

LOVE

WELCOME

I'm very excited for you to explore this issue focused on 'Love.' Mostly because I want to challenge your assumptions or previous definitions of what love is and is not. More importantly, I hope it inspires you to see what love can become in you, through you, and maybe even how to amplify it in your life.

I've learned a great deal about love, especially navigating an amicable separation and divorce over the last few years. I found that love is more than romance or sex or even caring for someone close to you. It's the most complex, expansive, and purest energy that flows through everything. It is the connecting network through which all elements may communicate. We are not keepers of this feeling. We are merely vessels or conduits through which love is channeled, meaning it does not rest with us. It is in motion with us. What we feel is the flow of love connecting us together.

I don't pretend to be an expert; I'm not a guru, and I'm certainly not a guide, but I have learned a few insights that have connected me to that flow of love. It may be counterintuitive, but the hurt and heartaches have helped refine and calibrate my connection to that flow. It was nasty medicine at the time, but necessary to my evolution. I have come to understand better what it means to love.

I hope you enjoy :)



IN THIS
VOLUME

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EVERYTHING I CREATE
OPERATES FROM THIS SIMPLE PHRASE

“
*when you feel inspired
you have to act*



Saige Thomas

Saige is a wildly creative artist with an incredibly diverse skill set. She produces fashion shows in San Antonio for local designers, shoots editorial and brand photography, and serves as the Executive Producer of Texas Fashion Week™ and Vice President of the Texas Fashion Industry Initiative. So right from the jump, you notice she's a badass boss! As impressive as her titles are, her work, leadership, and project execution are really what captures your attention. It's in the details where you begin to understand just how incredible this woman is. She also brings diversity and unique voices to every project.

I truly had to learn that my art is for me and the right people will be able to appreciate it and absorb it





OLLY'S POEM

*Discover what's inside first
For all answers are within
So you will no longer thirst
For the outside ever again*

*See, the outside will make sense
Once the light inside of you wins
For until love and light sets
The outside will forever dim*

*Can you see it now,
How light grows in and out?
Only when all illusions drown
Can the light of reality sprout*

is you create in your life and those around you, then life becomes a playground of endless probability. As Lewis Carrol wrote, 'life is but a dream,' or Shakespeare, 'life is but a dream, within a dream.' Every person and every moment is a perfectly placed gift. Never forget.” It's clear that even at a young age, her mind was decades ahead of her time.

ENLIGHTENMENT

I have shared many moments of enlightenment in previous volumes, and I genuinely feel so fortunate to have woken up to life at such a young age. It is such a unique and individual journey yet simultaneously universal. Everyone's context varies, but the outcome of waking up seems collectively freeing. Once you wake up, it is exciting to be able to recognize another soul who is awake.

Olly describes her journey by saying, “Three years ago, I stumbled into a consistent wave of gratitude and oneness that transformed and washed away everything that wasn't me. All problems, pain, blame, shame, and doubt were fleeting as I was placed into a world of unlimited probabilities.”

“I discovered this wave radiating at the center of life and existing in all things; it is the fire of fulfillment within; it is one of life's constants. True freedom, love, and fulfillment exist here – just beneath the skin – true happiness and peace as well. To search elsewhere is to miss one of the greatest realizations and meanings of life.”

She later elaborated, “Before material distractions, environmental pressures and societal conditioning, everybody had an underlying state of being. This state is a pure and innocent blank slate. Naturally, your slate starts to fill more and more overtime. It is said that a blank slate is enlightenment – that we are all born conscious, enlightened beings and it is the filling of the blank slate that clouds what we truly are. It is in reducing or unlearning that brings us back to our conscious roots or enlightenment. It is knowing that anything that fills your slate over your lifetime such as titles, status, relationships, career, superficial material items, desires or anything else outside of you – is not and never will be you.”

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ARTICLES & POEMS

Self-Love

These are self-portraits on my last day of 36. Tomorrow I turn 37, and I wanted to close out this last year by making myself completely uncomfortable. It may shock many of you, but I have been very self-conscious about my body. For many reasons, I felt too skinny or embarrassed about showing off my body. I have come to love my body and mind in my journey of becoming fully me. I appreciate them for everything they allow me to do. Over the past three years, I have come to not just like who I am, but completely love myself. I found out I love to be alone with my thoughts. I think I'm fucking incredible, and that is new for me.

*In my journey of becoming
fully me, I have come to love
my body and mind.*





Success happens internally years before it's ever recognized externally.

I also think self-love is about listening to your body. Learn to communicate with it. You don't have to act on everything you feel, but you need to learn to listen and understand its language. This has been a significant benefit. I realized several years ago that my body was trying to send me signs. I feel my body and mind can operate at their highest level as I listen.

BEING ALONE

One of the first and most challenging things about navigating divorce has been discovering myself. I can't know for sure, but I believe the chaos and turmoil of separating were necessary for me. It created an environment that stripped me down

to my core, and I had to take a hard look at who I was and sit with myself for the first time. I realized my biggest fear was more than not being loved; it was being alone.

