

RANDOM HOUSE  BOOKS

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# I Need Your Love – Is That True?

Byron Katie with Michael Katz

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Love is wonderful—except when we are searching for it, trying to hold on to it, or missing it. Hours of every day are taken up with difficult, painful thoughts about our relationships. This book introduces a way of relating that is much easier than our usual approach, and more effective. Through its guidance and exercises, you will learn how to have a fulfilling love life, and you will find out how you can be in charge of your own happiness.

### **1. DO YOU BELIEVE WHAT YOU THINK?**

Your most intimate relationship is the one you have with your thoughts. The way you relate to your thoughts determines everything else in your life, and in particular how you relate to other people. If you believe your stressful thoughts, your life is filled with stress. But if you question your thoughts, you come to love your life and everyone in it.

## 2. QUESTIONING YOUR THOUGHTS ABOUT LOVE

Until you understand your thoughts, you aren't relating to people or to yourself; you're relating to concepts that you haven't questioned. This is painful and isolating. Chapter 2 gives you instructions for getting started in The Work, the process of inquiry that allows you to find out for yourself whether your thoughts are true for you and exactly how they affect your life. The Work also gives you an experience of who you are without these thoughts. Throughout the book we'll be inquiring into some painful and universally held thoughts about relationships, and we'll be finding out if they are really true.

## 3. SEEKING APPROVAL

This chapter deals with one of the most painful thoughts about relationships—the thought that you have to win the love and approval of other people. We inquire into this thought first by investigating how you live when you seek love and approval. Several exercises are provided that allow you to make an amazing discovery: that the most universally held beliefs about what you need to do to be liked, loved, or appreciated are untrue, and that they lead to a false and stressful life. The chapter also includes exercises that show you the relief and intimacy of being with other people without seeking their approval.

## 4. FALLING IN LOVE

Why does it feel so good to fall in love? Why do you think your experience of love is caused by your partner? Why do you fall out of love? This chapter includes an exercise that allows you to discover what your experience of love really is—an experience that

doesn't disappear and doesn't depend on anything or anyone outside you.

## 5. PERSONALITIES DON'T LOVE—THEY WANT SOMETHING

This chapter points out what happens when you form a romantic relationship based on a fictitious identity and a false concept of love. It exposes the widely held myth that love is about getting what you want and having your needs met. It also includes exercises that allow you to clearly see the difference between wanting and loving.

## 6. THE RELATIONSHIP WORKSHOP

Chapter 6 gives you many examples of how relationship troubles disappear when you're willing to judge your partner mercilessly and then question your judgments.

## 7. WHAT IF MY PARTNER IS FLAWED?

Apparent flaws in your partner are opportunities for self-realization. What you see as a fact may be just another unquestioned thought. The chapter ends with a conversation in Amsterdam that transforms a divorce into a love story.

## 8. FIVE KEYS TO FREEDOM IN LOVE

If you believe that you absolutely need someone, that you couldn't make it without that person, that the people around you or life in general is failing to give you what you want, this chapter offers powerful ways to come to your own aid.

## 9. THE TRANSFORMATION OF A MARRIAGE

The real-life story of a couple who saved their marriage through inquiry.

## 10. WHAT'S NOT TO LOVE? COULD IT BE YOU?

There's nothing left now between you and love except what you haven't resolved inside yourself. This chapter facilitates the process of discovering what that is. It shows you how to free yourself from what you're most ashamed of, what you can't forgive, what you still resent, what you want to hide, and any criticism you can't welcome with open arms.

## 11. LIVING IN LOVE

What does love look like when it's not about seeking, wanting, and needing? Excerpts from the accounts of hundreds of people who are living the discoveries that make up this book.

## 12. LOVE ITSELF

A description of the experience of love when it is so firmly established in you that there is nothing outside it.

FURTHER TOOLS FOR INQUIRY

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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# ABOUT THE BOOK

IS IT TRUE THAT YOU *NEED* LOVE?

