

A close-up photograph of two hands, one above the other, gently cupping a bright red, glossy heart. The hands are light-skinned and the background is a soft, out-of-focus grey. The heart is the central focus, symbolizing love and care.

Romancing
your Soul
~ Written Guide Series ~

101 Ways to Love Others

By Regina Cates Author of *Lead With Your Heart*



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We often think of showing our love for others by doing something for them. A nice dinner out, a bouquet of flowers, picking up the cleaning. While those are great ways to express fondness, love is really about how you BE in relationship. That is, the BEhaviors you use to express your care and affection. Giving flowers on an anniversary is thoughtful and honors your commitment, but it is how you BE the other 364 days a year that truly expresses your love.

1. It's okay not to be perfect. You are going to make mistakes. When you do mess up, say you are sorry and mean it. Be genuine with your apologies and make them sincere. Owning up to when your actions hurt another person is being responsible for the emotional impact of your behavior. The mistake will become less important when you make the appropriate apology. Then do everything within your power not to make the same mistake again.

2. Tell the truth. No matter how hard it is or what the consequences may be. You must be trusted by those you love. Consistent honesty is the only way to establish trust. Also, admit the truth to yourself because if you lie to yourself you will lie to others. If you lie to yourself you will not trust yourself. So being truthful is not only a way to love others but it is also a way to love yourself.

3. Love is supportive. Instead of focusing on people's weaknesses concentrate on their strengths and acknowledge their positive qualities. Accept both their strengths and weaknesses but encourage their positive attributes. Look for something you can genuinely compliment them on and support them as you want to be supported.

4. Listen as you want to be heard. Keep your mind quiet while someone is speaking. Listen to their words and feel them in your heart as they speak. Stop yourself from forming a response while they are talking. Don't interrupt. Be patient and listen so you actually hear what is being said with compassion and courtesy.

5. Speak as you want to be spoken to. Words have power so be aware of the tone of your voice, how loud or soft you are speaking, and the emotion behind your words. It does not feel good to be shouted at or addressed in an angry tone. It feels loving to be spoken to respectfully. Especially when there is disagreement or frustration, keep in mind

how your words feel to the other person. Hard things can be said in soft ways.

6. Find your own passions. Have a great life of your own. Part of loving is appreciating no one person can be everything to you and you cannot be everything to someone. It's okay to have different interests and friends. Differences help keep relationships interesting.

7. Love does not deny reality or avoid challenges. Deal with what comes up when it comes up by refusing to sweep issues under the rug. Be direct and communicate clearly. Look to create win-win solutions to relationship challenges.

8. Recognize the needs of others. Put yourself in another person's position to feel what they feel. Honor their requests for help and support. You have needs for space, rest, comfort. So do other people. Think of others by keeping your heart open to see where you may be able to aid someone in satisfying the needs he or she has.

9. Remain calm in the midst of a crisis. Panic only makes a situation worse and stress and frustration levels higher. To best respond to a challenge or crisis requires you remain strong to support others. To be strong you must slow down, stay centered and balanced. In times of crisis focus on being patient, calm, and collected.

10. Say please and thank you. Love is courteous and gracious. Acknowledge the thoughtful actions of others. Politely ask for what you want.

11. When someone gives you a compliment express your appreciation for their comment. Don't lessen their caring with remarks like, "You're just saying that" which invalidates their compliment. Being humble is not the same as sending a self-denigrating message that the person giving you the compliment is wrong. It's not loving to reject or minimize a compliment. Stay modest and just say "thank you."

12. Choose to be happy. Happiness is not something created when the stars align, or you get your dream job, relationship, or new home. Happiness is a state of staying positive, even when life is challenging. Love chooses to be happy regardless of the circumstances.

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13. Don't rush to judgment. Listen to the ideas of others without picking them apart. Love does not criticize. It is important not to discount or be negative when someone is sharing something they feel passionate about. Look for ways to remain positive and reassuring through honestly weighing the merits of other people's ideas.

