

Splendored Love

The Six Great Loves of Lasting Relationships

By Robert Porter Lynch

Of all the words in the English language, the word “love” may be the most confounding and confusing. The reason is because English converged the meaning of at least a half dozen words from the Greek into one word. It’s like mixing many colors of paint into a bucket – the result is a muddy brown. In the 21st century, love seems to focus typically on a single form of *romantic* relationship, which makes love difficult to attain and sustain. It might be unrealistic to find a mate that understands the real richness of love.

By refining our desire to experience the diverse richness of the six loves, by building a strong multidimensional construct for splendored love, we have a heightened chance of attaining its glory.

Rather than try to resurrect the ancient Greek words (see endnotes) which have little meaning for us in our modern, digital age, I have referred to more contemporary expressions to illustrate the many facets of love. Let’s see how to grow love as a “splendored thing:”

1. Spiritual Love

This is best described as “soulful” or “sacred” love; it has a powerful “holy” or “blessed” quality to it.

Spiritual love is the very deepest and exalting of all the forms of love, for it is the “thread of the Holy Spirit” that connects two lovers to their highest and most beloved selves and to unity with the divine.¹

Spiritual love is both very “ethereal” and very practical, for it flows from above, transcending transgressions of the moment. It’s based on the strongest of foundations: belief and faith in a partner’s inherent goodness.

Often mates refer to each other as “soul mates” who are embraced by the light of such a strong experience of love.

From this foundation, a wellspring of wonderful sustaining waters flow – such as graciousness, forgiveness, mercy, and joy (which are based not on the circumstances of the moment, but upon a soulful reverence and devotion to life itself).

To give an illustration of Spiritual Love the description of Elsa Brandström by Paul Tillich² gets to its essence.



“Elsa Brandström, the daughter of a former Swedish ambassador to Russia, was in the hearts of hundreds of thousands of prisoners of war during the First World War; she was known as the Angel of Siberia. Elsa was an irrefutable, living witness to the truth that love is the ultimate power of Being, even in a century which belongs to the darkest, most destructive and cruel of all centuries since the dawn of mankind.

“At the beginning of the First World War, at the age of twenty-four years, at the Swedish Embassy in St. Petersburg, she saw German prisoners of war being driven through the streets on their way to Siberia. From that moment on she could no longer endure the splendor of the diplomatic life of which, up to then, she had been a beautiful and vigorous center. She became a nurse and began visiting the prison camps. There she saw unspeakable horrors and she, a girl of twenty-four, began, almost alone, the fight of love against cruelty, and she prevailed. She had to fight against the resistance and suspicion of the authorities and she prevailed.



“Love is a many splendored thing” is the song title of a romantic favorite from the 1950s.

So what does the “many” really mean?

Splendored Love refers to the multitude of types of love in relationships experienced over a broad range of people, including marriage partners, friends, family, strangers, and even with ourselves.

Splendor means: an *extraordinary brilliance*, a *lustrous glow*, a *glorious magnificence*.

Splendored Love is multi-dimensional and kaleidoscopic in nature – something marvelous.



She had to fight against the brutality and lawlessness of the prison guards and she prevailed. She had to fight against cold, hunger, dirt and illness, against the conditions of an undeveloped country and a destructive war, and she prevailed. Love gave her wisdom with innocence, and daring with foresight.

And whenever she appeared, despair was conquered and sorrow healed. She visited the hungry and gave them food. She saw the thirsty and gave them drink. She welcomed the strangers, clothed the naked, and strengthened the sick. She herself fell ill and was imprisoned, but God was abiding in her. I personally observed the creative genius and irresistible power of her love.”

2. Romantic Love

Often this is the dimension where love begins. The romance has many hues and flavors, combining the sensual with the imaginary. It can range widely in breadth of scope:

- physical (erotic³ such as sexual or erogenous interaction)
- fantasy (illusionary or imaginary delights, ethereal)
- passion (heightened emotions, elevated esteem, glorified feelings)
- enchantment (smitten, spell-bound, charmed, magical)
- euphoria (mesmerizing, spinning fascination, rapture)
- poetic and tender (such as lovely words and symbols)
- beauty (such as form, figure, proportion, and color)
- harmony (singing, music, a walk on the beach)
- stimulation (dancing, laughter, wittiness, humor, fun⁴)
- excitement (river rafting, risky feats, sky diving)
- adventure (traveling, discovering, exploring)
- surprise (unexpected, display of power or courage, unpredicted twists)
- loss of control (making one vulnerable, inability to exert normal limits, lowering of normal boundaries)



The common attraction of all these forms of Romantic Love is the association with *pleasure, happiness, fun* and *excitement*. Thinking of our mate as a “pleasure provider” creates a memory-base that solidifies the relationship.

