



# LIVING ABUNDANTLY

Embrace Your Unlimited Good





# OPENING TO GOOD

Rev. Ellen Debenport

The team at Unity who worked on this booklet enjoyed thinking of all the ways that abundance might show up in our lives and how we can embrace it. But the theme also raised some questions.

How can we trust our good will come to us? Is abundance really unlimited? And why on earth would we *not* embrace our good? For those answers, we turn to the spiritual teachings of Unity.

Consider this from *Lessons in Truth* by H. Emilie Cady, the first book Unity published in 1903 and, second only to the Bible, the foundation of Unity teachings:

One of the unerring truths in the universe (by “universe” I mean the spiritual and natural worlds combined) is that there is already provided a lavish abundance for every human want. In other words, the supply of every good always awaits the demand. Another truth is that the demand must be made before the supply can come forth to fill it. To recognize these two statements of Truth and to affirm them are the whole secret of understanding faith—faith based on principle.

We make the demand through prayer and affirmations, calling forth the abundance that is already provided. Good is already here, already available, even when we can’t see it yet. Our belief and faith bring it into manifestation.

Abundance can take many forms—love, health, and prosperity, along with letting go, giving thanks, or living your dreams. Allowing good into our lives may take practice, however. Sometimes we let gifts pile up against a closed door.

Refusing our good is not deliberate, of course; it boils down to our thinking. Worry, fear, anger, and resentment can hold abundance at bay.

Maybe we don't feel worthy to receive our good, or we embrace it in some areas but not others. One person might have no problem with finances but always seems unlucky in love. Another has a harmonious family but struggles with health. Believing we don't deserve the best in every area of life may need to be examined.

Another avenue to explore is thoughts held in mind. What are we focusing on? If we let problems crowd our minds, we might not notice the good right in front of us. In Unity we ask, "Where are you putting your faith?" Do you have faith everything will work out for the best? Or do you have more faith that if anything can go wrong, it will?

Chances are nothing and no one keeps our good from us except our own thinking. That's why every Lenten season for the past few years, Unity has offered a booklet about releasing those thoughts and habits that do not serve us, then renewing our minds with a more positive outlook. (The *Release and Renew* booklet for Lent 2022 is available at [unity.org/booklet](http://unity.org/booklet).)

Expecting and embracing our good does not make us selfish or entitled; it aligns us with universal principle. Unity cofounder Myrtle Fillmore wrote in *Myrtle Fillmore's Healing Letters* (Unity Books, 1948):

It is God's will for all His children to have abundance. And it is our privilege to think this Truth and declare it and expect it to be proved in our lives. This is our method of prayer: acknowledging our oneness with God, claiming the ability that this gives, and expecting to have the things needed and conducive to spiritual progress.