14. Be an adult. Love is responsible, accountable, honest, forgiving, forthright, compassionate, understanding, and loyal. Love is strong and patient. Love is accepting and cooperative. Don't allow your self-centered and pouty child to enter into your relationships.

15. Stay calm and don't react when having disagreements with others. Anger causes us to stop listening to one another which does not lead to the peaceful and cooperative settling of differences. Love looks for the right time and way to respond, even if it means asking for a break so you can come back to the discussion in a calmer, more receptive state.

16. Forgive an action. You make mistakes and so do other people. Love does not hold grudges. Release the resentment of what your loved one did. Give a second chance.

17. Set boundaries with people who repeatedly behave in hurtful ways. While love readily gives another chance, you must also be honest with yourself about the reality of the behavior of those who continue to act in negative and hurtful ways. You must communicate acceptable relationship behavior and what is unacceptable. You must set boundaries with unacceptable behavior.

18. Turn off the phone or other technology when at the dinner table, eating out, or anytime you are with other people. Love is respectful. You cannot act lovingly to those you are with if you are on the phone during an in-person conversation. That sends a clear message to the person you are with he- she is not important. Love is giving others your full attention, to face them, and listen attentively. The people you are with are more important than whoever is calling or whatever is on the television or computer.

19. Care about the wake you leave. Think about how your actions may impact other people and all life, before you act. Love cares by asking, "If I take this action, then what is the likely result." Prevent

hurtful behavior by taking a moment to ask how it feels to be on the receiving end of your behavior.

20. Encourage people to follow their dreams, to achieve their goals, and to do what makes their heart sing. Lead by example by persevering against adversity and challenge so you are an example of how willpower and determination result in success.

21. Be a person of admirable character by making decisions based on moral and ethical principles. Love is always positive and looks for ways to do the right thing. The people you care about will appreciate being able to trust the decisions you make and the actions you take that are founded upon honorable values.

22. Nurture your body and care for your health. Intentional and consistent self-care is not only a way you love yourself, it is also a way for you to love others. While you cannot prevent all health related issues you sure can monitor what you eat, and how much sleep and exercise you get. The goal is to prevent what you can so you don't burden your loved ones as a result of neglecting your body or abusing yourself.

23. Receive with the same grace as you give. Put yourself in another person's position. Remember how it feels to give and be told, "You shouldn't have" or "I don't deserve this." You don't want someone who gives you a gift to feel bad because you cannot accept graciously. You know how good it feels to give. Give the same good feeling to others by graciously receiving.

24. Support those you love regardless. It is easy to have high hopes for the people you love. It is also easy to make harsh judgments instead of accepting them for who they are and respecting their decisions. Love wants the best for others and often requires giving them time to figure out what is right for them. When you see a loved one going down a self-destructive path or making choices you don't agree with, the loving thing is to offer constructive support. And, if they refuse to listen, then love simply hangs in there ready to offer assistance when it is requested.

25. Refuse to gossip. Love supports, encourages, stands up for, defends, and lifts up. If you would not say something to someone's face then don't say it. If you would not want someone saying something

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negative about you then refuse to say the same about yourself.

26. When you forget an engagement, anniversary, or child's recital just admit to making a mistake. Don't make excuses. Love does not look to assign blame outside ourselves. While you don't want to take the fall for things you did not do, accepting blame when you do make a mistake is being responsible. Love owns up instead of denying, blaming or shunning responsibility.

27. Often it is easy to monopolize the conversations you have with details of everything going on with you. Love looks for ways to give people an opportunity to share about themselves. Then listen with interest and engage with support and encouragement.

28. Allow people to express their emotions. You feel anger, frustration, joy, sadness, disappointment, anticipation, and so much more. So do other people. Love does not discount the feelings of others with, "Oh you're not feeling that." Yes, people feel and the last thing they need is for you to tell them they are wrong about their feelings. Honor what they feel.

