

# AT LEAST A HUNDRED PRINCIPLES OF LOVING OURSELVES

1. By nature we are thoroughly good, intelligent and desirable. It's only logical and natural that we should love ourselves passionately and unconditionally.
2. The first step in establishing close, fulfilling, lasting relationships with others is to build your finest relationship with yourself. Knowing you are the centre of your life, you must become your own most cherished lover.
3. Be gentle with yourself. Treat yourself at least as well as you have treated your dearest love and as you should always have been treated – with compassion, high expectations, forgiveness and delight. Only then can you treat others and the world well enough.
4. The degree to which we love ourselves is reflected in the goals we set and in the actions we take. Our goals must express our fondest dreams, our commitment to no-limits-living, and the things that make our hearts sing.
5. Stay true to the voice within you.
6. Assume your importance in every situation. Be heard and be seen.
7. An essential component in the building of love for ourselves is hearing from others each day, what they think our strengths are and the things they love about us.
8. Each of us needs at least one relationship in our lives in which we exchange a minimum of fifteen minutes every day for mutual listening. We need time to talk about what has been good, what is hard, what our progress has been toward our goals, and what the next steps are in our lives.
9. In order to deepen our love for ourselves, we must take time to appreciate ourselves in detail, each day, preferably in the presence of someone we love.
10. As we love ourselves fully we will reflect our nature by balancing our lives with enough rest, play, creativity, meaningful work, exercise, healthy food, intimacy and the expression of our leadership in the world, and with time for the consideration of new ideas, for reflection on eternal truths, and for the release of emotional pain.
11. The more fully we love ourselves the easier and more joyful it is to take a clear and honest look at what is not good in our lives and decide to change it. This should be done without a shred of self-reproach.
12. Everything about our environment and our person reflects the level of our love for ourselves.
13. Loving yourself unconditionally means giving up all self-abuse, including all addictions.
14. The first step in meeting the needs of others is to meet your own needs. What is truly good for you is also good for others. Conversely, what is not good for one of you is not good for either of you. Chronic self-sacrifice and martyrdom hold everyone back. Ask yourself repeatedly: "what is it that I truly want?"
15. The things you are particularly drawn to in someone else are often the things you have yet to recognise in yourself. Give as much recognition and approval for them in you as you see in others.
16. Acting on your love for yourself will include pursuing people who inspire and excite you. Assume you are at least as thrilling as they are.
17. You are the most important person in your life. You have you forever.

## **LOVING EACH OTHER**

18. It is our nature to love each other deeply and passionately.

19. Only accumulated emotional pain and misinformation stand in the way of our loving each other fully and without shame, pretence or reluctance. We must, therefore, encourage each other in the natural healing processes of crying, raging, trembling, laughing, yawning and talking, through which our hurts are healed.

20. We can have the love relationships we've always wanted and dreamed were possible. All we have to do is decide what we want and do whatever is necessary to make it happen.

21. The place where we hold back in our closest relationship is the same place we hold back in our worldly leadership. It is the fear of being all we can be.

22. To be entirely close whilst never losing ourselves in the other person is possible and, in fact, essential for building truly successful relationships and for reclaiming our power.

23. Compulsive work, frenzied activity and relentless drive are often just replacements for what is truly desired: fully expressive, intimate relationships.

## **BUILDING CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS**

24. When two people truly love each other, each does whatever is necessary to see to it that the other grows and achieves the life of their dreams.

25. Knowing yourself fully is a prerequisite for establishing successful relationships with others. You must know your strengths; your areas of vulnerability; what matters most to you; your motivations; your positions on every human issue, including sexuality; and your goals, beliefs and dreams for the world.

26. It's not unromantic to be explicit about what you want and don't want in a relationship. Be specific and clear from the beginning.

27. Relationships should be built from the beginning on what is actually true and mutual between you, not on pretence, wishful thinking, or the implicit expectation the other person will eventually change.

28. Make no assumption about each other. Find out every day what your partner is thinking, feeling and wanting. Set up equal time to listen to each other without interruption. The art of asking questions is an essential component of effective loving.