Romantic Love is uplifting because it is essentially created (or co-created) in the moment, based sometimes only in small measure on fact or reality. Without imagination intertwined with empathy and caring, romantic love falls flat.

In so many ways, Romantic Love is an idealized interaction. When it is manifesting between two people, it feels so good that this peak experience becomes the ideal to which all other interaction is evaluated.

Most people think Romantic Love “just happens spontaneously.” While this is somewhat true, such a point of view can lead to great misunderstandings, terrible timing, and even real conflict. For example, on the list above, suppose you personally rank some of the types of romantic love very high, but your partner has a totally different perspective. Treating you partner to your top-of-list experience (such as and adventure like white river rafting) may be big turnoff to your partner who esteems harmonious or poetic love.

Understanding the elements of Romantic Love enables a better personal design of mutually romantic experiences, such as a special birthday gift.

Romantic love has a “soft underbelly” that makes it quite vulnerable to its own destruction over time. In the hands of people who are passionate but not compassionate, the negative side of romantic love can take on qualities of obtrusive obsession. These show up as intrusive thoughts, acute longing, moodiness if there is insufficient reciprocation, exclusion of all other people, irrational behavior for fear of rejection, over-protectionism, over-sensitivity to criticism, heartache to the point of physical debilitation, euphoria to the point diverting from taking care of life’s normal activities, or a failure to see any of the partners negative traits.

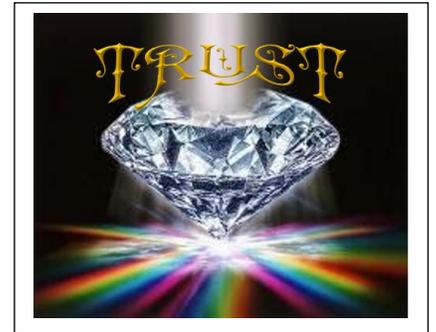
The harsh reality is that Romantic Love, being a “peak experience,” makes it difficult to sustain. When the interludes of reality set in, the relationship must be kept glued together by something of much greater substance. This is where Trustworthy love comes into play.

3. Honorable Love

While most love affairs may start with Romantic Love, for the relationship to sustain itself, it must be built on something far more firm, stable, and consistent. Honorable Love is Trustworthy Love.⁵ Relationships that last are sustained on a rock-solid foundation of trust.

To love fully,⁶ partners must *first trust fully*. Without trust, all romance will eventually crash on the rocks of fear, run aground on the shoals of anger, or have its undercarriage torn out on the reefs of instability.

Just ask any marriage counselor: “what percentage of couples going through a divorce have lack of trust as a central theme causing the breakup?” They will tell you without hesitation: “100% of breakups involve a loss of trust.”



Trust is a word so bandied about, but so little understood. It's not a single thing, it is *multifaceted* and *prismatic*, like a diamond. The facets can best be symbolized by key principles that engender trust. (Acronym: FARTHEST)

- **F**airness -- which insures equitability and reciprocity
- **A**ccountability -- which is the external display of internal integrity
- **R**espect for others -- which, in advanced form, becomes empathy
- **T**ruthfulness -- which requires solid commitment to be honest in your word
- **H**onourable Purpose -- which entails devotion to doing the best thing for the right reasons
- **E**thics & Excellence⁷ -- which promises doing the morally right thing with the highest standard
- **S**afety & Security -- which ensures your partner is physically safe and financially secure
- **T**ransparency & Openness -- which empowers your motives to be clear, noble, and obvious to others

When the FARTHEST qualities manifest *together* in the daily affairs of life, one becomes a far better partner ...

