

You Can't Rush Love

Authentic love is built on a foundation of strong, intimate bonds that can only be formed through time and experience, writes CHERIE CARTER-SCOTT

The evolution of true love is a process that begins with the creation of a 'we' reality. When both partners merge their 'I' into the greater 'we', they shift the way they perceive their life and circumstances. They do more than simply touch the edges of their lives together. Rather, they weave their interpersonal threads together to form a new fabric.

Authentic love is built on a foundation of strong, intimate bonds that can only be formed through time and experience. Imagine if you tried to build a house without taking the time to be sure each board and stone was properly placed and supported and every nail hammered in securely. The house might actually be built in record time, but at what cost? How well would you sleep at night when a storm was raging around your hastily built structure?

It is the same with relationships. Think of your relationship as the house you are building and the process of creating love as the work that goes into building it. If you try to rush through the stages of creating authentic love, you may end up with something that looks like a relationship, but may not be secure enough to sustain you through life's stormy times.

Trust The Process

Forming a couple is not all that difficult; anyone can link up with another person and declare themselves coupled. It is forming an authentic union that poses the challenge. This challenge can only be met by respecting the process of its creation and its natural evolution.

When we first encounter a potential partner, we may be tempted to rush the process so that we can get through the evolutionary stages quickly and get to the "good stuff". However, love is an energy with inherent laws, and one of them is that love refuses to be rushed

Donna and David met at a party. The attraction was immediate, and after spending the majority of the evening sequestered in a private corner talking, David asked Donna out for a date the following night. She happily agreed.

By the end of their first date, David told Donna she was the woman he had been looking for his entire life. Donna was so enraptured that she blocked out the little voice in her head that said that perhaps, she should take her

time and get to know David a little better before leaping into a relationship with him. She knew she should probably let things build over time, but the whirlwind was too exciting to relinquish. She had been waiting for someone like David for so long that she didn't want to mess things up by applying the brakes.

Donna and David fell into an exclusive relationship almost immediately. To Donna, David was perfect. He fit all her surface requirements for the perfect mate: he was handsome, successful at a high-profile and glamorous job, of the same religious background as she, and a considerate lover. She tried not to worry too much about the other details, assuming they would get to know each other over time.

They never did get to know each other. As time passed, Donna discovered that David was unwilling to share any part of himself with her other than what she saw in those first weeks. She grew frustrated as David continued to deflect her questions about his life philosophy, his hopes, dreams, values, goals, or his past. Whenever Donna tried to take their relationship a bit deeper, he withdrew. David continued to pull back and finally the inevitable happened — he dropped Donna by sending her a good-bye email and then disappearing from her life. She was devastated.

It took Donna many months to get over David. As the pain began to subside, Donna was able to finally see that she never really knew David at all. She had rushed the process with him because she so desperately wanted to be in a relationship. Like so many people do, she was so swept away with the idea of love that she didn't take the time to make sure David was the right person for her. As a result, there were no bonds of intimacy built between them other than those spun out of fantasy and hope. She saw in hindsight how glossing over any misgivings she had about David and careening into a relationship with him had set her up for heartbreak.

Rash Decision

When I asked Donna a few years later about that experience, she gave a bittersweet laugh and surmised that almost everyone has made that mistake at least once. I agreed. As humans, we feel the need for love so deeply that we sometime allow our instincts and reason to be eclipsed by passion and hope. Although we know in our rational minds how essential it is to really get to know someone before opening our hearts and making

rash decisions about our future, so many of us plunge ahead in our rush to have our dreams fulfilled.

The only way out of this trap is by learning the lesson of patience. If your desire to be in love is taking precedence over your desire to be in love with the right person, you may find yourself grasping at any available candidate who comes along, usually with disappointing ends. Trying to rush love is as futile as trying to rush time; each must evolve as it was meant to. This is not an easy lesson to learn, but learn it you must if your desire is for a truly authentic relationship.

The key to creating authentic love is to trust the process. Millions of couples have proved that it works. It may not happen overnight, but if you have patience and perseverance, love will reward you with its astonishing and wondrous gifts. *If Love Is A Game, These Are The Rules*, Broadway Books