29. A relationship is not two halves coming together to make a whole. You are already complete.

30. Each person is 100% responsible for the relationship all of the time.

31. We know very early in a relationship what difficulties will eventually surface. We need only ask ourselves right away, "What do I know now that I am going to find out in a year?"

32. Truly loving each other includes never colluding with each other's addictions. We must assist each other in the challenge of deciding to give up our addictions — chemical and emotional — and support each other to feel and release the painful emotion that has held them in place.

33. Real intimacy means fully expressing everything: our love, our fears, our passion, our dreams, our past, our daily living, our pleasure and our frustrations. Always observing mutual respect, we must hold nothing back.

34. Concrete verbalising of our love and appreciation for each other every day is essential for the health of the relationship and the individuals in it. In the relationship, the ratio of appreciation to criticism should be at least 10 to 1.

35. The currency of love is truth. We can love ourselves and one another truly only to the extent that we are living with integrity.

36. Love requires constant and delighted vigilance against sexism and every other form of prejudice. A relationship is only as intimate as it is knowledgeable about the full impact that prejudice and mistreatment in the world have had on our lives and thus our loving.

37. Loving requires objectivity and rigorous thinking. Decisions between you should be based on what truly makes sense for each of you, not on possessiveness, dependency, powerlessness, despair, threats or intimidation.

38. Disagreements between you can be brought much more quickly to a satisfactory resolution if you hear each other out. This can be done best by each taking it in turn to speak for, say, five minutes while the other listens without interruption for as many turns as it takes to reach agreement.

39. Compromise isn't necessary. For every real problem between you there is at least one solution that is good for both of you.

40. A good relationship is not static. True loving requires continual reassessment of our lives; change is its only constant. Ask each other often: 'How is this relationship not yet all we want it to be? What is the next step in making it so?'

41. Loving deeply will bring about a contrast between the present fullness of love and the past deprivation of it. The challenge is to feel fully and release the old pain of separation and disappointment that will surface, and to let in fully the reality of your love, not backing off from either.

42. The relationship itself is never more important than the growth of the individual people in it.

43. Staying in love requires sustained mutual growth and inspiration.

44. Lack of mutuality in a relationship is an indication that in that spot the relationship is not healthy for either of you.

45. The old hurts and rigid behaviour that lead to difficulties in a relationship will, if not rooted out, lead to similar difficulties in each new relationship.

46. Relationships should not be set up just to feel better about yourself. Only you can provide the certainty of how fine you are.

47. Relationships should not be used to avoid or protect you from feelings of panic, loss, loneliness, self-doubt etc., but rather to help you face and get rid of them, establishing a life free from the effects of old hurts.

48. Relationships should never be a place to hide from our individual power and impact on the world.

49. True loving is not competitive. It is the wholehearted celebration of each other's excellence and successes.

50. Our relationships are forever. Once you have a relationship with someone, you have it. You may decide to restructure it to make it a more accurate expression of what is currently real and mutual between you, but you cannot choose not to have it. What was good in it all along remains good and is in no way rendered invalid or non-existent because the structure of the relationship has changed.

### **BUILDING FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS**

51. The most dramatic growth occurs in each of us when we decide to go back to our families and bring to life the closeness and loving that as infants we originally had every expectation we would find. This is often the hardest challenge to our loving but it is the one that will have the most profound and far-reaching repercussions.

52. It's never too late to put things right in our relationships. We don't want to die, nor want the people closest to us to die, without first re-establishing the deepest possible connection. The sooner we take whatever initiative is necessary to accomplish this, the less costly the separation will have been for us. We should live every day in such a way that, if the people who have been or are closest to us were to die, we would have no reason to reproach ourselves for things we didn't say or do.

### **WHEN RELATIONSHIPS ARE SEXUAL**

53. Sexuality is part of our humanness and should neither be denied nor abused.

54. The expression of our sexuality should always be consistent with the highest standards we apply to every other aspect of our lives.

55. Sex should be a mutually desired celebration of intimacy. It should never be used as a replacement for closeness, or the releasing of feelings, or telling each other everything, or settling difficulties between you, nor just to please the other person when it isn't really what you want.

