

AH, LOVE SWEET LOVE THE SWEETNESS OF ROMANTIC LOVE

In giving consideration to this month's sugar theme, many things came to mind and I kept asking myself, what makes life so sweet? I considered discussing defining, creating, balancing and maintaining the many aspects of a sweet life, but when I got to the heart of what I wanted to share, love emerged... not just the universal, spiritual, higher consciousness, greater love for all humans and the many different relationships that make up our world, but truly, deeply, madly romantic love and the criteria needed to sustain a healthy relationship. After all, when it comes down to what people want most in life, isn't it just to love and be loved?

So, what is love? How do you know you are in love? And, why do so many people invest so much of themselves in looking for love? In her book *Finding True Love*, Daphne Rose Kingma defined love as "an experience of great emotional and spiritual awakening to the unbounded bliss that is the true condition of our souls. When we fall in love, we feel no separation between ourselves and the person we love or, for a time, from all others. It is the transcendent, luminous, lovely feeling of love that we desire most dearly, long for most passionately, and are filled by most deeply when it occurs in our lives. Love is a sanctuary for our spirits, a bath of empathy for our emotions, a tranquil meadow in which to nurture our fond hopes and dreams." Love makes us feel good, alive and purposeful, whether you are in a relationship, looking for one or choose to be alone.

It is important to understand some basics to having amorous love, and it includes self love, loving the other person and loving the relationship itself. Nourish and love yourself first and always be who you are; say what you feel and ask for what you need courageously; cherish your mate unconditionally; continually practice compassion and forgiveness; align your words and actions; treasure your relationship by celebrating, playing, remembering and honoring it; and show your love by making sure your words and actions match. Finally, practice three vital tools to sustain and grow your love... communicate consistently, co-create it by having a shared vision and deepen it with the passion that exists.

THREE USEFUL TOOLS IN SUSTAINING YOUR ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP...

- 1. Communication** is essential for a successful relationship. More relationships suffer from poor or little communication skills, so gain the tools needed to share your feelings and to ask for what you need. Realize your partner's needs may not match yours, so talk about it. Disclose your thoughts, dreams, fears, hopes, wants, desires, opinions and anything else that comes to mind. Revealing your inner self creates intimacy, a deep bonding, and a lasting connection. In *The Five Love Languages* developed by Gary Chapman, he identified the ways in which people feel loved- Physical Touch, Words of Affirmation, Quality Time, Acts of Service and Gifts. Do you know how you feel most loved, and what about your partner?
- 2. Shared Vision** is about co-creating a life together. Do you know what direction you want to go, and does your partner want to go with you? For example, do you both want children? Do you prefer to create a quiet life at home, or would you rather see the world together? Identifying your common interests and what goals you want to work toward will keep your relationship fresh, purposeful and on the same path.
- 3. Passion** in romance sets apart your relationship from all others. What is it to love deeply and come from the heart? When we have chemistry, a desire for our partner and the sexual expression of that, it creates a deeper connection and bond with the other person. What is pleasure? Learn about each other, be generous, take delight in each other's bodies, find the fervor, the zeal. It is easy to let the flame burn out way to soon in a relationship, so discover ways to keep the fire burning.

A COACHING EXERCISE TO ENRICH YOUR ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP:

Are you the type of person you would like to spend the rest of your life with? If so, you are ready for lasting love. An exercise I use with my life coaching clients when we work on their romantic relationship is a Wheel of Relationship that examines the level of happiness and satisfaction in twelve major areas of their partnership. This process provides perspective, balance and focus on what is working, and what might need attention. If you are at your best, what would you do in your relationship right now? To access an actual Wheel of Relationship, go to my website, excavive.com.

In each of these areas, rate your level of joy on a scale of 1-10 in each of these areas:

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| 1. Shared Goals/Vision & Creativity | 7. Family |
| 2. Communication & Conflict Resolution | 8. Celebrations, Rituals & Gifts |
| 3. Love, Emotional Health & Happiness | 9. Social Life & Friends |
| 4. Career | 10. Spirituality & Sacred Time - Let your faith and beliefs serve you on a daily basis. |
| 5. Money | 11. Fun & Play |
| 6. Sexual Expression & Physical Intimacy | 12. Physical Spaces |

To keep love alive and your relationship sweet, go for the sweet pure, raw love. True, blissful, real love. Not the kind that is artificial or manufactured, but rather the kind that is natural and has its flaws, but is always authentic and sweet to the taste. In doing so, love can not only satisfy your soul but also lead you back to your most authentic self. In this higher purpose, you can then reach your greatest potential and spread love to the rest of the world. Ah, love sweet love.

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