

UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

*How to Increase Your
Happiness by Loving
Without Reservations*

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“I believe forgiveness is the best form of love in any relationship. It takes a strong person to say they're sorry and an even stronger person to forgive.”

- YOLANDA HADID



INTRODUCTION

The idea of unconditional love sounds wonderful. We all want to be loved without reservations or conditions. However, it's not easy to love unconditionally. It's certainly easier to be on the receiving end of unconditional love, but it's not fair to expect to receive what you're not willing or able to give.

Unconditional love is love without limitations or conditions. That sounds great, but what does it really mean?

There are no hard and fast rules when it comes to unconditional love. What it means to one person can vary greatly from the opinions of another. It's your life, and your love to give. You can create your own definition, which you'll do later.

**By the time your finish this eBook,
you'll have a much better
understanding of:**

- The concept of unconditional love
- How to love unconditionally
- The obstacles to loving unconditionally
- How to get a new relationship off on the right foot
- Codependency
- How to practice unconditional love in your day-to-day life

“You don't love someone for their looks, or their clothes, or for their fancy car, but because they sing a song only you can hear.”

- UNKNOWN

CONDITIONAL LOVE

To get a better idea of unconditional love, let's consider conditional love. Most people have a conception of unconditional love. But they've never considered what conditional love is. Fortunately, there are plenty of examples to that will make the concept of conditional love crystal clear!

Suppose you purchased the car of your dreams. This car is ideal in every way. It's brand new, the right color, has a great stereo system, and the leather interior is to die for. Your friends are jealous that you're able to enjoy such an amazing automobile.

For the first 6 months, you're head over heels for this car. Then, you discover a rattle. It only rattles when you accelerate, but it's loud enough to get on your nerves. One of the speakers also starts to

cut out on occasion. There's a little static in that speaker, too.

The car is also less reliable. It only starts 90% of the time. You've even needed to have it towed back to the dealer twice.

That new car smell is gone. In fact, it seems like it always stinks like your dog does when she's wet.

Do you still love that car? Probably not. Depending on the issues and your tolerance, you might even dislike it.

That's conditional love! You only love when it's behaving the way you want it to.

Let's use a fictitious relationship as an example.

Imagine you've married a great guy. He's attractive and in amazing shape. He's a doctor that loves taking care of sick

children. He has a great head of hair and loves to spend time with your mom. He's kind to your friends. He even takes pride in having the nicest yard on the block.

Five years later, this incredible specimen decides that he's over being a doctor. He's always wanted to own his own plumbing company, so he quits the hospital and becomes an apprentice plumber. He's only making 10% of his previous salary, but he's enjoying himself.

He's also gotten heavier, a lot heavier. He's also going bald. He's tired from his new job and doesn't want to hang out with your mom anymore. He doesn't seem to want to make time for your friends anymore. However, he still loves to take care of the lawn. Your friends used to think you had the perfect man, but now they think you have a dud.

Do you still love him?

Would you still love your partner if they:

- Gained a significant amount of weight?
- Lost their job?
- Became disfigured in an accident?
- Took a less prestigious job?
- Developed cancer?
- Suffered from depression?
- Decided to become vegan?
- Decided to become a minimalist?
- Stopped going to church?
- Changed religions?
- Started going to church?
- Acquired a lot of debt?
- Was less attentive?
- Stopped being nice to your friends or parents?

Considering these questions, do you feel like you generally love unconditionally or conditionally? It's obvious that loving unconditionally is a real challenge. **The**

fact is that most people love conditionally. They only love someone when certain criteria are being met.

Keep in mind that unconditional love doesn't mean that you're willing to tolerate abuse or give up your greatest dreams to be with someone. It's important to love yourself, too.

Create your own definition of what unconditional love means to you! What would it take for you to stop loving someone you loved “unconditionally”?

"Actual love, as in unconditional love, doesn't mean you love everything about the person. It means you don't need them to be different than they are for you to be happy."

