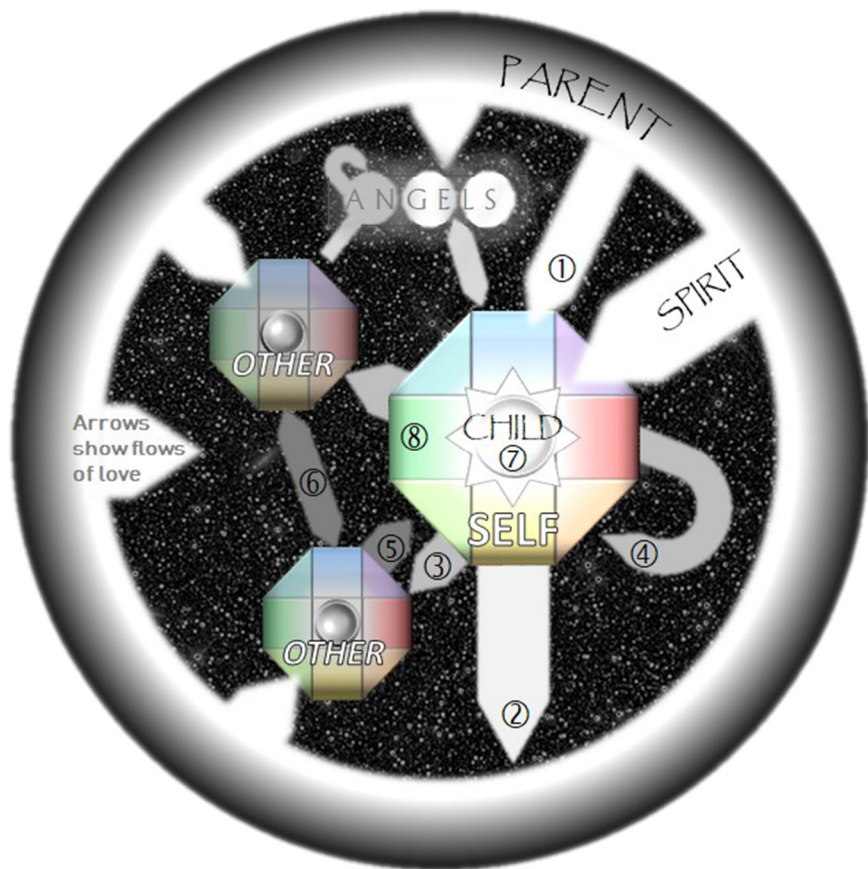


LOVELIHOODS

Explorations into the meaning of Love



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LOVELIHOODS

Marcus Robbins, Oxford, May 2018

Here is a collection of my jottings and musings on the subject of love from a Christian perspective. They are taken from various pieces, written over several decades, while developing my ideas on what it means to be a person, using my *Octaikon* model of reality.

Early on in life, I came to the conclusion that an understanding of “love” is fundamental to knowing one’s purpose in life, hence the many different lines of thought, which I continue to explore and refine with the help of my beloved wife and family. I should emphasise that these ideas are based on the writings of many authors who know a lot more than I do. Thanks to you all!

Where I have added to this font of knowledge, it is by exploring ways in which these ideas may relate and perhaps lead to new ideas. I am sure to be wrong in some of my answers to the questions posed by each section, but I hope that fact will not stop you finding and benefiting from what you think is right, and thinking about how you would correct my mistakes (tell me, please!).

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1. ORIGINS OF LOVE

If “God is love”, how was the universe created out of “love”, and why is there “unlove” in it? In this section, here is the beginning of a parable I wrote trying to answer this issue of “Theodicy”, where God is imagined as the Great Sower (The History of the Cosmic Seed).

Each paragraph begins with a keyword as a device to help the reader keep track of the story.

ORIGIN: Many millions of millennia ago when there was no-thing, just a void, the idea of a cosmic seed arose in the mind of the Great Sower.

LOVE SHINES: The Sower said to the seed "Grow in love!" and instantly the words became reality. From the seed burst forth infinite lights, sprouting from dark fields of energy.

SPACETIME BEGINS: Like their creator, the lights were intelligent, and while they spread out, they formed fields of time and space in fractal form, and myriads of miniscule seeds of substance.

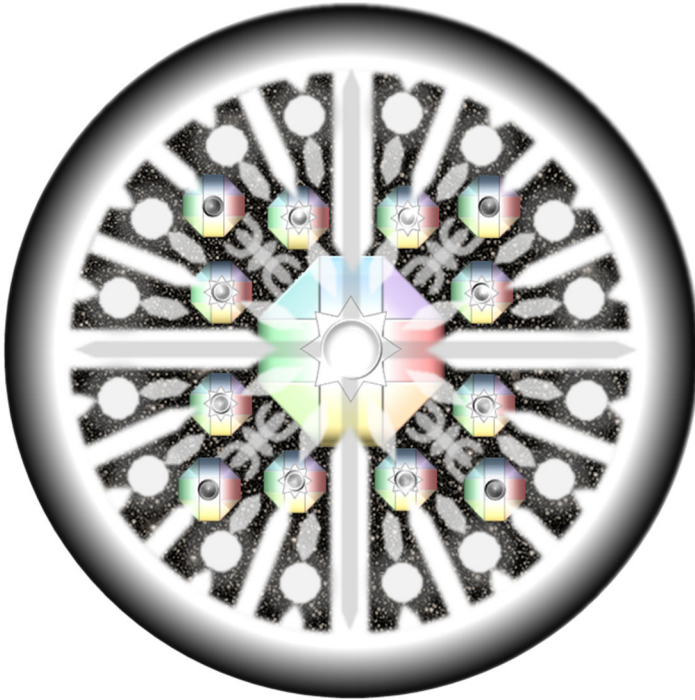
CREATION EXCLAIMS: These intelligent light-fields, called “spirits” or “angels”, continually acknowledged the source of their existence with loving attitudes that we would call praise, worship or thanks.

THE FIRST CHOICE: Since their creator's goal was to sow love, and true love is voluntary, the spirits had to be free and allowed to choose whether to follow the law of love or not.

NEEDS OF LOVE: The Sower’s true love had intrinsic needs: a need to recreate and multiply itself; a need to increase itself by forming

wholes; and a need to give itself away without expecting anything in return.

INEVITABLE FLAW: Happily, most spirits chose to obey and love, recognising the loving goal of the Sower. But some chose not to gift it and love only themselves, and so became proud and arrogant.



“FRIENDLY UNIVERSE”? So why were bad things later inflicted by nature in a universe created with the goal of love? The answer to this paradox seemed to lie in the selfish choices of these bad intelligences.

RELATIONSHIPS SOUGHT: The quest for love began and continued to be a search for creative relationships, with each new component of creation immediately searching for another.

ATTRACTIVE HABITS: One of the first things which the spirits did was to begin forming habits of attraction, first between the smallest components and then continuing amongst larger things.

LAWS FIXED: In this way, the four natural “laws” or habits of so-called weak and strong nuclear forces, and of gravity and electromagnetic forces - all became seemingly fixed and influential.

PARTICLES TO SPARKLES: Thus quantum particles formed nuclei, which with electrons then formed atoms, eventually creating cosmic nurseries for galaxies, stars and their solar systems.

PARTS TO WHOLE: And so a network of relationships formed, such that their parts formed wholes, each greater than the sum of their parts, wholly dependent on others - a “holarchy”

DISASSEMBLE: Some stars, guided by their intelligences, exploded and formed more complex matter and these in time formed planets, moons and breeding grounds for organic life.

LIFE EXPLODES: When material life eventually started to evolve each element again had its forming field and also a controlling intelligence. And thus from molecules came cells...

HUMANS EVOLVE: ...and then from cells came organisms, finally evolving into human beings like us, Body, soul, and spirit, each of us with our loving guiding intelligence.