I remember that first night staying in my own place. I kissed the kids good night like I had every night before,

then I gathered a few things and left the family apartment. I entered my new, tiny apartment and collapsed on the floor in the living room. I don't know if I have ever felt more alone than at that moment. The place was almost entirely empty except for a few mattresses huddled together in the only bedroom.

Growing up being the youngest of six children, I was always surrounded by people. I only lived on my own for a few months before getting married – and I was engaged most of that time, so I spent my waking hours with Anita. Over the last three years, therapy, exercise, art, and being on my own have taught me how to embrace solitude. How to leverage the pause to connect with my body and mind. During my journey inward, I learned something; Success happens internally years before it's ever recognized externally.

THERAPY

I can't say enough about the importance of therapy in my life and how it has empowered me to understand myself. I used to think that it was only for people who were crazy. Now I realize

we're all a little crazy, and everyone can benefit from therapy. I also recognize it is a tool to help individuals understand and heal from mental barriers. For me, a therapist isn't there to tell me how to think. They simply help me navigate my mind. They

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RARE

POEM

IN ALL THE MULTITUDE OF POSSIBLE PATHS IN LIFE,

IN HOW MANY DO WE MEET?
IN HOW MANY DO WE SPEAK?
IN HOW MANY DO WE GET SO CLOSE,
I EVEN FEEL YOUR BREATH?

PERHAPS THE MOST BEAUTIFUL THING ABOUT THIS LIFE
IS NOTHING IS GUARANTEED.

YET OUR PATHS DID CROSS AND I AM FOREVER CHANGED
WHICH ENDING DOES THIS PATHWAY HOLD?
THE ANSWER STILL REMAINS



Leaving With Love

This topic is deeply vulnerable for me, but it may be one of the most important lessons. Leaving with love is focused on my journey of navigating collaborative divorce. I believe the embodiment of this lesson is foundational in becoming a better human. Going into a new relationship or friendship with love and excitement is effortless. Yet there is a lack of examples or expectations on leaving a relationship with love and respect. It's been challenging to navigate over the last several years. Still, it has been a beautiful education on what it means to have unconditional love.

*I believe the embodiment of
this lesson is foundational in
becoming a better human*

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*I have found love is expansive energy,
opening you to your higher self, and
is only bound when people choose to
close off access to it*



To be transparent, I have intentionally not spoken much publicly or even privately on this matter. I have been cautious about approaching this subject because it's not just about me. As a father, I must protect my children and respect their privacy.

I also believe I have that same responsibility for Anita. In addition, I needed time to heal and learn, which required doing the work. So much learning is discovered in work.

It is a beautiful lesson to learn that a successful relationship can look different from what I presumed growing up

I just want to ensure I bring as much love and proper respect to the topic. And it's been very hard to navigate. Nevertheless, I think it's important to talk about. Mainly because the way our family has blazed our own path is such a beautiful story in its own right.

UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

This story begins where most relationships start, the excitement of something new. Anita was my first real girlfriend. When we got together, we talked about the excitement of dating, this relationship, and all the possibilities when I realized what a remarkable person she was. I said something to the effect of, "even if it's not with me, you deserve someone to bring you all the happiness in the world." I have always believed that. That sentiment was much easier to handle when we were together. When divorce and separation entered the conversation, I had to evolve, rise to the challenge, and do the work to live it on a new level.

It is a beautiful lesson to learn that a successful relationship can look different from what I presumed growing up. Separation and divorce helped me understand true, unconditional love. Pushing your feelings aside and choosing kindness and empathy for another person without expecting the affection to reciprocate is an enormous power source. It's also a very freeing moment. This process allowed me to view such an enlivening part of love; I don't regret that. I hope our children can see that love doesn't have to turn ugly when it hurts or is challenging. There can be beauty in the hurt. Maybe not in the moment, but in time.

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WE DECIDE WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE

Anita made a comment at the beginning of our separation that stuck with me. It’s one of the most beautiful and empowering statements I’ve heard. She said, “We get to decide what this looks like.” I think people forget that.

This idea that we get to decide how we navigate divorce, or this relationship, was an empowering way to approach the process. That foundation grounded us subconsciously. I needed that because I grew up with a negative narrative around divorce. By allowing us to throw out all the baggage of divorce, we could bring all the love, respect, and new ideas to this transition.

Anita and I still successfully co-parent our children. We had to create a new system for navigating this family unit and

accept that it would look different from traditional approaches. It is challenging enough to figure this out for myself as an adult, so I realize it is very complicated for the children to grasp. It certainly has moments and challenges, but it’s still a beautiful relationship. I would argue we have a better relationship than many who decide to stay married, which confuses many people. Some have asked why we couldn’t stay married. My response is that I’m not convinced marriage is always the answer.

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DIVORCE IS NOT FAILURE

One struggle during this process is grappling with the dichotomy of divorce being viewed as a failed relationship; yet, in no sense do I feel we failed. I struggle because, on some level, I was unable to fulfill my commitment to a life with this person.

