



The Art of Loving

By Erich Fromm
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Introduction

The Art of Loving has helped hundreds of thousands of men and women achieve rich, productive lives by developing their hidden capacities for love. An astonishingly frank and candid book by renowned psychoanalyst Erich Fromm, it explores the ways in which this extraordinary emotion can alter the course of one's life.

Most of us are unable to develop our ability to love on the only level that really counts—a level in which love is compounded of maturity, self-knowledge, and courage. Learning to love demands practice and concentration. Even more than any other art, it demands genuine insight and understanding. In this startling book, Fromm discusses love in all aspects: not only romantic love, so surrounded by false conceptions, but also love of parents for children, brotherly love, erotic love, and love for God.

Questions for Discussion

1. To what extent do you agree with the author's contention that being considered lovable in our culture is "essentially a mixture between being popular and having sex appeal"?
2. How has a greater equality between the sexes in our society impacted the nature of erotic love, and what are some of the larger implications of this equality on relationships in general?
3. How do motherly and fatherly love differ, and why does the author contend that a mature person is one who becomes, in effect, his own mother and his own father?
4. Why does the author view selfishness and self-love as opposites, and how is this distinction significant in terms of understanding human love?
5. "Love is the active concern for the life and growth of that which we love." How does the author's thesis connect to his idea of love as an activity rather than a state of being?
6. Why does the author consider love as "teamwork" and love as sexual satisfaction examples of the disintegration of love in our society?
7. To what extent do you agree with the author that the production-centered system of capitalism in the West discourages the development of love?
8. How would you describe the individual roles of discipline, concentration, and patience in the act of loving another? 9. What does the author's interpretation of the work of Sigmund Freud on human sexuality reveal about his own theories, beliefs, and biases?
10. According to the author, why are faith and love of God integral to the art of loving, and in what respects do you agree with his analysis?

About the Author

Erich Fromm (1900-1980) was a renowned psychologist and social philosopher who emigrated in 1934 to the United States, where he held a private practice and taught at Columbia, Yale, and New York University. His other books include *Escape from Freedom*, *Man for Himself*, *The Heart of Man*, and *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*.