SURVIVAL: The way all life developed was curious. Changes mostly occurred by trial and error, good and bad (like the controlling spirits!), and those that furthered life lived on.

HAVE SEX, MAKE LOVE? Integral to this process was the idea of sex to attract, multiply, diversify and fall in love. Good spirits promoted

it as mysterious, selfless fun, the bad ones turned loving into selfishness, fear and hate.

HUMANITY SOWN: The Sower initiated the start of humankind by sowing the seed of our consciousness, enabling us to become self-aware, ensouled and beginning to understand ourselves.

ENCOURAGEMENT: Assisted by our individual protective spirits our consciences were gradually formed, encouraging us in the goal to love others but never forcing us to do good.

ENVY SOWN: The intelligences of light were amazed at the capabilities that humans now had which were far more diverse than their own, but alas - sowed seeds of potential envy.

BAD DAEMONS: Unfortunately, those original spirits who had only wanted to love themselves, now influenced us to do the same thing and constantly battled with our good ones.

LIES AND CONFUSION: The bad spirits continually caused chaos. Some were far worse than others. Some were just tricky and mischievous. Others had a really evil, vicious influence.

THE HUMAN CHOICE: But fortunately, whereas all the spirits had had only one chance to obey or not, we humans could continually choose to love others as well as ourselves.

ETERNAL QUEST: In this way our good guiding intelligences had been working since the dawn of time doing the will of their creator, the Sower, and continuing the divine quest of love.

And so the parable continues in “The History of the Cosmic Seed”.

2. FLOWS OF LOVE

Now that we've set the scene of how love originated and evolved (as a parable), here is my graphical idea of the cosmic dynamics of Christian love, based on that story.

Love is motion as well as emotion. As God creates, love emanates. Like the objects and subjects of love, its flow is three-fold. Look at the diagram.

The circle represents the Divine No-thing (aka "God"), who is the source of everything and parent of us all (to use inclusive language).

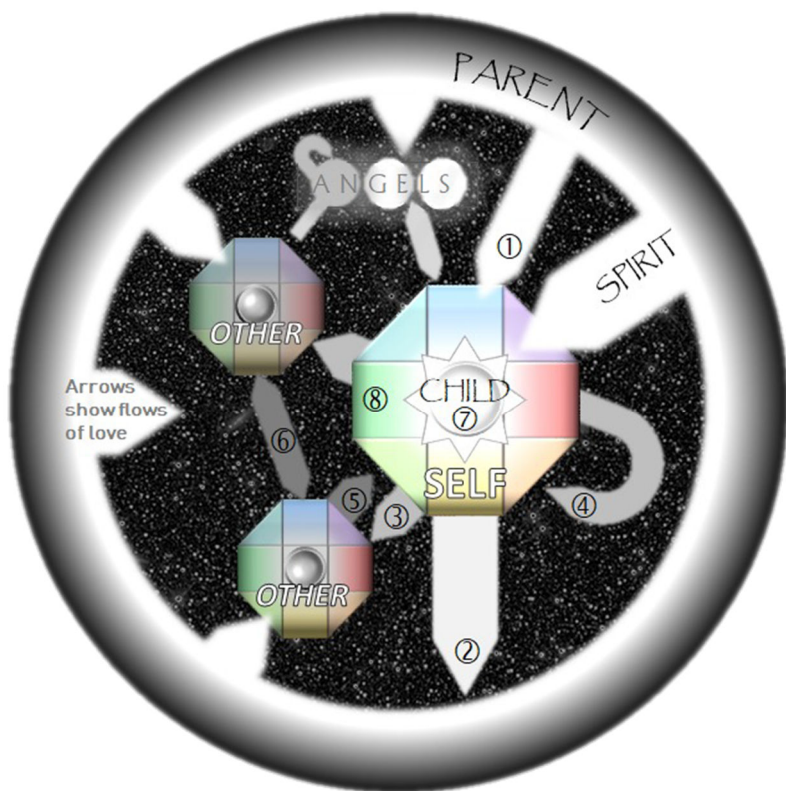
A Spirit of Love ① flows out from our Divine Parent creating and sustaining the cosmos, mind-spirits (angels), and body-mind-spirits (that's us, via evolution).

Such Love is creative and (as explained) has to be freely chosen. Inevitably (alas!) some mind-spirits, and all of us, chose to love selfishly, stemming the flow of love, and causing all sorts of trouble for creation.

We now have a choice to correct matters, since the Divine has become embodied Love and Wisdom living on earth 2000 years ago as Jesus the Christ.

This Child of the Divine, if invited, will fill up our "soul-hole" ⑦ (making us whole and holy - that's "wholiness"!), and help us to follow that golden rule which is (to remind you):

We should love the Divine ② with our whole self, and others ③ as much as we love ourselves ④.



This means looking after ourselves using all our faculties ⑧, helping others to do the same ⑥, whilst expecting no-thing in return from them ⑤.

Such love is: patient, kind, content, modest, humble, polite, moderate, truthful, protective, brave, hopeful, trusting, faithful, forgiving, etc! (See also the section on fruits of love).

If we choose this self-less way of Being-in-Love we participate in the Divine's timeless goal to bring everything together as one in love. It's our choice. Do we choose to let it flow?

3. KINDS OF LOVE

So, what do we mean by love? Here is one way of understanding it, partly taken from my booklet “Al’s Little Book of Reality” and also an article I wrote for the Tablet magazine called “Kinds of Loving”.

A key question in life is this: What gives us motivation, purpose, fulfilment, happiness or “wholeness”? One answer is that it’s when we can “love”.

OK – love is a tricky word, so here’s one possible definition: “Love is the desire (i.e. strong wish or want) for something perceived good or needed for ourselves and/or someone else.”

Here is one way of classifying love according to the appropriateness of our desires:

- 1. NEED-loves** are essential for life. Some of these desires (like air) are essential for survival. Others (like education) are needed for us to take our place in society.
- 2. Wish-loves** would really help us. They are a desire for things that would make our lives easier (like a washing-up machine) but are not essential.
- 3. Want-loves** are naughty but nice. They are a desire for things (like chocolate!) that are very satisfying but really a luxury.
- 4. Drug-loves** - we can’t help wanting. These are inordinate cravings for things that we’ve got into a habit of having (like alcohol).
- 5. Gift-loves** are what others give us. They may or may not be needed, wished for, or wanted (like a knitted Christmas pullover). It depends on how well the giver knows you.

6. Perfect-love is being given just what we NEED, no strings attached! This is what God always gives us. Sometimes we may not realize that we need such things.



Here is another ways of classifying loves.

This idea came from reading Greg Baer's book "Real Love" which is all about A-love or *agape* as described here, and also in C.S.Lewis' "The Four Loves". I've called them **VOWELOVES** as they correspond quite well to the vowels— A,E,I,O,U.

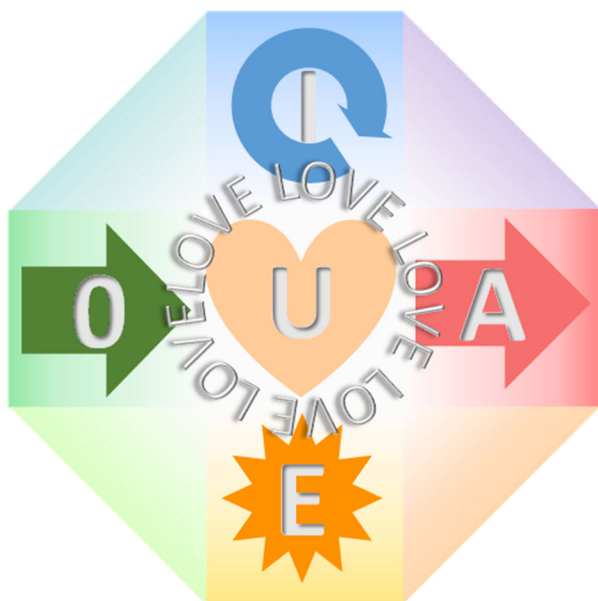
A-love is the desire to care, *unconditionally*, about the happiness of another person. This can also be described as real, true, perfect, divine, alpha or *Agape* love.