And, as a society, we deem the closing of a relationship a failure. I don’t exactly view it that way.

Several years ago, my therapist said, “Most people experience three to five relationships in

their lifetime. For some, that’s the same person; for others, it’s different people.” I like the neutrality of that. I genuinely do not feel like I failed. Still, I struggle to fully believe it because divorce is such a failed title, both societally and mentally, based on my upbringing. Therefore, I’ve realized that remaining in a relationship doesn’t indicate a successful or healthy relationship. It just means that you’re still in it.

There were so many things that we did right. It was conversations with each other, therapy, patience, and time. Throughout this process, there’s always been a sense of respect and honor for the other person. And I guess that’s probably why I just don’t see this relationship as a failure.

I think our view of love is skewed. Leaving with love is an entirely new dimension of love. Most people will live their entire life and never experience it. I have found love is expansive energy, opening you to your higher self, and is only bound when people choose to close off access to it.

We still have a relationship that works really well together. We created this new, beautiful way of navigating it. I’m pleased my children get to witness this because I don’t think marriage is always the answer. I don’t believe it solves what I thought it did as a child. It’s not the end of every story.

We created this new, beautiful way of navigating it. I’m pleased my children get to witness this

DON’T MASK YOUR FEELINGS

It’s important not to have this idea of ‘leaving with love’ mask the pain, hurt, frustration, or anger that comes with the close of a relationship. You need to feel those feelings. They are real. And you have multiple things that you’re feeling at once. That all needs to come out. Don’t hide it. Don’t force yourself to say, “I need to love this person.” You need to have moments where you can feel everything you

need to feel. But when you operate out of that pain and anger, nothing good will ever come from it.

So have a moment to experience it and work through it in therapy with a professional who can help you navigate it. But come back and remember the importance of human life; yours, theirs, your children’s, and society. Don’t be naive about it. Don’t fool yourself into thinking you’re leaving with love. There is heartbreak, and you need to feel it. Don’t bury it down. That will only get worse. Feel what you need to feel but always allow love to be the driving force from which you operate and make decisions.

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TAKE TIME - IT WILL BE OKAY

Another critical topic is to breathe and proceed slowly. Don’t feel like you have to just move on. At the start of our journey, Anita suggested we figure out how to navigate this new way of living before bringing in lawyers and making it official or legal. Then we’ll formalize it because it’s a lot harder and more expensive to go back and make changes to the divorce document. Plus, you have no clue what life will need to look like. It’s just like before you get married, go to college, or move to a new city. You have no concept of what the day-to-day will entail.

You can’t truly understand what life will be like, and you need to try things out. There needs to be freedom to make pivots, updates, and alterations. You are creating a new system. Remember, it took years to form the old ones. And, it’s not just about you. The main focal point for us was navigating this so the children could have an abundance of love that never stops but expands through this experience.

Lastly, this journey has been the most challenging experience of my life. I had to break down so many of my previous beliefs and form new alternate paths in my mind. It shook me to my core, and while I don’t wish this on anyone, I have become a better person. You will learn to not just survive but thrive again.

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LETTER TO MY CHILDREN

This was an excerpt from a letter to my niece Halie. I felt I would like to extend it to you kids. I love you with everything that is in me. My goal is for you to be able to navigate life long after I am gone. I trust you. I hope you can also learn how to trust yourself as well. To give some background, this is the answer to the question:

What is one piece of advice you would offer young entrepreneurs?

I have a few key takeaways I would share:

1. Don't get so caught up thinking, planning, or preparing for your future that you forget you are alive right now. So many get wrapped up in the horizon of their life they don't see it passing them by. Look to the future, learn from the past but always remember you are ALIVE. RIGHT. NOW!
2. The life you want is found in discovering your own path, not following someone else's. Don't worry about adopting someone else's system. Work on creating your custom system for how you navigate life. Be inspired by others, yes, bring in elements you learn from them absolutely. But craft your own system and stay curious; always allow your thinking and mindset to be updated as you evolve.
3. Keep patience and passion at the core of your path. Passion is needed to get through all the lows, struggles, and tribulations you have to go through to make dreams a reality. It's not an easy road. So if you're not passionate about something, you will not have the energy needed for the journey. People who succeed are simply the ones who keep moving their idea forward. And patience is vital to help balance the passion. Realizing you have multiple decades ahead of you helps keep a macro perspective when all you can see are micro failures. Patience will help you use the feedback to alter your course and keep moving forward. Patience gives you context to where you are in the journey and allows you to make micro-decisions based on macro vision. Patience and passion, the two combined, are a superpower.

Sorry, I don't think these really have anything to do with business. I'm sure they are wildly off base from what your teacher may be looking for, but I believe in what I shared with everything in me. I don't think like everyone else. But maybe that is precisely why I feel I will succeed. Original thought doesn't come from following what you've been told to do. It is earned. It's a skill set you have to develop. Always dare to be different and trust yourself. I hope something was helpful in all this rambling nonsense. Take what helps and discard anything you don't need. :)

*forever,
love papi*

The life you
want is found

in discovering
your own path