- First, by becoming *consistent* and *predictable* -- critical qualities to maintain the stability of trust.
- Second, by adherence to these principles one is enabled to live in *integrity* -- their *words* match their *actions* -- they under-promise and over-deliver, thus honouring themselves and being whole.
- Third, by having a full commitment to Trustworthy Love, a person knows they can indeed *trust themselves*, providing a pathway to a *healthy self-love*⁸ and *self-respect*.⁹
- Fourth, by being able to *trust fully*, partners can *love fully*, without reservation or concern about risk.
- Fifth, by unifying the FARTHEST trust elements, one is empowered to have *courage* -- that heartfelt willingness to put oneself in the face of danger or stand strong for the honor of their partner, to overcome injustice, inequity, and provide security for others. *Courage is overcoming fear* because Love is more cherished than Self-Interest.¹⁰
- Sixth, by holding a holistic, interconnected approach to trust *creativity is triggered* by taking away fears and worries of betrayal, thus letting the mind expand into imaginative realms, spurring Romantic Love.
- Seventh, by enabling deep trust, a strong, stalwart, positive *response to adversity* comes to bear, while acting as a powerful buffer to limit conflict and reduce stress in a relationship.

A wholeness emerges that strengthens the bonds of love by setting a standard of excellence, giving rise to gallantry, nobility, and moral admiration, which, in turn, enables a “fiduciary” relationship to emerge (which means “fidelity,” as in “Semper Fidelis” -- the Marine Corps motto: Always Faithful.)

People with strong character have a built-in basis for developing strong trust; conversely, people with poor character have extreme difficulty generating the trust to maintain the bonds of faith. To honor someone means never to intentionally belittle them, never demean them, never place yourself above them, never publicly chastise, never diminish them, and never put their mate's self-esteem in jeopardy. For this reason, people of good character make stronger mates who use the glory of Honorable, Trustworthy Love for mutual advantage. Those who play by the rules of honor will cherish the greater good -- all for one, one for all -- thus being released from the bondage of fear of betrayal, released to explore the unknown together.

Whereas Romantic Love runs the risk of pushing to the extreme, elevating the other person onto a pedestal, making them godlike and infallible, Trustworthy Love is more solid and realistic, providing a consistency and predictability that releases the partners from the bonds of caution and protection, and enables a decisiveness and forth-righteousness to take mutually beneficial action in good times and bad.

4. Partnering Love

Honorable Love sets the foundation for Partnering Love, which is the embodiment of both great *friendship*¹¹ and great *partnership* – two very different types of love flowing together interactively, making this form of love both *stable* and *dynamic* at the same time.



Let's first look at *friendship*. In Splendored Love, your mate is your very best, most trusted friend. We choose our friends because they are *like* us. A friend shares common experiences, has compatible values, and holds similar points of view.

On the other hand, *partnership* is based not on similarities, but on *differences* – qualities we honor in our mate that we do not have in ourselves. Like magnets, the different polarities can be highly attractive, drawing people together.

However, without trust, these differences, rather than being synergistic, can become conflicted, adversarial, and destructive, often ending in fighting, polarization, and divorce.

In a healthy relationship, it is both the *similarities* that draw each other together at first *and the differences* each holds dear in the other that energize their relationship – each capable of thinking, seeing, and doing something that the other is not skilled at. In this way, their differences enable their relationship to become a “whole” where the whole is greater than the sum of the individual parts.

What distinguishes the highest standard of Partnering Love is the *equality* and *mutuality* that best friends have for each other. My friend Jerry Watkins describes his relationship with his wife Susan in these words:

God blessed me with my best friend and partner, Susan. She is an absolute blessing daily. She is such a wonderful woman with all people. She gives of herself daily by working for far less than she is worth or could earn as a personal reward elsewhere but she knows her worth to those she serves and treats them as family. She is my inspiration!

Mates become “partners” when they *cherish the differences* between them, using each other's strengths and weaknesses to mutual advantage (not disadvantage!). They never manipulate each other to get what they want, nor do they become co-dependent upon each other.

Their level of trust is extraordinarily high; each knows the other will try to be fair, be accountable for their actions, respect each other, tell the truth, elevate their personal “mission” for honourable purpose, be ethical and set high standards of excellence, keep each other safe and secure, and be open and transparent. With trust as a consistent underpinning to Partnering Love, love can grow and sustain itself.

Partnering Love empowers mates to work together as a team, one for all, all for one; they realize that they are better together than separate; they build on each other's ideas, creating and performing as one. They engage in a “dance” where both are in tune to the music of life, but each dances with different movements, while keeping in rhythm with the other.