I-love is the desire to satisfy one's personal wants/wishes/needs (what "I" want). Greg Baer calls it Imitation Love, but it is a natural, self-preserving desire, that is not necessarily "selfish" *per se*.

U-love is the desire to bond with "you": i.e. couples, family, friends, or anyone with kinship and common interests (inc. God). This includes familial, brotherly love (*storge*) and friendship (*philia*).

O-love is the desire to obtain things ("Objects") that are partly or wholly essential for continuity of life (e.g. air, water, food, warmth). It includes physical/sexual/sensual love (*eros*).

E-love is the desire to Express one's other desires in word, gesture or activity. This includes all forms of creativity including poetry, music, art, dance, sports, pastimes, praise, gratitude, encouragement.



All these loves are found together and can be difficult to separate. They often complement each other. A-love is the highest form, the pursuit of which will bring everlasting happiness according to a Christian understanding of it.

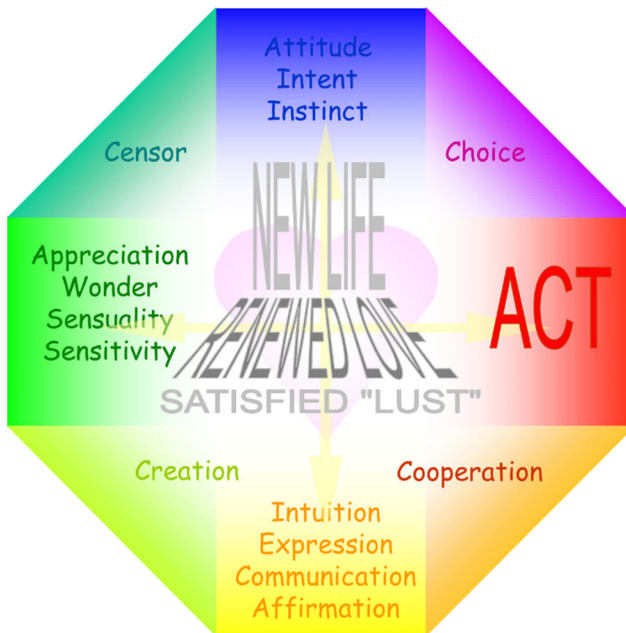
The diagram above summarises and relates these five *vowel loves* in graphical form.

4. MAKINGS OF LOVE

Now let's look at one of these loves, *eros* – the one that relates to our inbuilt desire to procreate ourselves (it's mainly O-love).

All of us started life through the natural process of sexual reproduction. Hopefully it *was* a loving act – “making love” and not just a casual encounter - “having sex”.

The act of sex can be a shocking paradox. In its fullest, most beautiful form, it epitomises a couple's commitment to love and life. At its most negative, ugly form it is driven by selfishness and hate, causing fear, division and death.



I argue that there are three dimensions or goals to sex. The **highest** is to create a new **life** (“procreative”). The **longest** is to strengthen a couples’ **love** (“unitive”). The **broadest** is to satisfy our natural

sensual “**lust**” (which here, simply and positively means our instinctive drive for sex).

The Catholic Church considers that, ideally, the unifying and procreative aspects of each act of intercourse should be inseparable, but in practice it does not work out like that.

Because we are not perfect, living in an imperfect world, our goals for making love cannot always be harmonised. However, they can be fulfilled and balanced over a couple’s lifetime together in the context of the whole Christian community. For more about this idea, read my article in the Tablet “Kinds of Loving” (Jan.8th 2011)

In the previous diagram, there are some keywords based on the Octaikon faculties (explained later) that can help to achieve this balance in fulfilling our goals (see also 18 Genders of Love).

5. EFFECTS OF LOVE

As we humans multiply and develop into adulthood, we are affected and changed by many things. Some of these changes are passed on to the next generations. This process has been well studied, but, I think, misses the crucial spiritual effect of divine love. Here is my extended understanding of the process (as a forester specialised in genetic improvement of trees!).

The interaction of our faculties or temperaments (*nature*) with the way we are brought up and educated (*nurture*) effects the way in which our personalities develop from our personhoods.

Our *temperament*, made up of genetically-controlled *traits* modified by the *environment* in which we develop, produce our *character*. The way we *express* that character to others is our *personality*.

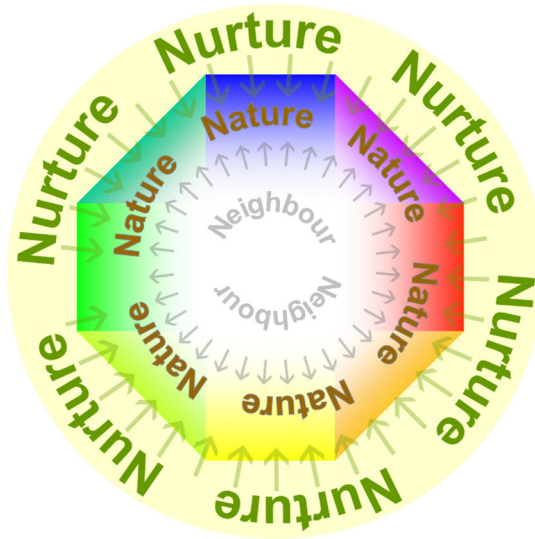
Our personality may or may not reflect our character, depending on how much we want to hide (*persona* means ‘mask’).

Here are these interactions as formulae:

Trait + trait + trait etc. = temperament (*nature*)

Temperament x environment (*nurture*) = **character**

Character x expression = **personality**



If you are a Christian, you will believe that humans are unique, being made in the image of God.

As such, we are also affected by a spiritual dimension. I call this (using the same alliteration) “*neighbour*”. Why? Because only with God’s Spirit working within us are we able to obey fully the command to love God, and to love our neighbour as ourselves.

In this way, the “*neighbour*” factor can overrule our *nature* and *nurture* and enable us to show unconditional divine love.

6. RECIPIENTS OF LOVE

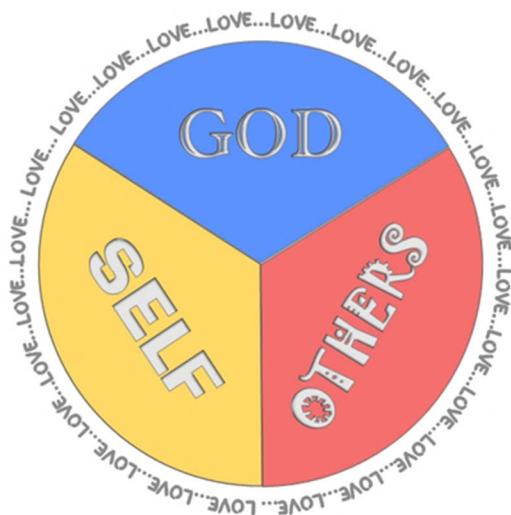
In previous sections, I mentioned the spiritual command to love. Here, I expand on this a bit more.

Jesus said that the most important rule in life is to love God as much as possible, and others as ourselves. Nothing is more important than that. *Gospel of Mark, ch.12, vv.29-31*

The pie diagram illustrates the three recipients of this rule: God, self, others. So what does it mean to love them all? Is one more important than the other?

I'd say that all three are equally important and must be kept in balance. Each one encompasses the other, if we understand them correctly.

The love that Jesus talks about seeks what is most appropriate for the object being loved, and is unconditional, not expecting anything in return.



In the case of self love, we need to take care of ourselves, develop and make use of our talents, avoid being selfish, and recognise the divine within. Otherwise we're powerless to love.

