

WHAT IS *True Love*

True Love isn't...

- ...jealousy
- ...being afraid of what the person you're with is going to say or do
- ...being afraid of how the person you're with is going to judge you
- ...being someone's possession
- ...walking on eggshells
- ...deeply believing that someone else 'completes' you



True Love really looks like:

RESPECT

True love respects each person's differences. You are allowed to not be the same and don't need to share the exact same views or preferences. Also, you can't always HAVE to be right. Respect is sometimes agreeing to disagree.

ACCEPTANCE

Having hard core expectations of what True Love is, or how a partner should behave is the opposite of acceptance. With True Love comes a level of acceptance that there will be things about that other person that you might wish were different. Of course we are not talking about really bad behavior or abuse, I mean accepting that the other person is not you, and may have a different idea of how things 'should' be - and accepting their weaknesses as well as their strengths.

WHAT IS *True Love*

TRUST

Jealousy and possessiveness are often glamorized in movies and even in some cultures, but the truth is that chronic or extreme jealousy is toxic and indicates insecurity. If you don't have trust, you really cannot build a harmonious relationship that will last. When people are jealous it really is an indication of how they feel about themselves. True Love is built on trusting that the other person can be counted on to be truthful. Jealousy is often a symptom of our own worthiness issues.

REMORSE

It's critical to have the flexibility within a relationship to be sorry - to be able to apologize, and for your partner to accept that and not endlessly punish you or throw your mistakes back in your face. With True Love comes a level of forgiveness that goes along with the remorse. There has to be room in a relationship to be sorry, and be forgiven. And I am not talking about taking the same destructive action or saying the same hurtful thing and then being sorry. That is a cycle of abuse or dysfunction. Changed behavior is the best apology.

EQUITY

There has to be equity of power for a sustainable healthy relationship. One person dominating the entire relationship is unhealthy. You should both feel that you have power, but also trust that neither of you will use that power to manipulate the other. In True Love, the person you are closest to is the person you could hurt the most deeply...but True Love says that you won't and wouldn't do that. When you are really close to someone it is easy to know what to say to hurt them, but True Love is all about never doing that because you don't want or feel the need to hurt them. Being empowered goes hand-in-hand with kindness and not abusing your power.

WHAT IS True Love

CHOICE

Real Love looks like choice. Choosing to be in the relationship because you WANT to be with that person, not necessarily because you NEED that person. When you are with someone because you feel you NEED them (Because you're afraid to be alone, or they have always financially supported you) it really complicates the relationship. True Love is CHOOSING your person, everyday. Couples have different agreements so if you have agreed that one of you will stay home with kids and one will support the family, that is a joint decision and a different scenario than feeling like you HAVE to be with someone for the financial support, or because you are afraid to be alone.

EFFORT AND INTENTION

Love isn't just having a 'feeling' about someone, it's about how you behave. True Love is indicated by your actions. It is consciously thinking about making that person's life better, about supporting them and celebrating their successes. Supporting the dreams they have for themselves ...not just the dreams that involve you.

UNITY

There has to be a sense of 'us'. When you are in a long-term relationship and it's True Love, the focus shifts from 'me' to 'us'. Everything you do is done with a consideration for what impact it may have on your relationship, because there is a unity and shared life. It's not about controlling what someone else does, or being afraid to act on your own - it's about prioritizing the relationship.

WHAT IS True Love

COMMUNICATION

It is so important to talk about what you want in relationship. It's not about asking for permission, its about being partners. When you are real partners you communicate and talk about things - you don't make massive unilateral decisions that will affect both people in the relationship, without discussing it. Communication is absolutely mandatory for success.

FEELING GOOD

True Love feels good. Not in the unicorns and roses every day way of course...but generally speaking in True Love when you are with your partner, you feel good about yourself. They hold you in high esteem (as you do them) and being with them makes you feel good. Being with your person should not inspire dread or fear.

EMPATHY

There is empathy in True Love. You feel for where your partner is at. It doesn't mean that you must completely understand exactly what your partner is going through, but you can always care about how they feel. Whether they are in pain, are seeking your advice on something or just need to vent. And if you are the one upset about something, you shouldn't have to convince your partner that you have the right to the way you feel. The support needs to be mutual.

As always, take care of YOU.

with love Terri