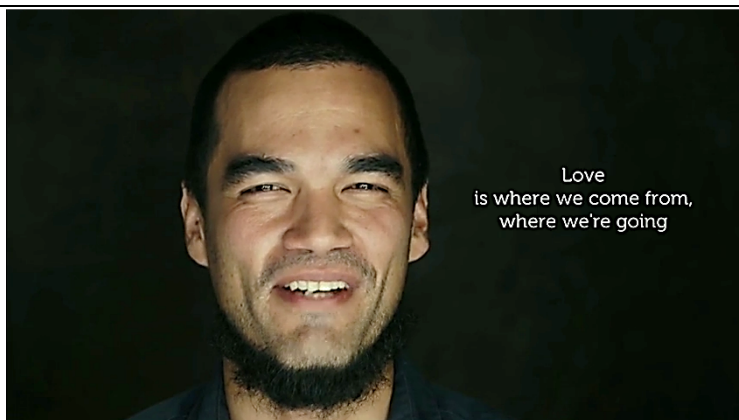


**Leonard (USA)** I remember my stepfather would beat me with extension cords and hangers, and, you know, pieces of wood and all kinds of stuff, and after every beating he would tell me, you know, "It hurt me more than it hurt you," and "I only did it because I love you." Which kind of communicated the wrong message to me about what love was. So, for many years, I thought that love was supposed to hurt. And I hurt everyone that I loved. And I measured love by how much pain someone would take from me.

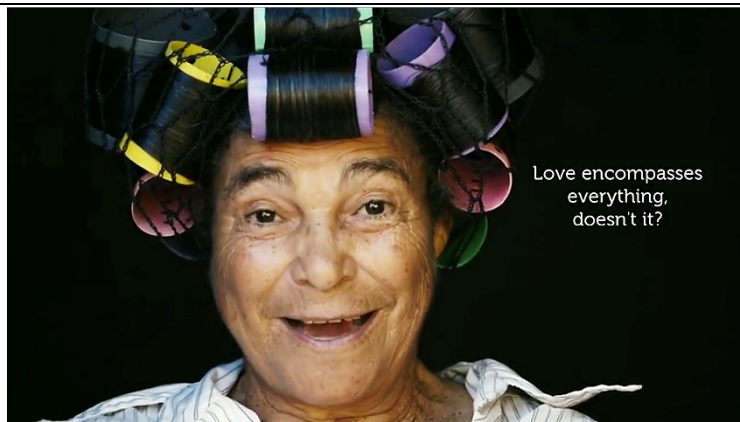
And it wasn't until I came to prison, in an environment that is devoid of love, that I began to have some sort of understanding about what it actually was and was not.

And I met someone, and she gave me my first real insight into what love was because she saw past my conditions and the fact that I was in prison on a life sentence for murder, and not only for murder but for doing the worst kind of murder that a man can do: murdering a woman and a child. And it was Agnes, the mother and grandmother of Patricia and Chris, the woman and child that I murdered, who gave me my best lesson about love because by all rights she should hate me. But she didn't. And over the course of time, and through the journey that we took, that's been pretty amazing.

She gave me love, and she taught me what it was.

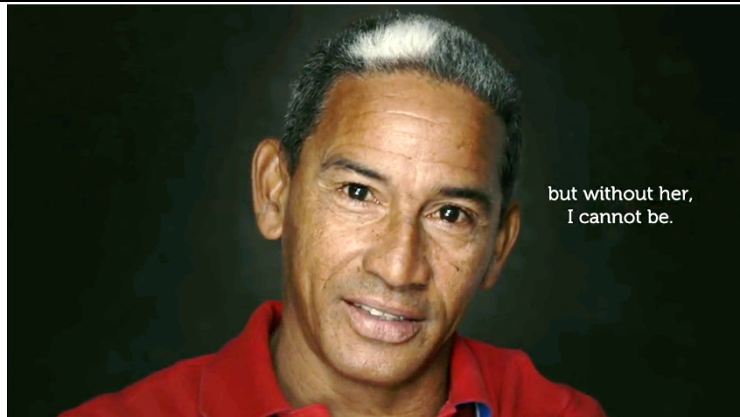


**Daniel (Mexico)** Love is the beginning and the end. Love is where we come from, where we're going, and what we live between the two. Love is everything.



Love encompasses everything, doesn't it?

