

You are encouraged to read the whole book, and please make a proper citation if needed.

Fromm, E. (1956/2000). *The art of loving*. HarperCollins.

1. Any theory of love must begin with a theory of man, of human existence. (7)
2. Man is gifted with reason; he is life being aware of itself; he has awareness of himself, of his fellow man, of his past, and of the possibilities of his future. This awareness of himself as a separate entity, the awareness of his own short life span, of the fact that without his will he is born and against his will he dies, that he will die before those whom he loves, or they before him, the awareness of his aloneness and separateness, of his helplessness before the forces of nature and of society, all this makes his separate, disunited existence an unbearable prison. The experience of separateness arouses anxiety; it is, indeed, the source of all anxiety. Being separate means being cut off, without any capacity to use my human powers. Hence to be separate means to be helpless, unable to grasp the world – things and people – actively; it means that the world can invade me without my ability to react. Thus, separateness is the source of intense anxiety. (8)
3. The deepest need of man is the need to overcome his separateness, to leave the prison of his aloneness. Man – of all ages and cultures – is confronted with the solution of one and the same question: the question of how to overcome separateness, how to achieve union, how to transcend one's own individual life and find at-onement. (9)
4. This desire for interpersonal fusion is the most powerful striving in man. It is the most fundamental passion, it is the force which keeps the human race together, the clan, the family, society. The failure to achieve it means insanity or destruction – self-destruction or destruction of others. Without love, humanity could not exist for a day. (17)
5. Mature love is union under the condition of preserving one's integrity, one's individuality. Love is an active power in man; a power which breaks through the walls which separate man from his fellow men, which unites him with others; love makes him overcome the sense of isolation and separateness, yet it permits him to be himself, to retain his integrity. In love the paradox occurs that two beings become one and yet remain two. (19)
6. Love is an activity, not a passive affect; it is a “standing in,” not a “falling for.” In the most general way, the active character of love can be described by stating that love is primarily giving, not receiving. Giving is the highest expression of potency. In the very act of giving, I experience my strength, my wealth, my power. This

experience of heightened vitality and potency fills me with joy. I experience myself as overflowing, spending, alive, hence as joyous. Giving is more joyous than receiving not because it is a deprivation, but because in the act of giving lies the expression of my aliveness. (21-2)

7. This does not necessarily mean that he sacrifices his life for the other – but that he gives him of that which is alive in him; he gives him of his joy, of his interest, of his understanding, of his knowledge, of his humor, of his sadness – of all expressions and manifestations of that which is alive in him. In thus giving of his life, he enriches the other person, he enhances the other’s sense of aliveness by enhancing his own sense of aliveness. He does not give in order to receive; giving is in itself exquisite joy. But in giving he cannot help bringing something to life in the other person, and this which is brought to life reflects back to him; in truly giving, he cannot help receiving that which is given back to him. Giving implies to make the other person a giver also and they both share in the joy of what they have brought to life. (23)
8. The active character of love becomes evident in the fact that it always implies certain basic elements, common to all forms of love. These are care, responsibility, respect and knowledge. (24)
9. Love is the active concern for the life and the growth of that which we love. (25)
10. Responsibility, in its true sense, is an entirely voluntary act; it is my response to the needs, expressed, or unexpressed, of another human being. To be “responsible” means to be able and ready to “respond.” (26)
11. Responsibility could easily deteriorate into domination and possessiveness, were it not for a third component of love, respect. Respect is not fear and awe; it denotes, in accordance with the root of the word (*respicere* = to look at), the ability to see a person as he is, to be aware of his unique individuality. (26)
12. To respect a person is not possible without knowing him; care and responsibility would be blind if they were not guided by knowledge. Knowledge would be empty if it were not motivated by concern. (27)
13. Love is active penetration of the other person, in which my desire to know is stilled by union. In the act of fusion I know you, I know myself, I know everybody – and I “know” nothing. I know in the only way knowledge of that which is alive is possible for man – by experience of union – not by any knowledge our thought can give. (28-9)
14. Care, responsibility, respect and knowledge are mutually interdependent. They are a syndrome of attitudes which are to be found in the mature person; that is, in the person who develops his own powers productively, who only wants to have that which he has worked for, who has given up narcissistic dreams of omniscience

and omnipotence, who has acquired humility based on the inner strength which only genuine productive activity can give. (30)