- UNKNOWN

CODEPENDENCY VS UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

Unconditional love and codependency are often confused for each other.

Codependent people are in a one-sided relationship where one person is highly dependent on the other. The codependent person might be loving in an unconditional way, but they aren't receiving unconditional love.

The dictionary defines codependency as “excessive emotional or psychological reliance on a partner, typically one who requires support on account of an illness or addiction.”

There are several signs that you might be a codependent person:

1. **You confuse love and pity.** Love and pity aren't the same thing. However, those that are

codependent often confuse these emotions. Unfortunately, those people that make us feel the most pity aren't often the best people for a relationship.

- The people you pity the most are worthy of your help. But, think twice about becoming romantically involved with them.

2. **You feel guilty when asserting yourself.** Codependent people feel that they aren't worthy, so they feel bad about making their own needs known. Do you feel guilty when you let people know what you want or need?
3. **You crave approval and recognition.** We all like to be noticed and appreciated. The codependent person takes this to an entirely different level. Many of their decisions are based on the perceived opinions of others. How

often do you include the opinions of others into your decision-making process?

4. **Fear of being abandoned or alone.** No one likes to feel lonely, but codependent people feel worthless unless they're helping someone else. **Do you feel like you have value, even when you're spending time alone?**

5. **You aren't honest in general.** Codependent people struggle with the truth. This is largely because they care so much what others think about them. This creates a desire to seem impressive. It also creates the need to avoid disappointing others. Lies are the result.

6. **You do more than your share in a relationship.** Relationships should be 50-50 on the average. Do you find yourself always going above and beyond in your relationships?

This includes your friendships, too.

7. **You are more dependent on your relationship than you should be.**

Do you live and die for your relationship? Is it greatly more important to you than anything else in your life?

- **A relationship should be an important part of your life, but it should never be your entire life.**

8. **Do you come from a dysfunctional family?** If you lived in a household with emotional, physical, or sexual abuse, there's a higher possibility that you're codependent.

Codependency is a serious issue that requires professional help. **Be sure that you're not confusing codependency and unconditional love.**

A healthy relationship requires emotionally healthy people for success to be a real possibility. Many people that are codependent believe they are loving unconditionally. Their behavior might mimic unconditional love, but the motivation behind it is very different.

“I would want everyone to love someone in the purest sense of the word - an unconditional love in which you don't expect anything in return.”

- MICHAEL ARDEN

THE CHALLENGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

Unconditional love isn't all fun, games, rainbows, and smiles. Tears, sacrifice, and other forms of suffering are part of the package, too. But this is true for all types of intimate relationships.

Understand that **a relationship with unconditional love still has real challenges and emotional discomfort.**

Perhaps there's even more discomfort at times, because you're committed to loving the other person in spite of the challenges.

Consider these challenges and disadvantages to loving someone unconditionally:

1. **Your partner might be more willing to misbehave.** Let's face it, if you know you're not going to be held accountable for something, you're more likely to behave badly. Loving someone unconditionally might give them the impression that they can get away with anything.
 - It's also possible that someone might be so appreciative of receiving unconditional love that they're regularly on their best behavior. It depends on the individual person you've chosen to love.
2. **You might be taken for granted.** If the other person doesn't feel they have to do anything to earn your

love, they might not appreciate it, or appreciate you. That's why **it's so important to love someone that loves you back.**

3. **You're more inclined to stay with someone you should leave.** We've all seen one-sided relationships where one person is totally committed, and the other person couldn't care less. Just because you love someone doesn't mean the relationship is worth your time.

- Loving someone unconditionally might lead you to tolerate more than you should. Everyone needs boundaries in life.

4. **You have to grow.** Loving unconditionally requires growth. You likely have to become a bigger person than you are. **You must learn to be flexible, forgiving, tolerant, and open minded.**

5. **You have to sacrifice.** At times, your time, energy, concern, and effort are sacrificed. Sometimes, you must also sacrifice your demands, some of your preferences, and the way your view the world. You evolve.

