

# Part 4: The Four Secrets to Happiness - Mom Style

## Part 4: Love

The fourth secret of happiness is the simplest, seemingly the most obvious, and yet, often the hardest to fulfill: love.

This secret shouldn't be much of a surprise. Jesus' final instructions before leaving this earth to return to heaven was, "Love one another as I have loved you." Mother Theresa encouraged us to "Do small things with great love." And the Beatles reassured us, "All you need is love."

They were leading us to happiness through love, but how often do we follow this good advice? Do we even know what it means to love?



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Fortunately for us, St. Paul wrote a lucid definition of love in the 13th chapter of his first letter to the Corinthians:

*If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. 3 If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.*

*4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.*

*8 Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part, 10 but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. 11 When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. 12 For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.*

*13 And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.*

The verse is ubiquitous, found everywhere from key chains to weddings (my own included). It's easy to see and hear these words and be reminded of the love we have for our spouses, and possibly our children and parents. The unconditional love we share with our immediate families is like no other, but if you truly want to be happy, take Paul's words and apply them to every person and situation you encounter.

No matter how frustrated, angered, or hurt we are by someone or something, we must respond with patience, kindness, and selflessness.

Given our human nature, love is incredibly difficult. When we are slighted, our instinct is to act out of hatred, to want the other party to feel as terrible as we do, to hold a grudge. Responding to negativity with more negativity exacerbates an exponential misery, while pure love, and ultimately happiness, can be found in infinite giving and receiving of forgiveness. God does it for us and asks us to do it for each other, in the name of love.

Setting aside our selfish desires, including the desire for happiness itself, to serve someone else, is a true test of patience. We parents know this firsthand by the sacrifices we make for our children without expecting reimbursement. We do, however receive joy in watching them feel happy, even at our own expense. If we could extend that kind of love to all of our friends, neighbors, co-workers, and even strangers, imagine the magnitude of our happiness.

My experiment for you is this: try to act entirely out of love for one week, and I will do the same.

Do not allow yourself to become envious, proud, dishonorable, self-seeking, or angry. Remember, I teach teenagers (who are notoriously difficult to love) all day, and it's nearing the end of the school year, so this will be especially challenging for me.

Being Irish, I've been known to have a short temper at times, particularly with inconsiderate drivers and fellow customers. There are a couple of people I need to forgive.

Love as Jesus did, as Mother Theresa suggested, as the Pauls (the Beatle and the Saint) instructed for one week. No matter what, treat every single person and situation you encounter with the same patience, kindness, selflessness, protection, trust, hope, and perseverance that you would show your spouse, child, parent, significant other, or best friend.

Check in and let me know how it's going. On this pursuit of happiness, you cannot fail.

*Make sure to also find out Robyn's [first](#) and [second](#) and third secrets to happiness.*