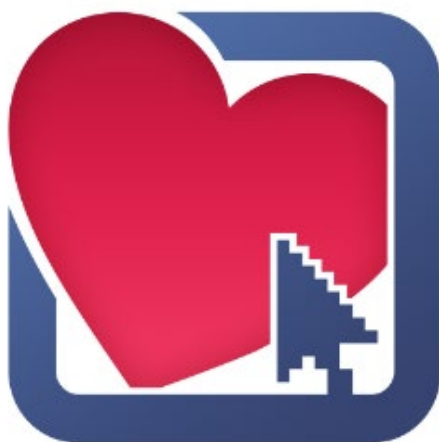


Make Him Worship You

by International Relationship Expert

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Lesson 2: What is Real Love?

Whether you are single or have been married 20 years, I want you to pay extra attention to this lesson. I am about to address something that is at the heart of all relationships everywhere.

We have all had that that moment when you feel like, “I want to crawl inside you, consume your heart, and merge forever into one being, one soul, connected for all time like weird Siamese twins who like to have sex with...” OK, I’ll stop. You get the point.

The start of a romance is full of obsession. It feels like it’s going to last forever, right? A man in love would rather rip his genitals off than even look at another woman! He thinks of you and only you all the time. He wants you, you, you, you, and *you* -- in that order.

That’s what the movies show love as. That’s what the romance novels show love as. That’s what your parents told you love was, even if they fought all the time because they were disappointed in each other for not being the people they thought they were when they first got together. Because love.

Here’s the thing. That mad, passionate, explosive feeling we all experience at the start is not love. That’s actually something called **limerence**.



Look at this perfect love. Nope.

Photo by [The Lazy Artist Gallery](#) from [Pexels](#)

I mean, look at this couple right there in that picture above, with their perfect skin and... I think they just don't eat? Is that how they get that thin? But look how in limerence they are!

I know you probably haven't heard that word before, but these two right here, who probably don't even really know each other because they're models, aren't even in fake love! They are in fake limerence!

And there is a HUGE difference between those two things. I'm going to explain that in a sec, but first I have to talk to you about the phases we all go through when we partner up romantically with our fellow humans.

The Systems of Love

Helen Fisher is a biological anthropologist at the Kinsey Institute of Indiana University, and a total badass to boot. I have been following her work for many years now. She has spent a career studying love: what it is, what it isn't, and why people like you and me fall deeply into and out of it.

What Helen Fisher says is that romantic love is one of three basic brain systems that evolved for mating and reproduction. When you get rid of all of the wonder - all the cultural myths and movies and romance novels - all the stories we've told ourselves and our children -- it just comes down to getting you to want to have sex with somebody so you have a kid. And then stick around long enough for that kid to actually survive.

I know it's a very cynical way of looking at things, but fundamentally, that's what's true. Let's take a moment to dig into these three systems.

Love System #1 is About Lust

This is the deep in your bones craving for sexual gratification. According to Fisher, this drive evolved to enable you to seek a range of potential mating partners.

This system explains why you can have sex with someone you aren't in love with. It explains why you can even feel the sex drive when you are driving in your car, reading a magazine, or watching a movie. Lust is not necessarily focused on a particular individual. It's ultimately just a hard-wired fishing mechanism.

And it's not hard to see how this can be true even if you are the most dedicated partner on the planet. You have certainly, unless you are asexual I suppose, felt lust and sexual attraction for more than one person in your life, and you have probably even felt lust or sexual attraction for two completely different people at the same time.

And that's not a big deal when you understand this is simply a function of biology. It doesn't mean you need to act on all those lustful thoughts. But understanding this can, among other things, help you to forgive a partner (and yourself) for harboring thoughts even when you're committed. It just shouldn't be that big a deal. This is the hand that nature dealt us all!

Love System #2 is About Attraction

According to Fisher, this drive evolved to enable you to focus your mating energy on just one individual at a time. This is also fuels the obsessive puppy love phase of a relationship.

As Kabir, the Indian poet, put it, "The lane of love is narrow; there is room for only one."

So this system, the obsessive-thinking system, is what narrows down the field built up by our lust system. You spend enough time with somebody, you smell their pheromones, this thing in your brain goes off in your brain, and all of a sudden you focus like a laser beam on just this one person.

Love System #3 is About Attachment

It's that feeling of deep union with a potential long-term partner.

According to Fisher, historically this drive evolved to enable you to remain with a mate at least long enough to rear a single child through infancy, although many of us remain together much longer and enjoy the benefits of life with a partner -- even when there is no goal to have children.

Biologically speaking, this desire stemmed from our basic animal need to survive, both as individuals and as a species.

The Incurable Symptoms of Limerence

I want to come back to that second system for a second, the attraction phase, and in doing so introduce you to the concept of **limerence**.

The dictionary defines limerence as: *The state of being infatuated or obsessed with another person, typically experienced involuntarily and characterized by a strong desire for reciprocation of one's feelings, but not primarily for a sexual relationship.*"

Put in simpler terms: limerence is about deeply *being* with someone. It is about *being a part of them*. It is puppy dog eyes, castles in the sky, and carefree ever-afters.