29. The people you love may do things differently than you do. Like you they are distinctive in their own tastes, preferences, style, and ways of doing things. There may be occasions when you must address negative behavior. But many times in relationship you can put the toothpaste cap back on yourself to let the little things slide.

30. Let go of the idea people should have known better. The rate at which you learn life's lessons is different from the rate other people learn. What is obvious to you about other people's behavior is not obvious to them until they reach the place in their emotional development when they have the awareness. While they may know intellectually their behavior is wrong they have not reached the place of emotional maturity to do better. As Maya Angelo said, "When we know better we do better."

31. Your actions teach. Words are cheap, especially when actions do not align with what is being said. How you consistently behave has more influence on those you love than anything you can ever say.

32. Stop and smell the roses. Lead by example to enjoy life's beauty. Organize walks through the

natural world, outings to a garden, or a river rafting adventure. Appreciate your connection to all life by regularly immersing yourself and those you love in the natural world.

33. When your actions hurt someone ask him or her for forgiveness. Whether the hurtful behavior was intentional or not, acknowledge the pain you caused. Take responsibility for your actions by seeking forgiveness either by asking in person or writing a letter.

34. Be transparent and vulnerable. Be who you are naturally, without trying to please others or to live up to their expectations of who they think you should be. When people see you are unmasked and you have nothing to hide they can better relate to you. Vulnerability connects you on a deeper level to those you love which builds intimacy, which builds trust.

35. Don't add to the burdens others are carrying. It is important to share what is going on with you and in your life. It is also vital to remain responsible for finding your own solutions to the challenges you face. Ask for the advice of those you love but don't expect them to bail you out of your troubles or to come up with the answers to fix your problems.

36. Give honest feedback. Telling people what they want to hear to make them feel good is not helpful or loving. Love does not want someone to find out later something about themselves we notice now. While not necessarily easy to do, providing thoughtful constructive feedback is the loving thing to do.

37. Life is filled with challenges. Everything will not always go your way. You will have bad days but you don't have to complain to others. One of the ways you love others is to eliminate complaints which can be toxic to other people.

38. Be humble. Avoid the need to be right and take responsibility for the mistakes you make. Be modest about your talents and significance. Humility builds trust and intimacy because your focus will be on others rather than yourself.

39. Lighten the load. There is a belief system your home breathes as a living organism, similar to you. The philosophy is this life-force, or qi, enters your home through windows and doors and should be able to flow unobstructed around the spaces in the

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corridors and rooms. When this energy is blocked by clutter, your personal energy can become blocked, resulting in stress, anxiety, and even illness. Less clutter means less distraction, so your energy can be more focused and productive.

40. Give of your time. The overall health and quality of your relationships is determined by how much meaningful time you spend with those you love. In fact, the most precious gift you will ever give to those you care for is your time.

41. Have your affairs in order. While you may live to be 100 and in good health, there is always a possibility something unexpected may happen. It is responsible to prepare for the possibility your loved ones will outlive you. Take the time to prepare a Will, medical power of attorney, and medical directive. Provide your loved ones guidance on your wishes for burial or cremation, donation of organs, and a memorial service. Invest in a term life insurance policy to provide your loved ones enough income to live comfortably. You can't know the future but you can prepare for it.

42. The people you love are unique individuals with their own thoughts and dreams. While you may want them to follow in your footsteps make certain you are not forcing your will onto them. Love does not control. Support their career goals and their life objectives. Allow your loved ones to be who they are meant to be.

43. Growing up you were subjected to the beliefs and behaviors of others. You may have endured abuse, ridicule, or expected to meet unrealistic standards. Emotional, physical and psychological mistreatment create wounds resulting in anger, jealousy, co-dependency, issues of abandonment, and fear. Unless you turn and face your past to release yourself from it, you may inappropriately project your unresolved pain onto others. One of the most loving things you can do is work through your issues so you don't pass them on.