15. Man –and woman- finds union within himself only in the union of his female and his male polarity. This polarity is the basis for all creativity. The man-female polarity is also the basis for interpersonal creativity. This is obvious biologically in the act that the union of sperm and ovum is the basis for the birth of a child. (31)
16. Love is not primarily a relationship to a specific person; it is an attitude, an orientation of character which determines the relatedness of a person to the world as a whole, not toward one “object” of love. If a person loves only one other person and is indifferent to the rest of his fellow men, his love is not love but a symbiotic attachment, or an enlarged egotism. Yet, most people believe that love is constituted by the object, not by the faculty. In fact, they even believe that it is a proof of the intensity of their love when they do not love anybody except the “loved” person. (43)
17. Brotherly love: there is the experience of union with all men, of human solidarity, of human at-onement. Brotherly love is based on the experience that we all are one. Only in the love of those who do not serve a purpose, love begins to unfold. By having compassion for the helpless one, man begins to develop love for his brother; and in his love for himself he also loves the one who is in need of help, the frail, insecure human being. (44)
18. Motherly love by its very nature is unconditional. Mother loves the newborn infant because it is her child, not because the child has fulfilled any specific condition, or lived up to any specific expectation. Affirmation of the child’s life has two aspects; one is the care and responsibility absolutely necessary for the preservation of the child’s life and his growth. The other aspect goes further than mere preservation. It is the attitude which instills in the child a love for living, which gives him the feeling: it is good to be alive, it is good to be a little boy or girl, it is good to be on this earth!
19. The need for transcendence is one of the most basic needs of man, rooted in the fact of his self-awareness, in the fact that he is not satisfied with the role of the creature, that he cannot accept himself as dice thrown out of the cup. He needs to feel as the creator, as one transcending the passive role of being created. There are many ways of achieving this satisfaction of creation; the most natural and also the easiest one to achieve is the mother’s care and love for her creation. She transcends herself in the infant, her love for it gives her life meaning and significance.
20. In erotic love, two people who were separate become one. In motherly love, two people who were one become separate. The mother must not only tolerate, she

must wish and support the child's separation. It is only at this stage that motherly love becomes such a difficult task, that it requires unselfishness, the ability to give everything and to want nothing but the happiness of the loved one. (48)

21. Erotic love: Sexual desire aims at fusion – and is by no means only a physical appetite, the relief of a painful tension. But sexual desire can be stimulated by the anxiety of aloneness, by the wish to conquer or be conquered, by vanity, by the wish to hurt and even to destroy, as much as it can be stimulated by love. Because sexual desire is in the minds of most people coupled with the idea of love, they are easily misled to conclude that they love each other when they want each other physically. If the desire for physical union is not stimulated by love, if erotic love is not also brotherly love, it never leads to union in more than an orgiastic, transitory sense. (51)
22. Erotic love is exclusive, but it loves in the other person of all mankind, all that is alive. It is exclusive only in the sense that I can fuse myself fully and intensely with one person only. Erotic love excludes the love for others only in the sense of erotic fusion, full commitment in all aspects of life – but not in the sense of deep brotherly love. (51)
23. Erotic love, if it is love, has one premise. That I love from the essence of my being – and experience the other person in the essence of his or her being. In essence, all human beings are identical. We are part of One; we are One. This being so, it should not make any difference whom we love. Love should be essentially an act of will, of decision to commit my life completely to that of one other person. To love somebody is not just a strong feeling – it is a decision, it is a judgment, it is a promise. If love were only a feeling, there would be no basis for the promise to love each other forever. (52)
24. Taking these views into account one may arrive at the position that love is exclusively an act of will and commitment. (52)
25. Self-love: Love for and understanding of one's own self, cannot be separated from respect and love and understanding for another individual. The love for my own self is inseparably connected with the love for any other being. Love, in principle, is indivisibly as far as the connection between "objects" and one's own self is concerned. Genuine love is expression of productiveness and implies care, respect, responsibility and knowledge. It is not an "affect" in the sense of being affected by somebody, but an active striving for the growth and happiness of the loved person, rooted in one's own capacity to love. (55)
26. The affirmation of one's own life, happiness, growth, freedom is rooted in one's capacity to love, i.e., in care, respect, responsibility, and knowledge. If an individual is able to love productively, he loves himself too; if he can love only