**Everyone agrees that love is wonderful. We spend our whole lives seeking it, holding onto it, or trying to get over it.** And not far behind, as major preoccupations, come approval and appreciation. From childhood on, most of us spend much of our energy trying out different methods to be noticed, to please, to impress and to win other people's love, thinking these are things we must have - and that's just the way life is.

In this groundbreaking book, **BYRON KATIE** shows how to use the simple form of inquiry she offered in her hugely popular work, *Loving What Is*, to highlight the common misunderstandings we often have about love. She explains how to examine our attempts to win people over - and also the imaginary needs that drive our quests. And, in the process, she clarifies how to bring new life to casual and work-based friendships, as well as romance and intimate relationships.

Liberating, exciting, wise and funny, *I Need Your Love - Is That True?* brings a fresh perspective to a subject dear to all our hearts. It will transform your outlook and your relationships, and show you how love itself is available to us all in every moment of our lives.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Byron Katie has been travelling around the world for more than a dozen years teaching The Work (her remarkable method for finding happiness and freedom) to hundreds of thousands of people. Her website is [www.thework.org](http://www.thework.org), where you will find her schedule, articles about her, registration forms and basic information about The Work.

ALSO BY BYRON KATIE

*Loving What Is:*  
*Four Questions That Can Change Your Life*  
(WITH STEPHEN MITCHELL)



# I Need Your Love—Is That True?

How to Find All the Love, Approval  
and Appreciation You Ever Wanted

Byron Katie  
with  
Michael Katz



EBURY  
PRESS

Any references to 'writing in this book' refer to the original printed version. Readers should write on a separate piece of paper in these instances.

*To Adam Lewis,  
with love and gratitude*

## PRAISE FOR BYRON KATIE

‘Suppose you could find a simple way to embrace your life with joy, stop arguing with reality, and achieve serenity in the midst of chaos? This is what *Loving What Is* offers. It is no less than a revolutionary way to live your life. The question is: are we brave enough to accept it?’

*Erica Jong*

‘Katie’s unique approach, with elements that recall Zen meditation, Socratic inquiry and Alcoholics Anonymous’ 12-step programme, offers a pragmatic and simple way of getting people to take responsibility for their own problems.’

*Time Magazine*

‘I love Katie and her Work. She seems to have spontaneously discovered the essence of Buddhism and self-inquiry and manifests them through her teachings as well as her personal presence. I often recommend my own students and friends to experience for themselves her transformative practice, for both love and wisdom are there.’

*Lama Surya Das, author of *Awakening the Buddha Within**

‘Byron Katie’s work is a completely accessible user-friendly form of the ancient way of spiritual inquiry. It has some of the spirit of Zen koans, and lightens the anguish that the world can bring. Katie’s work is a

simple method that anyone can use to untangle difficulties in work, love and family, and at the same time it opens the deepest spiritual directions.'

*John Tarrant, Zen teacher and author of *The Light Inside the Dark**

'Get real, beat the blues. Lasting happiness is just four simple questions away.'

*The Times*

# FOREWORD

by John Tarrant

*Author of Bring Me the Rhinoceros and Other Zen  
Koans to Bring You Joy*

The interesting thing about Byron Kathleen Mitchell (yes, she really was named Byron at birth—Byron Kathleen Reid) is what she has discovered and has to teach about love. It's something extraordinary, and this book will show you how it's done. Once you see it, it's obvious and will change your life if you try it out. It works for me. Also, just so you don't think that she is different from other people in some special way that makes her capable of doing things you couldn't do, it might be good to learn something about her. That way you might be able to see that what she has to teach can work for others, especially you. Her life has been ordinary and difficult and successful and full of misjudgment and intelligence, just like most lives.

When wise people return out of the desert in the old stories, they have lots of hair, are usually dressed in robes—which is what everyone wore in the desert—and they can't help speaking about what they have

found out. In the United States, such wise people might look much more ordinary to us, have, say, big hair, long fingernails, and a background in real estate. Byron Kathleen Mitchell (everyone calls her Katie) has a background in real estate, and though she no longer has big hair and now wears Eileen Fisher clothes, she still can't help talking about what she discovered.