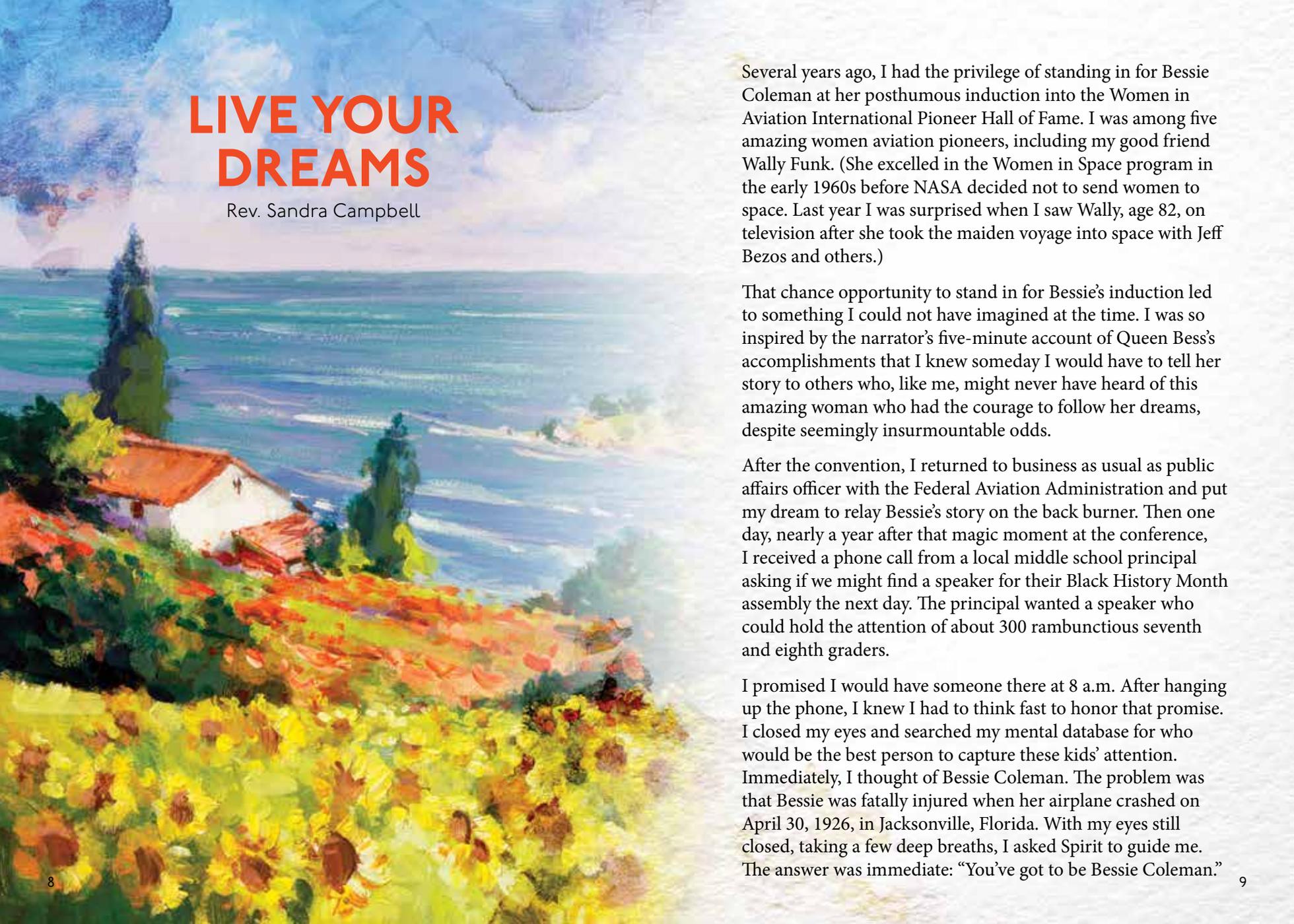
Developing our inner resources will naturally result in more abundance as we become more alive, she wrote.

Embracing our good, then, is a spiritual practice. It is taking our rightful place in the divine realm. With prayer, affirmation, and positive thinking, we manifest the good that surrounds us in the universe.

Your good isn't sent to you from somewhere else like an Amazon package. It is already yours, already available, waiting for you simply to open your heart and mind to receive it.

Embrace your unlimited good!

*Rev. Ellen Debenport is vice president of publishing for Unity World Headquarters at Unity Village and author of The Five Principles: A Guide to Practical Spirituality (Unity Books, 2009).*



# LIVE YOUR DREAMS

Rev. Sandra Campbell

Several years ago, I had the privilege of standing in for Bessie Coleman at her posthumous induction into the Women in Aviation International Pioneer Hall of Fame. I was among five amazing women aviation pioneers, including my good friend Wally Funk. (She excelled in the Women in Space program in the early 1960s before NASA decided not to send women to space. Last year I was surprised when I saw Wally, age 82, on television after she took the maiden voyage into space with Jeff Bezos and others.)

That chance opportunity to stand in for Bessie's induction led to something I could not have imagined at the time. I was so inspired by the narrator's five-minute account of Queen Bess's accomplishments that I knew someday I would have to tell her story to others who, like me, might never have heard of this amazing woman who had the courage to follow her dreams, despite seemingly insurmountable odds.

