

# The Four Noble Truths of Relationships

---

“Only  
Connect” —  
E.M. Forster



In the beginning there were simply monastic teachers.  
Not so much discussion of the path of intimacy. That is now changing.

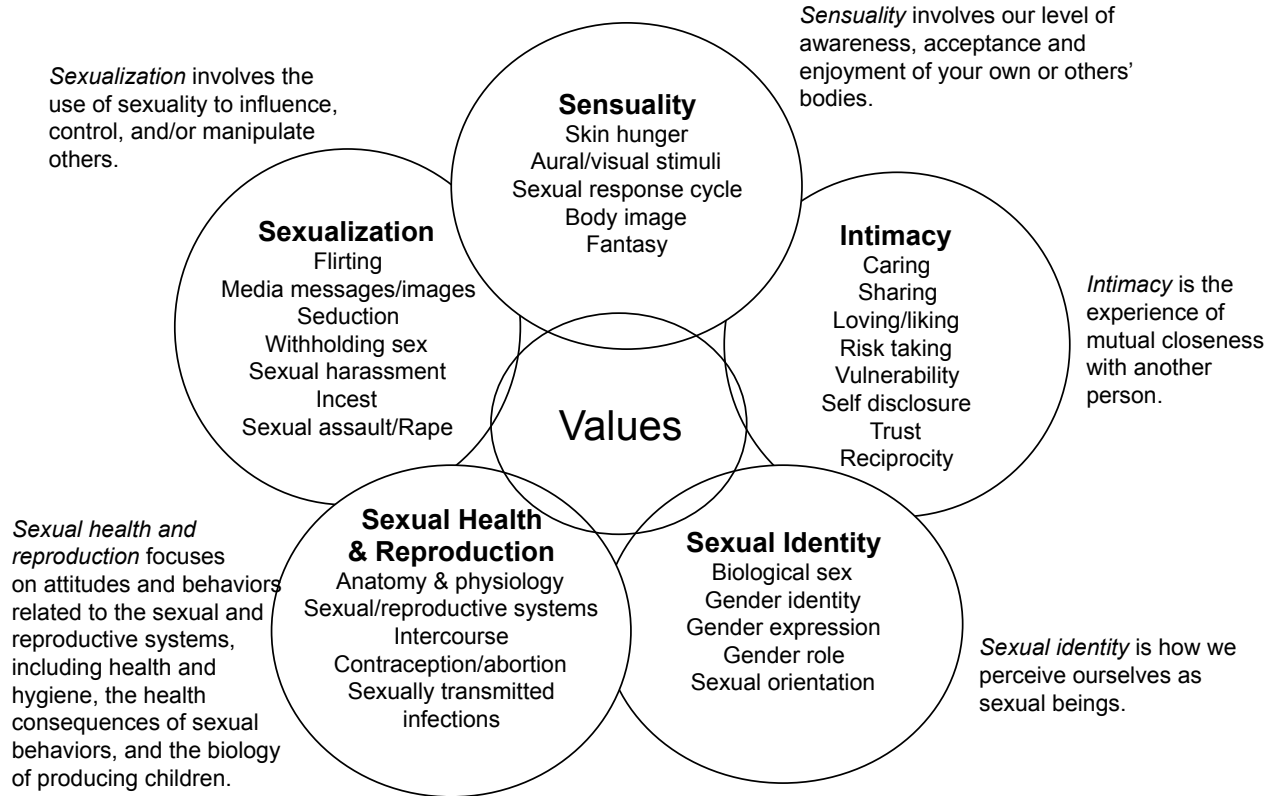


• Eventually, we as Buddhists will need something like the Unitarian program, Our Whole Life (OWL). Today we borrow from it.

OWL Grades 7-9 © 2014 by UUA & UCC

## The Circles of Sexuality

Sexuality encompasses nearly every aspect of our being, from attitudes and values to feelings and experiences. It is influenced by the individual, family, culture, religion/spirituality, laws, professions, institutions, science and politics.



"Circles of Sexuality," adapted from *Life Planning Education*, 1995, Advocates for Youth, Washington DC [advocatesforyouth.org](http://advocatesforyouth.org), based on the original work of Dennis M. Dailey, Professor Emeritus, University of Kansas.

—adapted from D. Dailey, "Sexual Expression and Aging," in F. Berghorn & D. Schafer, eds., *The Dynamics of Aging* (Westview Press, 1981).

# Making Contact



I believe  
the greatest gift  
I can conceive of having  
from anyone  
is to be seen by them,  
heard by them,  
to be understood  
and touched by them.  
The greatest gift  
I can give  
is to see, hear, understand  
and to touch  
another person.  
When this is done,  
I feel  
contact has been made.  
--Virginia Satir



# Circles of Sexuality Gathas from Dr. Victor Gabriel, University of the West

## **A Prayer Before Using a Dating App**

O Compassionate Avalokiteshvara,

As I search for a compatible and loving partner,

Grant me the courage to be vulnerable enough to open myself to another in love,

Help me to see the Buddha Nature in each person on this dating app.

To treat them with dignity and respect rather than as objects for my pleasure.

