

PRAYING with *Fire*

PRAYER POINTS



You Can Love Anyone

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Love is a choice.

It is possible to love anyone.

Don't believe me? Often I will ask singles, "When you have children, do you think you'll love them?" Inevitably they answer, "Of course I'll love my child." I inquire, "How do you know? Maybe your kid will be colicky, keep you up all night, have a personality that rubs you the wrong way, or maybe he won't be so cute looking? How are you sure that you'll love your child?"

"I will love my child because it's my child."

"But why?"

The main reason parents love their children is because they are *committed* to loving them.

When we make a one hundred percent commitment to love someone, we can love anyone. This is not only true for children; it is especially true for one's spouse, the annoying neighbor, the moody boss, and the receptionist who seems to have it out for you. (I am not talking about people in your life who are abusive. Such people need to be kept at a safe distance.)

The only reason we don't love the people we dislike is that we have not made a complete commitment to

love them like we love our children.

Here's what a commitment to love someone might look like. Pick someone and try it for 30 days.

Make a decision to bring this person into your circle of people you truly care about. Look at this person as if he or she is part of your family. Let me share something powerful that Jewish tradition teaches. "Invite the poor into your home and make them a part of your family" (See Ethics of the Fathers, 1:5). Note, the sages don't say, "make them *like* your family," but make them *a part* of your family. Treat them like one of your uncles, aunts, etc.

Make a commitment to care about this person's life. Meet with this person and get to know them. Find out what their needs are. What do they struggle with? Make a decision to do whatever you can to meet their needs and help them succeed in life as you would if he or she was one of your children.

Make a commitment to identify his or her virtues. Study this person and see the beauty in him. Everyone is truly beautiful; it's only that with some people we have to look a little harder to see it. On a daily basis review this list of virtues. Talk to others about the virtues of this person like a parent talks about his child with pride.

Accept the flaws of this person without judgment. This is exactly what parents do with their children. Parents choose to identify their child with their virtues and excuse their faults. Someone might say, "You know your son Josh is very disorganized." The parent responds by saying, "Yes that's true, but do see how sensitive he is to other people's feelings?"

Take on the challenge and share with me in the comment section how it goes. The bottom line is, make a complete commitment to love someone, and you'll discover that you will.