After the convention, I returned to business as usual as public affairs officer with the Federal Aviation Administration and put my dream to relay Bessie's story on the back burner. Then one day, nearly a year after that magic moment at the conference, I received a phone call from a local middle school principal asking if we might find a speaker for their Black History Month assembly the next day. The principal wanted a speaker who could hold the attention of about 300 rambunctious seventh and eighth graders.

I promised I would have someone there at 8 a.m. After hanging up the phone, I knew I had to think fast to honor that promise. I closed my eyes and searched my mental database for who would be the best person to capture these kids' attention. Immediately, I thought of Bessie Coleman. The problem was that Bessie was fatally injured when her airplane crashed on April 30, 1926, in Jacksonville, Florida. With my eyes still closed, taking a few deep breaths, I asked Spirit to guide me. The answer was immediate: "You've got to be Bessie Coleman."

I had purchased two books about her life, neither of which I had read. I had seen pictures of her in aviatrix regalia, but I did not know much else—how she spoke, how she walked, what she might say to a group of young people if she were here. The voice in my head encouraged me to use my imagination.

I stopped on my way home from work and rented a costume that could resemble a flight suit she might have worn in the 1920s. After dinner, I locked myself away in my room with my laptop and the two books and proceeded to flip through the pages, capturing highlights that would help me bring Bessie to life.

Now and then, doubt would creep in. *Did I really know what I was doing? Who was I to think I could represent such an amazing woman?* At those times, I would take a deep breath, close my eyes, and visualize Bessie on the stage and telling her story. I saw the faces of the students and their teachers leaning forward in their seats with wide-eyed excitement as they listened to Bessie.

The following day, with my 40 pages of notes, dressed in full flying regalia, I appeared in the school auditorium. I had transformed myself from Sandra to Bessie overnight. Relying on the power of imagination and the dream in my heart to inspire these young people to follow their dreams, I actually became the story just as I had imagined.

The reenactment got rave reviews, and as word spread I was invited to schools, churches, corporations, libraries, and other venues from coast-to-coast. Since that first performance in February 1996, I have appeared before thousands in person, on television, radio, and the internet. In 2000, the local Public Broadcasting Station in Kansas City taped my performance at the historic Gem Theater. It aired on PBS around the country for several years.

I titled my play *Follow Your Dreams* and employed an affirmation that the audience would repeat: *Follow your dreams, and don't take no for an answer, because every no brings you closer to a yes.*

By following my dream to bring the story of Bessie Coleman to life, I have inspired countless others to live their own dreams.

One of the things I have learned in Unity is that everything starts in the mind. When we put our imagination to use, there is no limit to what we can accomplish. As I was preparing for that first performance, I kept reminding myself of the words attributed to William Arthur Ward: “If you can imagine it, you can achieve it. If you can dream it, you can become it.”

I imagined myself being Bessie Coleman. I dreamed of telling the story in such a way that the audience would believe they were actually meeting Bessie Coleman in the flesh. And it worked.