others, he cannot love at all. Selfishness and self-love, far from being identical, are actually opposites. The selfish person does not love himself too much but too little; in fact he hates himself. This lack of fondness and care for himself, which is only one expression of his lack of productiveness, leaves him empty and frustrated. He is necessarily unhappy and anxiously concerned to snatch from life the satisfactions which he blocks himself from attaining. He seems to care too much for himself, but actually he only makes an unsuccessful attempt to cover up and compensate for his failure to care for his real self. It is true that selfish persons are incapable of loving others, but they are not capable of loving themselves either. (56)

27. To love is a personal experience which everyone can only have by and for himself; in fact, there is hardly anybody who has not had this experience in a rudimentary way, at least, as a child, an adolescent, an adult. (99)
28. First at all, the practice of an art requires discipline. Discipline should not be practiced like a rule imposed on oneself from the outside, but that it becomes an expression of one's will; that it is felt as pleasant, and that one slowly accustoms oneself to a kind of behavior which one would eventually miss, if one stopped practicing it.
29. That concentration is a necessary condition for the mastery of an act is hardly necessary to prove. To be able to concentrate means to be able to be alone with oneself – and this ability is precisely a condition for the ability to love. To be concentrated in relation to others means primarily to be able to listen. To be concentrate means to live fully in the present, in the here and now, and not to think of the next thing to be done, while I am doing something right now. One cannot learn to concentrate without becoming sensitive to oneself.
30. A third factor is patience. Anyone who ever tried to master an art knows that patience is necessary if you want to achieve anything.
31. Eventually, a condition of learning an art is a supreme concern with the mastery of the art.
32. According to what I said about the nature of love, the main condition for the achievement of love is the overcoming of one's narcissism. The opposite pole to narcissism is objectivity; it is the faculty to see people and things as they are, objectively, and to be able to separate this objective picture from a picture which is formed by one's desire and fears.
33. The faculty to think objectively is reason; the emotional attitude behind reason is that of humility. To be objective, to use one's reason, is possible only if one has achieved an attitude of humility, if one has emerged from the dreams of omniscience and omnipotence which one has as a child.

34. Love being dependent on the relative absence of narcissism, it requires the development of humility, objectivity and reason. One's whole life must be devoted to this aim.
35. This process of emergence, of birth, of waking up, requires one quality as a necessary condition: faith. The practice of the art of loving requires the practice of faith. Faith is a character trait pervading the whole personality, rather than a specific belief. "Having faith" in another person means to be certain of the reliability and unchangeability of his fundamental attitudes, of the core of his personality, of his love. Unless we have faith in the persistence of our self, our feeling of identity is threatened and we become dependent on other people whose approval then becomes the basis for our feeling of identity. Only the person who has faith in himself is able to be faithful to others, because only he can be sure that he will be the same at a future time as he is today and, therefore, that he will feel and act as he now expects to. Another meaning of having faith in a person refers to the faith we have in the potentialities of others. We have faith in the potentialities of others, of ourselves, and of mankind because, and only to the degree to which , we have experienced the growth of our own potentialities, the reality of growth in ourselves, the strength of our own power of reason and of love. The basis of rational faith is productiveness; to live by our faith means to live productively.
36. To have faith requires courage, the ability to take a risk, the readiness even to accept pain and disappointment. Then one will also recognize that while one is consciously afraid of not being loved, the real, though usually unconscious fear is that of being. To love means to commit oneself without guarantee, to give oneself completely in the hope that our love will produce love in the loved person. Love is an activity. If I love, I am in a constant state of active concern with the loved person.