

APRIL 1

*Love is the recognition of Oneness, of knowing
yourself as other. The Oneness is love.*

—Eckhart Tolle

Acknowledging Other People's Reality

Can you hold onto your reality while simultaneously acknowledging someone else's reality? What I mean is, can you have an argument with your partner and speak up for your view of things, while also acknowledging his view? This ability is the ultimate goal. It eliminates right and wrong, good and bad. It demonstrates a willingness to accept that people may view things differently from us, and that we value their needs as much as our own.

Imagine you come home from work and your partner says: "You never come home on time. I am really getting tired of waiting for you." You have noticed that you were late the last two nights, but don't agree that you "never" come home on time or even that you are late most times. You can start by empathizing with him, "Are you angry because you want to trust that I'll come home when I say I will?" "Yes! Not that I'll get that, but that's what I want." "So, not only are you angry, you also feel hopeless that you will be able to trust that I'll keep my agreements with you?" "Yes. I feel hopeless." When you notice that he starts using fewer words, or when he starts to lower his voice, you can guess that he has been heard.

Now it is your turn to express yourself. "I hear that you are angry and want reassurance that I'll come home when we agreed. I want that too. I'm also frustrated because I have worked hard over the last year to change my habit

of being late. This week has been especially stressful and I have been late three times because our project at work is wrapping up and I have struggled to complete it. So, when you say that I'm never on time, I feel worried and would like your understanding of how this week has been unique. Do you agree that I have been on time most nights over the last year?" Notice that a specific request is made for information about whether the other person agrees. "Well, I guess that's true. I think I got triggered because you were late so often this week and I began to worry that you were starting your old pattern again." You could empathize with him again: "Yeah, I can see how you might feel worried that a pattern was starting again. I feel regret that I didn't anticipate how much overtime I would work this week so that I could warn you."

When I think I have to win arguments or be right, my life feels scarce and limited. Imagine how it would feel to live in this consciousness, a space that is big enough to hold your own and other people's realities with love. When I live from this place, my life feels abundant and full.

For today, try to overcome your desire to be right
and win; replace it with a desire to understand
and connect with other people.



APRIL 2

There is no greater invitation to love than loving first.

—*St. Augustine*