

TRAFFORD R. COLE



# BECOMING CELESTIAL SOUL MATES

10 GOLDEN RULES FOR A  
RICHER RELATIONSHIP



© 2006 Trafford R. Cole

All rights reserved.

No part of this book may be reproduced in any form whatsoever, whether by graphic, visual, electronic, film, microfilm, tape recording, or any other means, without prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief passages embodied in critical reviews and articles.

ISBN 13: 978-1-55517-954-0

ISBN 10: 1-55517-954-1

Published by CFI, an imprint of Cedar Fort, Inc., 2373 W. 700 S., Springville, UT, 84663

Distributed by Cedar Fort, Inc., [www.cedarfort.com](http://www.cedarfort.com)

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOGING-IN-PUBLICATION DATA

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Cole, Trafford R. (Trafford Robertson), 1951-

Celestial soul mates : ten golden rules for a richer relationship / by Trafford R. Cole.

p. cm.

Includes index.

ISBN 1-55517-954-1

1. Marriage—Mormon authors. 2. Man-woman relationships—Religious aspects—Christianity. I. Title.

BX8641.C65 2006

248.8'44—dc22

2006022804

Cover design by Nicole Williams

Cover design © 2006 by Lyle Mortimer

Typeset by Annaliese B. Cox

Printed in the United States of America

# Table of Contents



[Introduction](#)

[Rule 1 Love, Honor, and Cherish](#)

[Rule 2 Commit for the Bad Times](#)

[Rule 3 We, not Me](#)

[Rule 4 Forget the Fantasies](#)

[Rule 5 Value the Differences](#)

[Rule 6 Seek the Positive](#)

[Rule 7 Creatively Solve the Conflict](#)

[Rule 8 Kindle the Flame](#)

[Rule 9 Nurture the Spirit](#)

[Rule 10 Grow Together](#)

[About the Author](#)

# Rule 1



## LOVE, HONOR, AND CHERISH

*Love is patient. Love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered. It keeps no record of wrongs. Love always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.*

—See 1 Corinthians 13:4–8

Gardeners know that certain plants grow better when planted together. Whether you have planted mint near the beans or carrots next to the onions, these plants are in symbiosis; they each gain from the other. The mint with its acute perfume keeps insects away from the bean plants, and at the same time, it flourishes better in the shade provided by the taller bean plant. The carrots keep away the parasites of the onions, and the smell of the onion does the same for the carrot parasite. Sometimes plants or flowers planted together just look better, like the Japanese peach blossom and forsythias. They bloom together in early spring, and the dark pink of the Japanese peach blossom is a beautiful contrast to the bright yellow of the forsythias.

These are enduring, intimate relationships. Two plants, each individuals, when planted together, intertwine and become something better, more beautiful than each does by itself. Each draws strength from the other and protects the other. For the plants to grow, certain elements are necessary. There must be good, deep soil. It must contain the proper nutrients for both plants to grow, and there has to be the proper acidity. There must be air and room to

grow. One plant cannot suffocate the other. They both need sunshine. Finally, there has to be water, for without water the plants will shrivel and dry up.

In the same way, the marriage of two people needs certain essential elements. There has to be the soil of commitment, the constant supply of the water of respect, and the sunshine of love and affection. Other nutrients need to be added, such as communication and romance, and the soil should never become too acidic.

Each plant must grow and flower, and the Japanese peach blossom should admire the forsythias just as the forsythias takes pleasure in the growth and flowers of the Japanese peach blossom. Neither should try to outdo or suffocate the other. Finally, their roots will grow deeper, and they will become stronger plants with the adversities of life. But they will face them better if they are united. Each year, they will grow, become larger, and be more radiant and joyful. This is the relationship of soul mates. It is the tale of two plants that either grow and fulfill their individual and mutual destinies or that shrivel and would be better off alone. Let us see how a plant grows.

## TO LOVE

The traditional marriage ceremony begins with a question asked first to the groom: “Will you . . . take . . . to be your lawfully wedded wife to love, honor, and cherish her?” The same question is then asked to the bride.

Both commit to those three principles: to love, honor, and cherish. The temple ceremony uses different words, but the concept is the same. We need to love, honor, and cherish our spouse. Like many things that we repeat often, these principles become routine and lose significance. You may wonder how people who have gone through this ceremony have thought about what it means to love, honor, and cherish their spouse.