56. We always have complete choice about whether or not to feel sexual, and whether or not to act on our sexual feelings. We are not victims of a sex drive.

57. Truly loving each other means our decisions to be sexual are based on our thinking. This means getting rid of our fears surrounding sex, which are manifested either in compulsion or inhibition, so that our fears don't do our thinking for us.

### **BUILDING MANY CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS**

58. Our ability to establish many close relationships is essential both to our individual flourishing and to the building of peace in the world.

59. There is an unlimited amount of love available to everyone. Jealousy has no place in human relationships. It follows then that each of us should see to it that each of you build as many relationships of at least the calibre of your own as possible.

60. People need intimacy, challenge, attention and collaboration in setting the world right. Because no one person can meet all of these needs for another, it's essential that we build many close relationships.

61. Setting up additional relationships is not for the purpose of escaping the challenge to strengthen our existing one. We must take into account all the factors and resources in the lives of the others to whom we are committed. Moving forward dependably will involve working through to the other side of old feelings of jealousy and irrational dependency.

62. To establish relationships only within the safety and comfort of our own group drastically limits us, and thus every other relationship we build. It is important, therefore, to build relationships across all previously respected boundaries of age, gender, class, race, religion, sexuality, nationality etc.

63. Love each person you meet as well as you possibly can in the amount of time you have with them.

64. Each new relationship can richly enhance every existing one.

65. Loving at this level brings change and upheaval. Expect and welcome it.

### **LOVING THE WORLD**

66. Deep in the heart of each of us is an inextinguishable longing for things to be right for everyone.

67. There are no human enemies. There are only unloving attitudes that can be changed.

68. Societal change can't take place without change in individual people. Strategies based on mass meetings, political campaigns, distributing leaflets, capturing the media, and so on, do improve our lives and keep ideas of freedom kindled, but they do not secure permanent change. Only the recovery of human attitudes born of loving relationships and of recognising the truth is sufficient to bring invulnerable change. This recovery will always be expressed in intelligent and effective action.

69. For people to change they have to feel loved and respected by the people who offer them change. Learning new information, perspectives, viewpoints, solutions, depends on our feeling good about ourselves and about the person teaching us.

70. As we reach to other cultures we must remember that the conditioning imposed by the irrational structures of society; culture; religion; and the national tradition to be cautious, reserved or exclusive in expressing love is a veneer penetrable by intelligent, fearless loving. Every person is longing to be loved and permitted to love others without limit.

71. The changing of the world is occurring every minute. Each time even two people come together to know each other well, care deeply about each other, see what needs to change and decide to act, our new world is being born.

72. The only sound enough motivation for doing anything is joy. All other motivations, such as guilt, compulsion, obligation and duty only lead us to dissatisfaction, tension and resentment. When we're engaged in what truly gives us joy, we lead ourselves inevitably to more and more challenging, powerful work that affects more and more of the world.

73. The difference between what we desire to do and what we can actually accomplish in a given period can create a gap of self-reproach. It is our nature to aim to the edge and beyond of what is currently possible. We must remember that success is not instantaneous.

### **LOVING ELIMINATES PREJUDICE**

74. Prejudice and injustice feed on separation. To end them we need to break the barriers of self-doubt, misinformation and fear that keep us from knowing – and therefore loving – each other fully.

75. No one wilfully hurts another. Our unloving, violent acts against each other are usually re-enactments of our own earlier hurts. We must, therefore, eschew blame of each other and reach instead beneath this hurt to find the person longing to be our ally and the friendship waiting to be born.

76. The only powerful way to behave in any situation in which you are the victim of prejudice is to keep your focus securely on the reality of your goodness, the inherent goodness of the person mistreating you and on doing whatever is necessary to begin a mutually powerful love relationship between you.

77. Prejudice and injustice are personal catastrophes for everyone, equally for those who perpetrate them as for those who are the targets of them. Understanding this we can create the conditions in which each of us can tell the details of these catastrophes fully. As we do so we begin to eliminate prejudice and injustice and create permanent loving alliances committed to change the world.