6. **Compromise becomes your middle name.** As with sacrifice, learning to compromise is important with unconditional love.

There are potential disadvantages to unconditional love. There are also a few obstacles, too. Understanding the potential pitfalls of unconditional love is important.

“The intuitive connection children feel with animals can be a tremendous source of joy. The unconditional love received from pets, and the lack of artifice in the relationship, contrast sharply with the much trickier dealings with members of their own species.”

- FRANS DE WAAL



BREAKING THROUGH YOUR LOVE LIMITS

There are obstacles to loving unconditionally. Otherwise, there would be a lot more unconditional love in the world. Unconditional love isn't easy. Fortunately, the greatest obstacles are within you. And anything within you is within your power to change if you're determined enough.

The biggest obstacles to loving unconditionally are:

- Your personal rules
- Your ego
- A lack of communication
- Your desire to change the other person
- Lack of commitment

Let's look at these in more detail.

Personal Rules

Loving unconditionally is a significant challenge. We all have rules for how others are supposed to act.

Each of us has an opinion on things like:

- **Promptness and reliability.** Is it okay for someone to be 20 minutes late? Or does tardiness make your blood boil?
- **Gratitude.** Are you okay with someone not thanking you for holding open the door, or does it rub you the wrong way?
- **Materialism.** Are you frugal and annoyed by those that aren't? Or maybe you're just the opposite.

- **Dating.** Is it okay to date more than one person at a time?

The point is that everyone has rules for what's appropriate and what is not. **Here's the kicker: If you have a lot of rules, it will be extremely challenging to love unconditionally.** The more rules you have for the behavior of others, the more frequently your rules will be violated.

“I think modern medicine has become like a prophet offering a life free of pain. It is nonsense. The only thing I know that truly heals people is unconditional love.”

- ELISABETH KUBLER-ROSS

Ego

Everyone has the blessing and challenge of possessing an ego. Your ego can lead you to do amazing things, but an unchecked ego can create a lot of pain in your relationships.

Your ego can be a huge obstacle to loving another person unconditionally.

Many of the negative feelings we experience, including resentment, anger, and jealousy are ego-based.

See how important it is to overcome your ego if you want to love unconditionally:

- 1. Your ego can cloud your judgment.** An ego and critical thinking skills don't go together. **Science has proven that the ability to think clearly and logically is**

negatively impacted by strong emotions. Your ego can make you irrational in your thinking, which leads to irrational sentences leaving your mouth.

- Consider how likely you are to deliver a “low-blow” when your ego is wounded. These are the zingers that are next to impossible to take back when cooler heads prevail.
- People might forget what you say and do, eventually. They never truly forget how you made them feel.

2. **Your ego limits your personal growth.** The ego doesn't like change. It doesn't like to change its thinking. It doesn't like to entertain new ideas. Learning to love unconditionally requires personal growth. For most people, it's going to require a lot of personal growth.

3. **Your ego can drive people away from you.** Your ego not only makes it harder to love unconditionally. **It can also make it harder for anyone to love you!** You can't shower your love on someone that doesn't want to be around you.

4. **Your ego can make you self-absorbed.** Loving someone unconditionally requires that you put some of your time and attention on that person. The more you're obsessed with your own life, the less you have to give to someone else.

5. **Your ego makes it challenging to resolve conflict.** When you're certain you're right, you won't consider the prospect that you might be wrong. For too many of us, being right is more important than being happy.

- **Your ego wants to win at all costs.** This can pose a significant challenge for finding acceptable middle ground for both parties.
6. **Your ego can create competition.** A little healthy competition can be fun and even beneficial. However, regular competition between intimate partners can be a real barrier to unconditional love.
 7. **Your ego can make you overly sensitive.** When your ego is sensitive, you assume the worst. You feel slighted when there's no reason to feel that way. You're easily offended. This creates negative feelings toward your partner.

