

Power of the Soul by John Holland

EXCERPTS *from*

Chapter 4 : **The Power of Love** and
Chapter 5 : **The Healer Within**

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Chapter 4 : The Power of Love : Relationships of the Soul

I couldn't write a chapter on the energy of love without touching on relationships and how they relate on a soul level. Relationships are mirror images of your own life, how you feel and treat yourself, as well as how you react and respond to different situations and people that are around you. All relationships whether they're on an emotional, physical, mental, or spiritual level are all part of the learning process and enlightenment of the soul. No matter what category a relationship falls into, it acts as a teaching tool for you to understand the lessons that your soul needs to learn. It can help you to understand, change, or enhance your individual qualities. Every relationship is an opportunity for soul growth. Different types of relationships have an uncanny way of showing you where you need to work on in your life. At times, they reveal your vulnerabilities and insecurities, or your need for attention, approval, and acceptance. Equally, they can identify where you may be stuck in a rut, or where you need love, peace, healing, or joy in your life.

Working as a psychic medium, I have come to appreciate and to look at people on a soul level. This helps me to express love through my heart, and to experience the interaction as a soul. When I'm faced with difficult person, I always try to connect with them on a soul level, or in other words, I try to make a soul-to-soul connection. Trust me, I know sometimes it's not that easy, but I look at that person from a divine perspective. I try to understand them through my own soul, my heart center, and by tapping in to and using my intuition. I see them as a Divine Soul, instead of what my eyes see or the reaction from my conscious response. It enables me to see the *real* person and the good that I know is inside all of us. Sometimes that divinity, that goodness that you know is there may be buried. Often it's suffocated by years of torment, negative behavior, mental conditioning, or unhealthy relationships. Sometimes the hardest and most painful relationships can act as our best teachers and guides. Relationships of all kinds are really about *you*, even in the hardest situations. As I have said, "They're meant to be mirrors for us, always reflecting back what we need to see. The question is: Do you want to look in this mirror, and be open to what you need to learn, or simply pretend its not there and pass it by?"

Business relationships can certainly test you. A few years back, I moved back to Massachusetts after living in California for many years. I took a job as an Office Manager for a high-powered businessman who worked in the travel business. It didn't take me long to settle into the new position and I developed a good relationship with my boss. Everything seemed to start off really well, and I enjoyed the new job. However, after a few months, the relationship began to change, as the respect he'd shown in those early months suddenly evaporated and was replaced by demands often barked across the room. He became more aggressive and there were times when his temper got so bad, that I didn't know what to do expect. These were the times when I keep my head down! I'm sure this is an all too familiar story but as I needed the job security, I stayed on suffering in silence.

It was early one morning, and I'd just returned to the office with his morning coffee. He yelled another command from his office about his upcoming travel plans before he

departed in his usual world wind, without even a thank you. I sat there trembling, feeling upset, confused, angry and thought: "Why am enduring this work relationship?" As soon as I asked the question, I *knew* the answer. I was reliving my whole childhood relationship with my father all over again. I was so keen for approval and attention that I was allowing myself to be treated like a child all over again. It was totally unintentional, but at least I realized it before it was too late.

In my eyes, my boss and his behavior was a reflection of those challenging times as I was growing up. The alcoholic outbursts from my father after long drinking bouts, of me being abused with a torrent of taunts and obscenities, being made to feel small, and living with the anxiety of never knowing what he was going to do next. I was reliving it all over again 20 years on. Okay, there wasn't any alcohol involved but the same feeling and emotions prevailed. I'd inadvertently taken on the role as a child again. I thought I'd worked through these issues of my relationship with my father but apparently not. They'd risen to the surface again. The situation at work was sending a clear signal to me about the relationship between my boss and I was teaching me a painful lesson, but one I clearly needed to experience one more time. I realized that I still needed to work on myself, my self-esteem, my courage, and focus on the healing for my soul.

Unbelievably and as strange as it may sound, I actually thanked the Universe for what it was showing me. I forgave and thanked my boss within myself, and shortly afterwards quit the job. The combination of moving on from that job and some intense work on myself enabled me to break the pattern that many of us get in to with unhealthy relationships. I finally *got* the lesson.