5. Parental Love

Parental love could just as easily be called Motherly¹² and Fatherly Love. Mates don't have to be raising children to fully express their motherly and fatherly instincts.

For example, my mother often said to me in her later years “once a mother, always a mother.” She cared for me not as a doting mother, but by checking in regularly and unobtrusively to be sure I was fine.

Her motherly love was demonstrated in her care of my vibrant father for the entire time they were together. She was always looking out for his well-being, happiness, health, stress reduction, and nutrition. She hugged him several times a day to reinforce her commitment. Mom always had a smile.



Similarly my father always looked out for my mom's personal safety (such as making sure her car was always in top maintenance), her financial security, improving our home, and protecting her honorable name. His caring

extended to his personal integrity (Honorable/Trustworthy Love) to help create a positive emotional and familial environment.

Paternal love is one of the stronger loves, because it is a devotional dedication to the well-being of another person, regardless of their level of dependency. As parents enter their last years, Parental Love does a reverse flip when children are called upon to care for elderly parents.

Parental Love also involves *guidance and direction* of any member of the family (young or old). Managing emotions is a key element -- when one gets frustrated, falls into depression or discord, or gets out of balance with life. Effective Parental Love provides values that engender family as solid community; building character, fostering learning, displaying respect, adhering to ethics and supporting personal maturation.

Motherly Love is something male partners want and need – the maternal caring that sustains life – balanced nutrition, caring emotionally, a loving home, an expression of beauty, tenderness, and sensitivity.

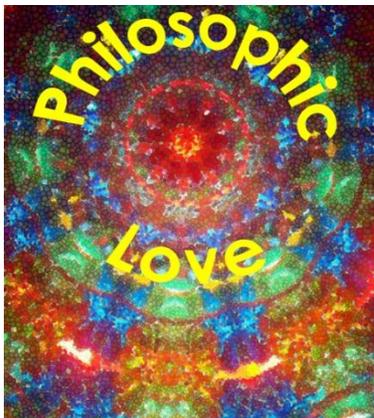
Fatherly Love is something female partners want and need – the paternal security, safety, financial stability, emotional constancy, trustworthiness, integrity, firm guidance, and a positive response to adversity.¹³

In a marriage, Parental Love is healthy in moderation, but toxic if either or both the partners become co-dependent or a mother/son or father/daughter relationship develops between the partners.

For example, Richie, married to Belinda, expresses a domineering and authoritarian form of Fatherly Love. He spouts words and behaviors of an ego-centric, self-aggrandizing bully.

On Belinda's part, she takes Motherly Love to the extreme. She has become so loving that she fears exercising restraint and discipline upon her partner for fear of hurting or being hurt. Her co-dependency has flawed her judgment, building a cocoon around herself. Now she "sees no evil, speaks no evil, and hears no evil" from her husband, who, in turn, just got worse -- becoming an exploitive, manipulative, deceitful scoundrel. Belinda now lives in an unreal world where the boundaries between right-wrong, and good-evil are blurred and twisted. Unrestrained, Richie's behavior spins wildly into the eccentrically bizarre.

6. Philosophic Love [of Wisdom]



The word "Philosophy" literally means "Love of Wisdom." (Greek *Philo*: Love + *Sophia*: Wisdom). Philosophic Love is not an academic abstraction; rather it's a pragmatic¹⁴ application of deep understandings of interpersonal realities. It aims at propelling the evolutionary journey of the mind and the soul throughout life.

Philosophic Love is the crown jewel of all the loves for it is the ultimate *guidance system* that balances, aligns, integrates and rotates (like a kaleidoscope) the other five loves -- knowing when you or your partner needs which one of the six loves at what moment. It also prevents love from becoming perverted.¹⁵

Wisdom combines emotional maturity, stability in a storm, courageous action, deep insight, empathy, sound judgment, prudent trust, use of truthful knowledge, and weighing facts/evidence with equanimity. It embraces the willingness to learn, inquire, thus being aware of changing conditions, prudence to control one's emotions under stress, the ability to see through a paradox, and accept new frames of reference.

Philosophic Love expresses itself through continuous learning, personal and inter-personal growth, and integration of seemingly disparate or paradoxical events, ideals, and circumstances.

Wise Love can rely on the other five loves for sustenance while simultaneously nurturing the other five.