Your ego can be one of the greatest obstacles to experiencing unconditional love within your relationship. How has your ego played a role in your previous

relationships? How is it impacting your current relationship?

“Unconditional love with someone you've never met is a straightforward feeling that is so overwhelming and fulfilling.”

- MARINA ABRAMOVIC

Lack of Communication

All relationships require communication. This includes your relationships with coworkers, friends, family members, and neighbors. You don't have a relationship if you don't communicate. One of the necessary components of learning to love unconditionally is to learn how to communicate more effectively and openly.

See how a lack of communication is a detriment to loving unconditionally:

1. **A lack of communication leads to misunderstandings.**
Misunderstandings lead to conflict and resentment. It's much easier to resolve something while it's still small. Often, **simple communication avoids a lot of challenges before they ever become an issue.**
2. **A lack of trust can result from poor communication.** When communication is poor, trust fades. If you want to trust, and to be trusted, it's important to communicate often and well.
3. **Unresolved conflict eventually kills a relationship.** When there is a lack of communication, conflict often goes unresolved. The resulting resentment seriously

damages a relationship.

4. **Poor communication damages the connection between you and your partner.** Communication is necessary to keep a relationship current and strong. A lack of communication degrades the bond with your significant other. Over time, the relationship can be destroyed by a lack of communication.

5. **You don't get what you want.** When you don't communicate effectively, your needs can't be met. How can the other person know what you want or need when you don't communicate this information?

6. **Your partner doesn't get what they want.** Likewise, your partner isn't going to have their wants and needs satisfied either.

How would you rate your communication skills? Your relationship can't be significantly better than your ability to communicate as a couple. Think of your ability to communicate as the upper limit on relationship potential. Enhancing your communication skills as a couple is a great use of your time.

“My wife has taught me about unconditional love. When there's a conflict, there's never a thought that we won't work it out.”

- TY BURRELL

Desire to Change the Other Person

No one is perfect, but there are a few people that come close enough that we convince ourselves that we can make

them perfect. This is a dangerous way to think!

It isn't necessary for someone to be perfect in your eyes for you to love them unconditionally. It also isn't likely that you'll be able to change anyone, either.

Loving someone unconditionally means overlooking, or even appreciating, those parts of their personality and behavior that aren't what you would consider perfect.

Consider these reasons why you can't change another person:

1. **Consider how challenging it is to change yourself.** Surely, you've wanted to lose weight, save more money, call your mom more often, or practice the guitar every day for 60 minutes. How well did that

work out for you?

- **If it's hard to change yourself, think about how hard it will be to change someone else.** And consider that you presumably wanted to change. The person you're trying to change probably doesn't.

2. **It's selfish.** There are many reasonable ways to approach life. It's selfish and arrogant of you to push your way onto someone else. Maybe their way is even better than yours!
3. **It creates resentment.** Others don't appreciate it when you try to change them. It's a clear indication that you believe that they're substandard in some way. No one appreciates feeling this way.

A huge part of unconditional love is accepting your partner as they are, warts and all. It's far too complicated and challenging to change someone to even seriously consider it. Other people don't like being forced to change either.

"If someone is facing a difficult time, one of the kindest things you can do for him or her is to say, 'I'm going to love you through this.'"

- MOLLY FRIEDENFELD

Lack of Commitment

Doing anything challenging requires commitment. That includes unconditional love. If you're not committed, you're likely to fail. How important is unconditional love to you? Are you willing to persevere?

If you want to love someone unconditionally, it's important to be committed to three things:

1. **The person.** This person is going to require a lot of your time, energy, and concern. Loving someone has costs, and those costs are your time and attention. There are also sacrifices that go beyond your time and attention. All relationships require sacrifice.
2. **The relationship.** The relationship itself is a living thing that's constantly morphing. **Your relationship is never 100% the same.** It's getting stronger or weaker at any moment. Are you committed to making your relationship stronger each day?
3. **The idea of unconditional love.** Are you committed to the idea of unconditional love? Are you willing

to be the embodiment of
unconditional love?