78. Love and exploitation are incompatible. Loving means never exploiting another human being in any sense: economically, practically, emotionally, or sexually.

### **LOVING THE WORLD TO PEACE**

79. Peace is whole nations of individuals loving each other too much to agree to kill, enslave, or mistreat each other.

80. Making peace involves five things:

- a. recognising and acting on the leadership innate in each of us;
- b. learning everything about what life is really like for each other;
- c. building close relationships with each other;
- d. restoring our capacity to think clearly by releasing painful emotion; and
- e. asking questions dispassionately of each other and thinking together in an atmosphere of love until fresh solutions good for everyone, and true to the reality of the situation, emerge.

81. There is only one person who you can count on to make peace and that's you.

82. War is an admission of defeat. It's an announcement that we have stopped thinking and have been disconnected from the love we have for every human being. To prevent war, we must make as many deeply loving and knowledgeable relationships around the world as soon as possible.

83. Jealousy can be said to be at the root of war. Because preventing war includes establishing relationships in which people love each other too much to consider killing each other, we must root out the barriers to the building of these relationships. Jealousy is the biggest barrier of all. To eliminate jealousy from our personal lives, then, is an important step toward world peace.

84. Each of us has been profoundly affected by war. We cannot have lasting peace and a world that is right for everyone until we thoroughly understand the particulars of how this is so for one another.

### **LEADERSHIP IN LOVING THE WORLD**

85. Each of us is born a world leader. We can help restore this innate leadership by seeing each other, loving each other and rejoicing in each other as such.

86. True leadership is love in action.

87. Effective leadership requires the reclaiming of our inherent individual power. Because true power lies in the ability to love, at the heart of reclaiming our power will be the recovery of deep loving of ourselves and one another.

88. When your message (your tools, theory, policies, work) is love rather than confrontation, divisiveness or blame, you have to face the fact changing the world means changing yourself. This is because you cannot fake love. When you lead by loving, the whole of who you are is exposed all the time, in every word, every gesture, every tone and every decision you make.

89. True leadership means assuming that each of us is entirely in charge of everything, seeing to it that things go right for everyone.

90. In any situation in which you are seeing to it that things are right for everyone, you are taking leadership in changing the whole world.

91. To take leadership in changing the one issue we care about most, and to see it as central, is to move every issue forward significantly.

92. Good leaders know everyone in their group personally and well, understand how the world has treated them and their people, and see to it that prejudice at every level is eliminated.

93. A leader's most important work is bringing people together in love, to think well and find solutions that are truly good for everyone. Such solutions don't depend on compromise.

94. Effective leaders develop, celebrate and champion others in their leadership whilst never abdicating their own.

95. It is the challenge of leadership to inspire people by holding out a limitless vision of what is possible, by assisting each person to think through the next steps in realising their dreams and in eliminating all barriers to their leadership.

96. The leadership that moves us forward fastest sees to it that people are skilled in the art of listening and assisting one another in the release of painful emotion.

97. Leaders help to create a truly peaceful world by listening far more than speaking.

98. Leaders must speak with the confidence, eloquence and clarity that come from unconditional delight in themselves, and from the certain knowledge they are loved.

99. Leaders should know their leadership has the backing of the people they lead. Neither ownership, patronage, money, length of service nor coercion is a valid basis for leadership. Leaders, including corporation owners and managers, should welcome being chosen, elected, designated, confirmed and regularly reapproved by those they lead.

100. Good leaders will regularly review their leadership with the people they lead. This will include a summary of what the leader has done well, where there needs to be challenge and development and what the next steps are. It will include appreciation and suggestions about how things can be done differently, from each person present.

101. An essential task of leadership is the daily exchange of time with someone we trust deeply to say what has been hard, what has been good, to appreciate ourselves fully, to review our accomplishments and to consider our next steps.

102. To take proper care of the world we must eliminate the isolation typically experienced by leaders by taking exquisite care of ourselves. We must see to it that we are nestled tenderly in the most personal and private places of our lives. We must make sure that we "come home each night" to a deep and unconditional welcome, embraced as the precious souls we are. We must always have at the core of our lives a host of penetrating reminders that we matter profoundly.

