

Getting it together

Affirm nature to define love

When I speak of love, I am almost always asked to define the word. That used to surprise me, but then I realized that we are surrounded by such definitions. So many different things are labeled as love that it's no wonder to find a growing skepticism as to whether love is definable at all.

Most people, when they think of love, think of romance. Lively scenes, like cigaret commercials, fill their minds. Kissing under the moon, adventuring, playing like kids together, passionate sex, reassurance of "forever" carved into oak trees—no, many, this is what it means to be in love.

It's a fantasy in living color. It's a beautiful experience to be in a romance. But it's not without costs. To maintain the intensity of a romance requires great devotion and focus, often at the expense of other pursuits. Lovers who are immersed in their romance are usually seclusive and narrow in their interests. There's a lot of acting out of fantasy roles and mutual deception.

SOME WOULD ARGUE that romance is a lower, less mature form of love. For these more grown-up lovers, love would be defined as altruism. When you are in love, according to this definition, you put your partner's needs first.

You have a responsibility to be the best husband or wife that you can be. And that's how you demonstrate your love. Bringing home the pay check, cleaning the toilets, keeping decent hours, and accommodating to golf schedules are the expressions of love for the altruistic lover.

This responsible kind of loving is the basis for our most prevalent model of marriage. It's also the chief cause of affairs.

ANOTHER KIND of relationship that is called love is based on intense dependency. This kind of love might best be called clinging. Because that's what these kinds of lovers do. They lean so heavily on each other for all of their needs that each feels desperate at the thought of losing the partner. Because they are rarely parted, they

By
BOB TRENZ,



Ph.D.

have no interests or activities independent of the relationship.

In contrast to this clinging dependency, is the person who defines love as expediency. Love, for the expedient lover, is what you do in order to divide the labor of daily living. But it's not something a grown-up person needs. Love is useful, but not a necessity. And it should never take priority over the autonomy of the individuals in the relationship.

THAT'S WHAT expedient lovers say. But it isn't what they really mean. Because the truth is that most such super-independent lovers are really clingers in disguise. They are desperate to prove their independence and to deny their basic clinging nature.

In fact, that's what all of these definitions of love have in common. Each one denies some aspect of human nature.

Romantic lovers deny their need for a relationship based of reality instead of fantasy, a need to be accepted for the people they really are. Altruistic lovers deny their childish side, the side that needs freedom and spontaneity. Clingers deny their actual abilities to take care of themselves.

So none of these can be a true definition of love. Because love is an affirming state. It expresses our basic nature rather than fighting it. Each of these definitions carries a glimpse of the real thing, but each is limited by its narrowness.

Bob Trenz is a psychologist and marriage counselor in Rochester. Comments for Dr. Trenz may be sent to P.O. Box 84, Rochester, 48063.

Dear Ms. Green

I look forward to reading your column every week. When it doesn't appear there seems to be a large hole in the paper.

It would be most exciting if you would choose my letter for your column. I find graphology very fascinating.

F.S.—Franklin

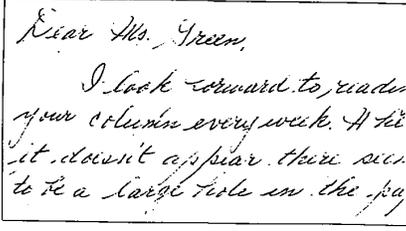
Dear F.S.,

I am always very pleased when someone shares my fascination with graphology, and it is a pleasure to talk to you about the plethora of positive traits in your personality.

The gestalt picture of your handwriting is one of a person who is disciplined and likes a structured life. You are goal directed, organized and orderly.

Firm and dignity are both extremely strong traits in your makeup (height and retracing of t's). When you assume a task you can be counted on to do it well. Precision is also here in the careful crossing of most t's and dotting of the i's. The dignity has you adhering to the customs and mores of your social set. Approval of others is very important to you.

Your light pressure reveals a gentle nature. You do not hold grudges and



have the wonderful ability to forgive and forget. Generally you are optimistic and think positively (upward slant of the writing lines).

Your active mind is both exploratory and analytical. Separation of the capital letters from the ensuing small letters tell me that you are a very observant person. I don't think much escapes you. The pronounced points on the tops of your p's tell me that you enjoy a good discussion, and the presence of cultural r's would make you a very interesting and uplifting conversationalist.

Your emotions are always on display. Whether you are happy, sad,

pleased, displeased, whatever, it is difficult for you to conceal these feelings (far forward slant). You are very much of a people person and you reach out to them by way of compassion and charity (word endings that reach out).

Some imbalance in the pressure pattern suggests inner tension. Also, is there someone attempting to tell you something that you are not hearing? Shape of the capital E suggests this.

You have an interest in many things and enjoy keeping busy. A strong desire for responsibility motivates you to accept new challenges. These responsibilities in turn enhance your



By LORENE GREEN

self image. Shown by large loops on capital m.

Do you have a question about your personality? Send it to Mrs. Lorene Green, certified graphologist, in care of this newspaper. Please write on a sheet of unlined paper in the first person singular.

One dish saves

Energy consumption in the kitchen can be reduced by planning several one dish meals each week, the National Association of Realtors says.

One dish meals prepared in slow cookers, electric skillets, Dutch ovens on the stove or in the oven save energy. It also saves on hot water usage by cutting down on the number of dishes you will need to wash.

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