44. No relationship is perfect. You will encounter disagreement and stress. In times of conflict it is easy to bring up the negative things your loved one did in the past. Don't! Reminding the people you love how they messed up is continuing to beat them up for their bad choices and mistakes. They are powerless to go back and change anything that is already done. Leave the past in the past.

45. Non-verbal behavior is estimated to make up 93% of all communication. Your body language, tone of voice and inflection make up the majority of your communication. Unless your words align with your non-verbal communication people will know something is off. You can't say all is well or you are okay when you are not. Other people feel your energy. Be honest with those you love and stay aware of how your body speaks for you.

46. Encourage loved ones to spend time alone. It is not healthy to spend all of our time with other people. Periods of solitude are emotionally healthy. Without the distraction of others we are able to think deeply to work through challenges and to be creative. Our brain needs peaceful down time apart from sleep to reboot itself and to increase our ability to concentrate. Being alone helps us stay connected to who we are, to our specific goals, and to our values so we make the best decisions for ourselves.

47. Seek win-win solutions. In a compromise one person ends up losing to the other. In game theory a win-win situation is one where, through cooperation and joint participation, it leads to all participants benefiting. Love others by looking beyond a loser and winner mentality. Seek to create a situation where all people involved win such as a joint decision on a family vacation or mutually agreed upon new car.

48. Just as you want others to respect your boundaries it is loving to respect the boundaries of others. When someone asks you to stop doing a behavior they find annoying, like leaving your dirty clothes on the floor, do the loving thing and be responsible for your mess. Love listens to and honors the reasonable requests of those we care for.

49. Not every relationship with those you love will last. When a relationship is over love lets go. Love looks for ways to grow and learn to benefit from the ups and the downs. Love does not harbor resentment, guilt, feelings of unworthiness, shame. Love does not cling to a fantasy of what we think should be. Love accepts the reality of what is. If you have been left in relationship, don't waste your precious energy in anger, resentment, blame or feelings of revenge. Those negative emotions will not get the person back. Those negative emotions

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and the behaviors they create will only hurt you. Continue to love by letting go.

50. Be responsible for your energy. When you've had a challenging day or you learn distressing news don't take frustration out on others. Rather than storming around spilling your upset onto people, channel the energy into openly and honestly sharing about your stress. Your loved ones will feel included rather than excluded. Love does not create situations where loved ones become defensive in attempts to emotionally protect themselves from misplaced negativity.

51. The people you care for often get themselves into negative situations or make costly mistakes. Love does not enable people to continue behaving badly at your expense. While it is important you hold safe and non-judgmental space for someone by listening with compassion and attention, it is equally important you do not attempt to fix things for other people. You can offer suggestions about appropriate actions. But you must let loved one take the necessary action i.e. - pay their parking tickets, end abusive relationships, etc., so they learn their own lessons.

52. There is something sacred about sharing food with others. In our busy lives meal time often becomes an activity one has to do rather than an enjoyable experience, an opportunity to be together. Make it a practice to eat meals together. If not all of them, then at least once a day make it an important love activity to gather and share food and conversation.

53. Keep both hands on the wheel. Yes, you are able to talk on the phone and drive. Yes, you are able to eat and drive. And, you cannot concentrate fully on more than one thing at a time. In an instant you can become distracted from paying attention to what is most important in the moment -keeping those you love safe, including you. Maybe it will never happen to you. But, love is more interested in making sure to do everything within its power to keep those you care for out of harm's way. It only takes a split second to change life forever. Love is not willing to take the risk.

54. The people closest to you are the ones who get to see all sides of you. They are in a unique position to point out aspects of your behavior you may be blind to. Remember, love is being open to bettering

yourself. So stay patient and don't shoot the messenger when a loved one says you don't listen or you are too quick to jump to judgment. Listen to their honest observations with ears of love.

