and to respect them, without trying to pull those persons closer to us for fear of losing them or analyze their own personal limits as a lack of love for us.