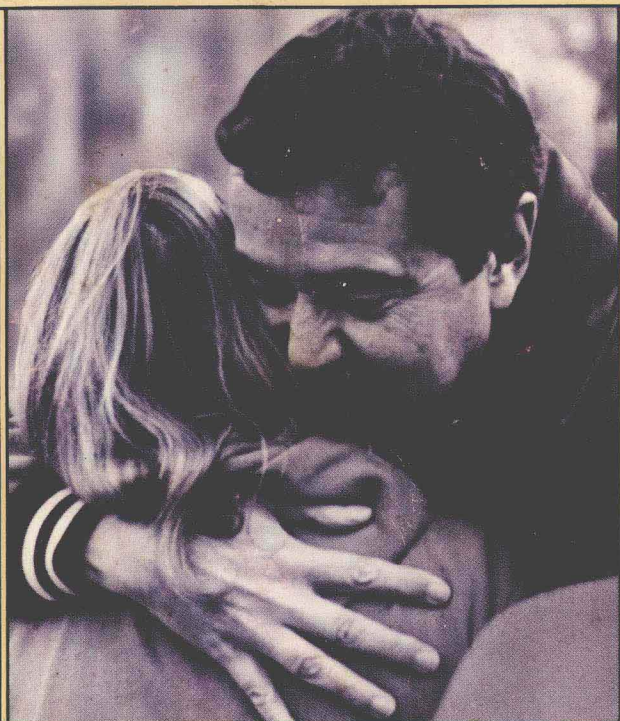


Living, Loving & Learning



by the author of Love

Leo Buscaglia, Ph.D.

Living, Loving & Learning

Leo Buscaglia, Ph.D.

Edited by Steven Short

Also by Leo Buscaglia
Love
Because I Am Human
The Way of the Bull
The Disabled and Their Parents:
A Counseling Challenge
Personhood

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Some of these speeches may be different from the way you originally remembered hearing or reading them. That is because most repeated stories have been removed. All the material is included at least once within this collection.

I hope you find it as pleasurable reading these presentations as I did listening to the tapes and reading the transcripts. I think Dr. Buscaglia's work is important because it is so sincere, so full of love, and so hopeful.

Steven Short, Editor

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Foreword

Nikos Kazantzakis suggests that ideal teachers are those who use themselves as bridges over which they invite their students to cross, then having facilitated their crossing, joyfully collapse, encouraging them to create bridges of their own.

The various presentations included in this volume represent such bridges. They are simply ideas, concepts and feelings which I shared in joy. They were delivered with the full understanding that they could be accepted, celebrated over, ignored, or rejected. It didn't matter.

They are restated here for those who may have missed them the first time, or for those who may desire to experience them a second time.

I am pleased that I shared these ideas. I am still rather awed that there were thousands who cared enough to listen. For me they represent ten exciting years of growth and sharing. In retrospect, I have no regrets, and I know, for better or worse, there will be more to come for I am determined to continue building bridges.

Leo Buscaglia

Introduction

Abundant thanks to Mr. Webster, who defines “introduction” as “preparing the way for a speech or a book.” How very nice that I have been so often privileged to “prepare the way” for Leo Buscaglia—in print and in person.

On an earlier occasion, I wrote, “He is a man of many splendid facets—teacher, student, writer, reader, speaker, listener.” Of all these, he seems most to exemplify his chosen profession—teaching. Leo teaches with enormous enthusiasm and sincerity and, best of all, he teaches by example. “If you will but listen,” his message implies, “I will show you how rich and honorable life can be!”

A huge auditorium—or the space by his living room fire—or a stretch of beach—all are classrooms to Leo as he strives to educate—to *lead*—his students of all ages from all walks of life. At the University of Southern California he has more than once been voted “Outstanding Teacher of the Year” by the young people there; and, of course, young people *know*.

