“... a vast majority of people are clueless concerning the meaning and application of love. So many believe that love involves dependence, being outwardly attractive, submission, domination, possessiveness, sexual greed, and/or “craving for control” of the other, which Fromm argues are none of these. The clearest systematic explanation of what Fromm means when he speaks of love can be found in *The art of loving* (1956). According to Fromm:

"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 ... That love implies care is most evident in a mother’s love for her child … [meaning.] Love is the active concern for the life and the growth of that which we love ... To be "responsible" means to be able and ready to "respond" ... Respect, thus, implies the absence of exploitation ... To respect a person is not possible without knowing him [or her]; care and responsibility would be blind if they were not guided by knowledge", of the other’s needs, wants, hopes, and fears. In addition, Fromm argues, none of this is possible if an individual cannot be a loving human being to one’s self. He explained: "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." Paraphrasing the rest of Fromm’s thought, only by loving themselves, in a non-narcissistic way, can they love another productively; without this self love, they act like fanatics, idol worshipers, and "cannot love at all.""

**Love, as it pertains to religion**

“The opposite of authoritarian religion is humanistic religion. This type of religion is centered around a human being’s ability to develop their power of reason in order to (1) understand themselves; (2) their relationship to other human beings; (3) to realize their potentialities; (4) accept their limitations; and (5) come to terms with their role in the universe. A religious experience coming out of a humanistic religion, Fromm argues, is "based on one’s relatedness to the world as it is grasped with thought and with love" — with love being defined as non-possessive and non-exploitative — while at the same time focusing on care, responsibility, respect, and knowledge, in an active way. Therefore, the individual’s "aim[,] in humanistic religion[,] is to achieve the greatest strength, not the greatest powerlessness; virtue as self-realization, not obedience,"which in turn makes "the prevailing mood in humanistic religions that of joy" and "not sorrow and guilt" that is found most commonly in authoritarian religion.”

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