I pray that you grant me the wisdom and eloquence to represent myself well on this dating app,

So that I can recognize me from my words.

Bless me with patience and persistence so that I may continue my search for love and companionship.



# Circles of Sexuality Gathas from Dr. Victor Gabriel, University of the West

## **A Prayer before a First Sexual Experience**

O Compassionate Avalokiteshvara,

You have always been with me.

Through the heartache and the happiness in my search for  
companionship.

I have longed for this moment for so long.

May I experience connection of the physical,

May I connect with the Buddha Nature of others.

May all who desire intimacy have their wishes swiftly  
fulfilled.



# Circles of Sexuality Gathas from Dr. Victor Gabriel, University of the West

## **A Prayer before Testing for HIV**

O Compassionate Avalokiteshvara,  
You who hear the prayers of the anxious and afraid,  
You who have heard the prayers of my parents, of my ancestors,  
I feel scared, numb, and overwhelmed,  
May these results be unstained as my innermost nature.  
Whatever the results may be, help me face each day bravely.  
My life may be different, but it is far from over.  
May whatever stress and anxiety I feel be of benefit to others.  
I bow to those who made this test possible,  
For those who came before me,  
Their protest, their dreams  
These now protect me.  
May all beings be free of illness and prejudice.  
May all have access to healing of body, speech, and mind.



# Circles of Sexuality Gathas from Dr. Victor Gabriel, University of the West

## **A Prayer for Coming Out**

O Compassionate Avalokiteshvara,  
As I take steps to come out and share my truth,  
I know that my ultimate truth is my perfect Buddha Nature;  
Yet coming out is my truth in this dream-like conventional life.  
Help me overcome my stress, fear and anxiety that hiding my  
sexuality has caused.  
May I find the strength to know myself beyond the fear of  
others,  
As I take this step  
Bless me with a life that is happy and free.  
May my coming out awaken more truth in myself and others.  
May these stresses and anxieties I am experiencing,  
Transform into loving-kindness and compassion for myself  
and others.





# Circles of Sexuality Gathas from Dr. Victor Gabriel, University of the West

## A Prayer While Transitioning

O Compassion Avalokiteshvara,

My mind, this ever-present awareness is pure.

Through the power of interdependence, I have received this precious human life,

This precious human mind, this source of Buddha Nature has no physical form.

My mind knows depths that do not always make sense to me and others.

Yet it knows when I take a chance on this unfolding,

My body carries the wisdom of the Buddhas and guides me into the unknown

Grant that my physical form mirrors the expansiveness and beauty within me.

Grant me the power and bravery to fully be myself.

Give me patience to be brave in small steps and bold ways.

In becoming may I be free.

# The Four Noble Truths of Love

## Susan Piver

---

- **Relationships never stabilize.** When you solve one problem, there is another. There is actually no way to get comfortable. They are constantly in flux because relationships are alive.
- **Expecting relationships to be stable is what makes them unstable** The second truth, the cause of suffering, is that we expect them to stabilize anyway. We are always trying to get rid of the problems in our relationships. This is only human. Thinking that a relationship will finally come to rest in a peaceful place is actually what makes it uncomfortable.
- **Meeting the instability together is love.** Rather than trying to resolve the discomfort of instability, a relationship is about riding the waves of connection, distance, desire, dullness and joy together. Doing so, you find that there is an ever-present invitation to deeper intimacy.
- **The path to liberation.** There are steps we can take to go beyond disconnection and disagreement to love each other more deeply.



# The Eightfold Path of Love

## Susan Piver

---

- **Right View:** Bring awareness to the mental movie-projector. Snap it off. Don't mistake the person for your projection.
- **Right Intention:** Set the intention of giving from the heart rather than the intention of "finding love".
- **Right Speech.**
- **No lying.** Know the truth of what you think and feel, and do not lie to yourself.
- **No divisive speech.** When I try to blame or hurt someone, I am dividing myself from them. It is quite a trick to argue with heat and volume and remain connected.
- **No idle speech.** Why are you speaking...is it only because you are bored.
- **Right Action.** Non-harming. Do your inner housekeeping. Take responsibility in the sense of getting right to work on whatever has just happened.
- **Right Livelihood (Right Household):** Don't live in a mess. Don't spend more than you have. Share responsibilities consciously.
- **Right Effort:** Continually working to apply these.
- **Right Mindfulness:** Mindfulness of the quality of energy.
- **Right Absorption:** Do not get distracted by discursive thoughts or conceptuality.



