

Pass It On®...

Shakespeare and Love.

The bard speaks of love over 2,500 times in his collected works. He knows a thing or two about the transformative power of our deepest emotion.

“And when love speaks, the voice of all the gods make heaven drowsy with the harmony.” So writes William Shakespeare in “Love’s Labour’s Lost.” In this comedy about the search for human betterment, four diligent young men find themselves caught between their oaths of cloistered study and their attraction to irresistible women. It is being truly in love, they realize, that makes them achieve their full potential.

And so it is with each of us. To love and to be loved is to experience the deepest emotions: belonging, joy, sadness and reverence for life itself.

Shakespeare knew a bit about love and longing. After his marriage, he had to move away to London to find work while his wife stayed in Stratford to raise the children. Living conditions for a young playwright in London at the time were not very accommodating. Business was also difficult for a writer. His first produced plays didn’t bear his name, and without copyright laws, his work could be produced without paying him royalties.

In his starving-artist years, Shakespeare must have missed his wife and family terribly. How else could he write tender lines like “love comforteth like sunshine after rain” if he had not endured the separation and the London rains, only to be united with his wife in the summer?

Perhaps what makes Shakespeare’s plays so enduring is that he was not immune to the hardships of life. Three of his siblings died, and his son Hamnet died at age 11. Sixteenth-century England was a time of geopolitical unrest. The lower classes were oppressed and disease-ridden. Human emotions were raw from the loss of life due to wars and pestilence.

But Shakespeare had a keen eye for character, and he captured the courageous, the loyal, the greedy and the depraved with equally deft strokes. Out of conflicted times come some of his most profound observations, still inspiring wisdom today: “To thine own self be true” from “Hamlet.” “No legacy is so

rich as honesty” from “All’s Well That Ends Well.” And “We know what we are, but know not what we may be,” also from “Hamlet,” as a young man grapples with disillusionment.

We often struggle to express our feelings in words. Luckily, Shakespeare has done much of the work for us. The perfect passage is there to comfort us — and inspire us to write our own verses. Our words may not live in the libraries for centuries, but they will last in the hearts of those who receive them.

After all, as Shakespeare wrote in “Romeo and Juliet,” the most famous love story of all, “My bounty is as boundless as the sea, my love as deep. The more I give to thee, the more I have.” So go ahead. Share your deepest thoughts, your greatest affections, your whole self. Because, in the words of John Lennon, our far more modern bard, “Love is all you need.”

Love...[PassItOn.com](https://www.passiton.com)

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