

A Lesson in True Love

By Lise Villeneuve

Unfortunately, the town of Lonesome had the highest divorce rate on the planet (98%). The citizens of Lonesome had a meeting one day and agreed that something had to be done about this, for the sake of their children and grandchildren. One man had heard about a wonderful True Love teacher who worked in a nearby town called Mystic. Surprisingly, Mystic had the lowest divorce rate on the planet (7%).

The Lonesome man proposed “since the people in Mystic seem to have figured out how to make relationships last, maybe we should contact their True Love teacher and ask if he’d be willing to move here and help us. It sounds like there’s not much work left for him to do in Mystic anyway.”

The following week, this new teacher – Mr. Hawkins – was giving his first True Love lesson at Sacred Heart School in Lonesome. The walls and ceiling of his classroom were decorated with giant hearts, and there were many pictures of people posted everywhere. There were pictures of people hugging and looking happy together, pictures of people getting married, as well as pictures of people fighting and arguing.

He asked the class “can anyone tell me what love is?”

Maria raised her hand. “Love is an emotion we sometimes feel when we’re around someone we really, really like.”

“Who agrees with Maria?” Mr. Hawkins asked the class. “Raise your hand if you do.”

Every single person in the class raised their hands.

“Wrong!” said Mr. Hawkins. “You are all wrong! Wrong, wrong, wrong, wrong, wrong, wrong!”

“Nice effort, Maria,” he continued. “What you said is exactly what most people in the world believe. It turns out that love is not an emotion at all. Repeat after me, class: love is not an emotion. Love is not an emotion. Love is not an emotion.”

At this point, the students thought Mr. Hawkins was a little strange.

“Do you want to know what love is?” asked Mr. Hawkins. The students were unenthusiastic.

He walked around the class with a box full of large rings and distributed them to every student.

“Love is a way of being in the world. It’s a way of seeing yourself and others. It’s a state of awareness. Now I know this probably doesn’t make much sense to you yet, but pay attention and you’ll get it. You can put your rings on now.”

“The truth is,” Mr. Hawkins continued, “you won’t be able to understand what true love is unless you know a little bit about mindfulness. Does anybody know what mindfulness is?”

Kevin raised his hand and said “I think it’s when you practice being aware of what’s going on inside you without reacting to it, sort of like being the watcher of what happens.”

“Excellent, Kevin!” said Mr. Hawkins. “Let’s see if you can answer this. When you are being the watcher, what are you watching exactly?”

“The parts of me that are on the surface like my thoughts, my emotions and my personality,” Kevin replied. “I think this is called the ego.”

“I’m impressed,” said Mr. Hawkins. “You’re right. Now have a look at your ring. Can you tell me what colour it is?”

Kevin looked down and the stone on his ring that started out black was now a beautiful ruby red colour.

“It’s red,” said Kevin.

“That means you are in a state of loving awareness right now,” Mr. Hawkins explained. “When the ring turns green, you are identified with your ego. Red means true love, green means ego.”

Kevin and Mr. Hawkins were the only ones with red rings at this point. Everyone else had green rings.

“Let’s continue” said Mr. Hawkins. “What do you call the part of you that notices the ego?”

Do you remember what it’s called?

“The awareness?” Kevin answered.

Mr. Hawkins jumped up in the air yelling “Yes!!!” He danced around the classroom, making everyone laugh. Many other rings turned red.

“Abso-lu-ta-bonking-ly! You are the awareness. You are the light inside that notices what the ego is doing on the outside. The real you has no form, no body, no emotions, no thoughts, no personality. The real you is pure, unconditional Love.”

Maria raised her hand. Her ring was still green. “Ok, but how’s that going to help me find the perfect husband?”

“Excellent question”, said Mr. Hawkins. “The truth is, you will never find a perfect husband, because there are no perfect humans. There are only imperfect, fearful, needy egos.”

“I thought you were here to help us, not to discourage us” said Maria.

Mr. Hawkins laughed and continued. “This doesn’t mean that you can’t share your life with someone. But before you say ‘I do’ in a beautiful white wedding gown, you should ask yourself which part of you is actually saying those words. Your ego, or your awareness?”

“What do you mean?” asked Maria, confused.

“If it’s your ego getting married to another ego, then you’re in big trouble right from the start! However, if it’s the light of your awareness that sees the same light shining in another human being, then you’ll always be in true, unconditional, Love.”

“But what if my husband becomes really annoying, doesn’t clean up after himself, and lies to me? Maybe I just won’t love him anymore,” said Maria.

“Well, that would be your ego reacting to his ego,” said Mr. Hawkins. “This is exactly why most relationships fail. They are built on shaky ground. Egos are never satisfied for very long. Sooner or later, the partners experience negative feelings, and because they see the world through their unconscious ego, they blame their partner for their unhappiness.”

“But if my husband lied to me, how could I NOT blame him?” asked Maria.

“Which part of your husband do you think would be doing the lying? The light inside him, or the unconscious, needy, fearful ego?”