She does actually come from the desert, from Barstow; that's the first thing in the creation myth of this discovery. Barstow is in the Mojave Desert in Southern California, the last stop before the long haul into Arizona. It has railway sidings and a nearby Air Force base and neat rows of houses where military personnel cultivate flowers in front yards in sight of the desert. The Mojave is bleak even by desert standards; it lacks the whimsy of cactuses, yet becomes truly beautiful if you start to pay attention to it. If you take a walk with Katie there at sunset, the warm wind seems like a caress and the rocks are subtle in their shades of brown and yellow and black and red, and the shadows are blue. She will lead you up canyons to places where hidden water drips and you might begin to see the desert as kind and believe her when she says it was her teacher.

Her story is hers, yet it is an everyperson story. She was happy with three children and a husband who loved her and a business, and then she became unhappy—gradually at first, and then all at once. She gained a lot of weight, she began to drink, she became angry and afraid, she slept with a revolver under her pillow. The revolver under the pillow is not

as unusual in Barstow as it would be in San Francisco, yet it was disquieting to her family. She kept her business going but was helpless in most other ways and felt deeply unworthy. So far, this is an ordinary sort of story and an ordinary kind of pain, though severe: you wander along through life taking in the view until something hits you on the side of the head and gets your attention.

The interesting part of the story usually starts at the moment you fall off your donkey, and so it does for Katie. Her crisis was profound and didn't seem to be resolving itself. It was a crisis of her whole being. Her family wondered if she was going mad. She checked herself into an eating disorder center because it was the only kind of treatment her health program would pay for—a nice, practical, American touch. This absurd idea turned out well. She just stopped everything for a while. But it wasn't a therapy or a treatment that helped. She just woke up one morning and the world turned over, and with it her heart did too. She had been knocked off her donkey on the road to Damascus, and her life would never be the same. This was in 1986.

It was one of those sudden, intense, and transforming experiences that happens for no good reason, and in Asia is called enlightenment. Suddenly everything was turned around. Where before she was afraid and desperate, now she felt love and kindness in every moment. Everyone was astonished, especially her kids. They say that the difference was like night and day. They could tell immediately that they didn't have to be afraid anymore. Suddenly she



was loving, she listened to them, she wasn't angry, she was delighted with their lives, and this helped them to become delighted too.

But just what had changed? Katie made a really simple discovery. She noticed that she had been believing her thoughts and terrifying herself half to death with them. Then she stopped believing her thoughts, and the world stopped at the same time. The inner conflict and fear dropped away. Straightaway, she felt deeply for others in the same plight and wanted to explain what she had seen. This feeling of connection and love was the beginning of a method to help others.

Here it is in her words:

*I saw clearly, irrevocably, that everything was backward, upside down from what I believed. My thinking had opposed everything as it truly was and reacted with stories of how I thought it should be. "My husband should be more honest." "My children should respect me more." Now I saw that instead of seeing what was happening, I was placing conditions on what was happening—as if I had the ability to dictate reality.*

*It was clear to me now that the truth was the extreme opposite. My husband should not be more honest—because he wasn't. My children shouldn't respect me more—because they didn't. Instantly I became a lover of reality: I noticed that this felt more natural, more peaceful.*

And for the rest, how do you live when you are happy? Well, some things changed a lot: She lost weight, and her anger and sadness were gone. Other

things don't look so unusual from the outside. She married again. She keeps in close contact with her kids, who do the usual ordinary and surprising things children do—her daughter has a couple of children and Katie tells the stories of being at their births. One of her sons likes to ride motocross bikes and produces interesting rock music in Los Angeles, another is an electrician with three kids. Family life.

Something that changed completely is Katie's work life. After her world stopped, she greeted the people she met with such freshness and presence that people in Barstow started to talk about a lady who was "lit"—as if she had a glow inside. They would start talking to her about what gave them pain, and she would bring them home, make them a meal or a cup of tea, and sit them down on the sofa. She would have them write down their troubling thoughts, then she would introduce them to her questions, beginning with, "Honey, is that true?" Katie didn't tell anyone what to do or what to believe. They answered her questions for themselves. In turn, people's lives changed—some quickly, some slowly.