Romantic couples, who have been together for half their lives or more, experience a very simple, pragmatic, down-to-earth love as well. They experience love in every moment, in the simple joys – going to the grocery store together, making a meal for each other, doing something totally unexpected for the other, or giving each other a hug throughout the day. It's about making something special inside the ordinary, finding meaning in the simple, unromantic tasks, appreciating the beauty of the moment, taking the time to "smell the roses."

Let's face it, couples will get angry with each other. Broken promises, different expectations, or stress, are a few of a myriad of causes. Wise Love enables one to see anger and bitterness as just the surface of deeper emotions.

When those angry moments arise (or in the early stages of a brewing argument), Wise Love lets us see what boils under the surface, embrace the other's fear or anxiety (real or imagined), feel their hurt (physical or emotional), appreciate one's sense of guilt (conscience), understand conflicting messages or values (standards), clarify confusion (uncertainty), rebuild broken trust (doubt, divisiveness, insecurity), realign expectations (broken promises), respond appropriately to the confusions of loss or death, relieve frustrations/stress/anxiety, and soothe feelings of depression/helplessness/victimization.

Philosophic Love is often long to develop, and forms the deepest foundations for love everlasting. It doesn't appear as dramatically as Romantic Love, and to the outside observer may seem unimportant.

Gratitude/graciousness, forgiveness, and mercy are central to Wise Love – knowing that what is said or done under stress may be but a mere fleeting feeling or transgression. Stress of a myriad of things – like death, moving, illness, financial worries, or miscommunication – can cause a partner to momentarily lose their center of balance. Under these circumstances, a wise partner will express graciousness, mercy, and forgiveness. They never let their experience of reality conform to their fears, knowing that to do so would poison the soul of the relationship. Wisdom can buffer the ups and downs, bring the partner out of the dumps, and know when to give your partner a “kick in the pants” when they are wallowing in self-pity, when to admit you are wrong, and how to build co-creation into life itself.

I asked my friends Bob and Patty, who celebrated their fiftieth anniversary, to what they attributed their long marriage. They were quick to say:

We forgive each other for our transgressions. We have amnesia about the bad times we've been through; yet we have an excellent memory of the great things we've experienced.

Philosophic Love lets a couple engage in healthy “give-and-take,” making tradeoffs and compromises, not to attain second best or lose power, but to attain balance, acceptance and mutual compatibility.

Roy Rogers, commenting on his long marriage to Dale Evans, remarked that a great marriage is not a 50-50 arrangement. Both partners have to give at least 100%. Rogers said both Dale and he were always willing to go beyond: giving 120%.

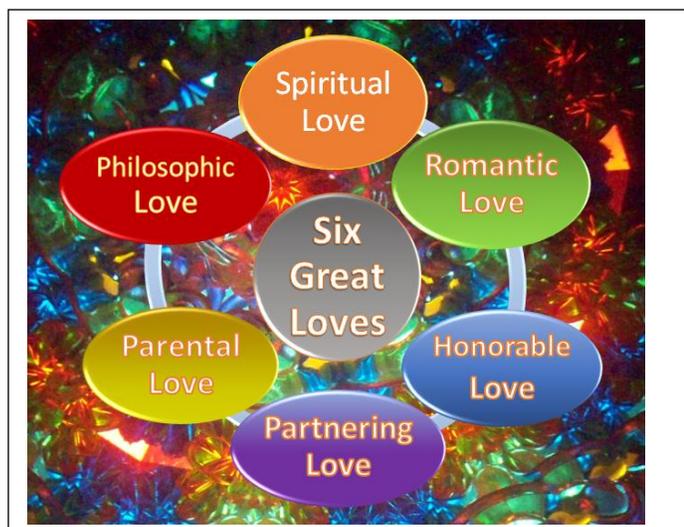
Wise Love also holds dear the ideal of virtue¹⁶ – the desire and willingness to do the right thing for the right reasons. A couple's commitment to virtue, family, and fidelity creates a bond that is nearly impossible to break.

Another important aspect of Wise Love is the significance of curiosity, continuous learning, and discovery. Philosophic Love holds the quality of linking together and integrating the very nature of life itself – great physical and mental health, bringing knowledge¹⁷ into the practical world, embracing the value of spiritual enlightenment, and being able to put all these into action in a wholesome manner. Wise Love propels couples to find meaning and purpose in every moment and to flourish in one's sense of mission in life. In this sense, Philosophic Love connects back and completes the circle with Spiritual Love.