A friend and I met Leo's plane on one occasion, and as he moved away to claim his baggage, an elderly gentleman stepped up to me and asked, "Who is that man? I sat next to him on the airplane. Who is he?" After my brief sketch, he sighed and said, "I knew he was someone special. He seemed to be grading papers during the trip, and on each one he wrote something like 'Beautiful!'—'Fantastic!'—'Marvelous!' No one ever wrote anything like that on one of my papers. I wish they had." What that lovely old man was seeing was the ultimate professional in action, one who brings honor to the art of teaching; and, who is, in turn, honored by his colleagues and his students.

The same commitment and passion are found in the body of his written work. His definitive book on counseling, *The Disabled and their Parents: A Counseling Challenge*, moved one student to remark, "It's the only textbook that ever made me cry." Beginning with *Love* in 1972 and including the most recent *Personhood* in 1978, his books are carefully crafted marvels of scholarship generously laced with warmth and exuberance—and, yes, impatience at the wasted landscapes of lives lived in "quiet desperation."

More than once during the years that I have known Leo someone has come up to me and asked, "Is he really 'like that' all the time?" The question is genuine—and complex. And I find that my initial response has changed. Once an unequivocal and resounding "Yes!" is now, more accurately, "yes—and no."

Yes—he does not need to be in front of an audience, large or small, to be exuberant and thoughtful and funny and wise. Yes—the concern for human potential which audiences sense is profound and genuine. Yes—

he is enjoying himself as much as anyone in the crowded room or auditorium. Yes—he is always impatient with bodies, minds, and purposes grown dormant. Yes—he believes with all his heart that “We are so much more than what we are.” And, yes, one of the favorite words in his vocabulary is—YES! (I have a letter in my files to prove the point. It reads: Dear Betty Lou, yes, yes, yes! Love, Leo)

But, no, he is not “like that” all the time, for if he were, he would be no more than a delightful performer—in demand, popular, and hugely entertaining, but with a single message. Nothing could be more contrary to the facts. Leo’s message, while based on universal truths, constantly changes, enlarges, takes on new dimension and depth, offers new challenge to us all.

From whence does this continual growth emerge? What is the wellspring? From people—old friends and new. From books—and the enchanters and enchantresses who write them. From nature—the prime example of change and growth and beauty. From his teachers: great mystics from Eastern cultures—and students—and children. From the music of the spheres! I think of Leo as a vast chunk of blotting paper, and nothing escapes imprinting itself on his quick eye, awesome intellect, and generous heart.

So convinced is he of the glory of a life that embraces change, he makes jolly well sure that others are rattled out of their comfortable complacency. I remember an encounter in Atlantic City, one of those late afternoon gatherings that seem to be a way of life at conferences. I was proudly and, I suspect, somewhat pompously regaling Leo with all I had been doing since

last we met. He listened patiently, fixed me with a beady eye, and said, "Betty Lou, you must stop doing all the things you know you can do so well and try something new." I forthwith returned home and resigned from everything in sight, almost immediately embraced a number of new (and somewhat frightening) endeavors, and had the time of my life! Do I listen to Leo? You bet, and it has been my mission through the period of our friendship to urge others to listen carefully, too. With their minds and with their hearts.

And, no, he is not "like that" all the time—or one might assume that he requires constant reinforcement from the crowds who seem to gather wherever he goes. No one that I know can vanish quite so fast nor quite so far as Leo when he feels the need to replenish his energy, his awareness, his life forces. It may be for an evening in the solitude of his home; it may be a summer in a remote cabin on an Oregon river; it may be a year on an island with only his own reflections and those of the wise men from whom he is eager to learn. He is a very private person, but this privacy seems not so much an escape, a going away from, as a going *towards*—a time for reawakening and refreshing the senses, a getting ready for spiritual and cerebral growth and soaring.

Finally, the question, "Is he really 'like that' all the time?" has a man or myth connotation. No myth he—but very much a man, very much a human, who occasionally stumbles and bumbles about like the rest of us, who suffers through the complexities of bureaucratic twentieth century life like the rest of us, who has moments of private anguish like the rest of us, who is capable of anger at large and small inhumanities like the rest of us. *Unlike* the rest of us, he seems to glory

in his own humanity and the weaknesses and imperfections and comedy that being human implies.