From this intimate beginning, her teaching spread as she was invited to other places in California and then the world. She has taught pretty much everywhere—from Osaka to Cape Town, taking in Jerusalem and San Quentin prison on the way. Thousands and thousands of people. People pass on what they have learned to their friends, and in this way her work spreads. Her method has remained pretty much the same, though now she doesn't get as much time to cook. She still calls people "Honey"

and sometimes “Sweetheart,” terms she uses comfortably, as a mild blessing. What she does is to sit down with someone, and have them write out the thoughts that give them pain. Then she asks her questions. Katie always starts with the thoughts a person has about others, thoughts around love or approval or appreciation or admiration—the tangled feelings that people have for each other at work or at home. What happens in the human heart is the field of her wisdom and the place she brings kindness and clarity to. If enlightenment is an interesting thing to you, she has made it available without going to a monastery or into the desert. Her questions help integrate the natural wisdom we all have when we are not being chased around by fear and anger.

Here’s the way Katie herself describes her discovery:

*My life was like this fable: I walked into the Mohave Desert on a gorgeous day, minding my own business. Suddenly, Oh my God!—there’s a big fat Mojave Green rattlesnake directly in front of me. And I had almost stepped on him! No one around for miles and this could be a painful, slow death. My heart was beating to pop out of my chest, my brow had broken into a sweat, I was paralyzed by fear.*

*But then, and I don’t know how it happened, my eyes began to focus: I dared another glance at the snake—and miraculously, I saw: It’s a rope! That snake is a rope! Well, I fell to the ground and began to laugh, cry, and to just take it in. I even had to poke it.*

*What had happened? I knew one thing: I was safe. I knew that I could stand over that rope for a thousand years and never be frightened of it again. I felt such gratitude and ease. The entire world could come upon this snake, scream, run away, have heart attacks, scare themselves to death—and I could just remain here fearlessly, and pass on the good news. I would understand people's fears, see their pain, hear their stories about why it really is a snake, and yet there would be no way that I could believe them or be frightened of that rope. I had fallen into the simple truth: That snake is a rope.*

The way Katie tells it, it doesn't matter how miserable you are; what matters is if you begin to question the thoughts behind your unhappiness. There is something you are taking to be a rattlesnake that is really a rope. Confusions about relationships are all forms of the same fear—that you won't survive or be happy without someone else's approval or love, that if you are not working twenty-four hours a day to please your boss, your spouse, your colleague, things will fall apart. Katie shows that there is another, less desperate, much easier way to get love.

*How do I help people who think that the rope is a snake? I can't. They have to realize it for themselves. They could take my word for it, because they want it to be true. But until they see it for themselves, they would always in their hearts believe that the rope is a poisonous snake and that they are in mortal danger.*

*Well, thoughts are like that, and inquiry is about the snakes in the mind—the thoughts that keep us from love and from the awareness of being loved. I*

*can see that every loveless, stressful thought in the mind is a rope. Inquiry is meant to help you discover for yourself that all the snakes in your mind are really and truly just ropes.*

Katie's best discovery is that when you do question your thoughts, you find out that the world is a much kinder place than you had imagined, and there's no need to go to sleep in fear or wake up anxious. When you really start to look, the world is full of love, and there's plenty to go around.

Santa Rosa, California  
December 2004

## PREFACE: HOW THIS BOOK WAS WRITTEN

“Can you imagine?” That’s what I thought the first time I met Byron Katie. I wasn’t sure what I was meeting—was it Mary Poppins crossed with a Zen master? A brisk, incisive, loving, alert, and cheerful woman. I was there to discuss becoming her literary agent, but I had trouble sticking to the agenda because we laughed so much. At one point our host actually laughed so hard that he fell off the couch.

Even with my limited exposure to Katie’s method of questioning your thoughts, it seemed to me that it changed everything. We laughed at what would happen to government, education, marriage, if people questioned what they believe. I was more interested in this conversation than in getting a book out. A book—*Loving What Is*—finally did appear. And five years later, I’m still being struck by its implications, and I still have trouble sticking to the agenda when I talk with Katie.

