



Happy Holidays and Crystallized Emotion

By Eric Ehrke, LCSW, LMFT

As the Winter Solstice approaches and Covid continues, daylight diminishes and darkness expands. Holidays provide loving stories, cherished songs and religious parables to remind us how to love in the midst of illusion. Love is a tiny word but a daunting emotion to master because it is the most complicated, convoluted, irresistible force in the Universe. Just as we have a biological instinct to breathe, so we also have a divine instinct to love. But how do we find love or cherish our circumstances, when someone just drove his SUV into the Waukesha Christmas parade and killed six people and harmed fifty others in Waukesha, Wisconsin.

Crystallized emotion is often the reason why some people reject love and react paradoxically when tender loving care is what their heart desperately needs. Once bitten a human heart is very tender and quite shy. The heart will close after significant trauma and trust issues arise that can evolve into a pattern of protection, which includes sabotaging that most precious human experience of love. These protective shields remain until a way is found to transcend suffering and heal our original wounds.

We are each challenged by self-inflicted injuries developed from misguided interpretations, conclusions and delusions about love that are rooted in emotional material from past experience, which crystallizes over time. Recycling the suffering from a previous love injury can activate shields to protect our heart and prevent further harm. Shielding mechanisms, like the victim/perpetrator paradigm the SUV driver may have used as he drove into the Christmas parade can occur when primitive defenses are never examined or healed.

When intense emotions are burned into our memories, our mind makes snapshot conclusions that can become framed photographs and mental programs. Trauma and suffering can evolve into encrypted, crystallized emotion that recycles primitive defensive reactions to present situations. Memory lapses and dissociation are shields protecting us from crystallized pain until we re-access that original event. But shields do *not* protect forever and actually *postpone* suffering until we release the emotions, revisit our mental conclusions and take those painful pictures off the walls. Beloved partners, family and friends, or some stranger or event will often trigger our unresolved trauma and reopen these wounds. Addressing them with love and acceptance is how to cherish them. When our wise lover reconciles the wounded beloved, defensiveness and the need for protective shields can be reduced.



Here is how crystallized emotions melt:

- By accessing a nurturing, emotionally mature aspect of our personality that has more internal strength and heartfelt passion than manifested during the original event, we can melt the resulting emotion that was internally crystallized into a painful love template or victim/perpetrator paradigm in the aftermath of the precipitating event.
- By cherishing with heartfelt sympathetic resonance the entire residue from our traumas, including the associated mental conclusions, the frozen, crystallized emotions melt away and disassociated decisions can be rewritten as our wounds heal. Removing embedded emotional material and its associated memories opens the gates for omnipotent wisdom to spontaneously erupt and unravel illusion.
- By improving our ability to self-cherish we can increase our adaptability and emotional maturity.
- When our wounds, or those mental snapshots we once used, are replaced with loving solutions, we regain the ability to react to similar experiences more productively.

Intellectual understanding is a tool of our brain's left hemisphere and does not typically have enough potency to melt crystallized emotion, which resides in our right hemisphere. However, the simple action of cherishing and processing our emotional material experientially will access our right hemisphere and can be very productive. If your struggles continue, see a licensed healthcare professional and/or psychotherapist for additional help. Unfortunately, not everyone is willing to do their deeper work, which is why prisons exist to protect innocents from predators.

“Your task is not to seek for love, but merely to seek and find all the barriers within yourself that you have built against it.” ~ Rumi

The following meditation from my book, *The Promise of Wholeness* may be useful during this holiday season:

Every atom of all of creation—including me, is appreciated, valued and honored. Every experience of love and angst brings the paradox of both wisdom and delusions to unravel. I know that no matter what occurs, the divine is with me. I know the divine cherishes me, and I, the human, cherish the divine. Our cooperative relationship creates the foundation for a spectacular partnership.

In the English language cherish is a word I can use to capture the quintessential quality of the divine's love for humanity and all of creation. Even if I am in the midst of a challenge to shift, I can cherish my emotional reaction like I would a giggling child, or recall how I felt cherished by a pet that adored me. Being cherished is uplifting, but now I also want to learn how to cherish the people I touch in my everyday life. My challenge is to develop the strength to reach a state of wholeness where I cherish and expect nothing in return. Can I willingly surrender to the wishes of another while, at the same time, honoring me and accepting that what happens is okay, even though others are indifferent and harm me? I choose to be objective and observe my judgments, indifferences and rigid reactions blocking my ability to love or cherish.

Even when other people react or judge me, I achieve tranquility and fulfillment by cherishing my own divine/earthly nature. I also appreciate when the divine, or anyone else for that matter, accepts or cherishes me during my darkest moments. Being “real” by maintaining my principles and values creates more integrity within me. But sometimes I do wonder why it’s so easy for a human to compromise their principles and personal integrity to receive a momentary illusion disguised as love. Cherishing everything and everyone around me in a competitive world that enables people to hurt one another is sometimes extremely difficult to do. Sometimes, scars exist inside me that make it difficult to love or trust another and that’s okay. I will be gentle with myself especially if I am finding it challenging to cherish someone who has harmed me. My goal is to cherish everyone to the best of my ability and accept the suffering laid before me in each moment.

I recognize that some days I have difficulty receiving love. Early childhood experiences, trauma or previous relationships have left me with emotional scars that have led me to develop behavior patterns that rationalize, defend against, and/or avoid intimacy. If my heart is too closed or self-protective, cherishing another is difficult, if not impossible, until I acknowledge and resolve the painful memories remaining in my heart.

My unhealed scars make giving or receiving love in some circumstances painfully difficult until I learn to cherish those scars by learning the lessons that increase my incorruptibility to every illusion residing within me and laid on me.

But love just is...I don’t need to do anything or be something to deserve or earn it. When I believe I’m worthy of being loved, I see others and myself through the eyes of divine partnership. To experience love (which I am coming to realize is the whole point of the soul becoming human) is to use cherish as the soul-infused quality that most closely resembles the way the divine loves me—flaws and all.

How often do I cherish my experiences without expectation and/or love myself without conditions? What is too much or too little or just right? How many people or things do I actually cherish in my world? Can I muster enough courage to discover what motivates an unsavory desire or cherish a

failure hidden within the recesses of my heart? Some days I miss my mark and on others...I am spectacular. Shame and blame create more of the same so I plan to cherish others and myself courageously no matter what happens. If I am compassionate, celebrate my beautiful flaws with acceptance, and do my best to cherish them, love can burn away the illusion of separation. Then my positive lessons, and growth-producing opportunities will flourish.

The dark aspects of human drama and the negative experiences of earth are created not to harm me but to guide me away from behaviors that recycle suffering. That guidance becomes exponentially more persistent and troublesome when I ignore, judge, and punish others or myself. I am willing to embrace my troubles, for they are partnered with the divine to remind me to love the aspects of myself that remain in illusion. When the world is mired in black-and-white thinking and division, acceptance creates openings for me to cherish others and create unique possibilities. Loving approaches create opportunities for light to emerge from darkness. Enlightened perspectives such as these allow me to discover what I previously thought unimaginable or improbable. When I love others and embrace my own positive and negative qualities, other people are drawn to take my lead.

Here, within cherish, lies the secret of love and success on earth. I want to accept this invitation to cherish. I will freely express my divine nature so that my world will flow with grace and ease and bloom like a flower.

Cherish is a gateway to love; love is a gateway to cherish...it is a continuum.

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