

The Power of Unconditional Love

There is a popular television show about the loving bond between soldiers called, Band of Brothers. It is the story of the friendship and loyalty among veterans of World War II. The theme of Band of Brothers is unconditional love. An author and teacher I respect a great deal is David Hawkins, MD. Dr. Hawkins is a veteran of World War II and has direct experience with the positive psychological attitudes of Band of Brothers. He teaches that it is a worthy endeavor to examine and actualize these virtues into our lives.

Dr. Hawkins describes the phenomena with the following example. He received a phone call from a shipmate he had lost contact with for over 40 years. As soon as he recognized his long lost comrade, they both instantly broke down crying. He stated there was instant unconditional love between them.

The first trait of unconditional love is timelessness. The time between lost contact had no bearing on their mutual respect and admiration. Another element of unconditional love is it is non-judgmental. Love holds no grievances. It does not matter what one did or not do with their life, which direction they took, whether they kept in touch or not or sent Christmas cards. None of that matters, love does not judge.

Other qualities include being respectful, gracious, pleasant, kind and forgiving. Between comrades, you let bygones be bygones. The last trait of unconditional love is power. The Band of Brothers are not wimps. They are tough, stand firm, and would lay their life down to help their friend. Unconditional love is rock solid, unmoving. Like gravity, it sets up a field impacting everything in its range.

So the question becomes, how can you integrate unconditional love into your life? Well, in my own experience, I recently lost a friend to an untimely death. My friend Alan died two weeks ago suddenly at the young age of 45. I have known Alan since I was 12. Childhood friends without interruption although over the years I would only see him on occasion. I grew up in San Francisco and hung around a neighborhood playground with a group of guys of which Alan was a member. This group of friends and Alan in particular, exemplifies the energy of unconditional love. Although not veterans of war, we demonstrate a loyalty similar to Band of Brothers.

Alan was respectful, pleasant, kind, gracious, and non-judgmental. When I reflect back on our relationship, I realize how he gave power to the entire group. Usually, there is one kid who cements the group together. That kid was Alan. He was not spared life's struggles and he went through some difficult times, but he did practice the traits of unconditional love toward all his friends. As a career, he was a physical therapist, who dedicated himself to help others more disadvantaged. Alan was also tough. A stellar athlete, he stood his ground when he needed too and was not cowardly.

Life gives lessons. Out of the ashes of grief from the loss of a friend arises the mighty phoenix. The symbolic meaning of the bird, phoenix, is resurrection. As Alan was a man of good character, I am certain he sits in God's presence now. The lesson for me is these

attitudinal qualities of unconditional love live on within our remaining circle of friends. Alan's surviving friends now reflect his character strengths onto the world. We would aspire to more like him to each other and our communities.

The true power of unconditional love is how its qualities reflect back into our lives. This is different than emotional love. These attitudes define how to be in the world, and when we embrace them and give them to others, they come back to us with more than we gave. My intention for you is to practice being more pleasant, kind, gracious, forgiving, strong and non-judging. Watch for the reflection back to you. The more you give, the more you receive. Lastly, call an old friend.

Matthew McQuaid, DPM is a board certified foot surgeon practicing in Lakeport. He has a particular interest in Mind/Body medicine and its impact on healing. He is an award winning author and teacher. Please share this article with a friend. For more information please call 707-263-3727 and visit www.drmcquaid.com