



Sue and Jeff Allen

6 Myths About Love

We're better together

We help you connect to other people, learn about yourself and develop honest and mutually fulfilling relationships.



visionworks

6 Myths About Love

The path of love is no easy ride. Relationships are tough and many couples don't make it. So what is going on? Why is true love so hard to find and why do we have to suffer so many devastating heartbreaks along the way? The kind of heartbreaks that feel like our world is collapsing around us, like the ground is trembling beneath our feet. We grow up with so many misconstrued ideas about what love is and how relationships work, it is quite shocking to realise how deluded we are. Here are, in no particular order, our 'top six' popular myths about love relationships.

Myth No 1: Relationships 'just happen'

What were you taught in school about how to have a happy, loving relationship? We are simply not educated about it. For something that is supposed to form the bedrock and fabric of society, it is astonishing how glaringly absent it is from the national curriculum. Instead, there is an assumption that, just like new parenthood, we will somehow just know what to do when it arrives in our lives. It will all just come naturally. When it does happen, we are then hit with the realisation that we actually haven't got a clue. We hit the ground running, learn on the job, make lots of mistakes and muddle through as best we can.

The way we currently learn about relationships is through the role models in our lives; namely, our parents. With the best will in the world, many of them were not well equipped with the essential skills – let alone educated in the art – of healthy relating. There is a belief that our happiness depends on finding the right partner. This is true to an extent, but it is more accurate to say that our happiness depends on how we relate to our partner once we have committed to them.

How often do we read of impulsive marriages that last a very short time, in at least one celebrity case just twenty-four hours? We can identify with the couple's spontaneous exuberance, and also with their crushing disappointment once the honeymoon feeling ends and they experience it as a horrible mistake.

In dating or marriage, if you think the first argument means the relationship is over then your relationships are bound to be very short, and probably getting shorter all the time. Time to realise that when the honeymoon feeling ends the relationship isn't over – on the contrary, it is time to go to work!

Myth No 2: Your prince or princess will come, and you will both live happily ever after

This is the ending to numerous childhood fairy tales that many of us grew up hearing last thing at night, just before we dropped off to sleep. At this point, any good hypnotherapist can practically hear the phrase drop like a stone into the impressionable child's subconscious mind, to live on into adulthood as an accepted truth. The implication is that once you find the love of your life, then that is it; you will be happy, fulfilled and complete forevermore. Let's be honest here: how often have you really seen that happen, in your own life or in the lives of others close to you? Anyone in a relationship like that is very lucky indeed.

'Rom com' movies are some of the worst offenders in perpetuating this myth. These movies typically end with the couple finally kissing passionately and declaring their undying love for each other. Metaphorically speaking, the screen couple waves a merry goodbye to the camera and skips off, hand in hand, into the sunset. It might be the ending in the movie, but in the real, gritty world of relating, falling in love and getting married are just the beginning. It's when the honeymoon is over that some of us think, to our horror: 'Oh no, this is not how I imagined it would be,' worrying that we have made the most dreadful mistake. Again, getting together is the easy bit; it is once the honeymoon is over that the work really starts.

Myth No 3: Your partner exists to save you from your pain

There is a scene in the movie 'Shrek 3' when, trapped in a prison, the fairy tale princesses hatch a cunning plan to escape:

Snow White: 'Right! Ladies, assume the position!' (Sleeping Beauty falls asleep, Rapunzel sits on a high stool with her braid trailing, Snow White lies down in her coffin pose, and Cinderella seats herself on the floor gazing dreamily into space.)

Princess Fiona: 'What are you doing?'

Snow White: (exasperated) 'Waiting to be rescued!'

