



AYURVEDA ELEMENTS

17 Orchard Road, Chatswood NSW Australia 2067
Phone/fax 0011 61 2 9904 7754 Email ayurveda@acay.com.au

SOUL MATES

by Caroline Robertson and Rama Prasad

True love...such an illusive yet attractive attainment. Yet despite this longing for love why do so many fail to attract an enduring and fulfilling relationship into their lives? Challenging the assumption that love is blind, Rama and Caroline explore time-tested approaches to raise our love IQ so that we can avoid blindly "falling" in love with an incompatible mate and instead "ascend" in love with the soulmate of our dreams.

SOUL MATES

Opinions differ as to what 'soul mate' means. Is it the one partner in the world who completes us? This was Plato's hypothesis in his Symposium. He proposes that we originally had both male and female parts until we were tragically 'split-apart.' Only by reuniting with our soul mate will we supposedly feel whole again.

Perhaps we have many soul mates who drift into our lives, teaching us what we need to learn, drifting out again when their role has expired. In this way they are a trigger for self-healing and transformation coaxing our true selves to shine through.

Another perspective on soul mates is Jung's idea that we can access this completeness within ourselves, independently of another person. His anima and animus theory espouses that we can reconnect our inner feminine and masculine essence in the same way that Hindu texts talk of awakening our dormant Shiva (active) and Shakti (receptive) nature. The premise here is that when our being is integrated we become the soul mate of divinity within, eliminating the need to search outside ourselves for the experience of unconditional love through blissful union. Mystic Edgar Cayce supports this idea - "The soul is rather the soul mate of the universe rather than of an individual entity."

Whichever theory you prefer, the desire for loving relationships remains undeniably the most powerful driving force in the human psyche.

LOVE BUG

Bouncing down the street the breeze caresses you and sunlight kisses your skin. Radiating joy and vitality, the strangers you smile at in the bank queue wonder if you're on Prozac. The truth is that your body is bursting with the euphoric biochemicals that are released when you get smitten by the love bug. Intoxicated by ecstasy inducing chemicals called mono-amines and pain killing endorphins pulsating through your veins, these are the giddy moments of fresh love. Our ability to distinguish lust from love is blurred by the presence of these primal juices however and once we come down from the initial thrill the realities of sustaining a long-term relationship hit home. As we know the course of love rarely runs smooth and although seeking a satisfying relationship we may find we're involved with an incompatible person or proceed to unconsciously sabotage our progress with a prospective partner. To clear the path for enduring love we need to examine ourselves, our attitude to relationships and our choice of partner in attempt to remove.....

ROADBLOCKS ON THE FREEWAY OF LOVE

When you think of the words 'love', 'relationship', 'partner', 'commitment' what flashes through your mind? Your parents fighting? Bored couples sitting silently through dinner? An episode of married with children? A male client saw himself on a leash straining to reach forbidden delicacies. A female friend pictures herself chained to the kitchen sink with an abusive husband yelling for more beer. We all have some negative neuro-associations connected with relationships from years of exposure to poor relationship models in the media and life. The danger is that if we don't replace these with a positive faith in our capacity to have a fulfilling relationship then the negativities can manifest as self-fulfilling prophecies. Getting out of our own way to allow love in we need to recognise if we are acting out a sabotaging pattern.

Some common syndromes include-

HOPELESS UNROMANTICS

Living with armour around their heart, these people are either once bitten twice shy or are afraid to unleash powerful suppressed emotions in case they backfire. Assuming a cynical and disparaging view of the opposite sex and love in general protects them from becoming vulnerable. Their unconscious motto is "nothing ventured, nothing gained." Under that tough cynical exterior they are actually terrified of hurt, rejection and disappointment. Tactics they use to keep love interests at bay include reciting negative generalisations such as "All men are cheats and liars", "All women are naggers" and memorising divorce statistics. A favorite joke could be "after marriage you get two rings- a marriage ring and suffer-ring". Imagine how enticing this is to any prospective love interest (NOT!) Ironically as we believe we tend to achieve so these people attract relationship scenarios that support their stance. Instead of hiding behind a mask of negativity and cynicism they need to cultivate the kind of courage and openness Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche expounds -"real fearlessness is the product of our tenderness. It comes from letting the world tickle your raw and beautiful heart."

DREAMERS

If you've ever been in 'love' with an unattainable actor, rock star, teacher or happily married person you know what the 'dreamer' delusion is all about. Having a fantasy love can make us feel alive, full of hope, open our heart to feel a strong connection with another being, even if the feeling isn't mutual. The sweetness of unrequited love can seem more pleasurable than the ups and downs of a committed partnership. It's easier too as without true intimacy we don't have to compromise, grow or face our weaknesses as reflected in a two-way relationship. It also offers a distraction from what may be a lonely and boring existence, providing a basis for hours of anguished discussion with friends and occupying our mind with countless unrealistic plot scenarios. It is a minor detail that the object of one's amours may be either:

- in a happily committed relationship
- not attracted to us
- of a different sexual persuasion
- an unattainable celebrity or role model
- someone who temporarily exploited us and moved on.

