

Synopsis

Love Letters To My Teacher:

How a Buddhist Monk Ignited the Love In My Heart

By Vickie MacArthur

The guru is “the living presence in our own hearts.” That presence and love might show up in our life in different ways. It’s very powerful, because for a moment we see a flash of our own beauty. We see ourselves through the eyes of love.

Krishna Das, *Chants of a Lifetime*

One look from Buddhist Master Thich Nhat Hanh was all it took to spark a spiritual love affair—not with the celibate monk but with the all-encompassing cosmic love he embodies. *Love Letters To My Teacher* reveals the intimate details of what I call a “divine love affair” to show how a mystical heart connection to a fully enlightened teacher leads us to the Love we all are—beyond the boundaries of race and religion.

Thay often invites his students to write to him. My story revolves around a collection of personal letters that helped me to understand the kind of life-changing, all-consuming love that mystics from all spiritual traditions struggle to describe. These love letters to Thay speak to the nature of a spiritual love affair that is both personal and universal, ordinary and divine, intimate and a vast, loving presence. The outer story describes my life-changing experiences with Thay and his teachings, moving between my day-to-day life in Canada and retreats in North America and Plum Village in France. The inner story reveals my spiritual journey from the bliss of awakening, and all the questions

and confusion that entails, to finally merging with the “Thay in me,” and my own inner teacher.

Weaving together crucial stories from my life with the teachings and practices of both Plum Village and my Christian tradition, I show how the teachings take root in everyday experiences—from generational suffering and grieving a loved one, to reclaiming the divine feminine through yoga and embodied spirituality. Departing from the usual Buddhist idea of non-attachment, I learn to embrace feelings of sensuality and desire on the spiritual path and the Bhakti path of love and devotion as a path to God, and non-dual awareness. Using the image of a flame this five part book shares the secrets of the soul, to reveal the subtle mystical connection between teacher and disciple that ignites the sparks of awakening. As I grow beyond attachment to Thay as a teacher, towards experiencing Thay as the presence of Buddha and Christ within the human heart, ultimately, I begin to see that presence in all, through the universal eyes of inter-being.