

Will your love last?

One of the hardest things to know in life is whether a relationship can last the distance or whether it's time to pull the plug.

Hopefully, you can make this decision before you commit to a long-term relationship. There are indicators that can help you decide if the relationship has what's necessary.

The words "I love you" are only part of the story. How someone behaves towards you is likely to be a better guide. The best relationships have both partners giving to the other – not one person doing all the work.

The past behaviour of your partner is one of the best indicators of your future together. For example, if your partner has kept things from you, don't suddenly expect that they will be open with you because you are moving in together or getting married. Trust issues are likely to persist even after the big day.

Think about what you and your partner share. Do you have genuinely shared interests and intellectually stimulating conversations? If one of you loves to travel and freedom is high on the agenda, but the other person is security-conscious and wants to put down roots, this is likely to lead to future problems. Placing value on the same things is a crucial ingredient in relationship longevity.

One of the big mistakes people make is thinking that because they are in love, they can easily change things they don't like in their partner, once they make the big commitment. Wrong. What you see is usually what you get, and major changes are unlikely.

Being on equal footing in terms of maturity, rather than feeling that you have to parent your partner, is important.

Likewise, having a partner who is attentive to you in public and doesn't intentionally flirt with others is vital for a sense of safety. Having a partner who is proud to be with you and who readily introduces you to family and friends is also a good sign.

Being treated with kindness and respect is essential. If your partner gets angry over little things and puts you down in any way, this is a red flag of danger. This kind of behaviour usually gets worse over time, not better.

Being able to say "I'm sorry" is another essential quality. If one of you always needs to be right, this is not a healthy sign. Being able to apologise shows maturity and an ability to take responsibility for the mistakes we all make.

Survival tips

- **Sharing the same values provides a strong foundation for a successful long-term relationship**
- **Being able to say "I'm sorry" is important for relationship success**
- **Look at your partner's behaviour. This provides the best clue**
- **If your partner doesn't treat you with kindness and respect early on, be very wary.**