# How to Be an Adult in Relationship

## David Richo

---

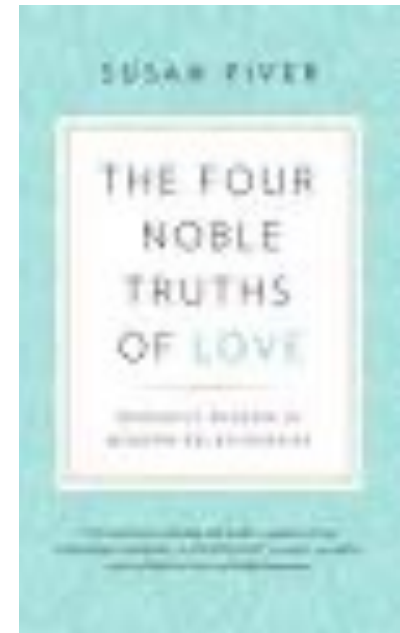
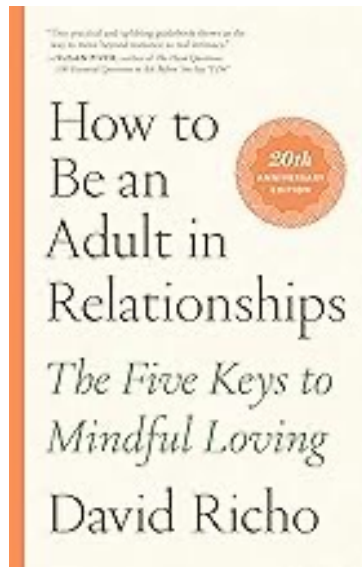
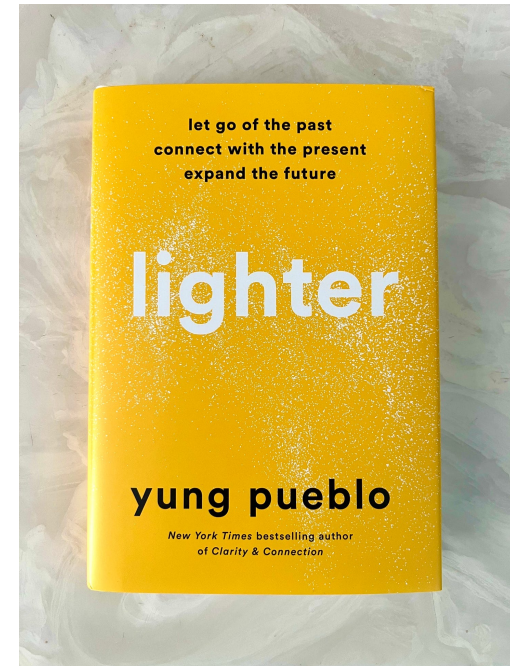
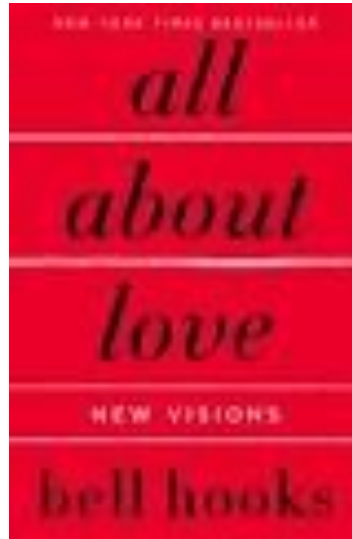
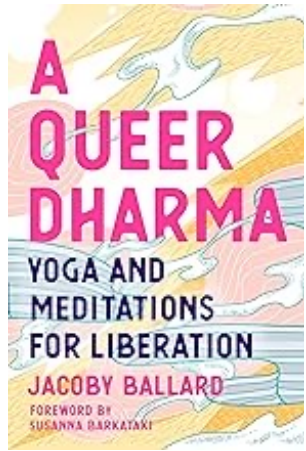
### Five Keys to Mindful Loving:

- **Attention to the present moment; observing, listening, and noticing all the feelings at play in our relationships.**
- **Acceptance of ourselves and others just as we are.**
- **Appreciation of all our gifts, our limits, our longings, and our poignant human predicament.**
- **Affection shown through holding and touching in respectful ways.**
- **Allowing life and love to be just as they are, with all their ecstasy and ache, without trying to take control.**



# Additional Resources for Mindful Relationships

## Buddha's Bedroom



# Attachment Theory

Attachment theory seeks to answer the questions, *what pattern of behavior tends to arise when one human being comes into relationship with another, and where does this pattern originate.*

## Secure Attachment

- Basically healthy relationship with parents.
- Mutual bonding.
- Parents were not blocked from responding by their own unconscious patterns.
- Parents at peace with their early life experience.
- Parents in good relationship with their emotions and body.



## Insecure Attachment

*Happy families are all alike. Every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.— Leo Tolstoy*

*Avoidant Attachment: Dismissive parent. Parent is not able to express love. Does not respond when child expresses emotional need. Therefore, child moves away from connection, becomes self-contained.*

*Ambivalent Attachment: Preoccupied parent. Parent may have been distracted by life situations or their own emotions, uneven in his or her response. Therefore child is in a state of vigilance. Not sure about relationships. Alternating clinging and rejecting.*

*Disorganized Attachment: Parent is abusive or not recovered from their own trauma. Child experiences fear without solution. There is no organized strategy that works. Child disassociates from themselves.*

# Earned Secure Attachment

- In the presence of a person with whom we have developed trust and rapport—whether they are our mentor, friend or spouse—we strengthen our inner sense of warmth, caring and security. At any time in our lives, we can learn to change our patterns.



Questions? Thoughts?