Isn't that what we have all, at some level, been taught about love? For women especially, the idea of being saved and whisked away by a hunky knight remains rather alluring. That and the idea that your wedding day is the most special day of your life (presumably it is all downhill from there)! One of the biggest mistakes we make in relationships is assuming that our partner exists on this earth to meet all our needs and save us from our pain, loneliness and despair. That is one heck of a responsibility and not one that anyone can realistically live up to. Mr or Ms Right is not actually your missing piece – but they can turn out to be the key that unlocks your inner world, enabling you, ultimately, to save yourself.

Myth No 4: True love will make you happy

This myth is so prevalent, it might as well be etched in stone. We cannot seem to let go of the notion that true love will save us. Wistfully we think: 'If only I had true love, then my life would be happy, perfect and complete.' The real purpose of relationship is to understand and then heal the wounded parts of ourselves. Only when we are able to do that, will we be happy.

As we said before, your partner is your mirror to your unhealed self. No-one will be able to push your buttons as easily as he or she can. Everything that is broken in our minds will, at some point or other, show up within our relationship for us to look at and heal.

Myth No 5: When things get difficult, the relationship is over

When things get difficult, the relationship is starting! It is after the honeymoon that the real work begins.

In our workshops we have met many people who say they want a relationship but when they look a little deeper, they realise that the thought of falling in love, and once more opening up and being vulnerable is, quite frankly, terrifying. They are just too scared to go there again. A part of them wants a relationship, but another part has put the brakes on. (This happens at a subconscious level and we will explain how this works later.) They end up being attracted to potential partners who are unavailable; they might be married, living abroad or unable to commit. The result is that they end up checking into heartbreak hotel yet again and sinking into a pit of despair. Why oh why, they wonder, do my relationships never work out?

Real, long term love is not for the faint-hearted. It requires you to open your heart right up and when you do so, any old sadness and pain that has been laying unexpressed, will inflict itself upon you to be felt and released. You cannot open up your heart without, at some point, going through all the reasons it closed down in the first place.

Awakening to your heart means awakening to your suffering too. Heartbreaks break your heart open. No matter how hard your relationship – or your heartbreak – feels, there is a lesson there that will, at some point down the line, make perfect sense, if you can look at it from the right perspective.

Myth No 6: If only my partner would change, then I would be happy

Oh dear. The classic heffalump trap we all fall into when the honeymoon stage is over and the niggles and fights begin. It was Dr Wayne Dyer who coined the phrase: 'When you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change.' This applies to relationships too. Do you like being nagged and lectured to about your faults? Does nagging and criticising someone inspire them to change or does it inspire them to do the very opposite: stick to their guns and defend themselves?

Forcing someone to change in order to make you happy is not love, it is need and in the long run it never works. If you want your partner to change, the best place to start is with yourself. The payoff is that when you change, magically, they do too. They have to change to keep relating to the 'new' you. (Don't worry if all this sounds confusing, we will explain it all later on in the book.)

As we have said before, true love will not save you from your pain. Quite the opposite; it will bring up all your unresolved pain. The responsibility for this pain is yours alone – not your partner's, no matter how much they look like they are to blame. Even if your partner did (begrudgingly) change for you, your pain would still be there and would, no doubt, hook itself onto someone else or get played out in some other situation.

If you still don't believe us, then keep on nagging your partner and demanding that they change. Then see how far it gets you. Good luck! (You'll need it.)

Unless you have lived without watching any movies, sitcoms, soap operas, listening to pop music, or reading any fairy tales or romantic novels, you probably have consciously or subconsciously bought into one or all of these Myths.

We humans are story-telling creatures. We can see the power of our collective myths when a royal wedding takes place in the UK. Millions watched Prince Charles' wedding to Diana and, more recently, the marriage of Prince William and Kate Middleton. This is not necessarily because the British Royal family is so fascinating; but because such occasions also speak to the mythical part of each one of us. Who of us has not dreamed of finding our prince or princess? Even if we have lost touch with these beliefs, the pageantry still affects us in a way we don't always understand but can certainly learn about.

If you want to explore your situation in more depth then book a coaching session with Sue or Jeff Allen or sign up for one of our events.