



Heart & soul

Cate Mackenzie, our resident love coach, helps readers open their hearts to relationships they never thought possible

How to fall in love again...

When you first meet 'the one' it can feel like you're living out the story line to a romantic movie.

You're full of excitement and sexual chemistry and all that's missing is an orchestra playing love songs in the background!

Remember how giddy you felt dressing up for a date? Maybe you spent hours sharing childhood memories and discussing your hopes and dreams together. And you certainly never grew tired of looking into each other's eyes or holding hands.

But now those things have changed. You rarely dress up, you chat about mundane things, and when was the last time you sat curled up on the sofa together?

With time, many find those first exciting and adventurous sparks of a relationship begin to fade. But being in a long-term relationship doesn't mean the flames of passion are lost forever. You just have to work a bit harder to keep them ablaze.

Couples therapists Dr Ellen Bader and Dr Peter Pearson say there are five developmental stages in a relationship and this period – where the spark seems to have gone – is one of them.

The five stages are:

Stage 1: Bonding

You want to be really close all the time.

Stage 2: Differentiation

You want to be independent from your partner.

Stage 3: Practising

Couples develop outside interests and friendships individually.

Stage 4: Rapprochement

Couples move away from each other, before then coming back together again.

Stage 5: Synergy

You develop true intimacy recognising you're stronger together than apart, and can enjoy each other in a deeper way.

If the passion and excitement are flagging in your relationship, it probably means you're in stage four – rapprochement.

But it's never too late to rekindle those feelings you had at the start.

As soon as you start to bring new, exciting elements and dates

into your life together, it can help you feel like you are rediscovering your partner, reconnecting, and revitalising your relationship.

And, rest assured, your partner won't think you've had a character transplant if you suddenly become nicer and more loving. They'll just feel happier and more loved, allowing a new harmony to enter your relationship.

Also, if you feel resentful because you believe your partner should be the one to start putting the spark back into your relationship, try to realise that if one person can take responsibility, then the change will start to happen sooner. And that one person can be you.

HOW TO CREATE SYNERGY WITH YOUR PARTNER

- * Take time to pamper yourself. Being kind to yourself will leave you feeling calm and more receptive to your partner.
- * Write a 'letter of resentment' to your partner. You will never give it to them, but it will help release any emotional blockages which might be causing your relationship to stagnate.
- * Look up interesting places to visit and enjoy some quality time together, for example a last minute deal for a hotel by the sea.
- * Make sure you cuddle and caress regularly as it immediately changes the connection between you, making it stronger.
- * Go out for a meal together and talk about the visions you both have for the best life you would like together.
- * Take it in turns to organise a mystery date once a week, where you tell your partner what to wear and the time and place to meet, but nothing else. This creates a sense of anticipation and excitement.
- * Leave love notes around the home or in your partner's clothing, bag or car. ■



'Reconnect and reach a new level of intimacy'

It's never too late to add more passion

WANT TO FIND OUT MORE?

Cate Mackenzie is a love coach and couples counsellor with more than 20 years' experience. For more information about her work, visit catemackenzie.com