55. While money is not the most important thing in life, it is the exchange system by which we trade. Happiness and peace in relationship comes from clear communication about financial resources. Such as making an agreement about the amount of money you and your loved ones can spend on a single purchase (i.e. \$50) without conferring with the other person. Love works to be financially responsible and doesn't argue over money.

56. Jealousy is called the green eyed monster for a reason. Negative thoughts and feelings of insecurity, fear, and anxiety do not align with love. You cannot control the people you care for, but you can, as a team, work to eliminate the emotions of anger, resentment, and inadequacy over an anticipated loss. Work to stay emotionally connected to those you love to build the foundation of trust which eliminates fear of loss.

57. Have a plan and work the plan. Love is purposeful. Whether it is a child, partner or friend, seek to discover their dreams and goals. Then together outline a plan to help them achieve those goals. Helping one another achieve individual and shared objectives gives direction and purpose to relationships.

58. Time is the most important personal resource you have. Once a minute is gone no amount of money in the world can buy it back. Time is the most valuable gift you give those you love. There are 1,440 minutes each day. Love strives to be responsible for how time is used. Make sure you don't leave loved ones neglected because you are too busy doing other things.

59. Make eye contact. Looking someone in the eyes conveys interest and attentiveness in what is being communicated. Holding the gaze of another conveys respect and lets the person know you understand what is being communicated.

60. Love is meant to be fun and filled with joy. One of the most delightful activities is laughter. Laughing lowers blood pressure and reduces stress. Laughter triggers the release of feel-good hormones and produces a general sense of well-being. Find ways to bring laughter into all of your relationships.

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61. Love is caring and affection in action. Life is filled with countless opportunities to be helpful. Show loved ones you care by not waiting to be told what to do. Look around to see what needs to be done and do it.

62. Sleep disorders have been linked to hypertension, increased stresshormone levels, and irregular heartbeat. Deprivation of sleep alters the functioning of the immune system, which helps the body fight disease. Too little sleep also leaves you tired and unable to do the things you enjoy doing. Sleep deprivation causes weight gain and affects the way the body processes and stores carbohydrates. Being sleepy can cause traffic mishaps and you become agitated and more prone to stress. Love your loved ones and get enough sleep.

63. Just as time is your greatest resource, it is the same valuable commodity for those you love. Be respectful of other people's time. Show up on time to scheduled events. Tell others when you are going to be late. Let people know you value their time. Be mindful of time and help them protect it as the irreplaceable resource it is.

64. Hug. Hold hands. Sit close to those you love. The largest organ in your body is your skin. When your skin's sensory receptors are stimulated the feel-good hormone, oxytocin, is released. Simultaneously, cortisol, the stress hormone, is reduced. In our virtual world filled with impersonal communication, physical contact is vital to lessen stress and deepen relationships.

65. You love others. Those you love also love others. Show interest in your loved ones friends, the co-workers they speak of fondly, their teachers, class mates and mentors.

66. It hurts to feel left out of decision-making and often results in creating a divide in relationships. Make joint decisions. Don't make changes without discussing them with your loved ones. Allow conversation and work to achieve consensus. Involving loved ones in decision-making results in feelings of ownership in the choices made.

67. There will be occasions when calling a loved one on their inappropriate behavior or pointing out an error they have made, is necessary. Make certain you correct in private. Don't embarrass someone in front of their peers or other loved ones.

68. Be a positive example of hope and faith. Stay optimistic, especially amidst hardship and stress. Be a lighthouse for those you care for. Shine a light to illuminate the end of the tunnel. Let your actions give them strength by showing your glass remains full even in times of challenge.

69. Maintain the effort you invest in your loved ones. The longer you know someone the closer you can become. Don't take others for granted. Continue to appreciate the ways your loved ones enhance you. Honor their contributions to the quality of your life.

70. Love is not harsh or violent. Be gentle. Demonstrating a kind and quiet nature is one of the strongest way to show affection for others.