103. As we proceed to change the world we must do so without frantic urgency. Love cannot take root when planted with high-pitched voices, frenzied activity, worried brows or angry interruptions of one another.

104. The art of resting deeply is essential for sound, durable leadership. It is only in the act of taking rest and ceasing the battles within that we can create the undistracted space in which some of our finest thinking can flower.

## **MEETINGS AS LOVING THE WORLD**

105. Meetings are one of the primary places where the world can change. They should, therefore, be focused on, structured on and imbued with our loving of each other. To this end, each meeting should begin with equal time for people to share something of their personal lives: something good, something they are proud of, some way in which they know they are loved, some successes etc.

106. People think more broadly and creatively when they are aware of the specific ways they are loved and appreciated by the people with whom they're working. Specific time should be set aside at least once during each meeting for people to appreciate each other in detail.

107. When people fall into uncreative solutions of self-interest, compromise or divisiveness, it is usually because they've lost touch with the mutuality of their dreams and with their love for each other. A leader's job is to do whatever is necessary to restore these connections.

108. Everyone, sometimes especially the shyest of us, has good ideas. A leader should begin each discussion by asking each person to speak once before anyone speaks twice and then periodically stop the discussion to hear from everyone again.

109. Leadership based on love requires the acquisition and communication of accurate information about the world and about any situation for which a leader is responsible.

110. Listened to well enough, people will get beyond the clutter in their thinking and will reveal the gems they have to offer in any discussion. A leader must make a distinction between people's unproductive repetition, or digression and the misinformation or confusion they are wading through in the search for their good ideas.

111. When clear thinking is blocked it's often because bad feelings have arisen that need to be released. The leader should at this point encourage people to break into pairs or small groups to air and get rid of their bad feelings and restore clear thinking.

112. To resolve fully the issues at the heart of human relations, whether within small groups or at the level of international relations, leaders will do their best to include this three-step process:

- a. People of like backgrounds meet in groups to discuss the issues in the safety provided by being with their own people, each person having a chance to speak. They begin by taking pride in their history. Then they consider and formulate what needs to change.
- b. Each group speaks to the people in the larger group, informing them of the true history and current situation for their group in the world, and making proposals about what needs to change.
- c. The leader makes or re-states specific proposals for change and guides the discussion, holding out consistently that no situation is acceptable unless it is truly good for everyone.

113. Changing the world together is a very sensual activity! The work in and of itself has, at all times, to be an aware celebration of how luscious it is to be human.

114. The more we know about love, the more there is to know about love.

Written by Nancy Kline and Christopher Spence  
Sage Hunt, London Lighthouse 1985, 1993

## **Background**

For three years Christopher and I had been thinking about love, both its expression in our relationship, and as a force in the world. During one of our fortnights together, (in year 3 of what became a 7-year transatlantic courtship, now a 30-year marriage!) on an apple farm near Canterbury, we wrote down what we thought was important about love. They were 'principles', 101 of them. Christopher suggested we call the collection, 'At Least a Hundred Principles of Love'. Just in case more showed up. That was prescient.

We also noticed that the principles fell into three clusters, which became sections: 'Loving Ourselves', 'Loving Each Other' and 'Loving the World'. We added an introduction that was a little manifesto about making the world better.

Not sure who might ever read this lovely thing, we told colleagues and friends about it, and Sage-Hunt printed it. We also distributed it in our workshops.

Before we knew it, we had gone through 20,000 copies. People were giving them as wedding presents, bereavement presents, birthday, Bar Mitzvah, and anniversary presents. They were placing them strategically in their offices, their waiting rooms, their sitting rooms, by their beds, and in their loos. They even were required reading for an American university course. Something was going on.

In 1993, the London Lighthouse published it as a booklet, raising funds for that flagship HIV and AIDS project, Christopher's creation.

It is now out of print but pops up here and there online. Maybe you will find it.

Don't worry. It's not sentimental. Hallmark will never pick it up, thank goodness.

– Nancy Kline