When we ask thirty people to define love, it is not uncommon to find thirty different answers. Poets, writers, and songwriters each have added their own perspectives. Take a minute now and write down your definition of love. Write it down and keep it for a comparison as you continue reading. Do it now!

## LOVE IS . . .

If you are like the vast majority of people, somewhere in your definition, you probably have written words like *emotion*, *feeling*, or *state*. Even though we find

many different variations on the word *love*, most people agree that it is some sort of feeling.

I suggest that this is not true. I suggest that love is far more than just an emotion or feeling, and I believe that Satan has purposefully led us astray with this idea. Love as just a feeling has two fallacies. First, it suggests that it is a passive state that we “fall into” or “out of.” Second, it suggests that it must be stimulated or initiated by some external event. To understand more fully, let’s examine just what an emotion is.

Emotions, contrary to what we normally assume, are automatic and unconscious. They are a reaction to some external stimulus. They are internal physiological and psychological experiences in which the physiological reaction comes first. This is easiest to recognize in the case of fear.

If you are faced with a growling tiger, you will have an automatic physical reaction as soon as the visual stimulus of the tiger arrives to your lower brain. Even before you can analyze it, your body already starts reacting to the situation. It does this by increasing heartbeat, breathing, muscle tension, and adrenaline, among other physiological changes. It increases your aggression and decreases your ability to think and reason. This is because the body diverts blood from the brain to the muscles to increase your power to fight off the threat or run from it.

In psychology, this whole reaction is called the Fright-Flight-Fight Syndrome. Thus, an emotion is both a physiological and psychological event provoked by external stimulus that causes either the arousal of the body, as in fear and anger, or the slowing down of the body, as in boredom or depression. Does this describe love? Is it indeed just a physiological reaction to something that happens to us?

This is an important question because if love isn’t just an emotion, what is it? There is another aspect of emotions that should be considered. Because an emotion is a physiological state and not just a psychological state, it is, by necessity, short-lived. Emotions are ephemeral; they come and go, they change and mutate, and they never last very long. Non-arousing emotions tend to last longer than arousing emotions, but even these usually last no more than days at the longest. If love were an emotion, it too would be temporary and transient, here today and gone tomorrow. If love instead lasts years or a lifetime

and can evoke just about any emotion from tenderness and contemplation to lust and frustration, then it must be more than a simple emotion.

*My bounty is as boundless as the sea, my love as deep; the more I give to thee the more I have, for both are endless.*<sup>1</sup>

—William Shakespeare

One way of understanding this is to use the following definitions. When we have an emotion consistently paired with the same thoughts, we have a feeling. When we have a feeling coupled with actions and perceptions, we have an attitude. When attitudes are about complex and abstract issues, we call it a belief.

Love, then, is not just an emotion but describes a whole set of attitudes toward a person that influence perceptions and behaviors. Love is a belief that leads to behaviors that conform to that belief. In fact, the word *love* has origin as a verb: to love. It is an action verb and requires a direct object, as in, “I love someone or something.” This means that not only do I have a warm feeling for someone, but also I do something for that person. It is not merely the emotion and not even the accompanying thoughts about the person but implies that some positive action be directed toward that person for his benefit.

Thus, love is not just an emotional state. It is *not* something that comes and goes according to how I am feeling that day, but rather it is a whole collection of thoughts, attitudes, perceptions, and positive emotions about a person that pushes me to act on behalf of that person.

This is an important concept because if we believe that love is just a feeling, then to us it is a passive state—something that happens to us without our will. We often say things like “he has fallen in love,” or “she’s in love.” Thus, we describe some mysterious state that someone falls into. We can just as mysteriously fall out of this state at some future date, and none of this depends on us. We are the passive recipients of this grace. Nothing is required of us. This leads to the other important misconception about love. Because we perceive love as something to feel, this feeling is dependent on someone or something else. All emotions are triggered by some stimulus, and we are the passive recipients of that stimulus. Therefore, if you do something for me, the emotion is triggered, I will feel love, and then I will do something for you. I

feel love; therefore I will love. I will love you and therefore will do something for you based on what you do for me. If you do nothing for me, I will not love you. Does this sound like the love of soul mates?

*Love is the gentle smile of love upon the lips of beauty.*<sup>2</sup>

— Kahil Gibrain

Let's examine an alternative theory about love that results from the psychology of attitude and belief formation. When we investigate complex beliefs that involve thoughts, emotions, and actions, we find that any time there is a contrast between the thoughts and the behavior, it is the behavior that is the most important aspect. We call this cognitive dissonance.