71. Stay aware of your own emotions. Knowing what you feel and why, allows you to remain open and accessible emotionally to others. By recognizing the emotions of other people you can read the subtle, non-verbal cues that reveal what your loved ones really want and need.

72. You don't spend all of your time with those you care for. But you can involve them in the parts of your life when they are not around. Make it a point to openly share about the times you are not together. Whether it is a work presentation, business trip, sporting event, or lunch with an old friend, be open and share. Make those closest to you feel included and a part of all the events in your life.

73. When someone you care for is accused of something, or being criticized, or verbally attacked, stand by them. While you remain open to determine if there is merit to the accusations, in the moment, the loving action is to calmly and respectfully defend them to others.

74. Respect yourself and your loved ones by maintaining good grooming habits. It shows you care when you look neat and smell good.

75. Sarcasm is defined as "mocking, contemptuous, or ironic language intended to convey scorn or insult." Going back to the origins of the word, sarcasm means to "tear flesh." Being sarcastic does not mean you are clever or humorous but actually means you are condescending, negative, and disrespectful. Don't tease those you love by saying something hurtful

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then defend yourself with, “I was just joking.” Hurtful words hurt. Love never hurts.

76. Don’t make assumptions. Instead of speculating about what people are feeling and thinking, ask them. Create a safe and non-judgmental space for them to share.

77. Every person is like a snowflake; a unique individual with his or her own dreams, thoughts, needs, and abilities. Don’t compare your loved ones to others. View those you love as if they are, beautiful unique snowflakes, different as the individuals they are meant to be.

78. There are two major emotions - love and fear. All other emotions either stem from love (positive) or fear (negative). While there are times when fear is useful, such as removing yourself and loved ones from physical harm, the distressing emotions aroused by projected thoughts of evil, pain, foreboding, and dread are not helpful in creating lives fill with love. Fight fear together. Unravel thoughts of apprehension together using logic and the goal of remaining calm.

79. With the current news trend of having commentators reduce complex global issues to cynical, dualistic arguments, it is easy to develop an apathetic attitude and fearful view of a gloomy world. There is a difference between responsibly staying informed and allowing ourselves to be swallowed up by negativity. Look for truth rather than rely on opinion. Be informed and thoughtful about current events, other people, politics, and the world in general.

80. Not everyone functions at the same level of mental alertness or brightness of intellect. Allow people to express themselves without labeling them stupid or illogical.

81. To judge is to form an opinion of or decide upon critically. Love does not criticize. And opinion is not fact, but a personal view. Accept loved ones without judgment. Love evaluates to determine the true value of something based on evidence and reasoning. It is investing time to gauge yourself, others and situations, from many different angles, with the goal of finding the truth for yourself.

82. Life does not just change for other people; challenges will, in some way or another, happen to

you too. Maybe a tornado will take what you care for. Perhaps a fire, a job loss, or the death of a loved one will be the event that throws you a major curve. You are not meant to live without challenges. You are meant to “rise above” to treasure who and what you love. In times of struggle comfort one another. Stay strong and united.

83. In addition to the physical, emotional, and intellectual capacities and the senses by which you perceive stimuli originating from outside or inside your body, a higher wisdom exists within you. Your heart/soul is where love lives. Encourage those you care for to nurture their whole being. Whether through reading, meditation, yoga, retreats, or organized service, support spiritual growth.

84. You can be stubborn. You can be argumentative. You can insist on getting your way, or proving your point, or being acknowledged as the one who is right. Or you can choose to overrule your self-centered ego and actually have a peaceful life. Let go of the need to be right.

85. Albert Einstein said, “No problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it.” When a loved one is irrational, stay calm. When someone is cruel, stay kind. When someone is impatient, remain patient. Refuse to stoop to the behavior other people choose for themselves. Bring a higher level of awareness to your loved ones.

86. You are not an island in the middle of the ocean. You are one part of something far greater than you are alone. You are surrounded by countless other people. We are connected to them and need them to exist. Ask for help. People like helping one another because it makes them feel valued.