Note that the rule states that we should love others as ourselves. Therefore, if we don't love ourselves properly, selflessly, we won't be able to love others properly.

In the case of loving others, we need to build them up by empathising and helping to meet their needs, to achieve their full potential and to recognise their divine within.

Note also that if we can't love ourselves and others whom we can see, how can we love God whom we can't see and understand? Knowing Jesus is key to this.

So, in the case of loving God, it means following the rules that Jesus gave, learning about him, and giving thanks and praise for our existence.

These three aspects are equally important in fulfilling Jesus's command to love, recognising God in all things and everyone.

And when we do that, our love and care for the whole of creation will follow automatically, since God created it, and all our lives are dependent on it.

7. FRACALITIES OF LOVE

One way of understanding reality and personhood is to consider it as having ten interrelated characteristics, or so-called “*fracALities*”, as I’ve developed in the Octaikon.

These *fracalities* are like human **faculties**, abilities or characteristics, which are **fractal** in occurrence, hence my term.

The word fractal implies that these abilities can be identified at all levels of existence, quantum or classical, from molecular to galactic scale, in physical, organic, human, artificial and abstract entities i.e. in everything and anything.

The fracalities form five pairs that complement and balance each other and are logically linked. The Octaikon model on p.20 helps to visualise their interrelationships, using symbols, colours and keywords: **Fracality**, cosmic, process, *human*, and a four letter word about LIFE! – as in my booklet “Life is a four letter word”).

Each fracality, then, can be described as follows:

Reality and personhood is defined by being.....

1. ORIGINAL – uniquely initiated and freely recreating itself anew in a multitude of ways and forms.

In human terms this means to:

Create (*brainstorm, innovate, imagine, perform, conceive...*)

i.e. using our intuition, being inventive, artistic, and imaginative.

2. INFLUENTIAL - controlled by laws, rules, principles, habits and eventually conscious choices/decisions.

In human terms this means to:

Judge (*criticize, value, prefer, select, recommend, want...*)

i.e. choosing or making decisions, based on what seems right.

3. MATERIAL - has properties that enable it to be sensed, possessed and/or consumed by other parts of itself.

In human terms this means to:

Observe (*perceive, note, watch, see, hear, taste, smell, buy...*)

i.e. input – taking in stuff as we sense, eat, breathe, acquire.

4. MOTIONAL - continually in motion or being moved and energised at some level or other in time and space.

In human terms this means to:

Apply (*act, administer, operate, use, construct, maintain, explore...*)

i.e. practically doing things, using our whole body – words into actions.

5. DIFFERENTIAL - broken down into an innumerable number of parts that can be distinguished and defined.

In human terms this means to:

Monitor (*identify, classify, differentiate, discern, name...*)

i.e. checking input, defining, rejecting unwanted, and finding missing stuff.

6. INTEGRAL - forming ever more complex wholes that are greater than the sum of their parts, which have purpose and direction.

In human terms this means to:

Direct (*mediate, mentor, teach, facilitate, encourage, integrate...*)

i.e. guiding ourselves/others to do what they/we need or want.

7. INTELLECTUAL - becoming increasingly conscious, actively intelligent and able to "make sense" of other parts of itself.

In human terms this means to:

Interpret (*reason, calculate, think, deduce, memorise...*)

i.e. using our brain/mind and instinct to analyse and work out stuff.

8. PHENOMENAL - continually communicating its state of being, passively or actively, with the rest of itself.

In human terms this means to:

Express (*describe, show, explain, praise, speak, hug, gesture...*)

i.e. communicating our thoughts and emotions to ourselves / others.



9. INTERNAL - maintaining connection with the divine source on which all its elements depend for existence.

In human terms this means to:

Reflect (*contemplate, recall, consider, ponder, pray...*)

i.e. thinking things over, meditating and connecting spiritually.

10. RELATIONAL - always building up ever-closer networks of relationships with other elements of itself.

In human terms this means to:

Relate (*connect, develop, participate, lead, befriend, love...*)

i.e. forming relationships, providing feedback, making changes.

LOVE: All these fracalities are all linked and made fully complementary, building up and benefitting every aspect of reality and personhood, through divine love.

8. INSTRUMENTS OF LOVE

Divine Love gives rise to three aspects of created things - body, mind and spirit. These can be imagined as governed by five Principles, derived from the ten Fracalities (as just described).

These are interconnected and need to be balanced between and within themselves. The immortal soul is formed from divine mind, spirit, transformed body and held together with A-Love.

Here is one way of imagining the instruments, summarised in the Octaikon diagram. Look also at the diagram on page 43 which helps to summarise the meaning on the ten fracalities paired as five principal principles.

Of course, except for our material “body”, we don’t really know what constitutes our mind (it’s not just fizzwork in the brain, surely?), let alone our spirit and soul! We use them all to love.

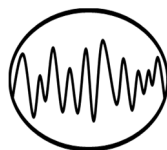
BODY (TIME & SPACE)

1. Principle of STUFF-MOVE (3+4)

Every-thing has a materiality that must embody motion to give it substance.

TIME is necessary for its existence.

The ultimate in materiality is Jesus and the ultimate in action is his life, works, death and resurrection.

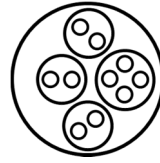


2. Principle of PART-WHOLE (5+6)

Every-thing has different parts that must form a greater whole to give it purpose.

SPACE is necessary for its existence.

The ultimate complexity of parts is yet to come about, and the ultimate unity and purpose from which it arose has always been.



MIND (MIND & CREATIVITY)

3. Principle of THINK-SHOW (7+8)

Every-thing has an intelligence that must express itself to give it meaning.

MIND is necessary for its existence.

The ultimate in mind is God and the ultimate manifestation of that mind is the message that God loves us.

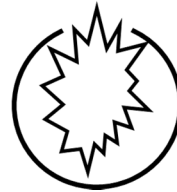


4. Principle of FREE-LIMIT (1+2)

Every-thing has freedom that must be subject to control to give it order.

CREATIVITY is necessary for its existence.

The ultimate in creativity and freedom is the act of creation (Big bang?), and the ultimate in control is the allurements of love.



SPIRIT (LOVE)

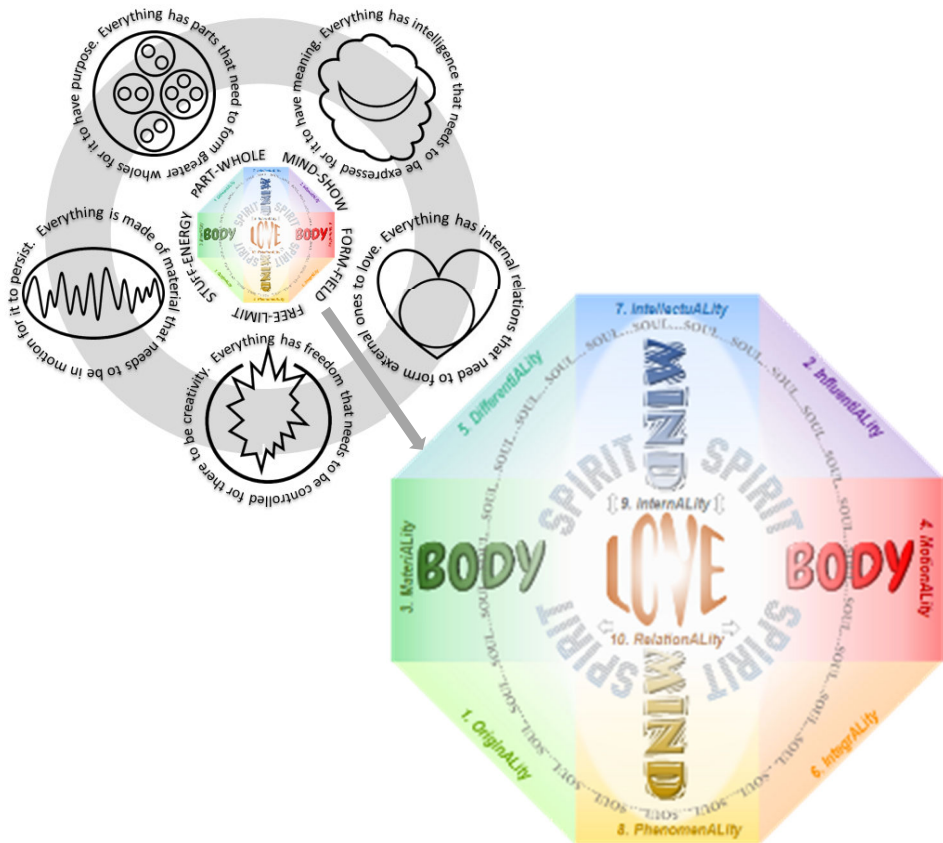
5. Principle of INSIDE-OUT (9+10)

Every-thing has an inner form that must link to external ones to give it relationships.

