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What it means to love

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The lyrics of a popular song 'Eight Days a Week', by The Beatles, goes "One thing I can say girl, love you all the time..." Existentialists question if one can constantly love another. Love, they maintain, is specific and for an act. It cannot be universal to the relationship.

If I tell my wife that I love her and always will, I am probably being dishonest. Love is manifest in being unconditional and showing positive regard. When I show love, it is towards something the other did where I demonstrate the qualities of accepting the person as he or she is. Therefore if I say, "I will love you always," I am in some ways trapping myself, for I am telling the other that I will not lose my temper with you nor misunderstand you and so on, which is a lie. If I genuinely love the other and know that my relationship is not fragile, getting angry or upset is part of the relationship. I cannot say that I will never be upset, nor can I say that I will not get angry with them.

Thus, love which is not specific is, in effect, untrue.

Love is wholesome and can only be real if both the other and I accept one another for whom and what we are. True love will allow us to falter. Finally, if I say, "I love you for this act," I am being specific and honest. In so saying, I am also telling the other that I accept them for who they are.'

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