



Northwest Seminars & Consulting  
*"Exploring the Best in Human Potential"*

## LOVE'S FOUR JOURNEYS:

Stage one and two. Wisdom and Folly, Decoding Love's Potion.  
The inevitable Power Struggle.

Workshop presented by Linda Carroll, M.S.

### Stage One "Falling Into"

I cannot exist without you. I am forgetful of everything but seeing you again. My life seems to stop there, I see no further. You have absorb'd me. I have a sensation at the present moment as though I were dissolving. I have been astonished that men could die martyrs for religion. ... I have shudder'd at it. ... I shudder no more. I could be martyr'd for my religion: Love is my religion. I could die for that. I could die for you. My creed is love, and you are its only tenet. You have ravish'd me away by a power I cannot resist.

—From a letter written by John Keats

Dorothy Tennov coined the term "limerence" to describe this temporary madness and the conditions associated with this state.

1. A magical, ecstatic, enchanted feeling—an emotional "high."
2. Vast overestimation of the good qualities of the beloved and minimization of the faults.
3. Acute longing for reciprocation from the love object.
4. Deep mood swings—from depression to elation and back again.
5. Involuntary, compulsive, repetitive, obsessive thinking about the love object (even if there is no response).
6. Deep heartache when limerence ends

What a small word we use for an idea so immense it has altered the flow of history, calmed monsters, kindled works of art, cheered the forlorn, turned tough guys to mush, consoled the enslaved, driven strong women mad, glorified the humble, fueled national scandals, bankrupted robber barons, and made mincemeat of kings.

—Diane Ackerman, *A Natural History of Love*



## Stage Two "Falling Out of"

### The Power Struggle Begins

#### Signs

- you begin to notice that the very traits which you once admired begin to annoy you
- disagreements seem to get bigger, sooner, without an easy resolution
- You have a feeling your partner has changed from the person you thought they were
- you find yourself longing for an earlier time when everything seemed special and amazing
- You may begin to resist the "we-ness" and long for some of your old independence back
- You start to notice the things you don't have in common

### Three Ways to Help .

#### 1. Five Love Languages (Gary Chapman)

- Touch
- Words
- Quality Time
- Gifts
- Acts of Service

#### 2. Update your communication skills. Learn to complain without criticizing, to listen with empathy, to manage your partners complaints and your own .

#### 3. Become familiar with the current research and relationship experts, discover your hidden expectations, and understand the 80/20 rule.

Remember this is a normal process and it doesn't mean something is wrong. Watch those toxic thought patterns and practice appreciations for yourself and your partner. It is only when the illusion has died that we can begin to know what real love is about.

"For one human being to love another:  
that is perhaps the most difficult of all our tasks,  
the ultimate, the last test and proof,  
the work for which all other work is but preparation."

—Rilke



## Love is the drug

Romance may be tied to reward system that can cause addiction

by Rhonda Grayson

NEW YORK (CNN) – People all over the world describe falling in love in similar terms: euphoria, exhilaration, elation.

It's an intense craving for the person they adore. But just how does the brain process romantic love?

Anthropologist Helen Fisher, author of "Why We Love," studied the brain circuitry that makes falling in love the intense, passionate emotion it is. She found that the brain sees romantic love as a reward, stimulating activity in the same areas that light up when a person seeks any kind of a reward, whether it's chocolate, money or drugs.

"It became apparent to me that romantic love was a drive -- a drive as strong as thirst, as hunger. People live for love, they kill for love, they die for love, they sing about love," Fisher said.

"There are myths and legends about love. The oldest love poetry is over 4,000 years old. The world is littered with all kinds of artifacts that stem from this basic mating drive."

Fisher went on a quest to unravel the mystery of the brain in love. She teamed up with Art Aron, a psychologist and professor at Stony Brook University in New York and Lucy Brown, a professor in neurology and neuroscience at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York.

They studied 17 people who recently had fallen madly in love -- people who were spending 80 percent of their waking hours not being able to think of anybody else. The subjects had been in love an average of seven months.

The findings were published last year in the *Journal of Neurophysiology*.

For the study, Fisher developed a questionnaire about passionate love, including such questions as "Would you die for your partner?" She said she was shocked by the answers to that query: All of the subjects said they would.

What especially surprised her was the casual way in which they responded.

The participants were put into an MRI machine and asked to stare at photographs of their sweethearts and then neutral photos that called for no positive or negative feelings. When the researchers were able to look inside the brain in love, they said they were struck by the results.

The part of the brain that lit up the strongest was that associated with rewards and pleasure, a finding not nearly as poetic as romantics would have thought. It turns out that, to the brain, love is just another reward, much like chocolate or money, or like a drug to an addict. This brain system gets used every time you want something.

Romantic love, it turns out, is a reward, the researchers say.

"We certainly think of romantic love as something that's magical, and the magic is here and here," Brown said, pointing to the part of the brain that lit up during the experiment, the brain stem region known as the ventral tegmental area. There, pigmented cells known to contain dopamine send messages to a part of



the brain called the caudate nucleus.

When Brown started the study, she said she thought she was studying a strong positive emotion.

"Now I have changed the way I think about early-stage romantic love," she said. "It's a motivation; the person [we're in love with] is a goal. Emotions come and go. We feel euphoria, but we feel anxiety, too. This core system that is driving the person who is in love toward their sweetheart, that is much more important in a sense than an emotion."

Aron added, "When you're intensely in love, and especially if it's being reciprocated, there is an incredible sense of exhilaration. You feel this person is the most wonderful person in the world, and if they were part of you -- if you were together -- your life would be perfect."

Fisher agreed: "Romantic love is not only an emotion, it's a basic mating drive, and it's stronger than the sex drive."

Although the early characteristics of romantic love don't last forever -- the pounding heart, the obsessive thinking and craving -- in good relationships they will transfer to a different level, a stage of love called "attachment," Fisher said.

In her own studies of more than 800 people older than 45, Fisher found that they showed just as much romantic passion as those under 25.

In fact, romantic love can be triggered at any age. Fisher said she interviewed an 8-year-old boy who perfectly described his intense passion for an 8-year-old girl. She said she also knows couples in their 70s and 80s who are madly in love.

When asked if placing love under a microscope takes away some of the mystery and romance, Fisher smiled.

"You can know every ingredient in a piece of chocolate cake, and you still sit down and eat that chocolate cake and it's wonderful," she said. "In the same way, you can know all the ingredients of romantic love and still feel that passion."

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