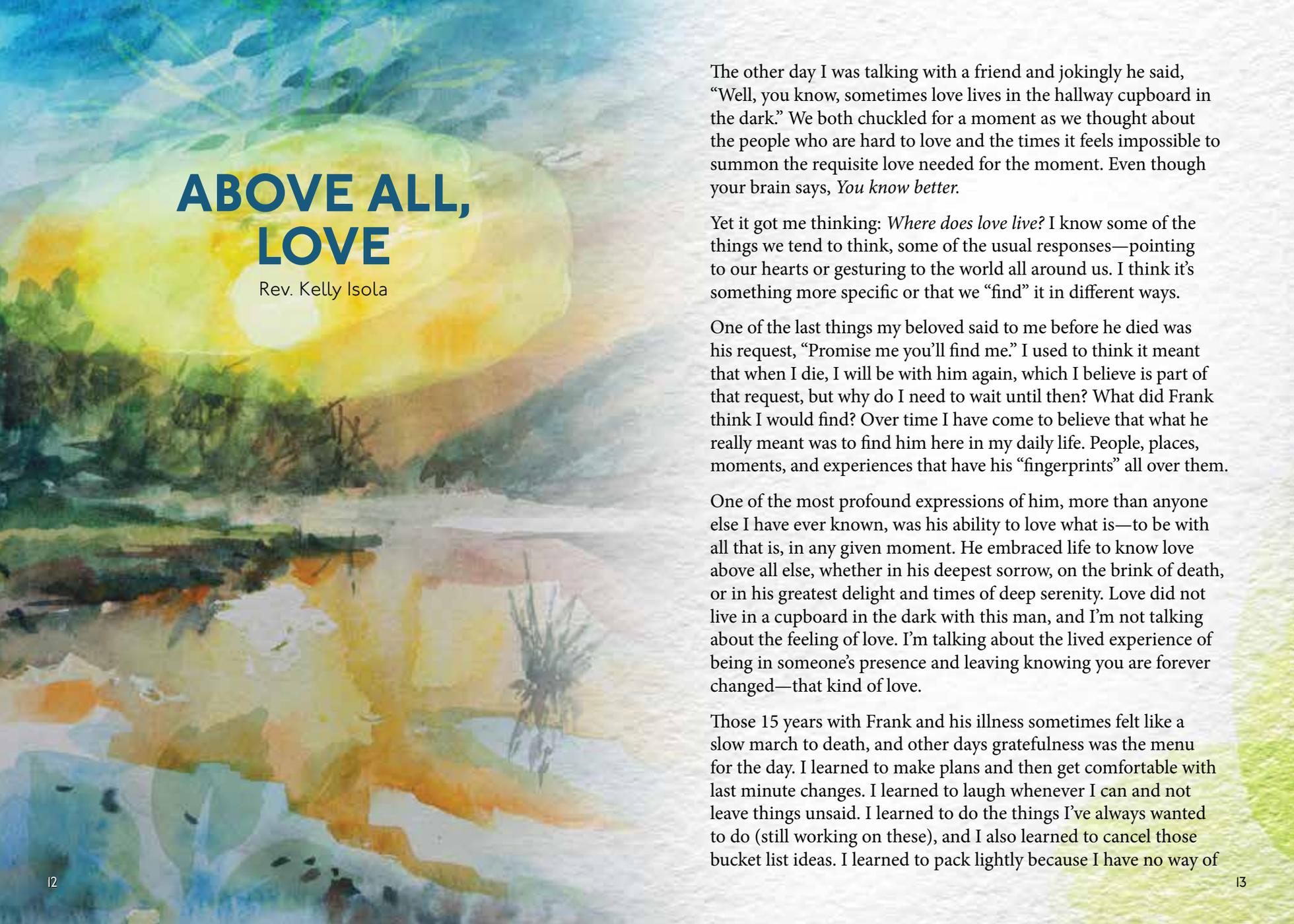
Imagine it. Dream it. Become it. That is the formula for living your dreams.

## STEPS TO LIVE YOUR DREAMS

1. **Imagine it.** Close your eyes. Take a deep breath. Let your imagination run wild. Set your intentions and establish a clear mental picture of what you want to achieve.
2. **Dream it.** Write it down. Focus your attention on this dream at least three times a day—morning, noon, and night. Hold a clear picture in your mind of what you want.
3. **Become it.** Engage all of your senses. See it. Smell it. Taste it. Touch it. Feel it. Be it. See yourself as it—with it, having it, being it. Then just do it!

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# ABOVE ALL, LOVE

Rev. Kelly Isola

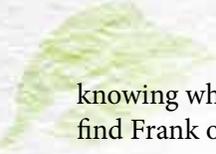
The other day I was talking with a friend and jokingly he said, “Well, you know, sometimes love lives in the hallway cupboard in the dark.” We both chuckled for a moment as we thought about the people who are hard to love and the times it feels impossible to summon the requisite love needed for the moment. Even though your brain says, *You know better*.