LOVE is necessary for its existence.

The ultimate in inner form is that of divine Spirit, and the ultimate in outer relationships are those of divine Love.





9. ANALYSIS OF LOVE

Now that you have idea what the Octaikon fracalities represent, here is a piece where I use them to look at the amazing cocktail that is love itself, and see how they can help us understand it. This is what I have come up with:

1. Love has beginnings. Times when we get to meet someone and maybe fall in love. A time when everything is new, fun, free and creative - that's love's **originality**! Some people think that love has been developing since the universe started. We could say that the

big bang was an explosion of love by which particles, electrons, protons, atoms, molecules, cells and finally us could continually fall in love with each other, constantly creating something or somebody new.

2. Love, like everything else in the universe, must be subject to controls and laws. Although love is free, it is not free to limit love anywhere else. Love must seek to create more love at all levels of encounters with other entities. Love that grows at the expense of love elsewhere is not true love. Thus its **influentiality** must be balanced by the needs of other beings.

3. Love in human form has to have **materiality** - something material to be attracted to, to sense and to be sensed. As a concept, love may be abstract, but in practice love has to be physical and capable of seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, or smelling, both passively and actively that which is loved or loving. I'm sure our sixth sense comes in here too!

4. Love is always on the move, active and changing. Love that becomes static and not evolving to suit new circumstances will begin to lose its attraction. It can and should become a habit but must never be taken for granted. It must be continually renewed. Love's ultimate aim is to bring the different parties closer and closer together - that is what its factor of **motional**ity is all about.

5. Love depends on having plurality, diversity, something else other than self - that's **differentiality**. Only two or more separate bodies gathered together can attract and demonstrate love. There doesn't need to be a perceived difference between the parties, but as in magnetism, opposite poles attract so maybe at some level there does have to be a difference other than the spatial or temporal differences.

6. Love is directed towards achieving unity of purpose - that is its **integrality**. The purpose of love is to pass itself on, enabling it to multiply and conquer all occasions where there is no love. Goals such as wealth, knowledge, power or skills never satisfy us for long. Only a love and loving that can create itself and become eternal will fulfil our deepest needs and vocation. Love brings us further forming wholes greater than the sum of our parts.

7. Love begins to really take root first in the mind. It starts as a thought or idea. Perhaps the original primeval idea of ideas was love and from this all subsequent ideas or patterns arose. True love must be grounded in the intellect - **intellectuality**. Falling in love may start off as an irrational feeling that cannot be pinned down, but eventually it must be rationalised.

8. Love expresses and communicates itself in a myriad of ways - its **phenomenality** is really phenomenal! Don't know what love is? Watch people who demonstrate it. Love is patient, kind, protective, trustful, hopeful, sharing, and persevering with others. It isn't envious, boastful, proud, angry, rude, possessive - it doesn't allow anything that stops others from showing and growing their own love.

9. Love strengthens itself from the outside inwards - that's its **internality**. Love makes sure that whatever entity that is expressing itself is made stronger, more resilient and able to fulfil its purpose to evolve love in life around itself. It strives to return itself to the source of its divine origin so that channels are fully open and available to all. It is never selfish, but selfless.

10. Love by its very nature is seeking to form creative relationships with all around it, to grow and evolve them. That is love's **relationality**. It has to balance its other frailties, continually

assessing how it is doing, and finding out how it could improve. In the end love is not an abstract idea, it is a person interacting with other persons in perfect creative harmony. Its perfection comes from the divine Trinity - the perfect relationship of love. Love may have beginnings in us, but divine love is eternal, outside time and space. God is love.

10. FRUITS OF LOVE

If God, who is divine love (as Christians believe) and is at the centre of our lives, then the ways we behave should be transformed as shown in the next diagram.

There are many places in the Bible that describe the characteristics of love. The Octaikon map lists three groups of key traits as follows:

- Seven virtues described by the Christian church
- Thirteen facets of love, listed in 1 Corinthians, ch.13
- Nine fruits of the spirit, listed in Galatians ch.5, v.22



You can read about these traits in the scripture passages and the church catechism. Not all the traits listed here are complete as there are some duplicates in the lists.

I have placed the traits next to the faculty that I think would be most involved in expressing them. You might map them differently.

As Christians, we are told to show these fruits of A-love to everyone, even to people who disagree, don't get on, are hostile with us. We may dislike people's behaviour, even to the point of being very angry with them, but we must show everyone, as a person, respect.

11. LABOURS OF LOVE

The next two sections come from my experience helping to give Catholic marriage preparation days with my wife, Gilli.

When couples fall in love and decide to live a life together, there will be many things that have to be done to set up home and possibly raise a family.



The roles and responsibilities of spouses will be many. All sorts of things need to be done together.

Tasks will need to be shared out according to temperament, abilities and time.

This may be very different from the shared responsibilities of the couples' parents, so nothing should be taken for granted. All the labours need to be done in mutual love and respect.

Here are some examples of the tasks mapped onto the Octaikon assigning each to the faculty to which it is most related.

Taking in

all sorts of input to meet daily needs

Thinking

and planning what to do in the future

Communicating

ideas, thoughts and feelings

Doing chores

around and outside the home

Growing

together spiritually (praying, worship)

Co-creation

planning and having a family

Shared monitoring

of input (e.g. food, media, friends etc.)

Joint decisions

about everything (money, schooling, house)

Mutual guidance

especially of the children (homework etc.)

When considering these tasks, various questions should be asked by the spouses:

- Can you think of other roles and responsibilities?

- Should they all be shared? If not, why not?
 - What would you imagine your spouse to be good at?
 - Should you try doing things you don't like?
-

12. LACKS OF LOVE

Partnerships are never without problems which test a couples' love for each other.

When they first meet they will want to show off their good points or **strengths** and only later may their bad points or **weaknesses** surface. These can form "**pinches**" in the couple's future relationship if they are not recognised and dealt with early on.

Pinches can be dealt with constructively in two ways: either they can be **accepted** and "**forgiven**" or they can be **discussed** and a **compromise** reached.

If you try to ignore pinches, they may suddenly become a **crunch** - a **major row**. Even worse, they may provoke retaliation which escalates the row and leads to **serious conflict**.

If help (i.e. counselling) is not found quickly, a marriage may then end up in **separation** or **divorce**.

Pinches can in fact build up a relationship helping partners to be more tolerant, if we allow them to make us realise that we are different and all have weaknesses as well as strengths.