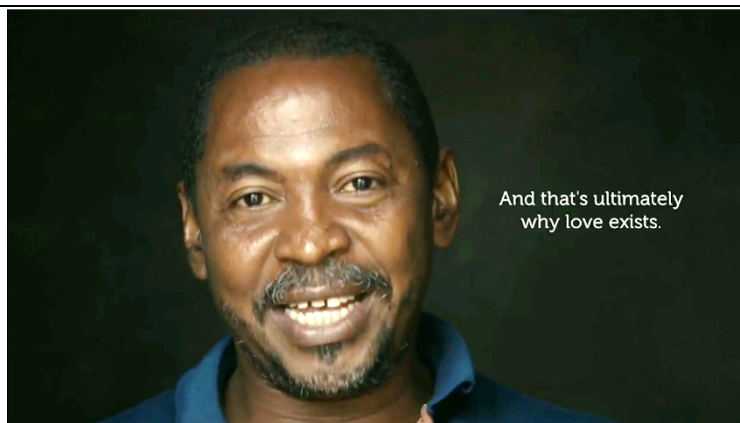
**Petronila (Dominican Republic)** Love. The word love is full of meaning for me. When you talk about love it encompasses everything. Love encompasses everything, doesn't it? When there's no love, you feel empty, or rather, I feel empty. Love. Love is what fills the soul.



but without her, I cannot be.

**Raul (Cuba)** I've spent 13 years with my wife, a wonderful person. We're very different. That's why we complete each other. She's someone special to me: She's my other half, feminine half. I love her a lot. We have an eleven-year-old child. I can live without her, but without her I cannot be. You have to take one day at a time. You live it every day. Love is this feeling that you can give and that the other person gives you.

My wife has a strong character. She's the one who guides the family. But I love her a lot. She's magnificent. Okay, I think that love, we're all looking for it. Not everyone finds it. I did.



And that's ultimately why love exists.

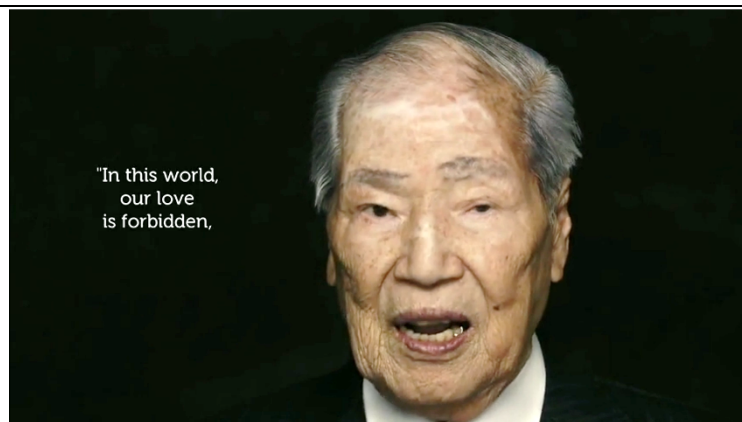
**Juan-Vicente (Dominican Republic)** If you don't make love, your love will be a failure. Do you hear? Why? Through love comes sex. Without sex, you'll go wrong. Your wife will ask herself: "He gives me love, but not sex. Love, food, clothing, everything, but not sex. What can I do with this man? What will happen to our home?"

The home will collapse, because after love must come sex. And that's ultimately why love exists. Otherwise, there's nothing. Si, si señor.



to tell you the truth, I never learned to dance.

**Camille (France)** Oh, wow! What a question to ask me! If I've had lovers? To be honest, I've never had any. I haven't. I went to parties, but I didn't go to dances, because to tell the truth, I never learned to dance. I tried, but it didn't work. So I gave up.



"In this world,  
our love  
is forbidden,

**Sunao (Japan)** As I was irradiated by the atomic bomb in Hiroshima, my fiancée's parents were opposed to the marriage. And, as we couldn't stay together, we made a decision: "In this world, our love is forbidden, so let's be in love in the hereafter." We took sleeping pills to die together. I don't know if it was good luck or bad, but I regained consciousness.

Afterwards, we cried on the hillside, the two of us. As we couldn't be together in this world, we wanted to die together, and we weren't able to. What a terrible destiny! We cried with all our hearts. That's what happened.

My health was more or less good, but I still survived. Her parents finally gave their permission, and after seven and a half years, we could get married at last.

