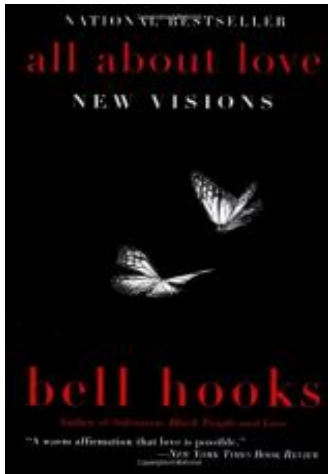


# All About Love

by Bell Hooks

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## About the Book

"The word "love" is most often defined as a noun, yet...we would all love better if we used it as a verb," writes bell hooks as she comes out fighting and on fire in **All About Love**. Here, at her most provocative and intensely personal, the renowned scholar, cultural critic, and feminist skewers our view of love as romance. In its place she offers a proactive new ethic for a people and a society bereft with lovelessness.

As bell hooks uses her incisive mind and razor-sharp pen to explode the question "What is love?" her answers strike at both the mind and heart. In thirteen concise chapters, hooks examines her own search for emotional connection and society's failure to provide a model for learning to love. Razing the cultural paradigm that the ideal love is infused with sex and desire, she provides a new path to love that is sacred, redemptive, and healing for the individuals and for a nation. The Utne Reader declared bell hooks one of the "100 Visionaries Who Can Change Your Life." **All About Love** is a powerful affirmation of just how profoundly she can.

## Discussion Guide

1. In the preface, hooks writes, "love returns us to the promise of everlasting life. When we love we can let our hearts speak" (p. xi). What does this mean?
2. hooks describes the inspiration and solace she finds in graffiti art declaring, "The search for love continues even in the face of great odds" (p. xv). Where have you found similar signs that have restored your faith in love?
3. Historically, how have the demands of love for women been different from those for men? How have they differed for adults and children? What does hooks suggest about these distinctions?
4. Discuss the way in which hooks uses her personal experience throughout this book. How does her personal experience

enhance her assertions? Which vignette do you find particularly meaningful?

5. hooks describes the allure of lying in relation to the allure of power. What are the lies you tell to feel powerful? How do our concepts of power -- born from the patriarchal culture we inhabit -- keep us from love? What role does greed play and where does it come from?

6. hooks probes the gap between the values many people "claim to hold and their willingness to do the work of connecting thought and action, theory and practice" (p. 90). How does our culture reward those who nurture this gap? What changes would we have to make in society to nurture and inspire the closing of this gap?

7. If we must sacrifice "our old selves in order to be changed by love" (p. 188), what is it that we're giving up?

8. Although she warns against attempting to return to the past rather than forging ahead, hooks advocates repairing and restoring family bonds. Why is this an important goal? How do these bonds enable us to live with love in all areas of our lives?

9. What are the political ramifications of hooks's visions of love? Is love a political issue?

10. Look over the chapter titles in **All About Love**. If you were to add a chapter, what would it be?

11. Why do we fear love? Are we more afraid of surrendering ourselves to love or of living without love? What sacrifices does love require? What relief and salve can love offer? Is it possible to be too damaged, too wounded to love?

12. How has **All About Love** enhanced, contradicted, challenged, altered your vision of love?

## Author Bio

Bell Hooks is a cultural critic, feminist theorist, and writer. Celebrated as one of our nation's leading public intellectual by *The Atlantic Monthly*, as well as one of *Utne Reader's* 100 Visionaries Who Could Change Your Life, she is a charismatic speaker who divides her time among teaching, writing, and lecturing around the world. Previously a professor in the English departments at Yale University and Oberlin College, hooks is now a Distinguished Professor of English at City College and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. She is the author of more than seventeen books, including **All About Love: New Visions; Remembered Rapture: The Writer at Work; Wounds of Passion: A Writing Life; Bone Black: Memories of Girlhood; Killing Rage: Ending Racism; Art on My Mind: Visual Politics; and Breaking Bread: Insurgent Black Intellectual Life**. She lives in New York City.

## Critical Praise

"She provides a refreshing spiritual treatise that steps outside the confines of the intellect and into the wilds of the heart. "

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