

Loving Humanity

By Christina Grote, ITPI Board Chair

I love mankind. It's people I can't stand. - Charles Schultz

In a *Peanuts* cartoon published in 1959, Linus tells Lucy that he'd like to be a doctor. Lucy tells him that he can't be a doctor because he doesn't love mankind. Linus replies that he does love mankind, it's people he can't stand. I carried this around with me for a long time as it perfectly captured my feelings about humanity, and about people. It made me feel better. Loving humanity with a big H is easy. Loving people is a lot harder. But can you love humanity if you have a hard time loving people?

It can be easy to love Humanity as a concept, as an abstraction of all human beings on the planet. Loving from a distance is easier than having to experience the fleshly interactions with people who can be unpredictable, confusing and hurtful. But they can also be loving, nurturing and supportive, and without them we can't do anything and wouldn't be here in the first place!

We all know that being human is messy but somehow we think it should be otherwise, that we should be perfect in whatever ways the concept of being perfect was ingrained in us. So we constantly fail ourselves, and others fail us too. I believe that we must embrace our own humanness with all of its imperfection and messiness before we can truly embrace all of living, breathing humanity. This includes people it is easy for us to love, people we have a hard time loving, and perhaps most importantly, loving our messy, evolving and essentially divine selves.

What do we mean by "love" here? Is it an attitude, a feeling, emotion or something more? There are many kinds of love – erotic, familial, and unconditional to name a few. Love can include warmth, caring, compassion, kindness and affection. What kind of love can we have for all of humanity, for all people?

In *Evolutionary Love and The Ravages of Greed*¹, Adam Crabtree elaborates on Charles Sanders Peirce's description of Evolutionary Love, or Agapic love, which is defined as the "heartfelt desire for the greatest possible fulfillment of a loved one's potentials." This is an unconditional, selfless love given with no judgment or strings attached. According to Peirce, receiving this type of love actually helps the loved one realize their potentials. In other words, it is evolutionary. Beyond furthering individual



evolution, when we broaden this heartfelt desire to all of humanity, we are contributing to the evolution of humanity, as evolutionary love is seen as the driver and foundation of evolution in the universe.²

We can extend this evolutionary love to objects, ideas and to ourselves. From the perspective of evolutionary love, we all came from love and are made of love, and love is working its way through us to its fullest expression. Murphy and Leonard write in *The Life We Are Given*, “We have suggested that cosmic evolution as we know it, from the big bang to the present moment is finally an expression of Eros, of love. If this is so, then can we doubt that love stands as the highest and most fundamental human impulse.”

Integral Transformative Practice embodies this evolutionary love and puts it into practice, as our goal is to help humanity reach its fullest potential through cultivating body, mind, heart and soul. Love is in our DNA.

The 9th commitment of ITP encourages us to find ways to be of service to others. And ITPI’s mission statement reinforces this: “Through our works, we aim toward the creation of a society dedicated to the greater realization of the human birthright to learn, to love, to feel deeply, and to create.” In essence, ITP is the practice of love, love in action, love on a mission.

How do we cultivate love in a heart that was wounded and closed, like all of our hearts have been to varying degrees? Perhaps we begin by recognizing our fundamental unity that all humans are born into this world with hopes, dreams and all are filled with so much potential.

George Leonard and Michael Murphy share their perspective on love by writing, “We believe that a community is nothing if it doesn’t foster love, an unconditional love that accepts us for what we are while moving us toward the higher good.”

After describing a number of reasons why loving is good and good for us, they end with this: “We believe that there is an even higher possibility in aspiring to serve others in love and kindness, not even for the sake of transformation, but simply because that is a true expression of who we are, the fundamental condition of the path upon which we walk.”³

With all of the guidance our practice has to offer, it comes down to each of us finding our own way into loving ourselves, humanity and people, too. Being able to love the messiness is still difficult for me. I’m working on it!

¹ Adam Crabtree *Evolutionary Love and the Ravages of Greed*, Friesen Press c2017

² Leonard and Murphy *The Life We Are Given*, Tarcher Putnam c1995 P. 194

³ *Ibid* p. 194