

familiar, it is a good place to start as an example of something potentially far reaching and profound. As it is below, so it is above.

The process of making a friend is something quite familiar to all of us. We know very well how to do it. We have been doing it since we were children. It begins with appreciation - when we see some quality in someone that we appreciate. In the life of Rumi, his first meeting with Shams is said to have occurred while Rumi, at that time a scholar, was studying some texts. Shams asked him what he was doing, and Rumi's high handed response was, "I am doing something you would not understand." Shams then took Rumi's books and threw them in the water. When Rumi recovered his precious reading from the water, miraculously all of the books were dry. He asked, "How did you do that?" To which Shams replied, "Because I am doing something you cannot understand." At that point Rumi's appreciation for Shams was immediate and lasting.

Having recognized some quality of value, next we find a way to be around that person, to spend time to get to know them better. As the process goes on we find that we come to know that person better and better. Gradually a closeness develops a friendship. We become aware of deeper, hidden levels within our friend, things we never knew before. With time we discover that without a word we can sense our friend's mood and thoughts. If we are fortunate enough to have cultivated a friend who genuinely possesses deep qualities of mind and heart, our friendship becomes infused with love. Love magnifies the experience beyond all bounds. It is a familiar experience for anyone who has loved or been in love that the sense of personal boundaries dissolves. When our beloved is sad, we feel sadness. When they are joyous, we too feel joy. This is the process and the result, whether with a childhood friend, or with our truest, most inner and patient of friends. It is simple, natural, and unfailing.

In the book *The First and Last Freedom*, Krishnamurti says, "love is one of the most difficult things to comprehend. It cannot come through an intellectual urgency, it cannot be manufactured by various methods and means and disciplines. It is a state of being when the activities of the self have ceased...There can be true relationship only when there is love, but love is not the search for gratification. Love exists only when there is self-forgetfulness, where there is complete communion, not between one or two, but communion with the highest; and that can only take place when the self is forgotten."