



Practices of Loving

Leave a Comment / by Caroline Muir / May 4, 2022

My life's work has focused on the importance of connection and intimacy between partners for the simple reason that they are our foundation for growing in love together. Intimacy and connection enable us to express our love to our partner and foster our feeling of being truly loved by our partner.

Intimacy implies 100% trust. With the walls and barriers down, we can be comfortable being who we are. But, unless we are exactly who we are, how can we connect?

It won't feel true unless both partners are authentic. One cannot be an actor. Impersonating another *preferred version* of yourself will make it impossible to form a connection. To connect, we must let the mask we wear for society slip off and show our true faces and feelings.

We must be courageous.

Once we have put our devices down and looked into our partner's eyes or touched their warm skin, our connection has a fertile ground to grow in. We may begin our loving practice by looking deep into each other's eyes. That gazing into the other may evolve into a long, still embrace. This could possibly keep moving towards a place where having sex feels like the perfect expression of our feelings of intimacy. Or perhaps we just gaze into one another's eyes, and that's enough. Whatever is true for us in that moment.

Your Practice of Loving can progress and grow in a variety of ways. Whatever you decide to practice, the main goal is to feel loved by your partner and for our partner to feel loved back. The end result is bringing more love into your life and relationship.

I felt called to share these Loving Practices with you ...

... after a recent experience working with a woman who told me she was starving for physical and emotional intimacy. This starvation results from the lost art of the intimate practice of connecting with ourselves and/or with another. We don't know *how to connect* even if we want to.

We joke about how our digital life has crippled us in our ability to connect with a living, breathing human. Sometimes, the situation seems more accurate and valid than we would like to believe.

Looking at our phones, we can *appear to be present*, but in actual fact, we are somewhere else, disconnected, in our own digital world.

Because of our lost ability to create physical and emotional intimacy, the way forward to having beautiful connections again is to start with some tried and true Practices of Loving. Then, we can put down our mobile devices, end our starvation, and bring more love into our lives if that's what we want. Finally, we can feast from a bountiful table of love and delight.

Let's Get Started!

Here are 3 Loving Practices that I would like to invite you to experiment with.

These 3 practices have helped many of the people I have worked with over the years to recreate more love, trust, and connection in their lives, no matter how old or young they are.

When you consider adding these 3 practices to your life, it's essential to think of them as everyday actions, not as optional, once-in-a-while things. These Practices of Loving are equal to, if not more important than, our daily necessities of brushing our teeth, eating, or taking a shower. Doing these practices – a few minutes here, a few minutes there – will help you the most if you keep them a top priority in your daily life.

First, Practice Number One – Gazing into Each Other's Eyes

When beginning the *Practice of Gazing*, it's helpful to understand that gazing differs from staring. Staring is focusing on a point. Gazing is a soft, liquid focus. It's the way we look at the night sky without really focusing on one point. Or, during the day, we sometimes gaze at the puffy, white cumulus clouds as they float across the deep blue sky.

An excellent way to start your gazing practice is to just gaze at yourself in the mirror. As you gaze, drop into feelings of love, appreciation, or respect. Let these feelings make you feel good about yourself. You can go back to the video this blog was adapted from and replay the part where I gaze at you through the camera. That may help you get the knack for this loving practice.

You could also practice this with your children. They love to try new things. Or, look at your favorite pet lying there next to you. Animals love to gaze into your eyes, and you'll probably notice that they don't look away so quickly. Instead, they will just stay there with you, returning your gaze for a while.

The *best* option for your practice is to do the *real thing* and practice with your significant other. Ask or *invite* them to receive your gaze of love for a few moments and let themselves feel loved. That's all. Then, if they wish, they can go back to their device.

Practice Number two, Caring Touch

This *Practice of Caring Touch* is recommended because we humans and our fellow furry and feathered creatures ALL have a core need to feel a quality touch from one another. This is about a fundamental human need and not about sex. Of course, it could become sex with the right person at the right time. But now, we are talking about a moment when a warm hand lands on your shoulder and begins to caress you, with no expectation.

Or a caring touch, lightly caressing your neck, perhaps lifting your hair just a little. The kind of touch that feels warm and loving makes you close your eyes, put down your phone, and say, "Mmmmm..."

As you become more adventurous in this practice, you can try things like warming a little olive or coconut oil for 5 seconds in the microwave. Then, rubbing your partner's feet as their feet lay on a towel in your lap. There is no need to be a professional. Put your caring heart into it and you both will feel more connected. For many people, having someone lovingly rub the bottoms of their feet or rub their scalp is pure heaven!

If you want to blow your partner's mind, you can try this when they're just waking up in the morning and lying on their side. With their back towards you, take some warmed up oil, and start massaging their back. Let them wake up to 5 or 10 minutes of a back and neck rub. They will feel the connection to you all day after that!

The idea is to give your beloved's body, heart, and soul the *physical, tangible* message that they are loved. Expressing that in words is great, but the words don't come close to the actual physical feeling of being loved.

Practice Number Three – Sexual Play Acting

Now that we have gazed at one another and perhaps given each other a foot or back rub, we are ready for *The Practice of Sexual Play Acting*. This third practice is fun, and I like to recommend it for rekindling intimacy and connection. The idea with Play Acting is, first and foremost, that we are playing, not acting. We are just having fun and experiencing some beautiful feelings without going through all the motions of having actual sex.

In this practice, which I often suggest to couples in their later stages of sexuality, we leave our clothes on and go through the different motions of having sex while lying on the bed. It's sexual slow motion, and it's relaxed and very comfortable. It helps us let go of the need for an erection, a juicy vagina and the need for penetration. Sometimes, those things are just not going to happen as we play in our later stages of life. But we can still *have fun and feel our familiar, intimate, loving connection!*

One of the current passions in my life's work is addressing those who are no longer young and jumping into sex whenever the whim arises. Those people are at a similar stage as I am – the stage where you roll around with each other and laugh about your stiff knees that don't work so well and hips that have gotten creaky. Plus, maybe some back pain from being on your computer for too many hours. Yes, that stage is here for many of us, myself included, and we can *celebrate it* with the right attitude!

No matter what age or stage someone is at, my message is love. Love is my assignment in life, to understand love in partnership and to understand it in loving myself. So, I put my love out to you and present myself and my ideas so that you can have more love in your life. Pure and simple.

I invite you and genuinely hope you will try some or all of these Loving Practices. And that they will help you to have more love, intimacy, and connection in your life!