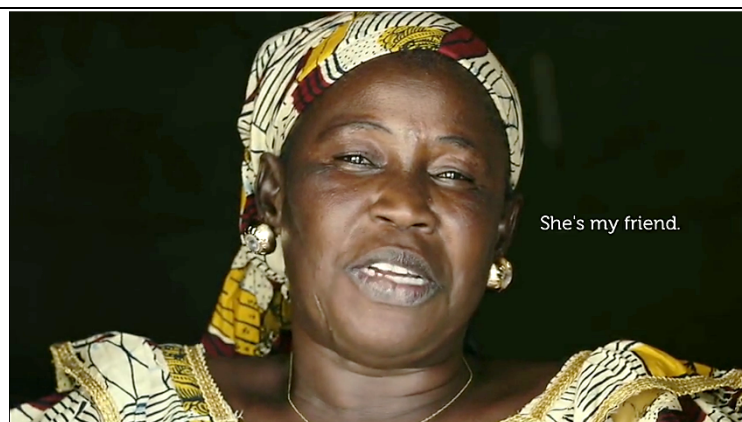
After going through such a thing, when I'm confronted with a difficulty in life, I think of all that, and I can get over anything. We've been a wonderful couple.



And I was  
thinking,  
"I'm a girl.

**Saul-Morgana (Mexico)** The first time I fell in love, I was twelve years old. I suffered for that boy. He wasn't interested in me. Of course not. He couldn't be in love with a boy! And I was thinking, "I'm a girl. Why isn't he in love with me?" So that was my first love. A childhood love.

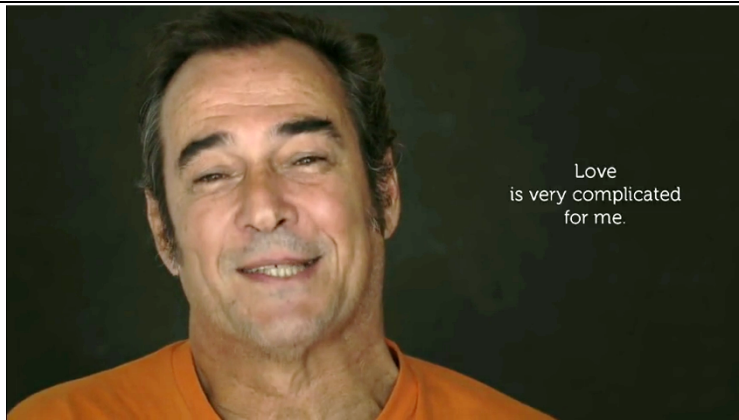
My first true love, and I mean love with a capital "L," happened when I was twenty-two. He was a marvelous man. We are still best friends. It was complicated because that was when I decided to go ahead with sex reassignment. I decided to become what I'd wanted to be all my life since I was a child: a woman. It was complicated. But it was beautiful. Really beautiful.



She's my friend.

**Aicha (Senegal)** My husband has two wives. He's polygamous; he has two wives. Here in Senegal, with polygamy, some people have four wives. Others have three, or two. But some people only have one wife. It's their choice. Some even have six, seven, eight, nine, as mans as ten!

But my husband has two wives. I'm the first; the other is the second. We live in peace. She's my friend. She really loves me, and I love her.



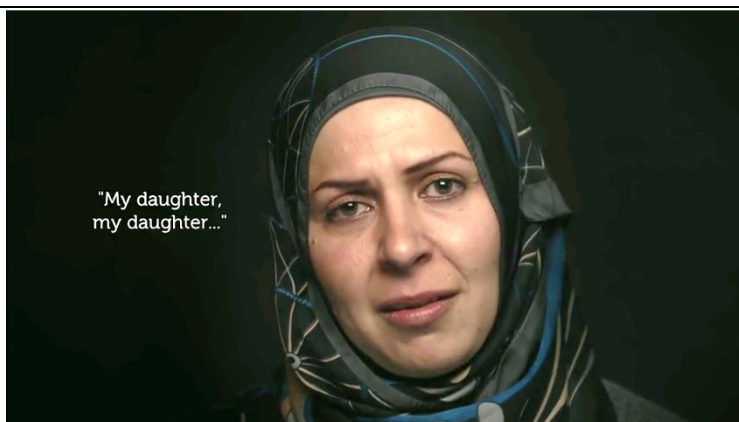
**Jorge (Brazil)** Love is very complicated for me. Because I love women. I don't know if it's a problem, but I just can't manage to love only one woman at a time. Right now, I love three women at the same time. I must be in the wrong land, because here it's not allowed. And yet, it is totally possible, totally viable, this love that I feel for all three. I don't know if it's indecent, this life of mine, but it's a fact. A fact. And each of these women is an ideal match for a part of me. And so, I live my loves intensely. It's a shame to talk about it that way, but I have three lovers, and I'm in love with them all, insanely, furiously, passionately.