Pinches (and crunches) can be handled effectively if there is:

- *good communication,*
- *mutual understanding,*
- *willingness to forgive, and a*
- *continued commitment to each other.*



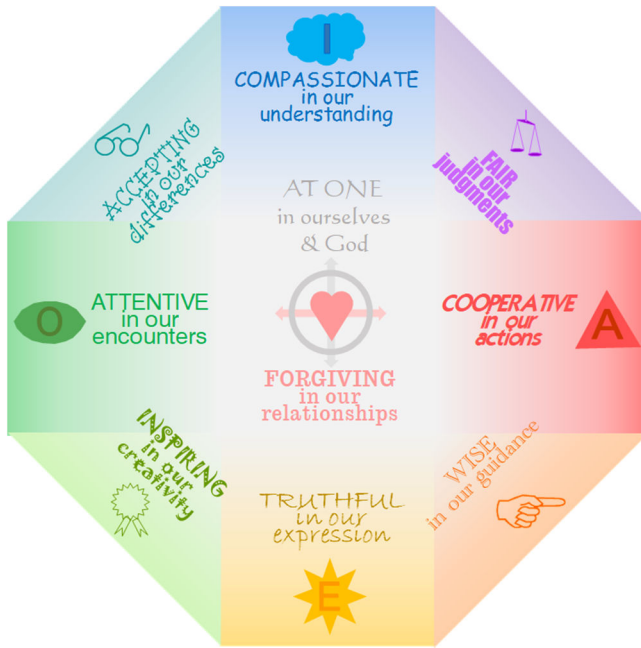
The diagram shows some possible pinches mapped onto the Octaikon faculties.

Questions to ask are: which are already potentially serious? Could the minor ones eventually lead to a crunch? Remember...When you point a finger at someone there are three pointing back at you!

13. MODELS OF LOVE

Jesus serves as a role model *par excellence* and shows us the way to live our lives. I've used the Octaikon here to identify one particular attribute that corresponds to each one of the ten fracialities.

Of course, there are many others.



14. ROLES OF LOVE

Love is not an abstract idea. As we have seen it is a relationship. And relationships require persons. In the economy of love, there are many requirements for the protagonists to thrive. They are subject to laws of the universe and people.

Jesus as Spirit within us meets all these on our behalf. That, I guess, is why he is referred to by so many titles in the Bible, each one corresponding to a principal or rule by which our love can thrive. Love cannot be forced, unjust, or unfair.

Jesus gives us the true way to live life, acting out many different roles that we are asked to imitate:

- **Emmanuel/Incarnation:**

Jesus is “God with us” in flesh and blood, giving us the ultimate example of divine love.

- **Shepherd/Pastor:**

Jesus knows each one of us personally by name, and helps us individually to be one loving community.

- **King/Head:**

Jesus is the head of the whole Christian “body” giving us “one mind” in our beliefs.

- **Advocate/Judge:**

Jesus examines how we follow his example, and pleads our case when things go wrong.

- **Messiah/Priest:**

Jesus is especially set apart (anointed – “Christ”) to act of our behalf and represent us before God (the Father).

- **Leader/Deliverer:**

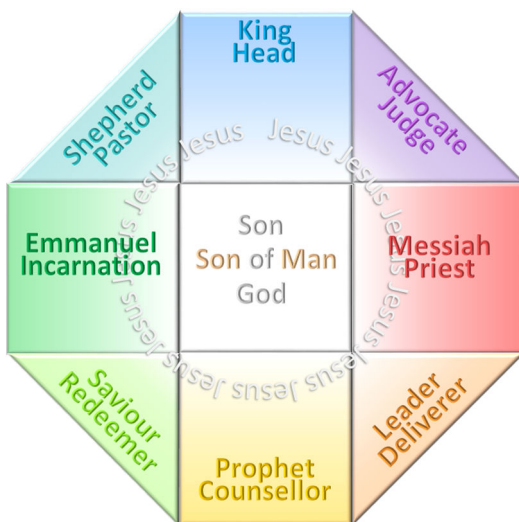
Jesus leads us to follow his divine way of loving and can deliver us from our selfishness.

- **Prophet/Counsellor:**

Jesus warns us of the consequences of failing to truly love and advises how to avoid falling into traps.

- **Saviour/Redeemer:**

Jesus sets us free, healing and forgiving us from the effects of our selfishness and lack of true love.



- **Son of Man:**
Jesus supports our external efforts to form loving relationships with himself and others.
 - **Son of God:**
Jesus reveals the inner life of how to be “sons of God” and at one with God in love.
-

15. PRAXIS OF LOVE

In section 3, I explained that **A-love is the unconditional caring about the happiness of another person**. It's **one-way**, given as a **gift** to someone else, with **nothing expected** in return.

The following notes are based on Greg Baer's thoughts in his book called Real Love (his name for A-love). He says that once A-love has been experienced, nothing else will seem to matter; without it, no other type of love will be enough. It's the greatest treasure of all. That rings true to me as the gift of the Jesus' Spirit!

It's the lack of A-love in our individual lives that cause all the **anger, racism, greed, violence** and **contention** in the world. Whatever effort and risk that's put into finding and providing A-love will be infinitely rewarded.

I-love (Baer's "*imitation*" love) is the natural pursuit of happiness by trying to satisfy our own needs or wants. It's two-way. If we give it, we usually expect something in return.

If we haven't experienced A-love in our lives, then naturally we resort to give and take I-love (in addition to E, O, and U-loves). It is the only way we can get what we think we really need.

A **parent's love** for a child is initially unconditional A-love. As the child grows, both parent and child expect A-love, but actually give and get more and more conditional I-love i.e. if you do this, I'll love you/get more, etc.

I-love in relationships mainly takes four forms - the need for **praise, power, pleasure** and **safety**. Even if these are met, in the absence of A-love we will never feel lasting happiness. There are two reasons for this.

One is a sense of **emptiness** because we can never feel completely fulfilled. To counter-act this, we use "*getting*" behaviour to attract and cling to what we think is love. In the worst case it turns into "drug-love" and pure greed.

The other is a sense of **fear** because we feel our happiness might be taken away. Against this, we use "*protecting*" behaviour to fight against or flee from what we think is a threat to our love and/or possessions.

Both behaviours include: (1) **lying** about ourselves to make people think we are different ("better") from what we really are, (2) **attacking** (verbally or more) another, and/or (3) **acting** like a victim ("poor me....").

If we think that these behaviours are not working, then we'll become **disappointed** and/or **angry** with the persons we are trading I-love with, and be unable to recognise any freely offered A-love.

To help receive A-love, we must be open and honest, telling the **truth** about ourselves. This can only be done with wise people in whom we have faith and trust that they will **accept** and **forgive** us as we are.

You should only ask somebody else to be truthful about themselves once they are sure you yourself will accept and forgive them, warts and all, and show them A-love, despite their confessions.

When you **share truths** as a couple or in groups, remember the following rules: Listen! One speaker at a time. Allow them to finish. The speaker only describes him/herself. If you can't be a "wiseman" or "confessor", find one.

Once you begin to feel accepted and A-loved by someone, then you will be in a position to **pass on that A-love** yourself. You will feel stronger and in control of your getting and protecting behaviours.

Everyone has the right to **choose** what he or she says or does. Relationships are the natural result of people making independent choices. This rule must be respected. We choose to give A-love. It can never be forced.

We never have the right to **expect** that another person will do anything for us (unless they've made a promise). Such expectations lead to disappointments, anger, and unhappiness in relationships.

In a loving relationship, we can always make a **request**, but if we're disappointed and angry when we don't get what we requested, we demonstrate that we are really making a **demand**.

If you have a **problem** in a relationship, always see how you can change yourself. You will have **three choices**. Live with it and like it, live with it and hate it, or leave it. You can't force another person to change.

Gratitude is a decision we make to recognise what we already have, and that decision greatly magnifies the effect of love and happiness in our lives. And the more you give A-love away, the more you'll find your store increases.

In any relationship, there will always be simple **differences** and **disagreements**. A-love eliminates the disappointment and anger that turn these into conflicts, and makes them opportunities to learn about why we have different viewpoints.