I have spoken of the man and not of the contents of this significant book even though I know the latter more intimately than the former. Of course, to know one is to know the other, at least in part. I will let the superb quality of the contents speak for themselves and will “prepare the way” only by saying—get ready to embark on a lovely adventure as you rejoice with Leo in a feast of life.

Betty Lou Kratoville



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Love as a Behavior Modifier



I'm overwhelmed at the pleasure of being introduced by someone who knows how to pronounce my name. I love to talk about my name because it's one of those beautiful Italian names that has every letter in the alphabet. It's spelled B-u-s-c-a-g-l-i-a, and it's pronounced like everything. The best thing, I think, that has ever happened with it in terms of introductions was when I was making a long distance telephone call. The line was busy and the operator said she'd call me back as soon as the line was free. When she called back I picked up the phone and she said, "Would you please tell Dr. Box Car that his telephone call is ready?" I said "Could that be Buscaglia?" She said, "Sir, it could be damned near anything."

Today I'm here to talk to you about love and I call this "Love In The Classroom." You're really very brave to allow me to come here and talk about love in the classroom. Usually I'm asked to disguise it or at least add something. You know, "Love, comma, As A Behavior Modifier." Then it sounds very scientific and it doesn't frighten anybody. It's the same way that, when I teach my love class on campus, all the faculty members giggle and poke me as I walk down the campus and say, "Hey, do you have a lab on Saturday?" I assure them that I don't.

I'd like to give you a little background about how I got started with this idea of love in the classroom. About five years ago I was interviewed by our Dean at the School of Education. He's a very official man, sitting behind a great big desk. I had just left the job as Director of Special Education in a large school district in California, having decided that I just wasn't an administrator, I was a teacher and that I wanted to get back to the classroom. I sat down and he said, "Buscaglia, what do you want to be doing in five years?" I immediately, without hesitation, said, "I'd like to be teaching a class in love." There was a pause, a

silence, just like you are doing right now. Then he cleared his throat, and said, "And what else?"

Two years later I *was* teaching such a class. I had twenty students. I now have 200 students with a waiting list of 600. The last time we opened the class, it was full within the first twenty minutes of the registration period. It shows you what kind of enthusiasm and excitement there is for a class in love.

It always amazes me that every time the Educational Policy's Commission meets to decide the goals of American education, the first goal is always self-realization or self-actualization. But I have yet to find a class from elementary school right on up through graduate school on, for instance, "Who Am I?, 1A;" or, "What Am I Here For?, 1A;" or "What Is My Responsibility To Man, 1A;" or, if you will, "Love, 1A." As far as I know, we are the only school in the country, and possibly the world, which has a listing called, "*Love, 1A,*" and I am the only professor crazy enough to teach it.

I don't teach this class. I learn in it. We get together on a great big rug and sit down and rap for two hours. It usually goes on into the night but we get involved for at least the formal two hours and share our knowledge, the thesis being that love is learned. Psychologists, sociologists and anthropologists have told us for years that love is learned. It isn't something that just happens spontaneously. I think we believe it is, and that's why we have so many hangups when it comes to human relationships. Yet, who teaches us to love? For one, the society in which we live, and that certainly varies. Our parents have taught us how to love. They are our first teachers, but they aren't always the best teachers. We may expect our parents to be perfect. Children always grow up expecting their parents to be perfect and then are very disappointed and disillusioned and really *angered* when they find out that these poor human

beings are not. Maybe the point of arriving at adulthood is facing these two people, this man and this woman, and seeing them as ordinary human beings like ourselves, with hangups, with misconceptions, with tenderness, with joy, with sorrow, and with tears, accepting that they are just human beings. And the big thing is that if we *have* learned love from these people and from this society, we can unlearn it and relearn it; therefore, there is tremendous hope. There is tremendous hope for all of us, but somewhere along the line you've got to learn to love. I think many of these things are inside of us, and nothing that I'm going to say to you is going to be startlingly new. What you are going to find is that somebody is going to have nerve enough to stand up and say it, and maybe, therefore, release it in you so *you* can say, "That's the way I feel, too, and is it so wrong to feel this way?"

