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One Love

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So, today is Valentine's Day and ... big deal! The day of love, and ... so what? So, what does it mean to you? What's it all about. I love you. Do you love me?

Love is in the air. Everywhere I look around.

My daughter recently celebrated her 16th birthday and I commented to a friend that 16 was going to be a difficult age for her and for me as a father. My friend said, "If you love her, she'll be fine." And of course, she was right. If I love her, she will be okay. Love is the answer. If she has love, she can love. She won't have to wait until Valentine's Day or any other pre-ordained, mass-consumer day to express her love.

But today is Valentine's Day! The day of love. But, this annual celebration of love has got precious little to do with my love for my daughter, or my love of music, my love for my enemies, for my friends or my country. God, I'd love a beer! No, Valentine's Day focuses on romantic or 'courtly' love. Lennon and McCartney sang about it ...

She loves you, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Ah, yes, the romantic love of 'the couple'. And indeed what a beautiful area of love that is. Two people 'in love'. It's wonderful. Cupid's arrow, love at first sight. Initial eye contact. A flirting smile. An exchange of greetings that says so much. A greeting that leads to friendship, intimacy, romance, or sometimes doesn't.

And romantic love is, of course, open to everybody. That's the great thing about love. It's so democratic. Anybody ... black man or white boy, old woman or young girl, big or small, rich or poor. It's there for us all.

Just ask anybody who's in love or has ever been in love what it's like and they might not be able to explain it because we're not all William Butler Yeats, but they will try and they'll say ... it's the best thing ever ... it's that kind of feeling ... I've never felt so good ... it just runs through me ... and ... all of a sudden nothing else matters ... it's the only thing ... James Brown knew all about it ...

So good, so good, I got you.

But there can also be pain involved. The 19th century French poet, Charles Pierre Baudelaire said that love was like a rose with a thorny reality hiding behind the illusion of every petal and indeed love can hurt when it's unrequited and relationships can turn bad and one person can feel hurt by the other ... and, of course, it's not very nice at all. But no pain, no gain, and as English writer J. E. Buckrose (Annie Edith Jameson) said "to love, and to be hurt often, and to love again - this is the brave and happy life". Elvis Presley knew all about it.

... but I can't help falling in love with you.

And so, many relationships last for as long as the spark lasts and if the spark dies, the relationship often dies with it. Some relationships last longer, though. The spark stays aglow or maybe something else comes along and replaces the initial spark. Like a deeper understanding of each other. A mutual depth within the relationship takes over and that's surely worth celebrating. Not only on Valentine's Day. That's worth celebrating 365 days of the year. Eight days a week ...

Eight days a week ... I love you!

And when that happens in a relationship, you've hit the jackpot! That's when everything clicks into place and other concerns fade into oblivion because you've got the answer, you've got what is needed, you've got ... love.

Celebrate good times, come on!

So what about Valentine's Day, then? Well, it really only scrapes the surface, doesn't it? The hearts and chocolates love, which is all very nice indeed, but really only represents that easily-marketable, very, very shallow end of the whole spectrum of love. So the message for Valentine's day today must be, "Don't settle for the shallow end of love. Jump in the deep end. Get in there! That's where all the good stuff is!"

All you need is love ... all together now ... all you need is love ... everybody ... all you need is love, love. Love is all you need.