**Philippe (France)** When you marry someone, you marry them as they are. At a given moment, you love them the way they are. I had an accident. I lost my arms and legs. She didn't marry a guy with no arms or legs. But she stood it for a number of years. We ended up separating; we got a divorce. I had to start a new life.

It took me three years to get over the breakup. After three years, I said to myself, "You can't stay on your own." So, I signed up on the Internet to a dating site. At first, I just put up a headshot. The rest was a surprise. I didn't show I had no arms or legs.

I had fun on the net, but when I told people about my handicap, nobody answered me. So, I announced my handicap, and one day I met Suzanna. There we are, love is possible. We've been together for eight years. Suzanna has three girls; I have two boys. We have a one-eyed dog, four cats, a guinea pig. It's one big reconstituted family. Anything's possible. I found love again. And we really love each other. So, that's cool.



**Abeer (Lebanon)** When I decided to divorce, I wouldn't back down.

My husband came to my parents' house. He went in; the door was open, and he stabbed me. It was the hardest thing I've ever experienced. I saw my life flash past. What a nightmare! I couldn't believe it. I thought he was just threatening me. I never thought he'd go through with it. A man who loved me and whom I loved, with whom I lived for ten years, with whom I had children. I couldn't believe it. I yelled,

“Chadi!” (Chadi is his first name.) He knifed me several times. I thought I was going to die as a martyr. I collapsed.

Alerted by the noise, my brother came upstairs. The second shock I had, because I could still hear sounds around me, was when my daughter came into the room where I was lying. She started screaming, “Mama’s dead!” I think that was the hardest thing. Knowing that my daughter. . .

In the hospital, I said to the doctor, “My daughter, my daughter. . .” The doctor shouted, “Think about yourself! Forget your daughter; forget everyone!”

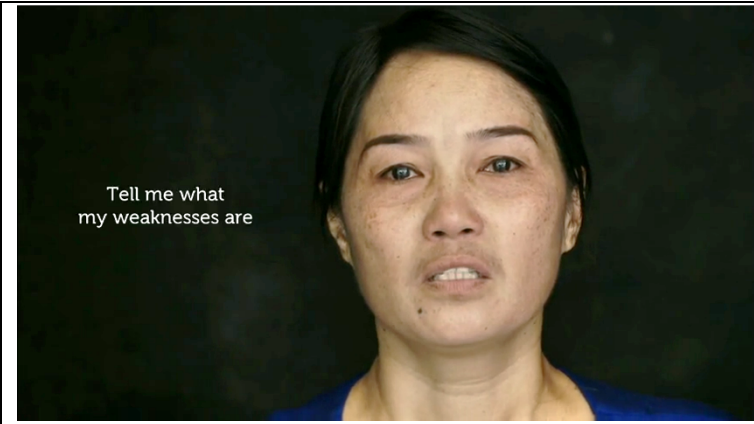
My daughter and my mother, I was scared for them after this shock. And it was the start of my life, not the end. I got up and decided that my life should completely change. It had to change. Thanks to God, I’m still standing. Thanks to God.



**Peter (South Africa)** After being married for fifty years. . . forty-nine. . . fifty-one years, my wife took seriously ill just before we celebrated our fiftieth wedding anniversary. And she suffered terribly for about two years as an invalid.

For the last two years of her life, I was her nurse, I was her doctor, I was her friend, I was her lover, I was her husband. And I had to bath her, I had to feed her, I had to dress her, I had to push her around in a wheelchair, and attend to all her needs. Everybody wanted me to get a full-time nurse, day and night nurse, to look after her, because she couldn’t sleep. She was up twenty-four hours a day at all odd times. And she begged me not to. She only wanted me to look after her. And I loved doing it for her. And I did it by myself. I carried her to the car, I carried her oxygen tank, I carried her wheelchair, I packed it in the car, I pushed her round, I put it back, I took her home, I bathed her, I put her to bed.

And I loved it that I was able to do it for her without anyone else. And she appreciated it. That’s love.



**Nar (Myanmar)** My darling, I really need your attention.

Please don't shout at me. Speak kindly to me. My darling, what do you want? Tell me what my weaknesses are and what I must change. My darling, I'll try to satisfy your wishes. Please make me happy all the time. My darling, I need your love so badly. I cried when I saw couples sixty or seventy years old walking hand in hand. It's so hard to bear. I feel so sad. Please make me happy.