

Why You Lost At Love

Almost everyone loses at romance at some point in their life. Many people lose their marriage because they don't know how to sustain one. This article explains what goes wrong.

In real love you want the other person's good. In romantic love, you want the other person.

- [Margaret Anderson](#)

In one line we have a summary of the difference between two very important kinds of love in our life.

With romantic love, we want something from the other person, something incoming from the other person (whom we desire) for ourselves. With real love, we want the best of ourselves outgoing to the one we love. By "the other person's good" Anderson means the welfare of the other person.

Can the two exist within one person, between two people? It's possible and many claim to have succeeded, but the feat is so difficult as to be highly unlikely.

Romantic love is a hormonal attraction, a primal instinct we have to spread our genetic material (DNA) to future generations, though this gets sidetracked by birth control methods and with same-sex relationships. The feelings are there even if the objective is something other than having babies.

Romantic love usually lasts from two months to eight months, though exceptions see it lasting two years or longer in rare cases. Romantic love is very energy demanding. As with mating rituals of other species, romantic love with humans requires great production of hormones and huge demands on the metabolism, which over a long term could negatively impact the immune system. In other words, romance is hard work on the body.

Real love, as Anderson calls it, requires commitment, which involves a very different set of requirements on the body, specifically on the brain. Interestingly, Margaret Anderson's real loves were of others of the same gender as her. Her romantic loves, if she had any even with other women, would have been brief and relatively insignificant to her compared with her real loves, two women with whom she shared her life (monogamously) for many years (one was the widow of the great tenor Enrico Caruso).

It would be very hard to have your own best interests at heart (romantic love) and the best interests of the love of your life at heart (real love) simultaneously. The push-pull would tear a person apart emotionally.

Why do so many relationships end in heartbreak and divorce? When the romantic period ended, the two people were not prepared to give more of themselves when they had got used to receiving from the other. Heartbreak occurs when the romantic period ends for one party while it still continues in the other.

In a relationship such as marriage, breakup and divorce brings a slightly different kind of heartbreak. Both kinds of heartbreak, however, involve grieving for the loss of the other. That is, the person with the heartache regrets the loss of what he or she was receiving from the other, not the fact that he or she will not be able to give of themselves to the other any longer.

Heartache, like any other kind of grieving, is both personal and selfish. Few people believe, deep down, in the saying "If you love someone, let them go. If they return, it's love, if they don't, it never was."

Both romantic phases of relationships (or the potential to have one) and real love fail mainly because one or both parties don't know the skills, the requirements and the commitment involved with keeping a relationship going. More romantic relationships never happen because one of the parties is socially ignorant of critically important social skills than because of inadequacies in the looks department. It's hard to fall in love with someone who doesn't know how to be romantic. Men may like to look at dumb blondes, for example, but few want to marry one.

On the other hand, two beautiful people may fall deeply in love, with hormones rushing like the Kentucky Derby, but the relationship may fall apart if one or both lack the skills necessary to keep the non-sexual part of the

relationship going.

That often happens with real love too. Couples who "drift apart" don't just develop different interests. One or both lose track of the giving part of the relationship, the part where they both have to constantly have the best interests of the other at heart at all times.

Love, the most powerful emotion we have and the greatest of bonds we can have with another person, is not a simple business. Few people are prepared to love another person who has little idea about what is needed to sustain real love. It would be like allowing someone who has just passed a first aid course to do brain surgery on you. It ain't gonna happen.

In good relationships, people want another person with the same levels of skills and knowledge as themselves. Someone with more knowledge and skills is a bit intimidating. Someone with fewer skills is dull and inept.

In a relationship where the person with the greater knowledge and skills wants it to work, that person must bring the other up to speed or the whole thing will fizzle.

Someone who knows he or she lacks social knowledge and skills about dating, marriage and the whole issue should go to the trouble to read up on the subject. Most of it can be learned from books borrowed from a library. Or by taking a course at a college or private school that may offer it, if one is available (they are scarce). Or by befriending someone who has the skills and pumping that person to give what they know.

There's nothing pretty about ignorance. In any relationship, almost no one wants to have a lover who doesn't know what they are doing. And the odd one who does, I wouldn't trust.

There's no shame in being ignorant about love. The shame is in knowing you are ignorant and doing nothing about it, then blaming others for being so "cold."

In something as important as love, whether it be of the romantic variety or the "real" kind, it pays to find out what you should know before setting out. Otherwise you may as well wear your ignorance on your forehead. *Loser!*

Bill Allin

Turning It Around: Causes and Cures for Today's Epidemic Social Problems, a guidebook for parents and teaches who want to grow children who know how to have good, sound relationships because they know what they need to know.

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