

## LOVE IS THE GREAT CONNECTOR

by Kathy Barrans

Love for me is about connections.

You connect because you care, and those connections build you up – strengthen you – but it's not always easy.

I have horses and I love taking care of them. For me, that's like going to the fuel pump. They are one thousand pounds of pure power, they can explode with energy, running, kicking, and bucking. But there are also times that they just hang out with me, following me around the pasture.

I care for four dogs. Two I inherited when my aunt died. I love animals but I never intended on having so many.

I also care for my dad who has Alzheimer's. He doesn't live with me, but I am all he has here.

I admit I do struggle with feeling overwhelmed and with the guilt over feeling overwhelmed. What does that say about my ability to love?

That's where my faith comes in. I'm learning to connect my struggles with Jesus. He was overwhelmed at times. Look at the agony in the garden. He prayed so hard that he was sweating blood. He asked God to take the struggle from Him. God said no and Jesus said, your will be done. Then he went and died on a cross. Why? Because he loves us.

Love is all about connection. That doesn't mean it's always easy.

My dad feels guilty at times – thanking me for daddy sitting him. I tell him I'm paying him back for all of the times he took care of me and I owe him a lot.

Loving is not always easy, but I do believe it's always worthy. It's always healing. Giving of ourselves to others, putting others first with a compassionate heart, always helps.

It also helps me to stay connected to God. Like the horses, God is my fuel pump. I live in the country and connect with God in nature. A beautiful sunrise or sunset, a full moon so bright that I can see moon shadows. On nights like that I don't want to go inside. I will just walk around staring at the sky or the shadows. Even a breeze blowing by can feel like God is putting His arm around me, just letting me know He is with me, I am not alone.

The challenges in life have been helping me to realize my need for those quiet God moments. If I stay focused on Him, I pray that anyone meeting me might experience, even in some small way, the love that Jesus shared overwhelmingly when He died on the cross.

So, what would I say to someone who's looking to find love? Look around you, love is there, in the people you meet, in nature, in God. It may be as simple as asking God a question, expressing a need, then turning on the radio and hearing a song that speaks to your needs. I do believe God is with us, hears us, and helps us. But we must choose to pay attention. We choose to put ourselves in His presence...or not.