

The Politics of Love

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What is politics?

Politics can and should be loving.

What is love?

Two questions:

1. How do **you** understand love – and why do you think that is?
 2. What can **our** understanding of love learn from yours?
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What is love?

What is love?

- love is a way of relating
- it involves feeling, thought, and action; and it can have a spiritual dimension
- we can love ourselves, each other (including non-human animals), and the wider world (plants, fungi, the land, ecosystems, the planet...)
- love combines qualities such as care, commitment, understanding, respect, responsibility, and trust, which can be thought of as its ‘dimensions’
- when we love, we typically nurture our own or others’ well-being; this often entails supporting ourselves, or others, to grow; it can also involve healing
- to love is a choice; we can commit to it as individuals *and* collectively

The Politics of Love

- is a radical vision of politics
- re-imagines our *entire* politics in loving terms
- has precedents in:
 - our relationships, everyday acts of kindness
 - feminist, civil rights, LGBTQIA+, animal liberation movement
- can be thought of as a ‘round space’, with love at its centre
- is opposed to all forms of domination
 - e.g. racism, sexism, ableism, classism, speciesism
- mobilises loving values
 - e.g. *care, honesty, respect, trust, understanding*

Imagining a loving world

- self-love / social life
- advocacy and activism
- voting, organising, campaigning, and governing
- policies, laws, institutions, and systems
- economics
- cultural transformation



10 'good faith' criticisms

1. The Politics of Love is too idealistic.
2. We are not 'good enough' for love – people are too selfish, etc.
3. There isn't enough love to go around, so we have to choose who we care about.
4. Love is weakness, and it leaves us vulnerable to exploitation by stronger, cynical people.
5. We should deal with urgent problems before we try to bring about a loving world.
6. Rather than promoting love, we need to address hatred and its causes.
7. Social life is inherently violent, so love cannot underpin politics.
8. Hitler/Pol Pot/xyz... would not have been defeated by love, so love is not enough.
9. Love has a 'dark side': it is often used to justify abuse.
10. A number of feminist, Indigenous, queer, and disabled theorists have criticised love.



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www.thepoliticsoflove.com