Yet it got me thinking: *Where does love live?* I know some of the things we tend to think, some of the usual responses—pointing to our hearts or gesturing to the world all around us. I think it’s something more specific or that we “find” it in different ways.

One of the last things my beloved said to me before he died was his request, “Promise me you’ll find me.” I used to think it meant that when I die, I will be with him again, which I believe is part of that request, but why do I need to wait until then? What did Frank think I would find? Over time I have come to believe that what he really meant was to find him here in my daily life. People, places, moments, and experiences that have his “fingerprints” all over them.

One of the most profound expressions of him, more than anyone else I have ever known, was his ability to love what is—to be with all that is, in any given moment. He embraced life to know love above all else, whether in his deepest sorrow, on the brink of death, or in his greatest delight and times of deep serenity. Love did not live in a cupboard in the dark with this man, and I’m not talking about the feeling of love. I’m talking about the lived experience of being in someone’s presence and leaving knowing you are forever changed—that kind of love.

Those 15 years with Frank and his illness sometimes felt like a slow march to death, and other days gratefulness was the menu for the day. I learned to make plans and then get comfortable with last minute changes. I learned to laugh whenever I can and not leave things unsaid. I learned to do the things I’ve always wanted to do (still working on these), and I also learned to cancel those bucket list ideas. I learned to pack lightly because I have no way of



knowing where life may take me that day, but mostly it's how I can find Frank on any day.

Whatever life brings my way, I experience an ever-increasing desire and yearning to love in greater ways. I have learned that with every betrayal, every suffering and humiliation in the name of love, new openings and channels are being etched in my heart, new passageways being carved so that I might experience an ever-deepening love that has no words. New cracks have been created so the mystery of life and love can enter and exit moment by moment.

One time I sat with a woman who, for decades, had been learning many different modalities to “fix” her brokenness. Like so many, she carried a belief that we need to transcend the human condition, that this physical world isn't real, or that heaven on earth needs to be something different than the life that is right in front of us.

As I watched her open to finding those unloved and unloved portions of herself, she saw for the first time that the torn edges were the most beautiful, loving, unique, and simply exquisite pieces of her being. Not something to fix but something to embrace, to love, above all. Her deepest sorrows and greatest delights had come to life in front of me.

In the blink of an eye, through tears of anguish and gratitude, I found Frank. I had promised him I would find him, and I did. That's how it happens. The things about those we love who have passed on are lived out through others.

I can promise I will find him because I know, above all, love. He showed me that. And there, love—above all else—sat in front of me, this woman with a tissue in one hand, mascara running down her cheeks, breathing peacefully, showing me love does not live in the hallway cupboard in the dark.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin said it best: “Love alone is capable of uniting living beings in such a way as to complete and fulfil them, for it alone takes them and joins them by what is deepest in themselves.”

## PRACTICE LOVE

1. Take a few minutes of quiet in the morning. Think about someone you love who is no longer with you.
2. What is the one thing that set them apart from others you know? Their capacity to demonstrate peace, compassion, playfulness, forgiveness, strength, listening, safety, grace, courage, gentleness, gratitude, and so on? Only you know.
3. Ask your heart, not your head, to discern what that one thing might be.
4. Listen in the quiet. Once you have a word or quality, see it in your mind, and then imagine yourself placing it in your heart.
5. Once you have done that, ask yourself: *What am I willing not to carry today? How can I pack lightly?*
6. As you move through your day, notice where your loved one's fingerprints show up, where that peace, grace, strength—that one thing that set them apart from others—shows up. Remember the idea of “promise me you'll find me.” It could be in a challenging moment in a crowd or could be with one other person on a phone call. Simply notice.
7. Then be still and give thanks for finding them in the present moment, just as you are, just as they are.

*Rev. Kelly Isola works internationally as an innovator, teacher, author, and Certified Embodied Social Justice Activist. She is cofounder of project\_SANCTUS (projectsanctus.com), an online spiritual community committed to equanimity, justice, and love. Visit [kellyisola.com](http://kellyisola.com).*