Probably the most vital part of Philosophic Love is that it gives us the wisdom to know how to “rotate the kaleidoscope” among all the various forms of love.

When we experience *Kaleidoscopic Love*, we feel whole, dynamic, and complete, as though the deepest yearning of the soul has been fulfilled – that seemingly missing part of our psyche has been given to us from our loved one – life itself is being sourced from an energy greater than ourselves.

This sense of synergy and transcendence is enervating, uplifting, and extraordinarily empowering, leading us into the highest form of love described at the beginning – Spiritual Love.



END NOTES

¹ Spiritual Love is closely akin to the Greek concept of Agape Love. *Agápe* (ἀγάπη *agape*https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek_words_for_love_-_cite_note-1) Means “the love of God for man and of man for God.” Agape is used by Christians to express the unconditional love of God for His *children*. It also means love for everyone or selfless love. This was a love is extended to all people, whether family members or distant strangers. *Agape* was later translated into Latin as *caritas*, which is the origin of our word "charity." It also appears in other religious traditions, such as the idea of *mettā* or "universal loving kindness" in Theravāda Buddhism.

There is growing evidence that *agape* is in a dangerous decline in many countries. Empathy levels in the U.S. have declined sharply over the past 40 years, with the steepest fall occurring in the past decade. We urgently need to revive our capacity to care about strangers.

² Paul Tillich is generally considered one of the century's outstanding and influential thinkers. After teaching theology and philosophy at various German universities, he came to the United States in 1933. For many years he was Professor of Philosophical Theology at Union Theological Seminary in New York City, then University Professor at Harvard University. His books include *Systematic Theology; The Courage to Be; Dynamics of Faith; Love, Power and Justice; Morality and Beyond; and Theology of Culture..* This story comes from *Shaking the Foundations* Chapter 3 – the Power of Love, published 1948. Elsa was married to Robert Ullrich, who also fled Germany when Hitler grabbed power. Ullrich was an esteemed professor at Harvard, and wrote the influential book *Crisis and Hope in American Education* among others. The version of the story presented here has been abridged for brevity

³ *Eros* – named after the Greek god of fertility, represents the idea of sexual passion and desire. But the Greeks didn't always think of it as something positive (as we tend to do today.) In the ancient context, *eros* was viewed as a dangerous, fiery, and irrational form of love that could take hold of you and possess you. *Eros* involved a loss of control – falling madly in love – which frightened the Greeks.

The problem occurs especially when there is a lack of balance between the 6 loves. When Erotic love overwhelms the others, sex becomes preeminent, diminishing the others. The result is nearly invariable – a failure to establish a foundation of trust, which will collapse any semblance of real, sustainable love.]

Eros is obviously the root word for “erotic,” but it does not describe sexual love only, it actually describes all emotional love; the feeling of love. *Eros* love is that insatiable desire to be near the target of this love. The exciting, passionate, nervous feelings that sweep over people in the appropriate circumstances. This is the love that says “I love how you make me feel.”

As an emotion, *Eros* changes, sometimes suddenly. Remember that it is entirely based on circumstances and on the target of its emotion. As an emotion, alone it is morally neutral, however, it can just as easily lead to lust (sinful desire) as it can passion. It is also a good picture to think of *Eros* as the fruit and flowers of a new relationship. *Eros* is not a bad thing, but it is also not a “good” thing.

⁴ The Greek word *Ludus* was used to refer to “fun-loving” or “playful” qualities. The Greek idea of playful love referred to the affection between children or young lovers. Innocent fun, such as flirting and teasing in the early stages of a relationship are good examples. It can be as simple as sitting around in a bar bantering and laughing with friends, or when we go out dancing. Dancing with strangers may be the ultimate ludic activity, almost a playful substitute for sex itself. Social norms may frown on this kind of adult frivolity, but a little more *ludus* might be just what we need to spice up our love lives.

