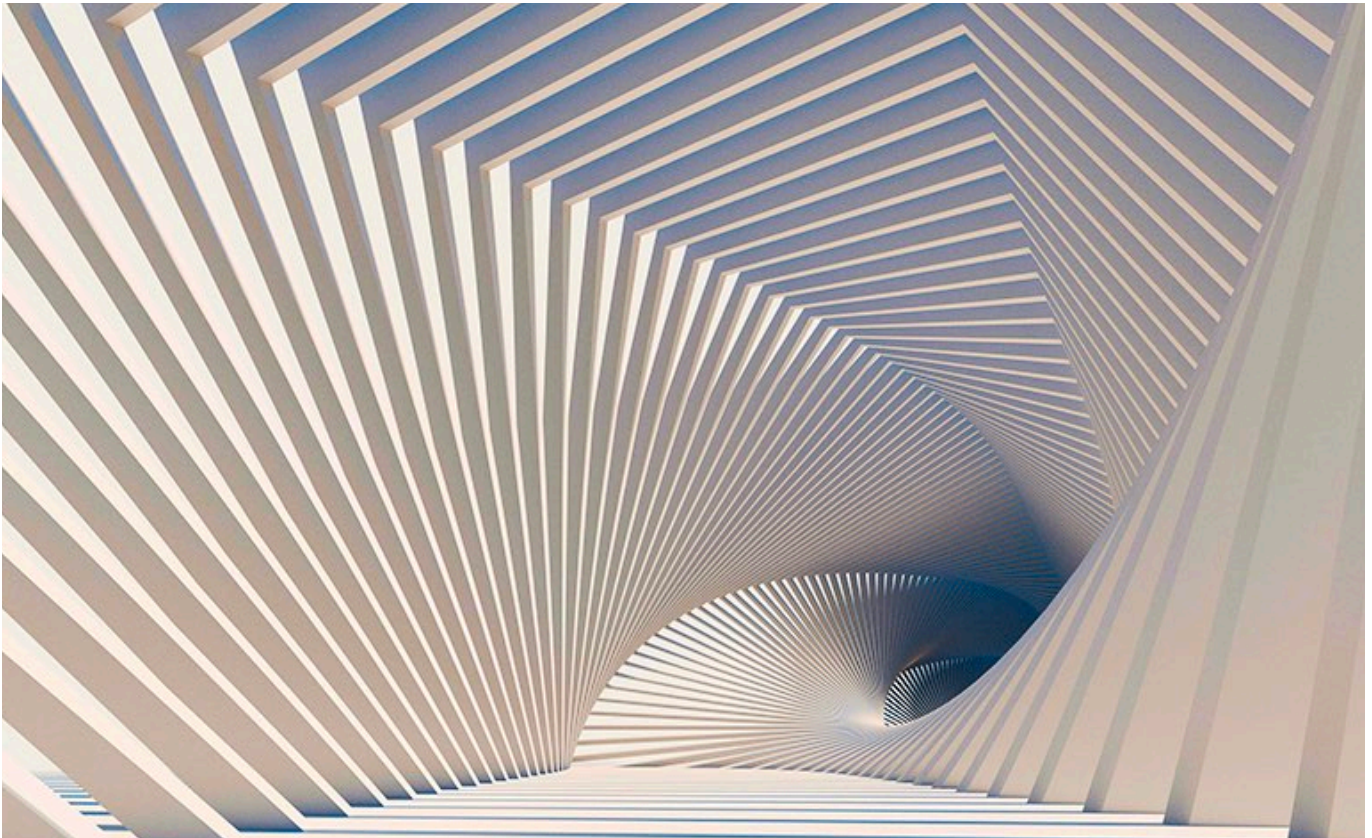


## EXPLORING LOVE, NEEDS & RELATIONSHIP LEVELS



### Unconditional Love

To give and not expect return, that is what lies at the heart of love.

Oscar Wilde

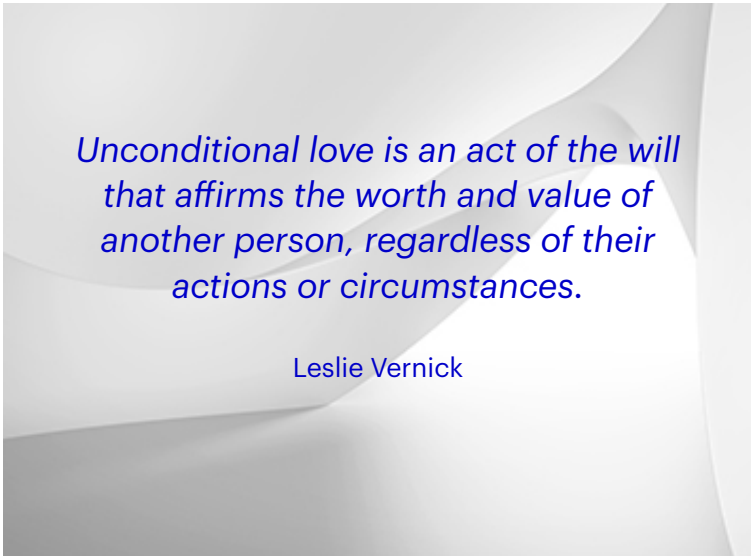
## The Levels of Love According to Human Needs Psychology

**Level One** is kind of like the baby stage. It's all about *me, me, me*. What can I get? What are you doing for *me*? There's no real sense of contribution—just a need to be fulfilled. It's very self-focused. And hey, that's okay—we all start there. But if a relationship stays there, it's not going to be healthy or sustainable.