Anything worthwhile is challenging and requires a serious level of commitment. Without commitment to your relationship, your partner, and the ideal of unconditional love, you're unlikely to experience a relationship with unconditional love as the foundation.

*“A dog will teach you unconditional love.
If you can have that in your life, things won't
be too bad.”*

- ROBERT WAGNER

CREATING UNCONDITIONAL LOVE IN YOUR LIFE

If you want to experience unconditional love, you must choose it each day. It's not a decision you make one time. Each day you have the choice to love unconditionally or conditionally. Each day is an opportunity to build unconditional love.

There are several things you must do on a regular basis to build unconditional love:

1. **Accept that you don't know the whole story.** Before jumping to conclusions, do your best to find out the whole story. It's easy to run with a few facts or preconceptions and come to an incorrect result. Love and trust enough to be

patient until you have all the facts.

- Accept that you might never have all the facts or truly understand the whole story. This is especially true with issues from the past. You've done things in the past you could never explain to your partner. Your partner has similar past experiences that they can't make you understand.

2. **Love yourself unconditionally.** If you can't love yourself unconditionally, you can't love someone else unconditionally either. You also can't expect someone to love you more unconditionally than you love yourself. **Most of us have a lot of work to do in this area.** We're just too hard on ourselves.

3. **Choose the more loving option.** When faced with two choices, lean

toward the more loving option. Interestingly, the alternative is usually more ego-based and likely to make you feel better in the short term, but cause damage to your relationship.

4. **Forgive.** Love and forgiveness go hand in hand. Practice being more forgiving in all aspects of your life. Forgive the garbage man for throwing your trash can on the ground. Forgive the mailman for being behind schedule. Forgive the heavens for bad weather. Forgive your boss for being grumpy.
 - **Most of all, forgive your partner for their shortcomings and mistakes.**
5. **Practice honesty.** It's not possible to be 100% honest without causing unnecessary challenges in your relationship. However, you likely need to be more honest than you are currently. **Honest, but gentle,**

is a good policy.

6. **Share your needs.** You won't feel loved or content if your needs aren't being met on a regular basis. No one is blessed with the ability to read your mind, so you'll need to be open and honest regarding your needs.
7. **Ensure that you understand the needs of your partner.** Your partner has needs, too. Do you know what they are? Are you making an effort to satisfy those needs each day?
8. **Communicate.** Sharing your needs is just one example of communication. Sharing your day, hopes, dreams, and challenges is an important component of unconditional love.
9. **Assume the best until proven otherwise.** Unconditional love

assumes the best about the other person. Assume your partner's intentions are pure. Assume that an offhand comment wasn't meant in a negative way. Assume any slights are just oversights.

10. **Be supportive.** Support your partner in whatever they're going through.

- **Whether it's a problem at work, an illness, or a hair-brained scheme, be as supportive as you can.**

11. **Be open to change.** Your partner will change. Your preferences will change. Be open to those changes. Be willing to accept those changes and choose to love your partner anyway.

12. **Focus on your shared vision for the future.** This creates the idea of you and your partner against the

world. It's the struggle that you share. You can't help but feel close when you're working toward the same thing.

You create and practice unconditional love each day by the choices you and your partner make. Look for ways to exhibit unconditional love, and it will become part of your life.

“Don't forget to tell yourself positive things daily! You must love yourself internally to glow externally.”

- HANNAH BRONFMAN

THE NEW RELATIONSHIP & UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

It's easiest when you start from the beginning. Turning a relationship full of conditions into one of unconditional love is a real challenge. Getting off on the right foot from day one can make the journey to unconditional love much less challenging.

If you're in the early stages of a relationship, here's what you can do.