⁵ In the Greek, this was known as the “Love of Honour” (Philo + Atimo) was complex but essential to the functioning of the culture. In ancient times, there was great public pressure to behave uprightly -- without integrity (honesty, justice, truthfulness). The term "philotimo" may be translated as an internalized inclination to do good, with a strong sense of social responsibility. (Etymologically, *philotimo* means "love of honor" =philos+timi, although the honor referred to is not merely external, or for "show" purposes, but a psychologically internalized yardstick of goodness, as in the ancient "kalos k agathos." (see later footnote for definition)

“By making them confront the possibility of their "aphilotimia" (=lack of *philotimo*, or integrity), they are at once chastised, or, worse, threatened with virtual exclusion from civilized company. Furthermore, and perhaps most painful, to be branded as "aphilotimos" is sometimes even equated as being dispossessed of your true "Greek [culture]." The power of *Philotimos* was extraordinary in that it bound the individual to a very high standard of

behavior. Philatimo was not just an admired trait among Greek citizens, it was expected of them. The expectation was that all members of the society or community would first act in the interests of the greater good of the whole, not in their self-interest. Anyone who violated the honor code of Philatimos would be branded a heretic, labeled with the scarlet letter “A” for Atimia - which means unscrupulous, dishonest, dishonorable, like a weasel and a fox etc.. The consequences of atima were severe: excommunication – to be ostracized or exiled from one’s community for violating the “common unity.” As my colleague Ninon Prozonic says:

“In ancient Greece - the very worst thing that could happen to a man was to lose his 'timiotita' (from the word 'atimia') meaning lose his honesty. Moral values were far more important to ancient Greeks than anything else. They believed that if they lived and acted honorably, would reach a superior 'level' of virtue, which would give them happiness.”

⁶ Love and Trust are controlled by the same neuro-transmitting chemical in the brain: Oxytocin

⁷ In the ancient Greek, the ideal of ethics was characterized by virtue – Arete, known in Latin and English as virtue (or excellence), was also a pivotal value the co-creative spirit in ancient Greece. It meant to do the right thing, the best thing, to be the best person. One could not perfect one’s soul unless virtue was a continual pursuit.

Virtue was dependent upon one’s commitment to act in accordance with the dictates of the higher soul, and not forsake oneself to the more prurient, lower level vices such as lust, greed, anger, or revenge. While no one then, nor today, could be expected to be perfect at the practice of virtue, holding this standard as a goal enabled higher order teamwork, intellectual interaction, and co-creativity to take place.

Socrates and Plato introduced the concept of the soul in a profound manner to the Greeks. The soul became a universal connection between people, enabling the sparks of creative energy to flow between individuals without the fear or concern of betrayal⁷, who got the credit, or loss of ownership. Ideas were owned collectively and thus shared and built upon by a group, who cherished the value of regenerative energy.

But virtue could never be achieved unless one practiced honor, sought wisdom, and built community. As Ninon Prozonic observes:

“Arête (virtue) was not a moral virtue only, but it was more an aspiration and endowment of qualities that would result in practical efficiency and public fame. Most young Athenians wanted virtue more than anything.”

Differences in opinions can be handled virtuously with compassion, understanding, and acceptance, or, conversely, arrogantly with condemnation, derision, and denial.

⁸ Philautia, was the term the Greeks used to refer to self-love. They realized there were two types -- one an unhealthy variety associated with *narcissism*, becoming self-obsessed and focused on personal fame and fortune – and a healthier version that enhanced your wider capacity to love.

⁹ Those who cannot trust themselves are likely to have low self-esteem, or the opposite – Narcissistic behavior. Poor integrity will also manifest itself in conflict with others, constant drama, personal attacks, and “fish tailing” behavior.

¹⁰ note: *bravery* is the absence of fear, which is not as prized as *courage*.

The Greeks valued *philia* far more than the sexuality of *eros*. Unlike Eros, which pulses up and down like waves on the ocean, Philos steadily grows, like a building being constructed stone by stone.

Philos is half about the circumstances, and half about the commitment of two people to one another; it says “I love who we are together”. Philos love generally grows over time except in the case of some kind of betrayal. It is commonly used in the New Testament, as in Matt. 10:37, John 12:25, and Revelation 3:19. In the New Testament, this is the meaning of “Greater love hath no man than to lay down his life for his friends. (John 15:13)

We should all ask ourselves how much of this comradely *philia* we have in our lives. It's an important question in an age when we attempt to amass "friends" on Facebook or "followers" on Twitter—achievements that would have hardly impressed the Greeks.