Interesting enough, it was the last job I had before I became a professional Psychic Medium. So, you can see why I thanked the Universe for the wonderful opportunity to advance myself. Sometimes life has a way of putting the same lesson in front of you until you get it! If it's necessary, you'll find yourself in a recurring cycle until you finally learn how to deal with it. It's a way really of life kicking you in the ass and helping you to move to the next level. Today, my old employer and I get along great and he's respectful of the work that I'm doing.

If you look back at all your relationships, whatever the situation, you'll begin to see a pattern. The learning process is all part of guiding you in the direction of where you're supposed to be. If enough people constantly encourage you to change something in your life, or take up a new hobby, or change something about the way you approach life, perhaps there's a message there. Equally, a certain relationship can be the catalyst for a major shift. I was seventeen years old when a friend took me to see my first psychic. In the reading, I was told I would live in California, that I would write books, and that I was psychically gifted. Well, being a typical teenager, I just said: "Yeah okay – right."

That one incident was to be the start of a life-long journey of learning and understanding as I became aware of spirituality and my own psychic gift. I often wonder what direction my life would have taken, if my friend hadn't taken me to that psychic. Maybe I would have discovered my abilities and spirituality anyway, but much later in life. My friend will never know just how much of a catalyst she was for me. Perhaps our relationship had been two kindred souls connecting and fate had played its part. When people hear the words *kindred souls*, they automatically they think of a love connection. A kindred soul can also be someone who tests your very nerves, but in the end have stretched your potential beyond what you thought possible.

Everyone's had these types of relationships, you just need to take the time and look into your past. Please remember not *all* relationships have to be one-on-one with just one individual. They can be with a group, an organization, a pet, or even an incident or situation. Write down in your journal the relationships you've had in the past, and see if they've guided you in the direction of where you are now or did they lead you away from your purpose? On another page, write down all the relationships that are happening in your life right now. Ask

yourself: “What am I learning from this relationship?” “What qualities am I developing?” “Is this relationship for my highest good?” “How can I make this relationship better?” “Are we learning from each other?” “What have I learnt or still learning about myself through this relationship?” “Are the people in my life empowering and encouraging me to be all that I can be?” Within every relationship, there’s an encoded lesson that you’ve hopefully learned or still need to learn.

Some relationships are simply there for you to experience love or it could be showing you what you *don’t* want in your next relationship. So when it’s time to develop a relationship, you’ll be more aware and have the ability to manifest the type of relationship you want – one that serves your highest purpose. Whatever the case, when you learn to open your heart and view relationship through the eyes of your soul, you’ll discover an even better relationship that’s waiting for you – the relationship of your soul-self.

Chapter 5 : The Healer Within : Soul Solitude

Phones ringing everywhere, e-mails to be sent, pagers going off, bumper to bumper traffic, televisions blaring – noise everywhere! This is how most of us now live our lives. With this constant noise, continual distractions, busy schedules, and the hustle and bustle of every day life, how can we even begin to be with ourselves? How can we connect with our soul, or block out the background noise long enough to hear the inside wisdom that our soul is trying to pass on? When we become more aware of our soul and heart, we strengthen the link with the Divine Source, and we’re reminded once again of our true perfection.

On a physical level, it’s easy to get caught up in the materialistic world, but occasionally it’s important to step back from your outside world, to give yourself a chance to pause, reflect, and heal. You need to schedule some alone time, so you can commune with your soul and give the power of spirit the time and opportunity to restore you with energy and vitality. Sometimes, when work obligations have been intense, you can feel so stressed and worn out that you just need to get away from it all. I’m not talking about a typical vacation, but something on a more spiritual level, such as a retreat – a place to restore your energy, release those tensions and quiet your mind. Vacations generally cater to our physical pleasure senses, rather than feeding our inner-self. We go on vacations for sight seeing, dancing, drinking, sun bathing, shopping, and packing as much as we can in such a short time. How many times have you gone on vacation and said: “I need another vacation from my vacation!”

Retreats and vacations have such different purposes and outcomes. For some people, all they want to do is rest on a vacation. That’s fine, but when I refer to a *retreat*, I think of a place where you can spend time to step back from the pressures and distractions of everyday life. Retreats enable you to be quiet, unplug, relish in the solitude, journal your thoughts, and most important, to be with yourself in communion. By devoting time to strengthening the connection between your body, mind, and spirit, you create a harmonious balance that permeates all areas of your life. This time offers you a chance to look inwards to connect with your spiritual center for self-discovery and clarification. When it’s time to go back to your routine, you’ll have a clearer perspective of *how* you live, as well as having a more positive focus on the direction for the future. This confident attitude will spread to other areas of your life, and hopefully you’ll continue this ritual of self-improvement and better self-care.

