

Dr. Dan *for* Today

The Power of Love

"**The Power of Love**" is the title of a 1985 single by Huey Lewis and the News written for and featured in the film *Back to the Future*. The song appears early in *Back to the Future* as Marty McFly (Michael J. Fox) skateboards to school, then when he and his band played the song for a Battle of the Bands audition and later when Marty returns to his neighborhood. Look at the lyrics as the tune plays itself in your head.

The power of love is a curious thing
Make one man weep, make another man sing
Change a hawk to a little white dove
More than a feeling that's the power of love

Tougher than diamonds, rich like cream
Stronger and harder than a bad girls dream
Make a bad one good make a wrong one right
Power of love that keeps you home at night

Chorus 1 :
You don't need money, don't take fame
Don't need no credit card to ride this train
Its strong and its sudden and its cruel sometimes
But it might just save your life
That's the power of love
That's the power of love

First time you feel it, it might make you sad
Next time you feel it it might make you mad
But you'll be glad baby when you've found
That's the power makes the world go-round

Chorus 2 :
And it don't take money, don't take fame
Don't need no credit card to ride this train
Its strong and its sudden it can be cruel sometimes
But it might just save your life

They say that all in love is fair
Yeah, but you don't care
But you know what to do
When it gets hold of you
And with a little help from above
You feel the power of love
You feel the power of love
Can you feel it ?
Hmmm

Chorus 3 :

It don't take money and it don't take fame
Don't need no credit card to ride this train
Tougher than diamonds and stronger than steel
You won't feel nothing till you feel
You feel the power, just the power of love
That's the power, that's the power of love
You feel the power of love
You feel the power of love
Feel the power of love

Love is powerful. When I go back in my life I can still remember and feel the first time I told my wife, Lynn, that I loved her more than 40 years ago. Our love has a long history to it. Our love is a state of being and belonging. It carries us through good and difficult times. At the root are trust, respect, honesty, and commitment. This is where the word love is used as a noun.

I remember a different feeling of love when our children were born and still another kind of love when each of our six grandchildren were born. Love is a beginning of a relational connection that can span a lifetime if it is reciprocated and nurtured. Love is not just a feeling; it is an internal place of safety and well being. A cognitive attitude of self-sacrifice and giving the benefit of the doubt, as well as an action of seeking the best for the ones we love. Love is a living memory both past and present that brings hope and confidence to our future. Love can be fed and grow or neglected and go dormant.

Love is powerful. Parents bring their history of loving their children from birth. Their love for their kids is often anchored in the past. Often parents will hear that they love their adolescent like "I was a 7 year old." In some ways our kids may be right. I remember this dilemma as our two kids

were growing and advanced as teenagers. The pictures in my wallet and on my desk were the latest ones taken; however, I did not want to change out the ones of them that were my favorites from their younger years. It's easier to see this now than when I was going through it. Maybe its wisdom or just maybe distance and the ability to see things that are farther away. I have often wondered if as parents we all can suffer from nearsightedness. Sometimes it is better for us as parents to seek to understand the situation first. Through all the emotion of the moment it is best to seek to understand before we are understood. Then rather than a rebuttal of react, to take a brief moment and come up with options for a response while maintaining our attitude of love. Doesn't this sound right even though it feels so wrong in the moment? I learned it from my wife. You see for years I was a more of a reactor to parenting opportunities.

Love is also a powerful verb. It is a learned skill, not something that comes from hormones or emotion particularly. Psychologist Erich Fromm called it "an act of will." This entails a growing maturity as well as learning good communication skills. These are means by which we develop trust and intensify connection. The more we can communicate the less discouraged we will be as parents because we will feel known and understood and seek to know our kids.

Adolescents on the other hand live in the present and project into the future all the good things that will be happening. It is a time of optimism and ideals-some would say idealistic distortion; however one thing is certain. We have all been there. Our teens often tell us that we do not have faith in them or treat them as the young adults that they think they are. Then we can often get into the proverbial power struggles of who knows best and who knows more. The teenage years can be a time of spinning wheels and not getting very far. I have often wondered if adolescents suffer from farsightedness.

So, how does the power of love fit into all of this discussion? Let's take a look at a few Scriptures on love. I Corinthians 13: 1-7: Love is: patient, kind, not jealous, does not brag, not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly, does not seek its own, not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, rejoices with truth. Bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Christian love, whether exercised toward believers or toward men generally, is not a response from the emotions. Love seeks the welfare of all (Rom. 15:2). Those of us as believers desire no harm to anyone (13:8-10). In fact Paul teaches that love seeks opportunity to do good to 'all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith' (Gal. 6:10). See also Col. 3:12-17.

The Greek word for *agapao* is used of the love of God. It refers to God's deep and constant "love" and interest towards entirely unworthy humans, producing and fostering a reverential "love" in us towards Him, and a practical "love" towards those who are believers, and a desire to help others to seek the God.

Phileo more nearly represents "tender affection." And also used first in the Greek for the "love" of the Father for the Son, John 3:35; 5:20. Second for the believer, John 14:21; 16:27. Also, of Christ's "love" for a certain disciple, John 13:23; 20:2.

"*Agape* and *agapao* are used in the NT (a) to describe the attitude of God toward His Son, John 17:26; the human race, generally, John 3:16; Rom 5:8; and to such as believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, particularly, John 14:21; (b) to convey His will to His children concerning their attitude one toward another, John 13:34, and toward all men, 1 Thess. 3:12; 1 Cor. 16:14; 2 Pet. 1:7; (c) to express the essential nature of God, 1 John 4:8.

Love is as critical for our mind and body as oxygen. It's not negotiable. The more connected we are, the healthier we will be both physically and emotionally. The less connected we are, the more our relationships are at risk.

Love is powerful. Focus on your adolescent for a moment. Rather than focus on what we are getting and how we are being treated, read your adolescent's need. What does this person really need for his/her own well-being?

What is needed is developing the ability to accommodate simultaneous reality. The adolescent's reality is as important to them as our own, and we need to be as aware of it as we do our own. What are they really saying? What are they really needing? The trap in parenting is thinking the only reality is our own reality.

Actively dispute your internal messages of inadequacy as a parent. This is another ineffective parenting reaction. Sensitivity to rejection is a cardinal feature of parental frustration. As a consequence of low self-esteem, every parent/child relationship blip is interpreted far too personally as evidence of inadequacy. Healthy thinking is a must in relationships. Recognize that the internal voice is strong but it's not real. Talk back to it. "I'm not really being rejected; this isn't really evidence of inadequacy. I made a mistake." Or "this isn't about me, this is something I just didn't know how to do and now I'll learn." When you reframe the situation to something more adequate, you can act again in an effective way and you can find and keep the love that you need. Just like separating the behavior from the person is important to wise discipline, so is separating the conflict from personalization in our parenting relationship self-talk. Love is powerful. It "Bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things." (I Corinthians 13:7). "But now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love." (v.13). Love is powerful. God uses it to change us for the better.

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