

HOW CAN YOU TELL IF IT'S LOVE? (Summary)

I. THREE MYTHS

1. There's only one right person for us.

Research shows that there are more than a few people who could make suitable marriage partners for us.

2. You should do anything a relationship requires.

Love is indeed a gift and it does emphasize giving, but not at the expense of the values, needs and goals which make you who you are.

3. Back away at the first signs of negative feelings. True love is close to perfection. Therefore, there isn't any room for anger, jealousy or boredom.

Love isn't static. Love requires two very difficult qualities of its participants -- honesty and intimacy.

II. LOVE IS NOT A FEELING

Love is the most exciting feeling in the world.

Love isn't a feeling at all. It generates a whole raft of feelings: joy, excitement, contentment, anger, fear, guilt, sadness -- and it is easy to confuse this mixed bag of emotions with the acts of loving or not loving.

- * Love is a decision and commitment based on knowledge of the other person, intimate communication, respect, responsibility and a deep sense of trust.

III. COUNTERFEIT LOVE

- a. The most obvious type of counterfeit love is sexual attraction. Dr. Leo Buscaglia says: "Love starts with physical attraction, which is sad, because the person who's perfect for us may not be the one we're attracted to."

- b. Another kind of counterfeit love springs from neediness.

IV. LOVE'S LITMUS TEST

True love is composed of four elements:

NEED: an intense need to be with...

CARING: care is not love

TRUST: with each other's emotions, to listen to each other, share vulnerabilities, not consciously hurt each other, seek only the best for each other even if that means personal sacrifice

TOLERANCE: see the truth (weaknesses) and commit to it.