

## The Particular and The Big Picture of Big Love



Someone asked us the other day, “Just what is Big Love?” As we started to respond, we immediately realized we needed to know exactly what they were asking about .... Were they asking about **Big Love** in the general, over-arching, philosophical, and “Big Picture” sense? Or, were they asking about “**Big Love**” in the context of our community’s initiative, currently embodied as [www.TheBigLove.org](http://www.TheBigLove.org)?

While the two are definitely intertwined, distinguishing them is helpful — not only to the person asking, but also to others and to ourselves. As things evolve, more may be revealed about both of them (isn’t that how things always work?). But, for the moment, beginning with “**Big Love**” as our particular expression of underlying Big Love, here are some basic ideas:

### “Big Love” in Particular

In broad particularities (is that an oxymoron?), we see “**Big Love’s**” (as currently expressed via [www.TheBigLove.org](http://www.TheBigLove.org)) reason for being to bring forth more “**Big Picture Big Love**” into the world. The website begins to articulate some of the detailed ways this might happen. Here are some of our key summary descriptions of our purpose, intention, and hopes:

- “**Big Love**” is a community of people who wish to consciously connect with and bring more Big Love into their day-to-day lives. It’s an emergent “movement” of people who want to “walk the talk” of Big Love in a day-by-day, moment-to-moment basis. We do this by embracing, experiencing, and practicing the idea of “having the courage and freedom to live as Big Love!”
- “**Big Love**” invites exploration of topics that are critical to our lives in spiritfully meaningful, inspiring, relevant, and fun ways! The Psalmist proclaimed, “Without vision, the people perish.” “Big Love” looks at both vision and guidance in areas

such as “Spiritful Living”, “Feeling At Home”, and “Being Centered” that provide context and direction for living.

- **“Big Love” introduces ways and means of having both a laser-like focus and an expansive embrace of Big Love.** A key guiding principle is the idea “What you do is what you believe!” It follows that as we “do” Big Love, we and the world become more expressive of it. **“Big Love” is “The Go-To For How-To”** actually live Big Love — and let it become more all-pervasive in the world.
- **“Big Love” is open and inclusive, calling forth the best in each of us to create the best for all of us.** It is an idea that we all can “partner with” (a concept advanced by Elizabeth Gilbert in *Big Magic: Creative Living Beyond Fear*). In today’s globalized, Internet-enhanced world, we have access to wisdom and knowledge in ways previously unknown. It’s up to us — individually and collectively — to harness it in ways that lead to a quality of life beyond our wildest dreams.
- **“Big Love” is reigniting the fire of the human spirit, the active presence of “Big Picture Big Love” in the world.** **Big Love** is, of course, always present. Ultimately, it’s the energy, the force, the substance that is vital and undeniable in all of Creation. As a consciousness, a movement, and a community **“Big Love”** is simply creating a greater awareness of and commitment to it. In other words, **“Big Love”** is a spark and kindling to brighten its blaze. In the words of Teilhard de Chardin:

*Someday, after mastering the winds, the waves, the tides and gravity,  
we shall harness for God the energies of love, and then, for a second  
time in the history of the world, man will have discovered fire.*

*~ Pierre Teilhard de Chardin ~*

### **Big Love — In the Big Picture**

Turning now to the more philosophical idea of “The Big Picture of Big Love”, in this section we summarize some of the basic concepts that we’ve uncovered so far on the topic:

- **Big Love is the desire for the best for all and the practice of living that way, every day in every way.** In their book *Active Hope*, Joanna Macy and Chris Johnstone tell us that the Buddhist’s term for this is *“bodhichitta* — a conscious desire for the welfare of all beings.” We like to describe the idea this as holding an intention to call forth “the best in each of us to bring forth the best for all of us”.

- **Big Love is being aligned with the natural evolution and ecology of the cosmos — our universe and everything in it.** This means honoring both the uniqueness of each individual part and the integration of the whole. It also means sensing the directionality and purpose of its ever increasing complexity and catching the ubiquitous, harmonizing pulse of all creation — “**The Heartbeat of The Universe**”.
- **Big Love is transcending (but including) the supernatural and embracing both the known and the unknown.** Wisdom traditions have much to teach us, particularly when viewed metaphysically (beyond the literal, the metaphorical, and the mythical levels). But the ever-expanding insights from the sciences bring us to new, awe-filled understanding and appreciation of nature — and expose us to the mystery about what remains — what is yet-to-be revealed.
- **Big Love is committing to doing one’s best to practice loving-kindness and to deeply value the highest ethics and morals commonly shared across all humanity.** As the Dalai Lama and Desmond Tutu point out in *The Book of Joy*, there is strength in diversity. No single religious tradition or world view is likely to become singularly dominant. Instead, we are called to find the highest common denominators shared by all peoples — and live joyfully together while honoring our differences.
- **Big Love is finding ourselves — as individuals and communities — within the overall context of Creation and fully participating in it.** As much as we might prefer to see humans as separate from the rest of Creation (and with dominion over it), the reality is that we are part of it. As part of Big Love, we are called to care for and co-create with it. In the final analysis, caring for our home is caring for ourselves.
- **Big Love is humbly discovering our own gifts and being willing to bring them forth for the greater good.** Without becoming self-important or egotistical, we learn to appreciate our particular uniqueness and share it with the world. We go “to the intersection of our great joy and the world’s deep need” (a concept coined by Frederick Buechner in an appendix of Richard Bolle’s perennial best seller *What Color Is Your Parachute?*) in sacred service that is practical and earthy — and spiritfult and joyfully fulfilling. It is through our relationships with others and the world that we realize Safety, Meaning, and Self-Worth.
- **Big Love is about living fully in the here and now as opposed to living for the “here-after”.** For centuries (especially since the 13th century’s scourge of the Black Plague according to the late Thomas Berry), Western culture has had a fixation about “getting to heaven” as opposed to experiencing life as heaven on earth. In Big Love, we realize that we connect with the concept of being eternal — as spiritual beings having a human experience. In our human form, we are all made of “stardust”, part of the cosmic recycling machine of our Universe.

There's more .... much, much more. But hopefully this gives you an idea of how we see "**The Big Picture of Big Love**" .... We'd love to hear what you'd add!

Here's to the Biggest Possible Expression of Big Love!  
**Olivia & Steve**

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### **It's Your Turn!**

What more would you include (or exclude) from the description of "**The Big Picture of Big Love**" presented in this blog?

Which of the features of "**Big Love**" (the community and website) do you find most interesting and meaningful?

If you're willing, please share your responses in the comment section under this blogpost as it appears on the [Big Love Community Facebook](#) page.

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### **Big Love News:**

"The Website Beat Goes On": Watch for an all new version of our website in the next week or so. It's "under (re-)construction now and we're getting close to announcing it as Big Love 2.0.

We just finished reading *Active Hope* by Joanna Macy & Chris Johnstone (published in 2012). Many of its ideas dovetail nicely with Big Love (in both "Particular" and "Big Picture" ways!). It's a good read. If you're familiar with it, we'd love your comments!

If you there are topics you'd like us to address, please send us an email from our "[Contact Us](#)" web page.

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