87. You and your loved ones cannot know the unknowable, change the unchangeable, or prevent the unpreventable. Accepting you are powerless to prevent, change, foresee the outcome of, or control certain situations provides a solid foundation of reality for those you care for. Have confidence in your ability to positively deal with life as it is and as it comes. Embrace the unknown by appreciating life is filled with mystery.

88. Don’t settle for status quo. Just because you were taught to believe something does not necessarily make it true. Likewise, just because you were taught not to believe something does not

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necessarily make it false. Be the example for your loved ones and challenge the status quo.

89. Slow down. Hug your loved ones. Take a moment to smell a rose. Feel the refreshing wind on your face. Enjoy the song of birds, the sound of water rippling in a creek, and the beautiful glow of evening dusk when day turns to night. Enjoy the little things, because the very best moments in life really are free.

90. Honor the possessions of others. Just because someone is close to you does not mean you can use whatever of theirs you want. Get permission to borrow something.

91. Sharing food with your loved ones is a sacred experience but make sure you are doing so in the most respectful way possible and have good manners. Keep your elbows off the table, take small bites, and chew with your mouth closed. Ask for food to be passed, don't talk with your mouth full, and use your napkin.

92. You may be in a position of power over those you love. With power comes the temptation to abuse your influence. Be fair. Give people what they earn-deserve, and they'll appreciate it. Real power is expressed through cooperation and giving credit when it is due.

93. It is okay to get annoyed at times. It is never okay to be abusive. Let your frustrations out in a healthy way and never throw a tantrum in front of other people. Let your exasperation out in private. Scream into a pillow, take a long run, punch a punching bag, or go for a strenuous hike.

94. Be grateful for your loved ones. Gratitude creates contentment. Appreciating everything others do for you gives you satisfaction. Being satisfied fills your heart with joy. The more you find to be thankful for about those you love the more they will feel appreciated.

95. People do change for the better. No matter what happened in the past, support people who actually do change their behavior from negative to decidedly positive. Give people the benefit of the doubt. Evaluate people's current consistent behavior as proof of real change.

96. Choose to be elegant. Foul language feels bad because profane words turn people off. Even

close family and friends will be offended by foul language. Be someone who knows using obscene language is crass, unintelligent, and demeaning. Cursing does not mean you are cool. Love and respect yourself and others by setting a higher personal standard.

97. All relationships experience ups and downs. It is the willingness of both people to learn from the downs that keep the relationship moving up. Don't give up on those you love. Hang in there. Successful relationships are like beautiful gardens. Both take time, patience and love to grow.

98. Be responsible for your mind that has a mind of its own. Your thoughts create your behavior. Your behavior creates your life. Jealous thoughts create jealous behavior. Kind thoughts create kind behavior. Revengeful thoughts create revengeful behavior. Peaceful thoughts create peaceful behavior. To create your best life, stay connected to what you are thinking, and why, so you can change jealousy to kindness, revenge to peace.

99. There is a saying, "You are what you eat." What you feed your body can nurture you. Or, eating without awareness can set you up for illness, excess weight gain, and stress. The same is true for what you feed your mind and heart. You can't watch violence, abuse, and negativity on television, in the movies, or see on new reports and think, "I can just tune it out," or "I am not influenced by it," or "It's just a movie or television show." Scientific research points to how messages and experiences actually change your brain, both positively and negatively. Love others and be the responsible gatekeeper to what you let influence you.

100. According to the National Institute for Play, "Play can dramatically transform your personal health and relationships, generate optimism, give your immune system a boost, relieve depression, foster empathy, and lessen stress." Make time to play. No matter what activity you choose, do something on a regular basis with people you care for to bring pleasure to your heart. Doing so is not a waste. It is a vital part of creating a joyful life and healthy relationships.

101. Be your own best friend. Then you can be a good friend to those you love.