Retreats aren't necessarily about the *quantity* of time; it's more about the *quality* of time that you spend on yourself that counts. I often teach workshops at the Omega Institute in upper state New York who offer workshops, retreats, and wellness vacations. It's set in beautiful gardens, rolling hills, and a spectacular lake. Their slogan "a peaceful oasis in a hurried world" is certainly an accurate one in this instance. I was teaching a course on psychic development and during one of the breaks, I took a walk in the grounds for a little fresh air, before the next segment of my class. It was a beautiful summer day and there were lots of people of all ages taking a break. Some were sitting against a tree writing in their journals, some were meditating, others lying on their backs staring up at the sky. I also noticed that some people were quietly walking around with their heads bowed. There's nothing unusual about this except in this case, these people were not in my class. I found out later that these students were participating in another workshop, and they were practicing their silent period. They were instructed not to talk, engage or interact with anyone else for about three hours. If you think it's easy, then try it and see for yourself!

Most of us are constantly interacting with others all day, but when we're not interacting with others, we're inside our own heads, talking to ourselves and always thinking, thinking, thinking. The purpose of not talking to anyone, which is a form of solitude, is to let your mind bring up thoughts, but not pay attention to them as you let them come and go. If you practice these quiet times, you'll find that the hold that your mind has over you will diminish. The constant mind-chatter will ebb like an out-going tide. In other words, you begin to have control over your thoughts, instead of them controlling you. This is when you start to hear your own inner-voice and value the stillness that results from solitude. As the weekend drew to a close, I noticed how everyone on the campus appeared really peaceful and serene, with a twinkle in their eyes as though there was a light illuminating them. I believe this is when your soul is beaming and saying: "I'm happy!"

By going on a retreat and spending time in quiet contemplation, you're giving yourself a chance to be with your soul, nature, and to be in the now. It's a great way of releasing those stored up tensions and irritations you may have been holding onto. More and more people are seeking answers and are looking for the tools to find their own inner-self, but with our busy lifestyles and schedules, rarely do we take the time to notice the outer beauty that surrounds us. When you stop for a moment without all the distractions, you'll have time to reflect on the people and situations in your life, and how you *feel* about them. It can be quite cathartic, as you filter out what's working and what's not. It's a way of dealing, releasing and purging the ones that have been consuming your vital soul energy and holding you back from living the life you want. Just as we clear our physical spaces of clutter, the energetic fields that are a vital part of our well-being must be cleansed of disruptive energies and emotions. It's a way of restoring the connection with yourself and your divine inner wisdom.

Retreats don't have to be luxurious spas or hidden away in the hills. They can be simple places, and yet still be a vacation for the soul. When a friend of mine David takes his retreat to be with himself and his soul in solitude, he goes to a local monastery run by Franciscan monks. Many of these monasteries allow people to come and spend time in quiet contemplation. The monk's lifestyle is exactly what David needs. The monks let him spend time alone in meditation, prayer, and silence. They're not there to convert him, but to honor his request as a spiritual being.

Solitude is recognized, honored and practiced by almost every faith. Every religion speaks about the practice of spending time in quiet contemplation. From the American Indians spending time on a Vision Quest, to the Buddhist monks in monasteries, to the certain sect of the Jewish faith who spend quiet time in prayer facing a blank wall. No matter what faith, most believe in the spiritual benefits of silence in solitude.

You can share with others at a retreat, just like I do at the Buddhist Temple. There's a sense of unity and connectivity. You somehow get to know people on a soul level, rather than judging them by their physical appearance. I find relationships are strengthened when you

spend time away on a retreat because you have the opportunity to distance yourself for a brief time, to clear away the unnecessary clutter and reconnect with what's essential. You will often hear me saying: "There can't be a *we* until there is a *me*."

Give yourself and your soul the opportunity for a retreat. Don't just say: "Oh, yes I really should do that sometime." Do it now or do it soon – you deserve it. It will improve your life, your health, your attitude toward yourself and others. It will definitely help you to approach your life from a more holistic perspective – inside and out. It truly is nourishment for your soul. Enjoy!

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