Baked into the limerence cake are a set of characteristics that are common to all.

- **Perceived significance in all things.** You like what he likes. He likes what you like. It was written in the stars. The universe is sending you a message. It is meant to be.

"Oh you like football? I like football. Oh, you like this band? I like that band, too!"

- **Boundless energy.** You can stay up all night just talking. You can stay up all night just THINKING about staying up all night and talking!
- **Perceptible changes to brain and body.** Loss of appetite. Mood swings. Anxiety. Nervous bladder (ok, maybe not that one as much, but...well it all depends on who you are).
- **Obsessive thoughts.** You cannot stop thinking about him. This leads to possessiveness and jealousy.

"He is MINE. Heaven help the woman who looks at him. Heaven double help him for looking back at her!"

- **An overwhelming certainty that they are the one.** And this time it will last forever. This time is different. This time is real.
- **Deep cravings for his time and affections.** You want him around ALL THE TIME. Gimme, gimme, gimme!

Now what do all those symptoms sound like? Kind of like drug addiction, right?

Surprise! That's because, in a very real sense, it IS drug addiction.

This is Your Brain on Dru...err, Limerence!

- Norepinephrine, otherwise known as adrenaline, gets a sharp boost in the body. Your eyes dilate, your heartbeat increases, your blood pressure goes up, and your energy spikes. Feel the electricity!
- Dopamine levels increase in the brain. This makes you feel GREAT. You know what else causes the release of dopamine? Oxycodone. Heroin. Cocaine.
- Testosterone is increased for both men and women. This makes you want sex more powerfully. As we have already established, it also makes us guys all kinds of extra nutty.
- Vasopressin and oxytocin release, increasing our bonding instincts and deep sense of connection. As an interesting side note, oxytocin is also released when women have babies.

This potent chemical cocktail makes us feel happy, connected, and obsessed. It drives that mad, puppy dog, honeymoon period.

And when the mad love settles down? Well it can also feel a hell of a lot like coming down from drugs.

As we exit infatuation and limerence, the hormones and chemicals settle down to something normal. Couples will then do one or more of the following:

1. Start having less sex and, in a lot of cases also start taking each other for granted.
2. Move from infatuation to the attachment phase.
3. Move from infatuation to a detachment phase, which is a nice way of saying they just break up.
4. Cycle back and forth between attachment and infatuation. In other words, it is always possible for the mad passion to return in the course of a relationship, but there are zero guarantees.

Why Treating Limerence Like “Real Love” is a Bad Idea

Many people who are “addicted to love” have no tools to experience true love beyond limerence. When the initial infatuation fades, they get fixated on the feeling that something is missing from their life. Like a junkie looking for their next fix, they float from one intense affair to another, leaving a pile of heartbroken, attachment-seeking partners in their wake

So here’s why treating limerence like it is “real love” is a bad idea.

When you are in limerence, there is that moment when you feel like you’ve found “the one”. You believe in your soul that it will last forever just like it is. We all get a little bit delusional this way. For

the first two or three years, it feels kind of easy, doesn't it? This is especially true at the very beginning.

Then two or three years go by and, oh my god, what is wrong? You used to look at this man and feel this particular thing, he used to look at you and feel this particular thing, but now it's not quite there in the same intensity anymore. Disappointment settles in.

"What's wrong with me that this keeps happening?"

All of a sudden, you're having fights all the time - about the dishes, about your job, about whatever it is. Then you can start getting critical. "Why isn't he who he's supposed to be? Am I not good enough? Maybe this wasn't love in the first place." That's what comes to a lot of people's minds. You go into the, "If he really loved me, he would," kind of phase. "If you really loved me, you would stop working late. If you really loved me, you would not watch porn. If you really loved me, loved me, loved me," et cetera.

But it doesn't have to be like this. If you understand and accept that limerence will pass and that real, long-term love takes work, well, then you focus on the fact that you found an amazing guy, that you had a ton of fun in the limerence phase, and that there still is a wonderful relationship to be had.

My wife and I went through this. Because we both have read a lot about this topic, and because of my role as a professional relationship expert, we knew at the start that we were in limerence. We experienced and loved that limerence for what it was. We had so much fun having sex all the time and wanting to be together all the time.

When that started to fade a bit, we recognized that was okay and natural, and that nothing was wrong. We didn't panic about getting off that roller coaster a little bit. Neither should you.

What Actually Comes Next?

When infatuation starts to fade, that's when the work begins. That's when you have to look at the man that you're with and think, "I like him for who he is, even though he's not perfect."

Real love means you choose to be in love every day. It means you choose to stick around. It means you choose to focus on the good and not the bad. And if you're lucky, this means you get to be happy that you got to share your life with somebody.

But you have to choose it. If you expect limerence to just naturally last forever, you're destined for misery. If instead you take it seriously, if you actually see it for what it is, that is when you can experience the true wonder and companionship and partnership.

