

Dear runners, dear Interfaith family,

How nice that we are together again. The moment has finally arrived and we will soon be heading to the starting line. Our legs are tingling, because we know: The Luxembourg Marathon is an unforgettable event. We are cheered on everywhere along the route, countless people are on their feet, a festival for runners.

When we from Interfaith are out and about in our colorful diversity, we set an example: A sign of peace, of love, of passion, of solidarity.

Yes, I would even venture to say that precisely because we are so different, our solidarity feels particularly strong. This bond can be experienced through the outstanding hospitality here in Luxembourg. An outstanding event.

We come from different countries, different cultures, we represent different religions, and that's what makes it so exciting. We are curious about each other, we question each other, we learn from each other. We sing together, pray together - unity in diversity. As much as we are at home in our own religious traditions, we can recognize in our diverse world that we can only make progress and remain credible by working together.

There is no one true religion, there is no one true worldview. A religion, a world view, an attitude to life is true if it promotes peace, friendship and love. We have been experiencing this truth of life since last night and it will carry us through the whole weekend - and beyond.

And as we run, we can encourage people to be part of this joie de vivre.

When I had reached this point in my speech, I wondered how I could continue. I had no real idea. As I work with children, I told them about our religious marathon and about my speech. I asked the children what else I could tell them now.

All the children thought about it. Then Antonia said: "I know." She ran out of the classroom and came back a short time later. She said: "This book is beautiful. Just read it to me."

### **The title is: I am love. A Book of Compassion**

When I see someone going through a storm ...

... of hurt and unfairness, of anger and sadness ...

... when the sun disappears and the skies grow dark ...

... and I see there is a fear ...

...I ask myself: What can I do to help let the light back in?

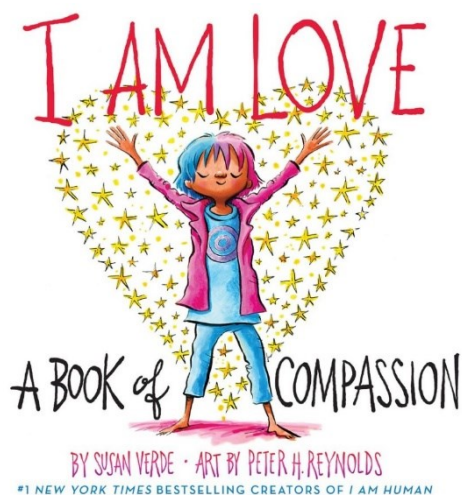
I put my hands on my heart and listen.

And that is where I find the answer: I have compassion. I act with tenderness.

I am love.

I can listen and not say a word. I can be there. Love is being present.  
I can hug and hold and say: "Everything will be alright." Love is comfort.  
I can speak softly and choose my words and actions carefully. Love is gentle.  
I can give thanks for all I have and am able to share. Love is gratitude.  
I can keep my mind and body safe and healthy. Love is taking care of me.  
I can express what's important to me. Love is creative.  
I know that no one is perfect. Love is understanding.  
I can do my best to make things better when something is wrong. Love is effort.  
I can celebrate those I've loved before. Love is remembering.  
I can find goodness in a kind word, a helping hand, or a shared smile. Love is tiny gestures.  
I can breathe in the air that the whole world shares and know all creatures are made from the very same stardust. Love is connection.  
When clouds roll in, for others and for me, I now know there is something I can do.  
I can let my heart lead the way. I am love. You are love. We are love.  
And with love we will weather the storm and light up the sky ... together.

Let's run in that love and connection and joy.



Bibliography: Susan Verde, Peter H. Reynolds (Illustration), Ich bin die Liebe. Über die Kraft der Herzlichkeit. München 2020. Eng: I am Love. A Book of Compassion. New York 2019.