Baer's principles of A-love can be **learnt** and **applied** to school and university friendships, dating, marriage, parenting, in play, and at work with colleagues - in short, in all relationships.

Remember that the **source** of all A-love is God, and the ultimate example of A-love in action was Jesus. His Spirit now gives us power to show A-love to others which we get through other Christians, prayer, and the sacraments.

16. WORDS OF LOVE

If human language is a unique characteristic which demonstrates how we are made in the image of God then why should not the typical eight parts of speech, which we use when talking about love, correspond with the various Octaikon faculties? This actually works very well. Here's one way of describing them:

NOUNS signify a concrete or abstract entity and are those things we observe (or imagine) with our senses (e.g. partner, love, home, child, water, wood, flower).

VERBS signify an activity or process performed or undergone - that is, the things that are done - actions. (e.g. to talk, listen, shop, argue, sing, pray, love).

ADJECTIVES modify or describe a noun creating a fuller description of a concrete or abstract entity (e.g. beautiful, kind, patient, selfish).

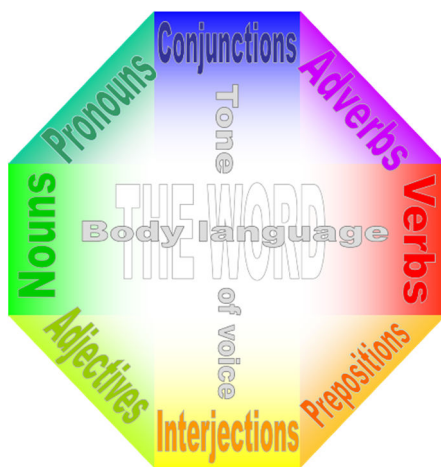
ADVERBS modify or describe a verb helping us to judge, evaluate or choose an activity or process (e.g. quickly, courageously, well).

CONJUNCTIONS join parts of a discourse and fill in gaps helping us to interpret the logic or rationale of what is being said (e.g. and, but, because, if, till, since, that, whether, or, unless, as).

INTERJECTIONS express an emotion of the speaker and can represent a particular feeling or attitude (e.g. hi, wow, hello, oh, ah, cool, bother, really).

PREPOSITIONS indicate a relation between things mentioned or the way they are directed or positioned one to another (e.g. to, for, by, with, from, around, under).

PRONOUNS (DETERMINERS) are like adjectives, and help monitor, distinguish, define or number people or things (e.g. this, that, one, eleven, him, it, which).



What of the other two Octaikon faculties? How we communicate depends not only on words but also how we say them, and our body language.

TONE of voice can correspond with our inner reflective faculty – what we really think and can include silence.

BODY LANGUAGE can correspond with our relating faculty – our “action” signs, gestures and facial expressions.

17. MINDS OF LOVE

It could be said that love starts in the mind, and I've always been interested to know how the brain/extended mind relates to my Octaikon fracialities. It seems that the way our brain works does indeed correspond to the way we use our four main Octaikon faculties: (observing/interpreting/expressing/applying).

We have left (**L**) and right (**R**) hemispheres. They are shown either side of the diagonal line on the two Octaikons opposite.

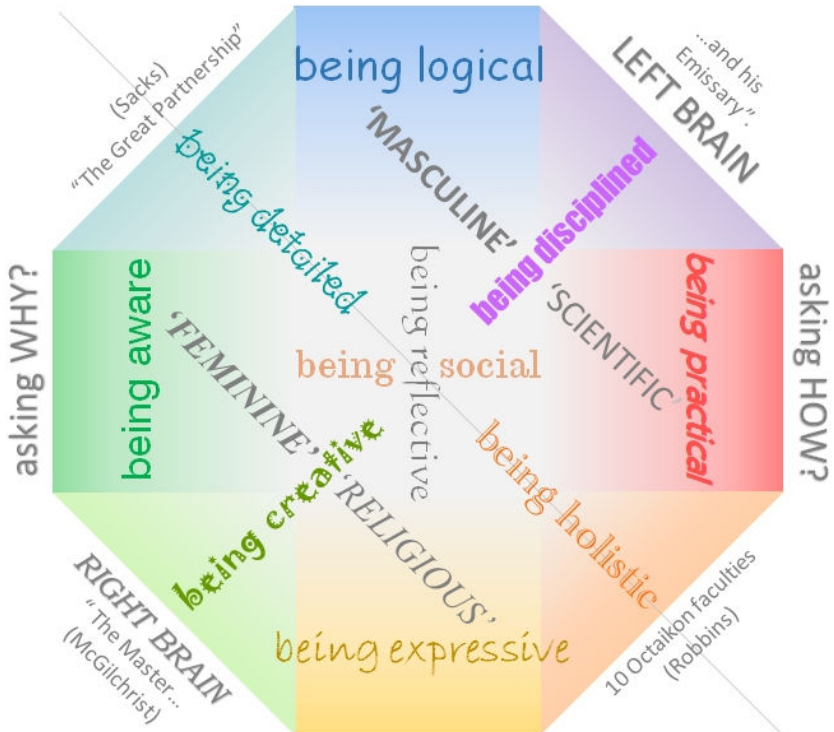
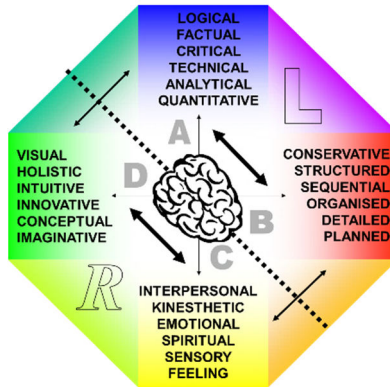
Some researchers think that each hemisphere is made up of two parts (or "quadrants"). The quadrants can be given a letter **A B C D** to identify them. We use each quadrant to think in the ways listed.

The arrows in the first diagram opposite show how easy it is for us to change from one way of thinking to another. The thicker the arrow, the easier it is.

For instance, it is easy to change within one hemisphere (A to B) but difficult to change between opposite "quadrants" (A to C) (e.g. if you feel emotional, it can be difficult to think logically – as when falling in love!). In general, men are better at using the left brain, and women are better at using the right brain.

However, we should all try to use our whole brain when thinking. So if you think you are better at using one part than another, try doing things that will help develop the other parts. (e.g. if you not very artistic, try doing something creative anyway!)

The second diagram opposite shows ten ways of "being human" or as Epimenides' said "having our being", and how they complement or balance each other, and may correspond to the right/left brain ideas of Iain McGilchrist and Jonathan Sacks.



18. GENDERS OF LOVE

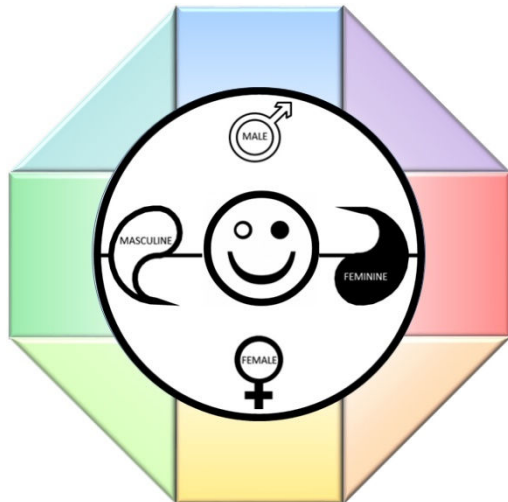
This section complements the ideas in section 4 on “Makings of Love” and the previous section 17 on “Minds of Love”.

Given the widespread and varied views on the topic of gender orientation, I’ve included here my understanding of this controversial topic. It seems to me that there are three dimensions to gender and how it is expressed:

Physically (body), we are ***EITHER*** male ***OR*** female (maybe changed or indeterminate).

