

## Unity and the Power of Love by Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee

Unity holds the essential vision that we are one living, interconnected ecosystem—a living Earth that supports and nourishes all of its inhabitants. If we acknowledge and honor this simple reality, we can begin to participate in the vital work of healing our fractured and divisive world and embrace a consciousness of oneness that is our human heritage. This is the opportunity that is being offered to us, even as its dark twin is constellating the dynamics of nationalism, tribalism, isolationism, and all the other regressive forces that express ‘me’ rather than ‘we.’

Oneness is not a metaphysical idea but something essential and ordinary. It is in every breath, in the wing-beat of every butterfly, in every piece of garbage left on city streets. This oneness is life—life no longer experienced solely through the fragmented vision of the ego, through the distortions of our culture, but known within the heart, felt in the soul. This oneness is the heartbeat of life. It is for each of us to live and celebrate this oneness, to participate in its beauty and wonder. And through our awareness, and actions born of this awareness, we can help to reconnect our world with its original nature.

There are many ways to experience and participate in this living oneness. But if I have learned anything after half a century of spiritual practice, it is the power of love. Love comes in so many forms and expressions. There are the simple acts of loving kindness towards friends and family, members of our community, or strangers. Love reaches across boundaries, expressing what is most essential and human: what unites rather than divides. “Small things with great love,” are more potent and powerful than we realize, because they reconnect us with the spiritual roots of life and its transformative and healing energies. Because life is an expression of love, each act of love is a participation and gift to the whole.

Cooking a meal with love and care, listening to another’s troubles with an open heart, touching your lover’s body with tenderness, or going deep in prayer until you merge in love’s infinite ocean—in all these acts, we live the love that unites us. And through our loving, we nourish life in unseen ways.

And at this time of ecological crisis, as we are tearing apart the fragile web of life, there is a vital need for us to love the Earth, to bring her into our hearts and prayers. We have a spiritual as well as a physical responsibility for ‘our common home,’ and she is calling out to us, crying for our help and healing. In the words of Thich Nhat Hanh:

Real change will only happen when we fall in love with our planet. Only love can show us how to live in harmony with nature and with each other and save us from the devastating effects of environmental destruction and climate change.

We need to reawaken to the power of love in the world. It is our love for the Earth that will heal what we have desecrated, that will guide us through this wasteland and help us to bring light back into our darkening world. Love links us all together in the most mysterious ways, and love can guide our hearts and hands. The central note of love is oneness. Love speaks the language of oneness, of unity rather than separation.

Love can open us to our deep participation in the life of the whole; it can teach us once again how to listen to life, feel life's heartbeat, sense its soul. It can open us to the sacred within all of creation and can reconnect us with our primal knowing that the Divine is present in everything—in every breath, every stone, every animate and inanimate thing. In the oneness of love, everything is included, and everything is sacred.

And from there, we can begin to respond. We cannot return to the simplicity of an indigenous lifestyle, but when we let love guide us we can become more aware of the oneness of life and recognize that how we are and what we do at an individual level affects the global environment, both outer and inner. We can learn how to live in a more sustainable way, according to a deeper understanding of sustainability that rests on an acknowledgment of the sacred within creation. We can live more simply, saying no to unnecessary material things in our outer lives. We can also work inwardly to heal the spiritual imbalance in the world. Our individual conscious awareness of the sacred within creation reconnects the split between spirit and matter within our own soul, and also—because we are so much more a part of the spiritual body of the Earth than we realize—within the soul of the world.

Love is the most powerful force in the universe. Love draws us back to love, love uncovers love, love makes us whole, and love takes us Home. In the depths of the soul we are loved by God. This is the deepest secret of being human, the bond of love that is at the core of our being and belongs to all that exists. And the more we live this love, the more we give ourself to this mystery that is both human and divine, the more fully we participate in life as it really is, in its wonder and moment by moment revelation.

Love and care—care for each other, care for the Earth—are the simplest and most valuable human qualities. And love belongs to oneness. We know this in our human relationships, how love draws us closer, and in its most intimate moments we can experience physical union with another. It can also awaken us to the awareness that we are one human family, even as our rulers become more authoritarian, our politics more divisive. And on the deepest level, love can reconnect us with our essential unity with all of life, with the Earth herself.

The Earth is a living oneness born from love, being remade by love each instant. And we can be part of its spiritual transformation, its awakening. The Earth is waiting and needing our participation. It has been wounded by our greed and exploitation, and by our forgetfulness of its sacred nature. It needs us to remember and reconnect, to live the oneness that is our true nature. And love is the simplest key to this oneness, this remembrance. Love is the most ordinary, simplest, and most direct way to uncover what is real—the innermost secrets of life. It is at the root of all that exists, as well as in every bud breaking open at springtime, every fruit ripening in fall.

Love will remind us that we are a part of life—that we belong to each other and to this living, suffering planet. Love will reconnect us to the sacred ways known to our ancestors,

as well as awaken us to new ways to be with each other and the Earth. We just need to say, "Yes," to this mystery within our own hearts, to open to the link of love that unites us all, that is woven into the web of life. And then we will uncover the love affair that is life itself and hear the song of unity as it comes alive in our hearts and the heart of the world.