

Love must be nourished with happiness and shared with others.

Imagine adding a spoon of salt to a glass of water. It'll be undrinkable, right? But what if you add the same amount to a river? A spoonful of salt won't change much at all.

Love is a bit like that.

If our hearts are small, the tiniest faults and failings of those around us can enrage us. If we expand our hearts, however, we become capable of treating others with compassion and empathy.

So how do you become more loving?

Love needs sustenance. It needs happiness.

That's because love is a living thing and, like every other breathing being, it needs nourishment.

Happiness is the food of love. When you're happy, you become capable of loving both yourself and others.

But that begs the question: What is happiness?

Zen Buddhism can provide a few insights.

Happiness can't be attained by fulfilling superficial desires. It's the fruit of mindfulness. Take walking. If you focus your attention on every single movement of your body and forget your eventual destination and the reason you're trying to get there, you'll begin to understand what happiness is.

That's because mindfulness is about experiencing and appreciating the present moment. When we're attentive to the present, we begin to notice how much beauty there is in the world. We can truly appreciate the joys of something as simple as a blossoming flower.

But don't keep this to yourself! Beauty, like love and happiness, is made for sharing.

Practicing mindfulness is a great way of learning how to share these gifts with other people.

Imagine going for a walk with a friend who's preoccupied and worried about something. You can bring happiness and love into their troubled reflections just by pointing out the things that warm your heart, whether it's the sun or the play of clouds in the sky above you.
