

More to love than meets the eye

You feel light-headed and euphoric. You can't stop smiling and you can't concentrate on the things that matter. You're sick...love sick. And there is no cure.

Time usually takes care of the "sickness" as the relationship develops into something deeper. Or it may die from natural causes.

The fact that people enjoy falling in love is one of the few truths that strike a common chord. A national Relationships Australia survey found that 83 percent of people surveyed felt that it was really important to have a satisfying relationship with a partner. And the first stage of developing that relationship was falling in love.

Falling in love is that almost unreal feeling of being at one with another person – and knowing that the feeling reciprocated. When two people share these strong feelings it usually makes for a very passionate few weeks, maybe a few months, or in rare cases, a whole year.

For some people though, falling in love has a large element of lust about it – it's very physical. For others, it's about being on the same emotional wavelength – about finding a soul-mate. For most people it's a bit of both. The one thing everyone would agree on is that it is a hugely exciting time.

But it isn't always possible to keep the all-encompassing passion going indefinitely. Even the most passionate of couples need space from each other, and reality also has a tendency to intrude.

Once the initial rush has subsided, the romance either ends because the relationship is based purely on passion, or it continues on to the next step because you seem to be suited to one another.

If the relationship is destined to become more long-term there are a few danger signs you should keep your eyes open for.

You need to be able to discuss differences and manage conflict. After all, sooner or later you are bound to have an argument. If you feel you can't talk about your differences this is a real warning sign that something isn't going to work in the long-term. Another danger sign might be if one partner is too caught up with his or her family, and the family always gets involved when you are not seeing eye-to-eye. It's easy to end up having your family-versus-family fight.

For a relationship to succeed, a couple need to be able to talk about the less-than-perfect things in their partnership. If you can only talk about the happy things, there isn't a lot of depth here and you may run into trouble later on.

In the early stages of romance we try to look our best and are on our best behaviour. But if you want a longer-term relationship partners need to accept each other "warts and all". It does not bode well for the relationship if the thought of your partner seeing you in a less-than perfect situation appals you.

We all like to feel cared about and are a little possessive of our partners. But intense jealousy could be an indication of a dangerous relationship developing. As with most relationship issues, communication is the key. If you have a fight you must be able to talk about it later.

While in the early stages romance is a wonderful cure-all, a long-term and deep relationship needs hard work, friendship – and fun.

Remember, romance is one "sickness" where it's rather fun to have the occasional relapse.

Survival tips

- **Enjoy the excitement of falling in love while it lasts**
- **Be confident enough to let your partner see you warts 'n all**
- **Be realistic – arguments are going to happen, so keep the communication lines open to talk when things blow up**
- **As the years go by remember to rekindle the romance every so often and have some fun**