

8

OFFER YOURSELF AS LOVE



*You look like
what you feel.*

Whatever you pay attention to, right now, you begin to look like. Whatever you have spent time attending to in the past, you already look like.

What would a videotape show if you had been recorded for the last eight hours? Would your face be long or glowing? Would your chest be sunken or beaming? Would you move like a nervous robot or an ebullient lover?

Suppose you sit at a computer all day, staring into the screen, pushing around words and numbers. Day after day, your body and mind resonate with cyberspace. You can easily begin to look like the dry domain to which you have been attending: functional, logical, insensate. Your shoulders can become hunched, your head tight, your body vacant. Feeling into a computer day after day can de-vitalize you.

Or, suppose your lover leaves you, and you spend the day mulling over the breakup, feeling hurt, depressed, and afraid. Your chest caves in, your breath becomes shallow, your face waxes pallid. You begin to look like the domain of

dark and sagging emotional energy to which you have been attending. Feeling into gloomy sentiments, your entire demeanor is endarkened.

Imagine that you've just won a million dollars. Your eyes widen, your face flushes, you dance and scream and whoop, hugging everyone around you. You look like the domain of abundant energy to which you now attend, thanks to your million-dollar moment. Feeling into the huge flow of money invigorates you.

Where you put your attention defines how you look and feel. For instance, you could attend to your genital need. You could go to a party and put your attention on potential sexual partners. Eventually, if all you did was place your attention on sex, you would begin to look and feel like a genital with arms and legs. And if you go to a singles bar, you may indeed see a number of walking, talking genitals.

On the other hand, right now, you can feel into the deepest love in your heart. You can remember someone you truly love, or you can simply feel directly into your deep heart, attending to its openness, compassion, and care. You can do this through the day. Even when something upsets you, you can choose to put your attention on your heart, and feel into the domain of love.

Feel the beating of your heart now. Relax your body and soften your breath so you can feel your deep heart beating and pulsing outward to your hands and feet and head. Imagine opening your chest so your heart was exposed to the world without protection, glistening, alive, tender. Imagine offering your beating heart as a gift to all, like offering a vibrant, delicate flower to your lover.

Opening your heart to all, feel your offering as love. What does love feel like? How does love show? As you feel your beating heart and open outward to all, what would a videotape of you reveal?

When you consistently open as love, you begin to look like love. Your face shines. Your eyes sparkle. Your body moves with grace, opening as the tide of love swelling from your deep heart to all—through the day, at work, during sex. Your voice carries the fullness of love rather than the stress of genital need or the exasperation of emotional betrayal. Since every part of you takes on the characteristic of what you feel, if you feel as love you show as love.

You can attend only to your worried thoughts and troubled emotions, and therefore appear as a twisted and fearful character. Or, even when you are worried or troubled, you can feel open as an offering of love.

Through this practice of feeling open, history evaporates as it occurs. Openness prevails. Love appears as you.