

The Parrot in the Freezer

A lonely woman decides to buy a parrot for companionship. This bird is beautiful, but it's nasty. Every day, she says, "Tell me you love me." And every day, the parrot squawks, "Nope. Not gonna do it." Until one day, it bites her. That's it. She's done. She puts the parrot in the freezer. After a minute of thrashing and squawking, it goes silent. Panicked, she opened the freezer, and the parrot stepped out wide-eyed. "I'm very sorry. I promise never to behave that way again. Please forgive me." Then the parrot looks back at the freezer and says, "But what did the chicken do?"

Funny, yes. But also, deeply real. Because this story is about forgiveness, it's about loving someone who bites you and the transformation that happens when we're willing to thaw our hearts.

Mick and the MG: My Freezer Moment

Years ago, I had a friend named Kurt who gave me a beat-up MG, one of those cool British cars that makes you feel like James Bond's mellow cousin. I got it towed to my home in San Ramon. That's where I met Mick, my British neighbor from across the street. Mick said, "I'll fix it for you, mate." And he did. I paid him over a thousand dollars to do so, and it was beautiful.

We became close friends, Mick, his wife, and their little girl. I even photographed his daughter on a carousel, framed it, and gave them a copy. Hung one in my house, too. That car was fun to drive, but it was a money pit. Eventually, I told Mick, "I need to sell it." He said, "No problem. I'll take care of it."

A week later, he sold it for two thousand dollars, just the amount I wanted. I asked him when he could pay me the money he received, and he said, "Well... I used the money to buy another car. I'll pay you back soon." It never happened. A few weeks later, they were gone. House empty. Tools gone. Cars gone. They had vanished. I stood in front of my house, stunned. Then I walked back inside, took that framed photo of his daughter off the wall, and ripped it up. The frame stayed on my wall, empty. Every time I walked past it; I didn't feel love. I felt betrayed.

When I Stopped Loving Mick, I Stopped Loving a Part of Myself

That's when Unity showed up in my life again, this time through a forgiveness workshop. And I learned something that changed me forever: When I stopped loving Mick, I stopped loving a part of myself. I had frozen my own heart, just like that parrot.

Only the Love Is Real

That's why I'm calling this talk *Only the Love Is Real*. The love I gave Mick. That was real. The dinners. The laughter. The photo. It all mattered, even if the story didn't end as I wanted; our love was real.

Jesus, in his final breath, said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Not after the cross. On the cross. While in pain. While still bleeding. That's not just forgiveness. That's a masterclass in spiritual maturity.

Forgiveness Is a Choice—For You

People who hurt us aren't evil. They're unconscious. Lost in fear. Just like the parrot. Just like us, sometimes. Forgiveness isn't saying, "You were right." It's saying, "I choose peace." We don't forgive because they deserve it. We forgive each other because we deserve freedom. As they say, "Holding onto resentment is like drinking poison and expecting the other person to die."

The Tibetan Story

I once watched a documentary about a Tibetan man imprisoned in China. Tortured. Abused. When asked what he feared most during his time in prison, he said: "What worried me most was the temptation to hate my captors." He feared losing his compassion more than losing his life. That's spiritual power.

Everything We Think, Say and Do Is Infused with Our Consciousness

And that's the deeper truth here. Every thought we hold, word we speak, and action we take carries our vibration. So, if you want to be a healing presence, don't just act with love, be love.

Turning the Negative into a Positive—Literally

A few years after the Mick incident, I found the negative of that carousel photo. I had it reprinted. I reframed it. I put it right back on the wall where it belonged. I literally turned a negative into a positive.

The Story of Dr. Albert Cliff

Dr. Albert Cliff, a therapist, once treated a man on crutches for eight years. The man said, "*I started using these about the time I discovered my brother stole from me.*" Dr. Cliff said, "*Let's write him a forgiveness letter.*" They did. As the man prepared to leave, Dr. Cliff said, "*Aren't you forgetting your crutches?*" The man smiled and said, "*I don't need them anymore.*" He never needed them again.

Forgiveness Doesn't Change the Past. It Changes the Present.

Forgiveness doesn't erase the hurt. But it does transform the present. It softens the edges. It returns our power. It brings our hearts back home.

A Poem: Only the Love Is Real

Rev. Blaine Tinsley

Even when it feels as if you've hurt me

With new eyes I see

That the unforgiveness lies in me

Only the love is real

You hurt me and do not know

But I can look within and let it go

The love in my heart you cannot steal

Only the love is real

When I look back at the times we laughed

All the joy and the love we shared

Love has been the truth for us

Only the love is real

The things you did cut me deep

I have decided it's time to give them rest

I know we really did our best

Only the love is real

I won't be captivated by my pride

In truth only love can abide

No matter what I feel

Only love is real

From the truth I will not hide

Even if you are no longer at my side

Forgiveness and my heart has healed

Only the love is real

Affirmation: *Only the Love is Real.*

So, here's your invitation this week, your soul homework, if you will: Find one place in your heart where there's a frozen bird, a torn-up photo, or some unforgiveness. One place where love got interrupted. Then take a breath... and choose to thaw it. To reframe it. Remember: *Only the love is real.* Live from that. Speak from that. Choose that repeatedly. And watch the world start to mirror it back. Only the love is real.