



Heart & soul

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

Jump-start your fun factor

Reclaim your sense of fun and find love with help from Cate

When you're run off your feet or feeling down, it can be really difficult to enjoy life and seize the day.

If you're experiencing this at the moment, it's time to give your playful and creative energies a boost, so you stop simply *doing* and start *being*. It won't only make you happier, it will improve your love life as well.

I know first-hand how this feels. Last year I got married to Paul, and we both had a wonderful day. I seemed to be in a state of bliss for about two months afterwards, absolutely loving the warm sensation of just being together.

But then I got really busy with work and was trying to move house as well. I needed every spare bit of time I had to do both, which meant having fun was put on the back-burner, but the last thing I wanted was for Paul to suffer. It was then that I realised it was time to reconnect with joy.

I thought about what I wanted to do that was enjoyable, and decided that I'd like my husband to come dancing with me. He was a bit shy, though, so I went to one of Olga Bastable's Biodanza classes on my own. Once I was dancing it felt like the most natural thing in the world.

I went to some other dance classes after that, including Sue Rickards' 5Rhythms, and the more I tried, the more I let go and felt creative. Seeing how much I was getting out of the classes, my husband decided to come along as well, and he really loved it, too.

I was on a roll now. So the next thing I did was join an online journaling group where I discovered

that writing can be as soothing as a deep bath.

By expressing myself through movement and writing, I found I was fully in the moment, shaking off stress and worry. And when you start having fun, it opens your heart and that makes you more accepting to love.

There may be negative beliefs or behaviours you're not even aware of, which are blocking your fun-loving energies and thwarting your chances of welcoming love into your life. For example, you might not truly believe you deserve to be loved and have fun. Or you

might be afraid that anyone you meet won't live up to your high expectations, or that you're not good enough for anyone.

Well, it's time to clear a path to having a laugh. So here are my tips on how to open yourself up to fun and love again.

How to make way for joy

DRAW UP A FUN LIST

To reconnect with your playful side, first you need to feel a genuine connection to your

inner self. Take 15 minutes to write a list of all the things that make you happy. You might start with your weekly Zumba class, but if you sit thinking for long enough, you'll find other things crop up – like living by the sea or having children.

START JOURNALING

By writing down what you're doing from day to day, along with your thoughts and feelings, you'll begin to recognise periods in your life when you're having fun. This will open you up to experiencing more joyful moments, which will allow your creative energies to flow and attract love towards you.

CREATE AN ALTAR

This altar will represent your decision to bring joy and love into your life. Decorate it with images of the things that make you happy, such as dancing, music, painting and travelling, along with photos of smiling couples. This represents your yearning to inject love back into an unhappy relationship, or if you're single, your decision to go out and find romance.

GET IN TOUCH WITH YOURSELF

Set aside anything from five to 30 minutes a day, whatever amount of time feels comfortable for you. Focus on giving yourself some me-time by practising your favourite form of meditation, such as mirror work, bathing, walking or body touch.

Adopting a stronger connection to your body will help you feel more confident to do things that bring joy to your heart, which will in turn open you up to love. ■



There are always opportunities for fun - you just need to seek them out

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