What I find useful is to think of limerence like your relationship's childhood. We can't go back to being kids. Sometimes we feel like we want to so we can kind of let go of all our responsibilities that we have these days, but you can't do it. The best thing you can do is look back on your childhood, hopefully happily - hopefully you had a good childhood - and accept that it's over; that you're an adult now.

Moving from limerence into that kind of attachment phase is becoming an adult. It's your relationship becoming an adult.

Let's Recap the Basics:

1. Real love cannot happen until after the limerence is over. Limerence is like romantic training wheels, but eventually they come off, and if you don't accept that, you will crash.

2. Real love requires walking through the fire with someone and seeing them at their worst and weakest and most messed up.
3. Real love means choosing to share your life with them anyway because their flaws and your flaws go together like the peanut butter and jelly of flaws.

I've actually saved the best part of this lesson for last.

According to Helen Fisher, you can flow in and out of limerence to a degree. That means that the mad passion can come back at times if you do the work. Better still, the BEST kind of limerence is the kind where you've already attached properly, where you know what true love is, and where you love the hell out of your partner anyway because you put in the time to understand who they really are.

Relighting the Limerence

(mostly for couples, though you singles would do well to think about this stuff too)

Remember earlier when I said that being in limerence is like being on drugs? Well, unlike heroin, you can give your brain (and your relationship) little hits of limerence and remain a functioning human being.

Here are some concrete ways in which you can take control and relight the spark.

Unplug from Those Devices

Seriously, put the phone down. Close the laptop. Power down the tablet.

A growing number of studies are confirming the worst about our tech. All that screen time is rewiring our brains, making us chronically distracted, and eroding our emotional bonding mechanisms. Does that sound real good for your romantic relationship? Of course not.

I am not saying that you should give up the screens permanently. As a tech enthusiast who offers relationship advice via the internet, that would make me disingenuous at best, and a giant hypocrite at worst. You'll have to pry my iPad pro out of my dead hands!

What I am suggesting is that you can put down limits, just like you would with a child. It works for the kiddos and it will work for you as well.

Unplugging suggestions include:

- Blocking a time everyday where screens stay off. For my wife and I, dinnertime until the following morning works best (not looking at a phone during bedtime can do **wonders** for the libido).
- Do a digital detox. This means picking a period of a few days to weeks where you just don't fire up a device at all. Even in the modern world this is possible. Psychologists the world over agree that you will see an amazing change in your focus, your energy, and yes, your relationships with other people.
- When your partner is talking to you, no matter what you are doing, try to put down the phone and engage. Hell, turn the thing off if you have to. Ask that they do same.

Plan Some Time Away from “Noise”

If you want to keep a spark alive, you **need** to make your time together as a couple a priority. You need to unplug from the job. You need to get a sitter for the kids. You need to tell your mother-in-law to buzz off for a bit.

Take time to get away from distractions and responsibilities. Make “date night” non-negotiable. Go on vacation if you can manage it.

And don’t just do it once and expect that you’re good. You have to work time away into your system. You have to make it a habit. Consider your regular time away to be non-negotiable.

Try New Things Together

When your relationship lives in a world of utter sameness, boredom is going to come knocking. If you’re stuck in that rut, it is seriously time to consider breaking out and trying something different.

Learn to tango. Take a cooking class together. Join a dodgeball club.

In truth it doesn’t actually matter that much what you try. The point is to make it new, and to do it together.

Pattern Interrupts

Make a list of areas of your life that have fallen into deep, predictable patterns. Think about ways to change up the basics, such as cooking, TV watching, standard date night, holiday routines, chores, or any other deeply established routines. Don’t be afraid to shake things up!

Think of at least 10 patterns you have right now, then set out to break them all in the next 4 to 6 weeks.

Here are some examples to get you started.

Pattern	Interrupt
Playing on your phone right before bed	<i>Make the last hour before bedtime a device-free zone.</i>
Meatloaf Tuesdays	<p><i>Good grief, stop eating meatloaf on Tuesday—or maybe ever. Meatloaf is not sex food.</i></p> <p><i>Oysters? Tacos? Change it up!</i></p>
Date night	<i>Switch up the day, or the activities, or the length, or the frequency. Is date night always dinner and a movie? Change it up. Go to the theater or a museum. Play kickball at the park. Do it different! Be goofy.</i>
Parenting routines	<p><i>Does he usually take the kids to school in the mornings? Trade off sometimes.</i></p> <p><i>He'll appreciate the extra free time in the mornings.</i></p>

My ideas for kicking up the fire are going to work for a lot of couples (and I know this to be true, because I've gotten loads of feedback from women just like you who have successfully implemented my techniques over the years).

Of course, every couple and situation is going to be different. Maybe you live in a rural environment and nature is your jam? Or maybe you're both really into amusement parks and thrill rides? Or horror movies! OMG, what about board games? (Okay, I'm a nerd.)

The options are somewhat endless, but getting to them requires thoughtfulness and work on your part. So really put on your cap, write down your ideas, and try them out. Not everything is going to stick, but some of it will, and your relationship will be all the better for that.