**Level Two** is the *exchange mindset*. It's transactional: I'll give to you, but only if I'm getting something back. It's "I scratched your back, so where's my back scratch?" It can sound fair on the surface, but it's often rooted in fear or scarcity—like, if I give too much and you don't give it back, I lose. This is where a lot of people get stuck. You can call it *scorekeeping, bartering or horse trading*. In relationships it's hard to feel truly loved when a person feels they're being measured.

**Level Three** is where things start to really shift. This is where love becomes generous. In Level Three, the focus is on the *other person's needs*. You're not giving in order to get—you're giving because you *want* to. There's a level of emotional maturity here (and spiritual). And honestly, this is where the magic happens in relationships. It's where real trust, connection, and joy live. It's the place where relationships hit a level unattained by most.

There's a **Level Four**. This is the rare air. This is the level of love and contribution that we saw from spiritual leaders like Jesus, Buddha, Gandhi—people who showed love even to those who harmed them.

A quote by Leslie Vernick about unconditional love. The text is centered on a light gray background with a subtle, abstract wave-like pattern. The quote is in a blue, italicized serif font.

*Unconditional love is an act of the will  
that affirms the worth and value of  
another person, regardless of their  
actions or circumstances.*

Leslie Vernick

# Reflection & Journal Prompts

## 1. Self-Awareness Check-In

- In my current or most recent relationship, which level have I been operating from most often - Level One (getting), Level Two (exchanging), or Level Three (giving)?

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- Why?

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- What do I typically expect from a partner in order to feel loved?

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- Are those expectations conditional?

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## 2. Reframing Love

- What does “unconditional love” actually mean to me? Have I experienced it—or given it—without expecting something in return?

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- Is there a time I thought I was loving someone unconditionally, but I realize now there were strings attached?

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### 3. Needs and Understanding

- Have I taken the time to understand what my partner (or loved one) truly needs—not just what I think they need?

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- What are my top emotional needs in a relationship? How well am I communicating them?

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### 4. Conflict Through a New Lens

- Think of a recent conflict or recurring tension. What needs were likely unmet—for me, and for the other person?

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- If I chose to focus on understanding their needs first, how might that have shifted the dynamic?

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### 5. The Growth Stretch

- What would it look like for me to love someone from Level Three—even in a moment of disappointment or frustration?

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- Is there a relationship in my life that could transform if I moved from 'What am I getting?' to 'What can I give?'

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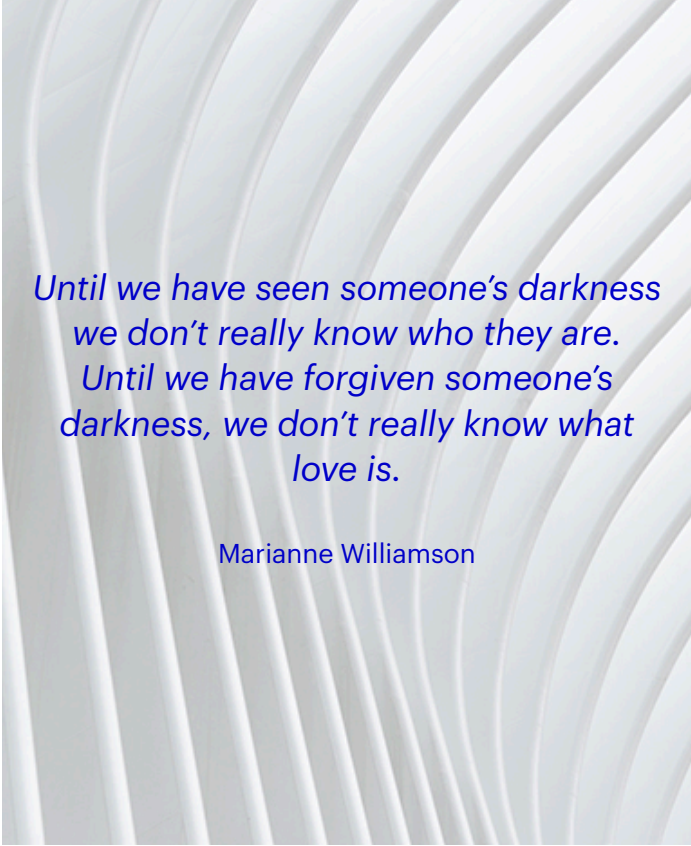
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## 6. Level Four Contemplation

- What do I think it takes to love like a Level Four human (think Jesus, Buddha, Gandhi)?

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- Where in my life could I begin to practice even a small act of love or compassion toward someone who's been difficult to love?
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*Until we have seen someone's darkness  
we don't really know who they are.  
Until we have forgiven someone's  
darkness, we don't really know what  
love is.*

Marianne Williamson