“His ego” said Maria. “But that’s no excuse. He should know better.”

“Maybe he SHOULD know better, but if he’s lying to you, he doesn’t know better. If you blame him, yell at him, throw his things outside the window, which part of you is doing that?”

“My ego.”

“Right” said Mr. Hawkins. “It becomes a fight between egos. Because egos are so needy and insecure, any relationship between two egos is going to be very challenging. The only way to experience a true, loving, lasting relationship is to see through your awareness and not your ego.”

“How would that be possible with a lying husband?” asked Maria.

“If you are very aware, you’ll be able to see that your husband is lying because he is deeply unconscious. You’ll understand that it’s his ego that makes him act out of fear and pain.”

“I’d be aware that he’s driving me crazy, but that’s about it,” said Maria.

“When you are in a state of real detached awareness, you are able to watch your own reactions, thoughts and emotions. You are present enough to see that underneath your husband’s hurtful words and actions, there is a beautiful shining light of awareness. Through your forgiveness and compassion, you could help him break the ego shell that is keeping his light trapped inside.”

“Well I don’t think I’d have the patience for that,” said Maria.

“People have this idea about romantic love that sets them up for failure right from the start,” explained Mr. Hawkins. “Nobody’s perfect, and as long as people are identified with their egos, conflicts will continue.”

“Okay class, we’re going to do a little experiment now,” said Mr. Hawkins. He pulled out large photos of superstars Justin Beaver and Kitty Perry. The class got very excited.

“Kitty Perry!” said one boy, “I LOVE her! She’s so beautiful and talented.”

“Justin Beaver!” said one girl, “He’s so adorable! I’m totally in love with him!”

Mr. Hawkins said “Alright, now please look at your rings.”

Every single ring was green!

“Your rings are ego-green because what you feel for Justin and Kitty is not true love, but ego attachment. You admire Kitty and Justin, you appreciate their talent, but this is not true love.”

Maria asked “what if I love someone who loves me back, and we get along perfectly? Is that true love?”

“That depends on your awareness” said the teacher. “When someone loves you and tells you how wonderful you are, your ego can’t get enough of that feeling. It’s easy to love the other person back. But what happens if the person who loved you suddenly rejects you? Do you still love them unconditionally or does your ego suddenly feel hurt and sad? True love comes from inside you, it’s not affected by what other people do, or don’t do.”

“Now I have a little surprise for you class. Just give me a minute,” said Mr. Hawkins. He walked out of the classroom and a few moments later, five tiny golden puppies ran in.

“Awwwww! They’re so adorable!” said a girl.

Everyone got to pet the puppies and play with them. It was a delightful experience. Mr. Hawkins asked the students to take a look at their rings. Every single ring was red!

“Are you guys in love with the puppies?” asked the teacher with a grin. “These puppies helped you get in touch with the true, unconditional Love that’s already inside you. That Love is always there, because it’s what you are made of. I will now remove the puppies and I’d like you to be very aware of what happens inside you. Try to stay in this loving state for as long as you can. As soon as your ring turns green, notice what thought or emotion just went through you.”

The rings stayed red for quite some time. Some of them turned green, then red again, then back to green. The students were learning how to shift their perspective from ego to awareness.

“I ask you now,” continued Mr. Hawkins, “what is one thing that everybody can do to improve their relationships with others?”

Kevin raised his hand. “Everybody can work on knowing the difference between their ego and their true, aware Self.”

“Excellent!” said Mr. Hawkins. “Once you know who you really are, you enter a state of loving awareness. It’s only from this place that you can truly love others.”

“Is that why they say you can’t really love others unless you love yourself first?” asked Maria.

“Well yes, if ‘yourself’ means your aware Self and not just your ego, your personality and your body. There is a huge difference. Once you know yourself to be the light of awareness, you suddenly see this same light in everyone else and you are able to love them unconditionally, just like the puppies.”

Maria continued “but why even bother being in relationships if we can just love everyone unconditionally?”

“Very good question, Maria” said Mr. Hawkins. “Very few people experience that state of unconditional love. It requires a lot of courage, a lot of letting go, and a lot of devotion. Do you know what gives people the greatest opportunity to grow and break free from their egos?”

“What?” asked Maria.

“Relationships!” said Mr. Hawkins. “The partners in the relationship poke each other’s seeds of unhappiness. This may feel uncomfortable, but it’s a golden opportunity for each person to face and release the pain they have been keeping inside. This sets them free.”

“Our time is almost up for today, class. Who can tell me what true Love is?”

How would you answer that question?

“I know!” said Maria. “True Love is not an emotion. It’s who we are under our ego shell. If we want happy, peaceful relationships, then we have to know ourselves as the awareness. This allows us to see and love the light of awareness in others, even when that light is sometimes dimmed by their ego.”

Mr. Hawkins’ class had such a profound effect on the students at Sacred Heart School that after only ten years, the town of Lonesome had the world’s lowest divorce rate (2%).