

Love Works

Brian Balke

For Julia, and all the unattended joys of growth.

To Kevin and Gregory, for listening.

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Creation of a work of this type is an effort of a community of people. The contributions were most focused during my student years at the University of California, Berkeley. I recall with particular fondness Professor Tussman, constitutional philosopher, who led me through Political and Moral Philosophy, and Professor Gaillard, who taught me particle theory.

While I received degrees in Physics and Particle Physics at UC Berkeley, those years were deeply invested in analyzing love as a social principle. I regret that my investment may have resulted in some disappointment with my development as a physicist.

In the subsequent 20 years I attempted to walk away from this work. Fortunately, I still had many opportunities to express my social principles. I would like to recognize Morris Dees as a personal hero, and the Environmental Defense Fund as an early trail-blazer in environmentally sound policy making.

Towards the end of this period, my life became dominated by a number of people that decided that if I wasn't going to use my spiritual power, they would manage it for me. Most of them were pragmatists, with focused career and financial goals. When I finally “woke up”, I found that the commitment to moral principles I had evolved during my university years made it almost impossible to work with them. I simply kept on saying “no” to conduct I considered unethical.

Disentangling myself from the influences of the pragmatists was quite an education, and was the motivation for my investment in learning to protect love. I would like to acknowledge this group of people (who shall obviously remain anonymous) because if they had been any less committed to trying to keep the box closed, I wouldn't be nearly as confident that the meek will indeed inherit the Earth. When I pray for them, it is mostly with the hope that they will accept that the past makes absolutely no difference.

I also reached out for allies during this period. Many of them were beleaguered by the same antagonists; others had to endure the attentions that followed me. I have received spiritual acceptance and insights at the Los Angeles Cathedral, Saint Maximillian's and Saint Jude's in Westlake Village, the Conejo Valley Islamic Center in Newbury Park, the Chabad of Agoura Hills and Adat Elohim in Westlake Village. I was pursuing commonalities among the traditions of Abraham. It was not always comfortable for the spiritual leaders, and I am grateful for their tolerance.

My affiliation is with Unitarian Universalism. I have been welcomed by the Livermore and Berkeley Churches, and shared some really beautiful dreams with them. My spiritual home is the Conejo Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship. I would like to thank the Reverend Betty Stapleford for walking through fire with me – it wasn't the same oven, but the embers went up through the same flue, so to speak. For much of the period in which this work was done, I was also gratified to receive the encouragement of the community when I stood up at services to express my opinion on social and political issues, or to share the healing work I was engaged with in my dreams. Even more so, the community has come to trust me when I follow the thread of a song or phrase to engage it in ministering to a community that needs a measure of our strength.

Unitarian Universalism proceeds from the proposition that people of good will can be found in every tradition, and recognizes that Humanity is going to have difficulty unless they learn to work together. While the name evokes two Christian heresies, in this age UU communities openly welcome people of

all faiths, walks of life and sexual orientations. Its principles establish a set of ground rules for engagement, the most important being that the members engage their spirituality.

And finally, I must recognize the contributions of all those that came before me. The breadth of the issues I synthesize reflect a lifetime of reading. I did not plan an academic discourse on these topics, so the list of references is dominated by the reading of the last year. I apologize if the reader is left with needs for greater depth that cannot be satisfied here.

I would highly recommend the services of librarians and booksellers. While I was working on the precursor to this work (www.everdeepening.org), whenever I found myself struggling I would find relevant books lying on a table when I entered the library, or sitting on display at the bookstore in a place that seemed to demand my attention. More than anything else, that quiet service gave me hope.

While all the defects of the work are mine, whatever hopes it catalyzes are due to the good will of everyone mentioned above. I tend to put my foot in my mouth, and in drafting this work I have benefited again and again from “private conversation” with people both living and dead. I am honored by the association with their company.

Introduction

Imagine that you found a sealed box with the slots labeled “gold” and “diamonds” on it. What would you buy with it? Naturally, it's not a fair question, until you open the box and learn the value of its contents.

Life is an exploration of two great gifts: our body and our spirit. Our body is like the sealed box, and our spirit the treasure inside. But what is “spirit”, and what is it worth?

This answer is more important than a “scientific” view of the world leads us to appreciate. Our religions are an attempt to manage the great mystery of the spirit. They are highly politicized because the power of the spirit is so great. Normally dammed up behind walls of resistance, it is power liberated by deep human need, and constructively channeled through the expression of love.

Imagine that you attempt to open the treasure box, but fail. While you can't open it, you realize that it's a good place to store your valuables. Over the following months, you store your savings in it.

Then a friend takes your box and hides behind a locked door. Frustrated and angry, you pound on the door, shouting curses and threats. Finally, you sink to the ground, certain that you have lost your friend as well as your wealth.

Sitting slumped against the wall, you reflect on the experiences you've shared, and a seed of doubt enters your mind. Your friend is a good friend, and has never hurt you intentionally. So you knock and tell them “Please come out and talk. I'm sure that there's been a misunderstanding.”

After a moment, your friend opens the door and asks, “Why did you take my treasure?”

This is a parable of the human condition.

Humanity was not given understanding of the world – we are groping our way forward. Learning involves mistakes: if we could avoid all mistakes, we would, by definition, have perfect knowledge. Mistakes are a part of learning.

For centuries, knowledge of the power of the spirit has been suppressed because there was insufficient faith in the strength of love. We tended to blame one another for our mistakes, because they cause pain and “death”. That blame justified a politics of retribution that reinforced violence and greed. With those passions in play, many believed the widespread practice of spirituality was a certain prescription for disaster.

This book is being prepared, against the better judgment of some, because I believe that the anger and fear that arises from honest error is overwhelming our ability to heal. I am committed to the proposition that when we understand the relationship between our body and our spirit, we will have the strength to turn from fear and anger, and step into love.

Would it really hurt to give people an owner's manual before sending them down the freeway of Life?

This book has four parts. In the first, I will propose a model of physics that is conceptually consistent

with what we observe of nature, but that also explains the nature of the spirit. (I am convinced that this model is incomplete; I am also convinced that it is no less wrong than the “Big Bang” theory.) In the second part, we will turn the lens of our new-found understanding onto the Judeo-Christian myth, and analyze the nature of the spiritual conflict that *surrounds* (present tense) Christ’s crucifixion. In the third part, we will consider in more detail the nature of human personality, with a focus on the relationship between men and women. Finally, I will suggest a thesis regarding our purpose in Creation, and so to move with confidence to grasp the future that awaits us.

As the pieces of this puzzle have unfolded to me over the last seven years, I have arrived in grateful awe at the conclusion that reality appears to have been constructed so that love works. All that remains to us is to choose to apply it!.

Preface

The Eve

Standing in the twilight, at the end of day,
Fears and wants surround us. Seeking our lost way:
Circle we the borders, shutting reality out?
Or open now our hearts, bringing rest to doubt?

Embrace the tortured land, dark abandoned waters,
Fauna's angry sons, Flora's timid daughters!
Conceiving in our minds patterns just and true,
Guide the subtle elements into balances anew.

This has been our calling, since consciousness begot:
The gates of time will open, racing through our thought.
The Eternal form'd in instant, joining women and men.
Wisdom that was given, we will give again.

So rest your burdensome matter: dawn is evening turned!
Spirit moves with, in, through us: *grace* our Destiny earns!