Why We Are All Connected

*Written by Emma Mayer*

Imagine a love so unique, so life-giving, and so undeniably real that you can’t imagine being the person you are today without them. Perhaps you immediately thought of someone; perhaps you thought of no one at all, or maybe you thought about someone from your past. Whoever it is, you know exactly what kind of love I’m talking about. That love that encompasses your every living moment, to the point where a moment without them feels like an eternity of torture.

Now imagine hatred; imagine a time when all you felt in your heart was that white hot, burning anger that invaded your senses. A time when you couldn’t possibly imagine being able to love that person or that thing. Or imagine a time when you felt hatred being directed to you. When the color of your skin, your religion, or your political preferences made you feel like an outcast; when you felt the most alone in the world because of someone else’s prejudice.

According to a professor of psychology at Beacon College in Florida, we hate because we fear things that are different than us. Studies have found that we are more likely to be attracted to and pursue relationships with individuals who are more like us. Essentially, these two ideas are saying the same thing, and that’s that the ideas of love and hate are built on the same foundations.

Human beings are innately similar, as we have all been created in the image of God. We can see love and hate in every single person, in every life lived. Both are primary emotions that are shared by all of humanity.

One of my passions is relations between human beings. I love the way that we react to one another, engage with one another, and manage to form relationships with others. My favorite part about humanity is how we constantly seek people and build relationships with those that we can say are our “forever people” – the people that we want to make sure are by our side for the rest of our lives, and I dislike the way that we can invoke pain upon other people, or on ourselves.

The thing about love and hatred is that you can’t have one without the other; it takes hatred to make you see what you love, and love to show you that there is hope beyond hate. This is why my project, titled “Love & Hate” is one that illustrates memoirs, real stories told by real people about the things they love and the things that they hate. This project is for all of us, not just those that are willing to share.

Even if we don’t know exactly what it feels like to go through racial discrimination, a birth that was almost an abortion, the deportation of a loved one, or the inspiring ways that a marriage can last 60+ years, we can still relate to the most basic human emotions that those events transpire in our own lives. To me, that’s what makes love and hate so incredibly human: we define it by the ways we see it.

I’ve felt my own share of love and hate. I know what it feels like to give everything to a person, to lose a loved one, to feel as though nothing about myself as a person is worthy of being loved. I have felt every ounce of the emotions that all of those things invoke, and essentially, that’s why I love this project so much – because I too can relate to every single other human on this planet in that way. In a world full of disconnect, this is how I connect.

A friend of mine once said, “you have to be willing to have some hatred in your life in order to move on and recover in love.” The purpose behind this collection of memoirs is to show people how to do that by showing how other people have done it before. That’s the thing about love and hate – it connects the world to one another, no matter how different we may be.