Katie spends most of her time on the road leading various kinds of workshops, and in that role she doesn’t have to explain much. She asks people to trust her questions, and she demonstrates how they work. She meets every thought that comes up—agonized or angry or sad—with the same inquisitive

and friendly “Is that true?” Her warmth and acceptance do the rest. They allow her to move quickly without much explanation. She soars.

When Katie asked me to help her write this book, I saw it as my job to be more of a plodder, to walk along on the ground, making sure to clarify the intervening steps on the page. Here and there I would add a layer of explanation or an exercise. In other places I couldn’t resist pointing out things that Katie doesn’t usually talk about directly. For instance, as part of my job as an agent, I keep up with the drift of popular self-help books. I began to notice that, based on what I had learned applying inquiry to my own life, the best course often seemed to be the exact opposite of what the self-help books advised. Katie got a big laugh out of that, even though I don’t think she’s ever read a self-help book.

In the explanatory sections and in the connections that I occasionally spelled out, I introduced passages to the book that Katie wouldn’t have written. Yet when she read them, they excited her, and she interjected her own comments and thoughts. We sent passages back and forth by e-mail, and met often. As a result, parts of the book came out in a hybrid style, like a rocket-boosted bicycle.

My hope is that you’ll do as I have done—take a test spin on that bicycle. Ask yourself Katie’s questions. There is really no way to describe what will happen when you do.

Michael Katz

# INTRODUCTION

EVERYONE AGREES THAT love is wonderful, except when it's terrible. People spend their whole lives tantalized by love—seeking it, trying to hold on to it, or trying to get over it. Not far behind love, as major preoccupations, come approval and appreciation. From childhood on, most people spend much of their energy in a relentless pursuit of these things, trying out different methods to be noticed, to please, to impress, and to win other people's love, thinking that's just the way life is. This effort can become so constant and unquestioned that we barely notice it anymore.

This book takes a close look at what works and what doesn't in the quest for love and approval. It will help you find a way to be happier in love and more effective in all your relationships without being manipulative or deceptive in any way. What you learn here will bring fulfillment to all kinds of relationships, including romantic love, dating, marriage, raising children, work, and friendship.

In the course of reading this book, you'll begin to notice how many of your thoughts are about the quest for love and approval—something most people never discover. And just by noticing, you'll learn a whole new way of relating to your thoughts. This will



radically change how you are with yourself and with anyone important to you: your spouse, your children, your parents, your boss, colleagues, employees, friends. You won't have to learn a new way of presenting yourself that isn't true for you or that deceives others. Instead, you'll be pleasantly surprised by what you discover. You'll be amused as well.

If you're in pain right now because your quest for love and approval has hit a bad patch, you'll find it helpful to follow the exercises in this book. They work best when, just for a moment, you put aside your desire for relief from pain and do them in the spirit of a search for truth. Relief will come quickly if you can find what is really true, not for other people but for you. This isn't a book of advice. Instead, it offers you questions that will bring you face-to-face with parts of your life that you may not have thought about until now. Getting to know yourself in this way is interesting, and bursts of natural light and happiness will appear where you least expect them. All you have to do is genuinely answer the questions you'll find here. And if you do answer them from your heart, you'll discover for yourself what you've always wanted and how effortlessly you can get it. Many of you will get it simply by reading this book.

Here is one way of understanding where the journey of this book leads. Consider a smile. First think of a deliberate smile, the smile you produce when you think you should—for instance, for a photo. That smile is useful in some ways; it's intended to be kind to others, like Secretary Appreciation Week.

Now think of a smile that happens by itself. This smile can't be produced on purpose, it can't be faked, and there is no instruction book for creating it. We all love a smile that happens by itself. Unmistakably genuine, it opens doors and hearts everywhere.

Even if it is seldom allowed to see the light of day, you know that this smile is somewhere inside you, ready to burst out. It comes from an enjoyable conversation that you have with yourself. Once you understand this, everything in your life with other people will change. The book you're about to read is designed to introduce you to that conversation and, if you like, to help you make it your own.

