

A blue-tinted photograph of two rock climbers on a steep cliff. One climber is higher up, reaching down to assist the other. Both are wearing helmets and climbing gear. The background is a clear sky.

THE LOVE STRONGER MANIFESTO

Transform Your Life + Change the World

By Lee Bezotte

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WHAT LOVE IS NOT

Love is not **endearment**.

Endearment is nice but it comes and goes.

It doesn't take much for **warm fuzzies** to turn to **cold pricklies**.

Like most feelings, endearment is dependent on others'

Behavior

Words

Appearance

Newness

Endearing qualities

In fact, **love isn't a feeling at all.**

Love is not **endurance**.

It may endure but it's not endurance.

It doesn't mean putting up with abuse.

It doesn't mean staying with a hurtful person believing your love will change them.

Loving and being a punching bag are **not the same thing**.

It's ok to keep a safe distance from an abuser.
It's ok to protect yourself.

There are others who need your love and you can't give it to them if you're beaten, bloodied, and drained from an abuser.

Love is not **extreme** boundaries

You're going to have to bend a little. **Love costs.**

You're going to have to risk a little. **Love is an investment.**

You're going to have to open your doors at times.
Love welcomes.

Protecting your time, your resources, and your energy is important but **the sacrificial nature of love demands your flexibility.**

Be wise.
Be open.
Be generous.

WHAT LOVE IS

Love is intentional.

It's not a happy accident and it's not led by emotion.

Love is given on purpose.

It's premeditated.

It's deliberate.

Willful.

Voluntary.

**You choose to love with your actions or
you withhold love with your inaction.**

Love is willful and calculated.

Love is **unconditional**.

It can't be earned, traded, or sold.

Love says, "**No matter what, I love you.**"

Love generously shows **grace**.

Even when you're **mad**, love loves.

Even when you're **offended and hurt**, love loves.

Even when you **don't feel anything at all**, love loves.

It doesn't depend on skin color,
social status
religion
or political affiliation.

It doesn't make others **jump through hoops**
and it isn't withheld to get what you want.

Love is **sacrificial**.

Sometimes it hurts.

It pushes you out of your comfort zone.

It **gives** when you're not inspired.
It **serves** when you don't feel appreciated.
And it **chooses kind words** when you're angry.

Love is rarely convenient,
often difficult, and
isn't for the faint of heart.

Love could cost you everything.

Now that you know what love is, **I want to warn you about reading further.**

If you're just looking for inspirational sayings that you can turn into memes and get likes on Facebook and Instagram, then **don't read any further.**

The following is not for the lazy, the comfortable, or the excuse makers. It's for people who want to **change themselves and the world** and are willing to make personal sacrifices to do it.

If you are courageous enough, strong enough, and committed to love, then **read on brave one.**

START WITH YOU

Like yourself, **love** yourself.

You can't hate yourself and love others.

Look in the mirror and recognize
the image of God in you.

Without arrogance, without conceit,
just appreciate the fact that **you're wonderfully made**
and a pretty decent human being.

Make a list of your positive qualities.
Actually write them down!
Don't skip this part!

Realizing that you're worth loving is the first step to
transforming yourself.

You're worth the effort!

Take care of yourself.

You love yourself by **maintaining physical health.**

You love yourself by **reading books that will help you grow.**

You love yourself by **learning new skills.**

You love yourself by **getting enough sleep.**

You love yourself by **setting goals and reaching them.**

You love yourself by traveling to faraway places
and expanding the way you see the world.

Look away from the screen
get outside
stretch yourself physically
intellectually
spiritually.

You will thank yourself for it in the near future.

LOVE OVERFLOWS

Be the best friend you've never had.

When we love ourselves the way we're meant to,
love can **overflow onto others.**

Think of the ideal friend you wish you had.
It may be someone already in your life,
or you may not have met this person yet.
It doesn't matter. Just **go be that kind of friend to someone.**

Kiss your spouse when their breath is bad.
Hug them when they have body odor.

Help your friend move and offer to get the pizza.

Pay compliments.
Put away your phone.
Give your full attention.

Love them enough to give them a heads up when they need
a course correction in their life.

Be kind.

Smile at the checkout clerk.

When you mow your lawn, mow your neighbor's too.

Tip your waiter 25%. Thank them for a job well done.

Help the poor without judging them.

Give money to worthy charities.

Invest in others by volunteering your time.

Actions speak louder than your verbal, "I love you."

TAKE THE LOVE STRONGER CHALLENGE

The challenge is simple.

First, get out your calendar (or calendar app).
Until love becomes a habit, it must be scheduled.
It must become an intentional priority.

Now, **schedule some self-love.**
Schedule some exercise time,
some reading time,
or any kind of activity for self-development.

You're important and, as they say on the airplane, "Place the oxygen mask on your own face before helping others."

Do this at least five days a week.

Next, **schedule some others-love.**

Drop a dessert off for the neighbor.

Give a sincere compliment.

Sponsor a hungry child.

Pay for a stranger's coffee.

Do someone else's chore.

Send a kind note to someone.

The options are endless!

Put something on your calendar
(regardless of how small)
five days a week.
Remember, love isn't easy!

It's important to schedule the love and
keep your appointments.

Do this for six weeks, until **loving becomes a habit.**

Our brains have become wired to focus on ourselves.
We're obsessed with how we're doing and feeling.
Consequently, we've lost our others-mindedness.
**That's why we have to work to re-wire our brains
to see the needs of others.**

Train your brain
(and your heart)
to respond to your surroundings with love.

That's how we love stronger.
We program our minds to love ourselves and love others.

That's how we transform ourselves and change the world.
It's always been and always will be about love.

WILL YOU TAKE THE CHALLENGE?

If you do, please let me know how it goes.

You can email me at contact@leebezotte.com.

I would be honored if you shared your results with me.

SHARE THIS MANIFESTO

You are welcome to share The Love Stronger Manifesto with anyone and everyone.

I only ask that you don't change it in any way or charge anyone for it.

Just copy and paste this address into any Tweet, Facebook post, email, etc. <http://leebezotte.com/manifesto>.

Thanks for spreading the word!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lee Bezotte is an author, speaker, and relentless life fine-tuner who lives in the Quad Cities with his wife and three sons. He can be found at www.leebezotte.com where he writes about life from a perspective of humor, passion, and grace.

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