Mentally (mind), we are ***BOTH*** feminine ***AND*** masculine (covering a whole spectrum) with differing proportions expressed.

Spiritually (spirit), we are ***NEITHER*** one ***NOR*** the other (just a unique whole person).



ALL these dimensions should be taken into account when understanding a person, their personhood and personalities, and when considering the complementarity of couples who express love for each other. The rich tapestry of love is diverse!

19. CHANNELS OF LOVE

This penultimate section was inspired by a Tablet article by Tina Beattie, the writings of C S Lewis, D G R Goyder (my Father-in-law), and Pope Benedict! It also reflects my article “Types of Loving”, also in The Tablet. Here I consider how the doctrine of the Trinity, and the fact that we appear to have three channels of knowledge (Goyder), correspond and relate to the traditional four loves (Lewis).

So.... how (on earth) do we understand and explain the mystery of God as a Trinity of three “persons” who is/are divine “Love” – that exists/is outside time, space and ourselves, as well as within?!

Maybe it depends on how we “tune in” to the image of God in whom we are made, and to what has been revealed in his/her creation, using the three channels of knowledge available to us, and our ten associated Octaikon faculties:

God as “Father” – divine mind – is known through our instinct (built-in “inherited” knowledge) and expressed as timeless familial affection love (*storge*), using our discerning, reasoning and judging faculties.

God as incarnate “Son”, Jesus the Christ, is known through our senses (passive and active) and expressed as time-bound, physical *eros* love using our faculties of sensing, relating and acting.

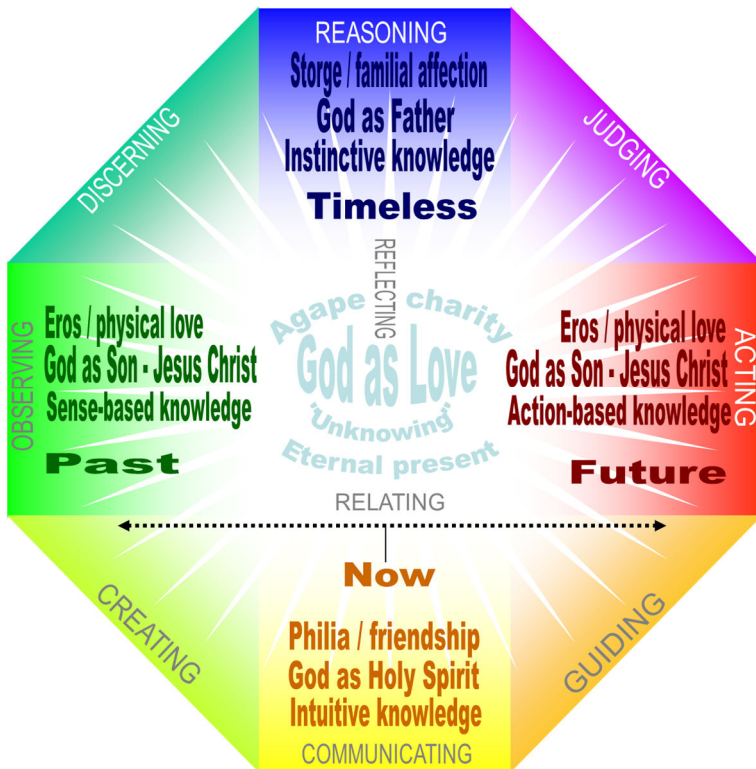
God as “Holy Spirit” is known through our intuition (without use of reason) and expressed as immediate *philia* friendship love, using our creating, communicating and guiding faculties.

God as “Love” - divine love, is known within ourselves – (maybe by “unknowing”?) and expressed as *agape* or *caritas* supernatural love

using our faculty of inner reflecting which allows God to unite and “divinise” the three “natural” loves.

Here are a few questions that I have posed with regard to this interpretation.

- How well do we express the four loves?
- How effectively do we use all our faculties?
- Do we tune in to all the channels?
- What will happen if we only listen to one broadcast?
- Will we get an incomplete view of the “Good News”?
- Can we understand, appreciate and nurture all the manifestations of God as Love around us?



20. INFINITIES OF LOVE

We come to the end of these reflections on love. If love existed before time, and was the origin of the universe, multiplying since then, does it ever cease? As I understand it, no!

So what happens when we die? There are three popular modern answers according to David Winter:

The first is **annihilation** - we go out like a light – finish - end of story and our love.

A second is the **spiritualist view** - there is a spirit world and some elements of human personality survive and can be communicated with, but not for ever. Love will eventually fade.

A third can be called **sentimental optimism** ... a comfortable, vague view that the deceased is in a 'better place' – at rest – but we don't really know where or how. A bit lovey dovey.

There is also a fourth answer – the Christian view: **resurrection**. We can live again like Christ, body and soul. After death our soul survives and our body is transformed in such a way that our personalities live on, fully expressed, perfected and recognisable as "me", "you" or someone else in a state of "heaven" and "in love" with God.

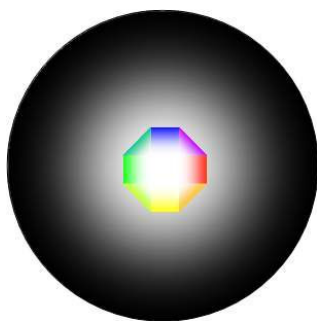
To which we should be able to say when someone dies something like: "Hallelujah! Our beloved has gone home and has been made whole – they are now truly with us in Spirit".

The Bible describes heaven as wonderful beyond our imagination. Our rational minds are incapable of fully understanding it. It is out of space and time. Just like true love!

According to Winter, heaven is: “‘where God is, when God is’ (and hell, we might add, is being where God is not: an appalling concept)”. It’s up to us to choose the way of love and ask to be forgiven when we have not.

Many people have talked of near death experiences where they appear to travel down a tunnel towards a light. Maybe that is the light of love where we meet Christ and our love is outside time and space.

A thought to conclude: in the economy of heaven, what if the extent to which we love in this life (and ask for forgiveness when we don’t) determines our place in the next?



BIBLIOTECA

All the following are written by me and most are available in printed form from www.Lulu.org and in pdf form on www.scribd.com .

E-mail me if you have trouble obtaining:

amj.robbsins@googlemail.com

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Okkimaps – mobile format. *A PDF in mobile phone format which shows almost all the idea and theories that I have read about on Octaikon maps, with a brief description of each.* PDF available on Scribd.com:

<https://www.scribd.com/document/342839827/Okki-maps-Mobile-Format>

Octaikon videos. *Many topics can be found as 5 minute clips on YouTube:*

https://www.youtube.com/user/amjrobbins/featured?disable_polymer=1

Here are two examples with direct links:

OM5 Branches of Christianity: My thoughts on why there are so many Christian denominations, and what Christianity might look like if integrated.

<https://youtu.be/5LI9SGJ9gMU>

OM6 Love Truly: My attempt to explain the different types of love, and how “making love” fits in! (explains section 4 of this booklet).

https://youtu.be/Mykqp_6gBII

WEBSITE: Visit www.octaikon.co.uk to find out how I’ve used the Octaikon model to look at the many theories of how we live, move, and have our being, and ideas for resources.

I’ve not included here all the very many books and articles I have read and referred to over the years in developing my ideas, because they would take up so much space. If you would like a list of these resources, please contact me. Suffice it to say, I am very grateful for all these founts of knowledge and to all their authors. Above all, I am eternally grateful to the Divine Inspirer of what is written about Love in the greatest “biblioteca” ever produced – the Bible.

Page order for booklet. 2 pages per A4 sheet, both side print, short side stapled centre.

48,1,2,47,46,3,4,45,44,5,6,43,42,7,8,41,40,9,10,39,38,11,12,37,36,13,14,35,34,15,16,33,32,17,18,31,30,19,20,29,28,21,22,27,26,23,24,25

NOTES