¹² The Greek word (commonly called “motherly love”) is *Storgy* –the love one has for a dependent. When the child is no longer dependent, this love remains only in its emotional memories. If motherly love becomes obsessive in later years it becomes unhealthy.

¹³ A woman who does not experience the strength of real Fatherly Love can begin to lose her feminine qualities and become more "masculine." ¹³ *Philia* (φιλία *philia*) means "affectionate regard, friendship," usually between equals. *Philia* is expressed as loyalty to friends (specifically, "brotherly love"), family, and community, and requires virtue, equality, and familiarity. Furthermore, in the same text *philos* denotes a general type of love, used for love between family, between friends, a desire or enjoyment of an activity, as well as between lovers. *Philia* concerned the deep comradely friendship that developed between brothers in arms who had fought side by side on the battlefield. It was about showing loyalty to your friends, sacrificing for them, as well as sharing your emotions with them.

¹⁴ *Pragma* is the Greek term for long-standing, practical, mature love. This was the deep understanding that developed between long-married couples. *Pragma* was about making compromises to help the relationship work over time, and showing patience and tolerance.

The psychoanalyst Erich Fromm said that we expend too much energy on "falling in love" and need to learn more how to "stand in love." *Pragma* is precisely about standing in love—making an effort to give love rather than just receive it. With about a third of first marriages in the U.S. ending through divorce or separation in the first 10 years, the Greeks would surely think we should bring a serious dose of *pragma* into our relationships.

¹⁵ All the six loves can be perverted in several ways:

1. By obsessive emphasis on one, to the exclusion of the other five.
2. By twisting a love into a something deceitful, overbearing, or even evil, such as how cult leaders or con artists twist meanings and intentions.
3. By turning love into Mania – Manic love is almost not a love at all. It is more like "obsession." This is the love of possession and obsessive desire to own, limit, or control. It is generally seen as taking over the "lover" like insanity – thus the connection to modern concepts of madness (kleptomania, pyromania). "Mania" is "madness" and "beside yourself." Manic love is based on fear, obsession, or lack of empathy. It can be an expression of excessive (too much) self-love (narcissism) or the opposite – too little self-love, which creates an empty hole in one's psyche. It is this empty hole that becomes filled, in a misguided way, with excessive, passionate obsession.
4. By the absence of balance – love of self with love of others – is all-too-often the result of lack of trust of oneself. Self-trust comes from personal integrity and accountability for one's *thoughts, values/principles, words, and actions*. Without a deep adherence to the FARTHEST Principles, there may be no construct in the mind for how to build self-trust. For, without trust, there is no foundation for love – they are based on the same neurochemical in the brain – oxytocin.]

¹⁶ This emphasis on goodness is encapsulated in the ancient inscription "kalos k' agathos" on numerous Greek artifacts. Kalos k' agathos means, literally, "good and good," referring to both:

- the *outward*, social and personal "beauty" of the person looking outwardly to the quality of a person's social relations and
- the other to *inner* moral and humanitarian excellence, looking to personal improvement, the formation of character" to build a good and virtuous person (see footnote above on Excellence & Virtue)

¹⁷ The Greeks understood that an active mind could bring deep knowledge. But knowledge alone is often empty of real, valuable learning, and can carry with it conceit and narrowness. Knowledge exists primarily in answers, wisdom in questions and revelations, uniting ideas/ideals with action. Knowledge is intrinsically self-fulfilling, while wisdom creates higher order purposes and new destinies. The pursuit of wisdom created the challenge to grow upward with a spiritual yearning. Wisdom, thus, was sacred. As written in the Wisdom of Solomon from the Apocrypha:

"Wisdom – Sophia -- the fashioner of all things, taught me. For there is in Sophia's spirit qualities that are intelligent, holy, unique, manifold, subtle, mobile, clear, undefiled, distinct, beyond harm, loving the good, keen, unhindered, beneficent, philanthropic, firm, sure, free from care, all powerful, all seeing, and interpenetrating all spirits that are intelligent, pure, and most subtle. For wisdom is more mobile than any motion, and she penetrates and permeates everything, because she is so pure; for she is the breath of the power of God...."

It is this sacred journey that so excited and empowered the Greeks. Wisdom combined knowledge with spiritual transcendence and human compassion and passionate action. Wisdom was not dry like knowledge, but it was dynamic, engaging, vital, and soulful.