## DO YOU BELIEVE WHAT YOU THINK?

HAVE YOU EVER felt that the harder you look for love, the more it seems to elude you? Or that seeking approval makes you feel insecure? If you have, there's a reason. It's because seeking love and approval is a sure way to lose the awareness of both. You can lose the awareness of love, but never love itself. Love is what we are. So, if love is what we are, why do we look for it so hard, and often with such poor results? Only because of what we think—the thoughts we believe that are not true.

You don't have to believe any of this. You can verify it for yourself as you read this book or when you put the book down and ask four questions about your own relationships, or lack of them, and discover how your life changes.

In the pursuit of love, approval, and appreciation, what do we think? We think that the love and approval of others are the keys to the kingdom—to every good thing in the world. We think that seeking romance brings love, a sexual partner, long-term closeness, marriage, family. And we think that trying

to impress society—trying to win the admiration of the right people—is our best shot at bringing fame, wealth, and satisfaction into our lives.

So we think that if we succeed in the quest, we're home: safe, warm, and appreciated. And what if we fail? We're homeless, out in the cold, lost in the crowd, unnoticed, lonely, and forgotten. If those are the stakes, no wonder the quest can be so fearful and all-consuming. No wonder a compliment can make your day and a harsh word can ruin it.

The big, primitive fears rarely rise to the surface. Few people walk around actually thinking that they're about to fall through the cracks of society and vanish. Instead, thousands of anxious thoughts appear all day long: "Was I noticed?" "Why didn't she smile?" "Did I make a good impression?" "Why hasn't he returned my call?" "Do I look okay?" "Should I have said that?" "What do they think of me now?" It's a constant monitoring to see if we're gaining or losing ground in the grand approval sweepstakes. Those little doubts are rarely noticed or questioned, and yet they set in motion hundreds of strategies designed to win favor and admiration, or just to please. The unspoken belief is that unless people approve of you, you're worthless.

The irony is that the struggle to win love and approval makes it very difficult to experience them. Chronic approval seekers don't realize that they are loved and supported not because of but despite their efforts. And the more strenuously they seek, the less likely they are to notice.

How do we get into this predicament? For a few pages, we'll just look at the ways unquestioned thoughts create our experience. We'll see how often-unnoticed thoughts that most of us share lead us to needing, wanting, longing, and reaching for what we already have. The thoughts behind a familiar 3 a.m. anxiety attack are a good place to start.

## Thought at 3 a.m.: Nothing Supports Me

Suddenly you wake up in the middle of the night, glance at the clock, and wish you were still asleep. A thought appears: "What's going to happen to me? It's a cold, uncaring universe. I don't know what to do." These thoughts were triggered by a mutual-fund commercial you saw last night, but you don't realize that. And the next ones come from a half-remembered motivational tape: "There are no guarantees in this world. Nothing's going to happen for you unless you make it happen." This thought provides a little boost, followed by a major deflation as you remember that self-reliance hasn't worked all that well for you. "I need so much. I have so few resources to get it. My survival skills aren't great, and basically I'm faking it. I'm helpless and alone." The next thought brings some hope: "If I could just get more love from my family and friends, if just one person really adored me, if my boss really believed in me, then I wouldn't be so anxious, and I could count on being supported."

The thought “Nothing supports me without my efforts” is just one of the unquestioned and often unnoticed beliefs that set in motion the search for love and approval. Let’s pause for a moment and explore the opposite.

## Daylight Reality Check: Everything Supports Me

Do you know what supports your existence right now?

Just to scratch the surface of this, suppose you’ve eaten your breakfast, sat down in your favorite chair, and picked up this book. Your neck and shoulders support your head. The bones and muscles of your chest support your breathing. Your chair supports your body. The floor supports your chair. The earth supports the building you live in. Various stars and planets hold the earth in its orbit. Outside your window a man walks down the street with his dog. Can you be sure that he isn’t playing a part in your support? He may work every day in a cubicle, filing papers for the power company that makes your lights come on.

Among the people you see on the street, and the countless hands and eyes working behind the scenes, can you be sure that there is anyone who isn’t supporting your existence? The same question applies to the generations of ancestors who preceded you and to the various plants and animals that had