It's very interesting, but five years ago when I started talking of love, I was very lonely, indeed. I remember, and there are some people in this audience who were in that audience, when I stood up with a colleague from another university at a discussion about behavior modification versus affect. After I had been there screaming and crying about love, this gentleman turned to me and said, "Buscaglia, you are totally irrelevant." I think I have this singular distinction of being the only human being I know who is irrelevant. And it's groovy! But it's not so lonely now because more people are turning toward affect and studying it.

One of the most crucial developments for me was finding Leonard Silberman's book, *Crisis in the Classroom*. If you haven't read it, do, it's fantastic. It probably will be one of the most significant books in education. It's already on the bestseller list. Anyone who's interested in children must read Silberman's book, including parents. It should be available for

everybody. This book is the result of a three-year Carnegie Grant given to Leonard Silberman, a great sociologist and a great psychologist, to find out what the state of American education is today. He concludes that considering that in America education is for all, we're doing a pretty damned good job when it comes to reading and writing, arithmetic and spelling. We're pretty good at that. But we fail miserably in teaching individuals how to be human beings. All we have to do is look around us and we can see this. The accent is definitely on the wrong syllable.

In my first year at USC I was teaching a class. It's an amazing thing—I imagine you feel the same thing I do—but you pick up vibrations from your audience. Things happen between you and your audience if you are talking *to* them and not *at* them. It would be marvelous if we could ever have a small group to sit down and really talk and relate instead of always these massive things. But nevertheless, you know that there are certain faces in an audience that come out, certain bodies that vibrate. They reach you and you reach them. Every once in a while, when you need support, you focus on them and receive a smile that says, "Go on man, you're doing fine." Then you can do all kinds of things. Well, I had such a person in this class, a beautiful young girl. She was always about the sixth row back and she'd sit there nodding. When I'd say something, she'd say, "Oh, yes!" You could hear her say "Wow," and then she'd write things down, and I'd think, "Oh, I'm really communicating with her—something beautiful is happening between us; it's going to be good; she's learning," etc. Then one day she stopped coming. I couldn't imagine what had happened and I kept looking for her but she wasn't there. Finally, I checked with the Dean of Women and she said, "Haven't you heard?"...this young lady whose

papers were absolutely brilliant, whose mind was exciting, who had a creativity like you never dreamed. . . had gone to Pacific Palisades, an area where sheer cliffs fall into the sea. She parked her car, walked out, jumped off that cliff and splattered herself on the rocks below. It bothers me still and I thought to myself—what are we doing stuffing facts at people and forgetting that they are people, that they are human beings?

Carl Rogers recently said this very thing about missing the boat. He said,

You know that I don't believe that anyone has ever taught anything to anyone. I question the efficacy of teaching. The only thing that I know is that anyone who wants to learn will learn. Any maybe a teacher is a facilitator, a person who puts things down and shows people how exciting and wonderful it is and asks them to eat.

That's all you can do—you can't force anybody to eat, no matter what. No teacher has taught anything to anyone. People learn themselves. If we look at the word "educator," it comes from the Latin "educare," meaning to lead, to guide. That's what it means, to guide, to be enthusiastic yourself, to understand yourself and to put this stuff before others and to say, "Look how wonderful it is. Come on and join me in eating of it." Remember the line from Auntie Mame, "Life is a banquet and most damned fools are starving to death." So I begin to wonder, and it's become easier because more people like Silberman are making this statement and I don't sound so weird anymore.

Sorokin, a great sociologist, in the introduction to his book, *The Ways And Power Of Love*, makes this statement,

The sensate minds, our minds, emphatically disbelieve in the power of love. It appears to us something