For example, if I love to eat chocolate (behavior) but know that I am overweight and chocolate is bad for me (belief), I have several options. I can change my behavior to conform to my belief, or change the belief to conform to the behavior, or rationalize the importance of the belief—that is, I can stop eating chocolate, change my belief that chocolate leads to weight gain, or rationalize my belief about the dangers of being overweight or how much influence chocolate has. Most often, we rationalize or change our beliefs. Rarely is a belief strong enough to change behavior. The conclusion is that our behaviors govern, for the most part, our beliefs, and not the other way around. What does this have to do with love?

If love, in truth, is a combination of emotions, thoughts, and actions that create a belief about someone or something, then the emotions and thoughts are evoked by the action. It is what *I do* for my spouse in a caring relationship that stimulates the loving feeling in me, not necessarily what my spouse does for me. This is the paradox of love—I do not need to sit and wait for my spouse to do something for me to feel love; rather it is what *I do* that generates the loving feeling within me. Love is proactive. If I want to feel more love, I need to give more to my beloved.

I first encountered this principle on my mission. After only a couple of months in the field, a General Authority visited us and interviewed each missionary. When it was my turn, he asked me about my mission. One of the questions he asked me was how my relationship with my companion was. I replied that it was terrible and launched into a series of criticisms of my



companion. He listened and then told me: “If you want to improve your relationship and learn to love your companion so that you can do the work of the Lord, you can do this one action. Get up a half an hour earlier every morning and shine the shoes of your companion.”

At the time, I thought he was crazy. I never followed his advice, and I never got along with my companion. His words, however, stuck with me, and it wasn't until I was married that I learned the importance of this concept. If you want to feel love for your eternal companion, don't wait for her to do something for you, but do something for her.

This is easier to understand if we change the context of the situation. If you volunteer to work at a shelter for the homeless, why do you get a good feeling? It is not because the people at the shelter are doing something for you. Isn't it because you are giving service without expecting anything in return? In fact, if they were to pay you to do the same job, you would probably lose that warm, positive feeling. Isn't it the same in a relationship?

If I want to feel love for my mate, I must love her—that is, I must do something for her. It is when I satisfy her needs that I feel the most love. Love is proactive. Love is service.

To feel love, I should not be waiting for my spouse to do something nice for me, but rather I should be doing something positive for her. Love is service. The more I serve, the more I feel love. It is a question of cognitive dissonance. My attitude toward a person will correspond with my actions toward that person. As our mothers told us, it is better to give than to receive. The more I invest in a relationship (behaviors, time, energy), the more my emotions and thoughts will be correspondingly positive. The consequence of this is that if I am not feeling love, I must do something to change that feeling by freely acting in a loving way toward my mate.

The best example of this is our feelings toward our children. Many people, especially mothers, will say that they love their children as much as they love their husband. (Some even say more!) Rationally, this makes little sense. Children require great sacrifice, time, effort, and money, and cause psychological stress, while giving very little back, except an occasional smile or hug. Children are takers, not givers. Think back on the sleepless nights, the vomit on your best clothes, the ruined furniture, and the countless other

sacrifices. Where is the reward? Nevertheless, we love them. In fact, we love them dearly. Why? It is because we have given. We have satisfied their needs. We have invested huge amounts of ourselves in them, and we cannot take that back. So, this effort creates cognitive dissonance that influences our emotions, thoughts, and attitudes to correspond with our investment. We love because we have given. Mothers tend to love more because they have invested more. Pregnancy and early childcare are mostly the mother's commitment and investment in the child. She, who has sacrificed the most, loves the most. Only later, as fathers interact more and contribute more to childcare will they start experiencing the same emotions. A father who contributes very little denies himself the opportunity of loving his child.

Another example of this comes from a story told by J. Allen Petterson, a well-known marriage counselor and author. The story can be summarized as follows: A wife seeks help from her pastor stating that she can no longer stand her husband. After many years of marriage, there is no sentiment left. He never tells her that he loves her, and he barely talks to her at all. Their evenings are spent watching TV or reading the newspaper. All her efforts for him are ignored, as are her needs. She feels unloved, angry, and sad, and just cannot put up with it anymore. The children are grown up, and she needs a more fulfilling life. The pastor, instead of expressing sympathy, asks her in a rather sneaky way, "If he has been so mean to you, and so selfish for these many years, wouldn't you really like to get back at him?"

