

Expert Dating Advice: What is Love & How Do I Find It?



By Debbie Ceresa for [Divorce Support Center](#)

Have you ever wondered how [Tom Hanks and Rita Wilson](#) make their celebrity marriage work? How about [Sarah Michelle Gellar and Freddie Prinze Jr.](#)? You're not alone. Most singles wonder if they should wait for that magical attraction to happen. In our quest to solve this mystery, we often turn to expert [dating advice](#). We Google. We write, and we do research. However, the question remains: **What is love?** The question was even the hottest search phrase on Google in 2014.

Musicians have also ventured into love's mystery. John Lennon and Paul McCartney attempted to provide us with an answer with "All We Need Is Love." The lyrics say, "Love is everything."

However, we are still searching for the answer to this elusive question. Is it because, if you don't have love, you have nothing? The prospect of nothing is a little scary.

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The ancient Greek philosophers broke down the word *love* into six categories: *Philia*, the deep bond between family and close friends; *Ludus*, the playful affection when flirting or joking around; *Pragma*, mature love found with couples who have been together a long time; *Eros*, our sexual desire and passion; *Agape*, one's love for humanity; and lastly, *Philautia*, the love we have for ourselves. You're lucky if you have all six. Some of us may only have one or two.

But maybe, just maybe, we're looking for love in all the wrong places. Let's go back to the basics and take some dating advice from the experts.

According to [Dr. Brené Brown](#), a relationship expert and research professor at the University of Houston, "Love is that intangible connection between two people that feels exceptionally good." She further states that the strength and depth of this connection is determined by the self-acceptance, openness, and honesty of the two individuals and how exposed each is willing to be.

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Although not logical, love is both easy and mysterious. Couples who have been together for years often confess that they aren't really in love with each other. Don't feel

hopeless! You're not on this quest alone.

A love map that gets you from one stage to the next doesn't exist, but there are two important questions to ask yourself.

1. What are you looking for? Once you understand your desired qualities, make a checklist.

2. What do you think your future partner would want from you? Always keep in mind that no one is perfect. Recognize your imperfections and understand your future lover may have a few flaws too.

Once you've answered these two questions, follow my love advice below to find The One.

1. Love yourself first: You are the only *you* in the universe. Work on being the best you that you can be by taking care of your mind, body, and spirit. Do you have characteristics about yourself that you dislike? You're not alone – we all have them. Our disliked imperfections become our trigger buttons. How we deal with our buttons is the answer. Now is the time to start accepting your imperfections and reminding yourself that no one is perfect. Taking this first courageous step will help lead you to discovering your own special qualities. Loving your whole self will lead to loving another.

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2. Let your hair down: Openness is a key ingredient to have in your relationships. We have different types of love in our life: sexual, mature, family, friends, and self. Think about some of the people in your life who you are close with – maybe your partner or a friend – someone who has seen you at your very best and worst. They've seen you laugh and cry, be strong

and weak. They were given permission by you to see the real deal. The totally exposed you is comfortable sharing yourself with a shared connection. Once you feel comfortable, you have the connection. And then, you have love.

Debbie is a Certified Grief Recovery Specialist® and the author to the #1 bestselling memoir A Beautiful View, available on amazon.com. A Beautiful View documents her journey through her husband's battle with cancer, which ultimately ended with his death. She has experienced grief firsthand and is well equipped to aid others in the recovery process, whether with death or divorce. For more information about Debbie and how to recover from your loss, please visit debbieceresa.com.

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