

# **Keep Love In**

**Gordon Blitz**

**a monologue**



GORDON

*Bare stage with only a chair and card table. There is a Bible and dictionary on the table.  
GORDON, a middle-aged man, walks back and forth nervously.*

September 2, 2024. I have been worrying about the upcoming date of September 17th. That's the day that I will meet with my radiation and chemotherapy doctors. I wanted to be lifted up. Not worry about the results of the CAT Scan and the PEP Scan that I had been forced to endure. Had the grueling radiation and chemotherapy that lasted too many weeks eradicated the cancer in my throat? Had the promises of my doctors that it was *curable* come true?

*GORDON stops speaking, feels his neck and then sits at the table.*

And then on top of that, could someone make sense of the chaos in the world? But then it happened! I felt hope and faith. Pride in belonging. A congregation chanting. Singing songs with conviction. Believing in something. Social justice. Answers. Optimism. My insides were stirring. Electrified. Why hadn't I been feeling this before? What made this so special? When did I hear words spoken with such gut-wrenching passion? I would be able to move forward, optimistically. And even if I didn't believe every declaration, who cared? I wanted spirituality. A way to look at the fighting in Ukraine and Israel and Gaza that made sense. I listened to my breath, and it wasn't shallow any longer. It was peaceful and meditative. Sharing devotion and loyalty with the gathering. Worshipping ideals. Regaining trust. A sun-lit future.

*GORDON stops and hums "Still Haven't Found What I've Been Looking For."*

I no longer had to use the words of "I Still Haven't Found What I've Been Looking For" by U-2 to define my existence. Yes, I never would say, "Thank goodness I was brought up without social media. I never had to have shooter drills."

*GORDON dives under the table.*

But yes, diving under the desk in preparation for a nuclear holocaust that never occurred now seems almost quaint compared to having classmates shot by a rogue student who had been bullied. But *now* there was more.

*GORDON gets up from the floor and sits at the table.*

This was going to alter my life. Give me freedom. Different from the Israelite Exodus from Egypt. *This* would become a reality. I might not need my anti-depression and anxiety drugs. I could sleep peacefully. I could take action.

*GORDON stands up.*

No, this didn't have to do with going to a temple or church or mosque. This wasn't about going to a lecture. This wasn't watching theater or movie magic. This was *tribal*. This was the first night of the 2024 Democratic Convention.

Although the example I used was myself, it's not actually my philosophy. I still am nourished by the Jewish religion and the clergy. The congregation at my temple is not a tribe. It's a worldwide community to me. The Democratic Convention, on the other hand, could easily have been replaced by the Republican Convention. During the conventions, stories were told, no different from the stories in the Bible or Torah.

*GORDON picks up the Bible from the table and turns pages, then puts the Bible down.*

Folk tales were interpreted differently by the right and by the left. The commentary by religious scholars like medieval Talmudic scholar, Rashi, had been replaced by the commentary of Anderson Cooper or Laura Ingram on cable news. As an example, abortion on the *left* was a story about a woman who had to give birth even though it was known that the child would not survive. The reason was *anti-abortion laws*. On the *right*, that *same* woman having an abortion before giving birth would lead to, "In the ninth month, a child was aborted. *Killed* before being born."

*GORDON pauses, thinks about what he said, sits down, takes a sip of water before continuing.*

I believe that politics has replaced religion in America. A place for Democrats and Republicans to be with like-minded people. Religion no longer seems to have satisfied their hunger. The world was plagued by religious wars since the beginning of time. Now the *tribes* are potentially violent toward one another. Now it's a battle between ideologies. Liberals versus Conservatives versus Libertarians. I wish I could say that *tribal* only refers to Native Americans and their rich heritage of ancient tribal customs.

*GORDON picks up the dictionary.*

Webster's definition of a *tribe* is a social group comprised of numerous families and clans; or generations together with dependents and adopted strangers; or a political division. So far that sounds promising.

*GORDON puts down the dictionary.*

When Hilary Clinton used the phrase, "*it takes a village,*" was that in reference to *tribes* and *tribal*? Why didn't the dictionary include *village*?

What about a kibbutz? How does that enter into the equation? This clustering seems to have many of the characteristics of *tribes*. The kibbutz is a conglomeration of nationalism, socialism and religion. From its inception, it has been committed to religion. Yet because the American Constitution mandates a separation of state and religion, on the surface, American *tribalism* excludes religion. If you ask those people who don't go to church or temple any more why they don't go, the response might be, "It's pointless, it's

irrelevant, it doesn't speak to me." So in effect, political tribes have replaced organized religion.

*GORDON stands up and roams the stage.*

And if we delve further into American political tribalization, we might come up with blind allegiances, passions for partisan affiliation, loyalty, badges of identity *not* of thought. The best that one might say is that tribalization provides the securities of belonging. Sound familiar? Are these descriptions of religious *cults*?

We need religion more than ever today. Keep politics *out*. Keep tribalism *out*. Keep our traditions and rituals *in*. Keep God or a higher power *in*. Keep prayer *in*. Keep love *in*. Isn't that the most important? Yes, let's keep love in.