Plant the seeds of unconditional love in your budding relationship with these strategies:

1. **Understand and appreciate yourself before getting serious with someone else.** It's not fair to expect someone else to appreciate

you if you're unable to appreciate yourself. It's also critical to have a deep understanding of yourself, your needs, and your desires.

- How can you find the right person if you're unclear on what you like, dislike, and need in a relationship? How can you build a nurturing relationship without this knowledge?
- Avoid becoming too involved, too quickly, until you're able to understand and appreciate yourself fully.

2. **Realize that a successful relationship requires more than love.** Love is necessary, but hardly enough. You can truly love each other, but if you have different values and opposing desires for the future, the relationship can't last. **Love is just a starting point.**

3. Understand the ways in which you add value to each other's lives.

What value do you provide to your partner? What value does your partner provide to you? You should both be getting something out of the relationship beyond love. Here are a few suggestions to spark your thinking:

- Support. This can be emotional or financial.
- A different perspective on life
- The opportunity for personal growth
- Fun
- Knowledge
- Tidiness and order
- Stability
- Think about, and then list, the value that you add to each other's lives.

4. **Accept the differences between you.** You'll never find anyone exactly like you, not even your identical twin. Everyone one you meet or become involved with will be different from you. **It's the differences between people that makes life interesting.**

- Embrace the qualities in your partner that are different from your own. Together, you can have all the bases covered.
- For example, if you're super uptight, and your partner is very relaxed, you can both learn from each other. You can learn how to relax, and your partner can learn how to be a little more conscientious.

5. **Avoid the belief that a relationship will make you happier.** A relationship shouldn't

be based on solving a challenge in your life. This is a recipe for disaster.

- If you're lonely, learn how to enjoy being with yourself or how to make more friends.
- If you're financially challenged, find a way to earn more money.
- It's great to receive benefits from a relationship. However, the benefits that a relationship provides shouldn't be the primary motivation for entering into or maintaining a relationship.
- **A relationship doesn't automatically make you happier.** Make yourself happy, and then you can attract the right person for a

relationship based on unconditional love.

- When your relationship is based on a problem, you're dooming yourself to have more problems.

6. Change your demands to preferences. Demands and unconditional love don't go well together! Demands create stress and disappointment. This is true in all aspects of life.

- **When your satisfaction is tied to circumstances or people meeting your specific requirements, you're going to be disappointed most of the time.**
- Also, most people don't appreciate being required to

meet the demands of others.

- This can take many forms. You might insist that you'll only date men over 6-feet tall. Or you might demand that your partner put her dirty clothes in the hamper instead of on the floor. Maybe you only want to be with someone that agrees to be vegan.
- It's fine to have preferences. In fact, it might be impossible not to have preferences. However, **it's important to avoid turning your preferences into demands.**

A new relationship is a great time to set the stage for a future of unconditional love. After all, it's easier to start with a clean slate than it is to clean up a negative relationship. Make the most of your budding relationship!



“You know you're in love when you can't fall asleep because reality is finally better than your dreams.”

- DR. SEUSS

CONCLUSION

We know what unconditional love looks like and we want to experience that feeling with our romantic partner.

However, in order to receive it, we have to be willing and able to give it. And this is a big challenge.

We all have our own set of rules and preferences. We'd like someone that meets our expectations 100% of the time, but everyone is different, and accepting - and embracing - those differences is vitally important to unconditional love.

Our ego also tends to get in the way of unconditional love. If you want unconditional love in your relationship, keep this question in mind, "Do you want to be right or be happy?" **Your answer to this question can support or undermine your desire for unconditional love.**

Communication is also important. Good communication can help you to avoid challenges, ensure that yours and your partner's needs are being met, and strengthen your bond.

The amount of personal growth required to love unconditionally is considerable. **Are you willing to make the sacrifices that would allow you to include unconditional love in your life?**

Yes, unconditional love requires work, but the results can bring so much joy to your life. Unconditional love is pure, steadfast, and accepting. Such a love between two people is a beautiful thing. **It's true love.** And who doesn't want true love?