

**Lyceum 99– June 26, 2025, Neighborhood/Parish Lyceum** – a forum to Think, Discuss, Share, and Learn from one another. Your input is welcomed.

“The 1826, in Connecticut, a farmer named Josiah Holbrook started a school for ‘the general diffusion of knowledge and raising the moral and intellectual taste’ of Americans. In those days, the opportunities for higher education were limited to those venerable old universities that had long served the upper crust. Holbrook’s vision was to make learning – practical, liberal, and humane – available to working people of all kinds. He named his school the Lyceum, after the garden where Aristotle once taught his students philosophy.... We need to go deeper than the superficial fights that characterize public life. We need to return to the first principles and meet each other there as human beings.” – Nathan Beacom, Plough Magazine, Autumn 2023, p. 9.

Roger J. Vanden Busch

“For many of us, our pets are our children and have become an especially important part of our families. They ask for nothing from us, yet they somehow present us with a type of love that can be described as **unconditional.**” – Lyn Ragan.

### **"How Do I Love Thee?" by Elizabeth Barrett Browning**

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.  
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height  
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight  
For the ends of being and ideal grace.  
I love thee to the level of every day's  
Most quiet need, by sun and candlelight.  
I love thee freely, as men strive for right.  
I love thee purely, as they turn from praise.  
I love thee with the passion put to use  
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.  
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose  
With my lost saints. I love thee with the breath,  
Smiles, tears, of all my life; and, if God choose,  
I shall but love thee better after death.

### **15 Definite Signs of Unconditional Love.**

by Emma Mills

1. Acceptance, not just tolerance, is the foundation.

**Unconditional love is not about gritting your teeth and tolerating someone's quirks or shortcomings. It is about fully accepting them, flaws, and all. It is recognized that everyone has imperfections and loves them despite (and sometimes even because of) those imperfections. When you love someone unconditionally, you embrace their whole being, not just the parts that are easy to love.**

**2. Support flows freely, without expectations or conditions.**

**Unconditional love means being there for someone through thick and thin, offering support and encouragement without expecting anything in return. It is about celebrating their successes, comforting them in their failures, and cheering them on as they pursue their dreams. This kind of love is not transactional; it is a gift given freely and generously.**

**3. Forgiveness is a given, not a bargaining chip.**

**We all make mistakes, and unconditional love understands that. It does not hold grudges or keeps score. It forgives freely and completely, allowing for healing and growth. When you love someone unconditionally, you understand that their mistakes do not define them, and you are willing to let go of the past to create a brighter future together.**

**4. Honesty and open communication are valued more than anything else.**

**Unconditional love thrives in an environment of honesty and open communication. It encourages you to share your thoughts and feelings openly, without fear of judgment or rejection. It values authenticity and vulnerability, knowing that true intimacy can only be achieved through honest communication.**

**5. Boundaries are respected, even when they are inconvenient.**

**Unconditional love does not mean being a doormat or sacrificing your own needs and well-being. It recognizes the importance of healthy boundaries and respects them, even when it is challenging or inconvenient. It understands that everyone has the right to say no and that self-care is essential for maintaining a healthy relationship.**

**6. When you experience unconditional love, you feel safe and secure in the relationship. You know that you can be yourself, express your feelings, and share your vulnerabilities without fear of judgment or rejection. This deep sense of trust allows for a level of intimacy and connection that is rare and precious.**

**7. The love feels expansive and unconditional.**

**Unconditional love feels boundless and limitless. It is not restricted by time, distance, or circumstance. It is love that expands and grows, encompassing all aspects of your being. When you love someone unconditionally, you feel a sense of connection that transcends the physical and emotional realms.**

**8. It inspires you to be a better person.**

**Unconditional love has a transformative power. It inspires you to be the best version of yourself, to grow, learn, and evolve. It encourages you to step outside your comfort zone, face your fears, and pursue your dreams. When you are loved unconditionally, you feel empowered to reach your full potential.**

**9. There is a willingness to compromise and find solutions together.**

**Unconditional love does not mean always getting your way or having your partner agree with you on everything. It is about finding common ground, respecting each other's differences, and working together to find solutions that benefit both of you. It is about valuing the relationship more than winning an argument or proving a point.**

**10. It celebrates individuality and encourages personal growth.**

**Unconditional love does not try to mold you into someone you are not. It celebrates your unique personality, quirks, and passions. It encourages you to pursue your own interests and goals, even if they differ from those of your partner. This kind of love encourages independence and individuality, while also providing a safe and supportive space to grow and evolve.**

**11. It prioritizes quality time and meaningful connection.**

**Unconditional love is not about grand gestures or extravagant gifts. It is about spending quality time together, engaging in meaningful conversations, and simply enjoying each other's company. It is about creating a deep and lasting connection that goes beyond the superficial and materialistic aspects of life.**

**12. It does not try to fix or change you.**

**Unconditional love accepts you for who you are, not who they want you to be. It does not try to fix your flaws, change your personality, or mold you into a different person. Instead, it supports you in your journey of self-discovery and growth, encouraging you to be your most authentic self.**

**13. It is a choice, not just a feeling.**

**Unconditional love is not just a fleeting emotion; it is a conscious choice to love someone deeply and completely, regardless of the circumstances. It is a commitment to show up for them, support them, and cherish them, even when it is challenging or inconvenient. It is a decision to prioritize the relationship and invest in its growth, even when things get tough.**

**14. It is a journey, not a destination.**

**Unconditional love is not something you achieve overnight; it is an ongoing journey of learning, growth, and connection. It requires patience, understanding, and a willingness to work through challenges together. It is about continually choosing to love each other, even when it is not easy. It is a lifelong commitment to building a relationship that is based on trust, respect, and unwavering affection.**

**15. Finding unconditional love starts with loving yourself.**

**The most crucial step in finding unconditional love is to first cultivate it within yourself. Learn to accept and appreciate your own flaws, forgive your past mistakes, and embrace your unique qualities. When you love yourself unconditionally, you are more likely to attract and recognize that same kind of love from other people. It all starts with you.**