

A reading by Anne Morrow Lindberg and Peter Cork

Our emotions and our relationships are variable and intermittent. When you love someone, you do not love them all the time, in exactly the same way, from each moment to the next. This is a near impossibility and it is self-delusional to pretend that this is so.

Yet this is exactly what so many of us demand. We have so little faith in the ebb and flow of life, of love, of relationships. We leap with joy at the flow of the tide and resist with fear its ebb, afraid that it will never return. We demand permanency, duration and continuity when the only continuity possible, in life as in love, is in growth, in fluidity, in freedom, and in change.

Climbers on a pitched Alpine route share a changing relationship. Belay points allow encounters where the joy of their journey can be shared completely but these are necessarily fleeting moments. Hours are spent often out of sight, out of sound, their only connection 50m of nylon rope. Across the rock face, through this vital thread the simplest tugs communicate their bond as a team, mutually in support, remotely holding each other's delicate lives in their hands, proving trust and showing love. Their relationship changes as they travel their course on the rock but the bond of trust and love remains strong.

Security lies therefore not in owning or possessing, not in demanding, or expecting, or even hoping. Security in a relationship lies neither in looking back to what it was in nostalgia, nor forward in apprehension or eager anticipation to what it might be. As climbers midst their journey, one must accept the challenges of the present and face the unknown route ahead with confidence built on past experience. Security lies in accepting the undeniable past along with the uncertainties of the future and in living in and owning the present. Through accepting the ebb and flow of the changing world and the variability and intermittency of a relationship, one can enjoy the enduring security of love.

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