To love another human in all of her splendor and imperfect perfection, it is a magnificent task ... tremendous and foolish and human.

Louise Erdrich, The Last Report on the Miracles at Little No Horse

We do not exist for ourselves alone, and it is only when we are fully convinced of this fact that we begin to love ourselves properly and thus also love others. What do I mean by loving ourselves properly? I mean, first of all, desiring to live, accepting life as a very great gift and great good, not because of what it gives us, but because of what it enables us to give to others.

Thomas Merton

Close friendships are one of life’s miracles — that a few people get to know you deeply, all your messy or shadowy stuff along with the beauty and sweetness, and they still love you. Not only still love you, but love you more and more deeply. I would do anything for my closest friends, and they would do almost anything for me, and that is about as spiritual a truth as you can get.

Anne Lamott

Someone to tell it to is one of the fundamental needs of human beings.

Miles Franklin

Social support is the most powerful protection against becoming overwhelmed by stress and trauma. Social support is not the same as merely being in the presence of others. The critical issue is reciprocity: being truly heard and seen by the people around us, feeling that we are held in someone else’s mind and heart. For our physiology to calm down, heal, and grow we need a visceral feeling of safety. No doctor can write a prescription for friendship and love: these are complex and hard-earned capacities.

Bessel A. van der Kolk

Love as a concrete foundation for an authentically functional civilization requires the around-the-clock labors of forgiveness. Without it, love fails, friendship fails, intelligence fails, humanity fails.

Aberjhani

Unless we learn to live with ourselves we cannot live with others. But equally, unless and until we have learnt to live fully and creatively with others we cannot hope to live with our own selves.

Esther de Waal

We all think that everyone else lives in fortresses, in fastnesses: behind moats, behind sheer walls studded with spikes and broken glass. But in fact we inhabit much punier structures. We are, it turns out, all jerry-built. Or not even. You can just stick your head under the flap of the tent and crawl right in. If you get the ok.

Martin Amis, Time’s Arrow

To know when to go away and when to come closer is the key to any lasting relationship.

Doménico Cieri Estrada

Once the realization is accepted that even between the closest human beings infinite distances continue, a wonderful living side by side can grow. And if they succeed in loving the distance between them which makes it possible for each to see the other whole against the sky,

Rainer Maria Rilke

In a perfect union the man and woman are like a strung bow. Who is to say whether the string bends the bow, or the bow tightens the string?

Cyril Connolly

I love you as you are, but do not tell me how that is.

Antonio Porchia

Only solitary men know the full joys of friendship. Others have their family; but to a solitary and an exile his friends are everything.

Willa Cather, Shadows on the Rock

Love all the people you can. The sufferings from love are not to be compared to the sorrows of loneliness.

Susan Hale

Those who need us give us a hold upon life.

Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach

My mother’s last word to me clanks inside me like an iron bell that someone beats at dinnertime: love, love, love, love, love. . . . Practice saying the word “love” to the people you love so when it matters most to say it, you will. We’re all going to die. . . . Hit the iron bell like it’s dinnertime.

Cheryl Strayed