

How Unconditional Love Harmonizes Our World

Marci Shimoff Explores its Transformative Power

by Judith Fertig

A self-described “seeker from the get-go,” Marci Shimoff, is an expert at helping others effect greater personal fulfillment and professional success. The noted transformational leader, speaker and author has written two bestselling books on happiness and unconditional love—

Happy for No Reason: 7 Steps to Being Happy from the Inside Out and *Love for No Reason: 7 Steps for Creating a Life of Unconditional Love*, and co-authored six bestselling titles in the *Chicken Soup for the Woman’s Soul* series.

What is the old way of looking at love, versus the new paradigm shift you propose?

We’ve been trained to think of love solely as energy between two people, usually experienced as conditional love—we feel love if the other person agrees with us, treats us a particular way or loves us back. But love is actually the essence of who we are, and when we live in a state of unconditional love, what I call “love for no reason,” we experience our essence that is love, which doesn’t depend on another person, situation or romantic partner. It is the core of every spiritual tradition.

Why do our ways of loving often seem inadequate?

We each have a “love set-point,” the upper limit of our ability to give and receive love. We can’t feel more love by trying to change the outside—by relying on others to fill us up—because it will



never work in the long run. We need to raise our love set-point higher; then we experience everything more through the eyes of love.

Do challenging economic times help us grow spiritually?

We can use any life challenges to help us grow and find fresh avenues of lasting fulfillment. Success and money don’t guarantee happiness, and I know that from my own wake-up call.

In 1998, I had three of my *Chicken Soup for the Soul* books on *The New York Times* bestseller list at the same time. One day, I spoke to 8,000 people and autographed 5,432 books and felt like an author rock star. Yet when I returned to my hotel room that night, I burst into tears. All of the success was great, but it still hadn’t made me happy. That’s when I began my intensive study of happiness and love.

Does science support our capacity to daily experience and deepen a love for all things?

Science is finding that there is a neurophysiology of love. Studies by researchers in major institutions worldwide show that we can do simple things like breathe more deeply, walk barefoot on earth, listen to uplifting music or practice meditation that will support us in experiencing more unconditional love. These activities create greater heart rhythm coherence and new neural pathways in the brain.

How does having a heart that’s open to unconditional love benefit us?

The Institute of HeartMath has discovered that the magnetic field generated by the heart—what’s measured on a magnetometer—is 5,000 times stronger than that of the brain. HeartMath research has also demonstrated that when we’re in a positive emotional state, our hearts beat in a coherent rhythm that causes all the other systems in the body—including the brain, immune system and hormones—to work more efficiently and harmoniously. Their research shows that experiencing this regularly leads to better health, slows the aging process and brings us greater creativity, resilience and happiness.

What are the seven doorways to practicing unconditional love revealed by your own research?

I’ve interviewed hundreds of people that are living examples of unconditional love. I’ve found seven access points to experiencing more love: safety, being grounded and present; vitality, energy and well-being; unconditional self-love, feeling empowered; openness, being comfortable giving and receiving love; communication, listening and speaking with love; vision, seeing through the eyes of love; and oneness, feeling connected with the greater wholeness of life.

How does one person’s loving larger bless our families, communities and world?

The more we experience love, the more we spread love to others. Our feelings are contagious. This idea is beautifully expressed in an ancient Chinese proverb:

“When there is light in the soul, there will be beauty in the person. When there is beauty in the person, there will be harmony in the house. When there is harmony in the house, there will be order in the nation. When there is order in the nation, there will be peace in the world.”

Connect with Marci Shimoff at HappyForNoReason.com.

Judith Fertig, of Overland Park, KS, is a regular contributor to *Natural Awakenings*.