Taken aback by the question but intrigued by the idea, the woman says, "Yes, I would really like to make him suffer as much as he had made me."

The pastor replies, "Good. Here is what you should do. To make him suffer, you first have to make him fall madly in love with you again, as it was at the beginning. Then, just when he is really in love—then you dump him. That way he will really suffer."

The lady thinks for a moment and says, "I like it—I'll do it!"

"Remember," the pastor says, "you will probably have to sacrifice for several months by doing all those things you did in the beginning to make him love you. You will fix his favorite meals and give special attention to his needs. Are you willing to do this?"

The woman replies, "Yes, I'll do it." They make an appointment to meet

again after three months to see how the experiment is going and to decide when would be the right moment to dump the husband.

After several months have passed and the pastor still had not heard from this woman, he finally calls her to hear how things are going. The woman answers the phone and upon hearing the pastor's voice, says, "You rat! You knew this was going to happen didn't you?"

Feigning innocence the pastor asks, "What happened?"

The woman says, "It was all going so well. I was fixing his favorite meals. I would no longer nag or needle him to talk to me or to turn off the TV. I started getting up with him in the mornings again and fixing his breakfast—I was doing everything possible to make him fall in love, and it worked. He fell in love again. He started bringing me flowers and gave more attention to my needs. He even turned the TV off some nights to talk."

"So, what is the problem?" the pastor asks.

The lady replies, "Now I have fallen in love with him again! You knew this would happen, didn't you?"<sup>3</sup>

This story also illustrates the point that when you act consistently to serve someone, it touches his soul and he too will open up and serve you, so that love breeds love. There is a counter part to this.

Love is a belief and, like any belief, it is based on trust. We are willing to invest and act unselfishly as long as we believe and we trust that we will be reciprocated at least in part. Mothers can make huge sacrifices and feel totally appeased with just a quick hug every once in a while from their children. The same can be true of couples. If just one spouse invests and gets nothing in return, trust is broken and the feeling dies in the end. It is betrayal that kills love—not just sexual betrayal but betrayal of that basic trust of what a couple considers its relationship to be. This perception, in turn, is based on our expectations. This will be addressed further in Rule 4: Forget the Fantasy.

True love is unconditional. I will continue to serve my loved one and have affectionate thoughts for her unconditionally, as long as there is trust. As long as I believe in my spouse, I will love her.

A basic law of human nature says that when we realize that someone gives unselfishly of himself to us, we will be motivated and stimulated to give back. Therefore, if we desire change in our spouse, it is by changing ourselves that we

will achieve it. It is with our loving actions that we will see an increase in the loving actions of our spouse.

Love is proactive. If you want love, *you* must show love. *You* must begin. It is not a passive state in which we wait around for someone to show us love so that we feel the emotion.

There is also a law that says I must have received unconditional love at some time in my life to know how to give. It is the primary duty of parents to love their children, to invest and sacrifice for them so that they can grow up and become loving adults. When this does not happen, the child will have a more difficult time learning to love. He will need much of the unconditional love of his mate to learn how to give.

There is a final aspect of love that must be considered. Love does not mean always having to please the other person, nor does it mean sacrificing our growth for them. Always saying yes to my spouse or my children does not show that I love them. Love is working for the good of the other person. Love means contributing to the spiritual growth of a spouse or a child, and that often requires saying no. It often means confronting the person about his weaknesses but showing our trust and support for him. Too often we hear the phrases “he loved me *in his own way*” or “she loved me *but didn’t know how to communicate it.*” If what we do or say inhibits the growth of our mate, it is not love. At the same time, as I work for the spiritual growth of my loved one, that enhances me and I grow too.

The Lord has expressed this concept well in section 121 of the Doctrine and Covenants:

Reproving betimes with sharpness, when moved upon by the Holy Ghost; and then showing forth afterwards an increase of love toward him whom thou hast reproved, lest he esteem thee to be his enemy; That he may know that thy faithfulness is stronger than the cords of death. (D&C 121:43–44)

In his book *The Road Less Traveled*, Dr. Scott Peck defines love as “the total commitment to the full development of the potential of the other.”<sup>4</sup>

The measure of love in a relationship is comparable to the spiritual growth of both members of the couple. The more we grow personally, the deeper the

**You've Just Finished your Free Sample**

**Enjoyed the preview?**

**Buy: <http://www.ebooks2go.com>**