

# Loving involves becoming mindful and learning how to play the role of a healer.

---

Chances are that you'll have encountered the concept of mindfulness in a hundred different settings. The idea has become hugely influential in the West, and we're regularly confronted with advice on how to walk, eat and exercise in a mindful way.

So why not love mindfully too!

But that's actually saying the same thing twice over – true love is mindfulness.

Start with the term “love” itself. It's a beautiful word. That means we should be careful not to rob it of its power by casually saying that we “love” cheeseburgers. Simply restricting its use to the cases where we really are talking about true love makes us more mindful of its meaning.

Mindful love is holistic. It means loving everything about someone and appreciating both their beauty and their weaknesses and faults. Mindfulness is a brake on the reflexive, unthinking judgments which make us reject difficult aspects of those we love rather than devoting ourselves to patiently helping them change.

Suspending automatic judgment allows the mindful lover to become a healer.

To get a sense of this, we can turn eastward. “Compassion” in Sanskrit, an ancient philosophical language widely used across South Asia, is karuna. Its literal meaning is the ability to suffer with someone else. But it also has a deeper meaning.

Karuna isn't just about empathy; it's also about taking an active role in attempting to alleviate and ultimately heal the suffering experienced by another person.

Think of a doctor. It'd be great if she was compassionate and could share the pain caused by your appendicitis, but you'd also want her to do something about it, right? That, after all, is what doctors are there for – they heal and eliminate the causes of pain, in this case by removing your appendix.

Love is like medicine in this respect. It's an art that allows you to understand the suffering of your partner and help heal them.

But, as we saw, love is a two-sided coin. Both you and your partner must be healers. You need to be able to ask for help when you're suffering. This can be tricky because it takes courage to admit that you need assistance, especially when it's your partner who's the cause of your pain. Appealing to each other for help, however, is the only way to achieve mutual healing.

---