Dreamers often believe that there is only one true love for them and the universe will eventually conspire to unite them. Of course ten years later when they wake up from their fantasy world they realise that they wasted years pouring energy into a hopeless cause while a life of true possibilities passed them by. The shared joys and burdens of a tangible relationship can never be replaced by a one-dimensional virtual love. Most dreamers have low self-esteem issues. They doubt their worthiness and ability to be in a relationship and lack the courage and actual intimacy skills needed to sustain reciprocal love. They may also have beliefs about love being a struggle, unattainable and filled with angst. Once they understand that love doesn't hurt it heals and they value themselves enough to go for the love they deserve, they will mature from this phase.

TERMINALLY DESPONDANT

If you're convinced that it's not your destiny to be in a happy relationship-you'll probably prove yourself right. The terminally despondent cling onto this fatalistic belief with gloomy acceptance. They can often support their despondency with reference to their terrible relationship karma confirmed by a negative astrologer/tarot reader/ psychologist/ mother or expert of choice.

Of course there is an element of destiny in all our lives but these people need to take some responsibility for their happiness and remember that God helps those who help themselves. Often they have withdrawn from life and relationships in response to previous disappointments. Understanding that the past does not equal the future is the first step to creating a destiny of their own.

TOO BUSY FOR TWO

Sogyal Rinpoche called it "Western laziness" Cramming every waking moment with activity so that we are too busy and distracted to face the real issues. Some people do this with love. They keep their schedules packed so they don't have time to reflect on the emotional void that they feel without a loving partner in their life. A mask of self-sufficiency and independence may hide an underlying craving for love and companionship. They're too busy to have a relationship and besides the material gains they're achieving through work are more satisfying, they tell themselves. These people also may have difficulty reconciling the contrasting behaviour required in the work place as opposed to the love place. Work skills value competitiveness, toughness and emotional coolness. These are contrary to love skills needed to develop a relationship such as selflessness, tenderness and openness. Work is time and goal oriented whereas love thrives in an organic, relaxed way, free of deadlines. How to reconcile the two? This is the dilemma of the workaholic loveblockers. They have to realise that you can't just schedule an appointment in your filofax for finding love. Love thrives during unstructured spontaneous leisure time.

They have to clear some space and time in their life to allow love in. If love is a priority one also needs to soften and relax in our relationship with others.

HEART SURGERY

Are you ready to undergo heart surgery to release these limiting patterns? We all have love scars to bear but as John Vance said "the soul would have no rainbow had the eyes no tears." View past negative experiences as valuable lessons that made you stronger, wiser and more capable of a loving relationship. You are now able to make clearer distinctions regarding what does and doesn't work in a relationship which gives you clarity about your ideal relationship.

Love won't enter on demand but we can make sure we aren't standing in its way if it's ready to come in. We will only overcome loveblocks if we have the faith that great relationships are possible and are excited and inspired to be in one ourselves. Love is a positive force that grows in a positive environment and starves in an atmosphere of negativity. To nurture positivity think of positive role-models of happy relationships, spend time with them, list all the things you would gain from a relationship and most importantly create an unconditionally loving relationship with yourself.

DISCOVERING "ME" BEFORE FINDING "WE"

We only have to look within to find the love we seek. Once we connect with our inherently loving and lovable inner core we can develop a healthy loving relationship with someone else. Although some believe that you can 'find yourself in someone else', you're more likely to be happy with someone if you're capable of happiness alone. It's a fallacy that a relationship will complete us when all it does is to enhance our individual completeness (or dysfunctions). So how do we develop this sense of completeness, happiness and self-love?

The first step is to clean up our self-image. If we have a poor self image people will treat us poorly. This is because people treat us the way we treat ourselves. Unhealthy self esteem makes us reliant on others for a sense of worth, a recipe for a co-dependant relationship. A 1996 Harlequin Romance report of 5,300 women highlighted this fatal flaw when women said the most important thing in a relationship was "how he makes me feel about myself." Seeking validation or happiness from another is an incredibly vulnerable situation to be in. It doesn't convey a desire to love unconditionally but rather a desperate hunger to be loved. This will scare off any partners wanting an equal relationship.

We need to know who we want to be and where our strengths lie before we can know who we want to be with.

Make a start by writing a list of all your positive attributes and qualities including the things you have to contribute to a relationship. Also write down the qualities you will develop in the near future. Ask your friends how you could improve yourself if you get stuck. Recite these qualities every morning and evening with conviction whilst holding an empowering vision of yourself in your mind.

To maintain enthusiasm in the quest for love, you have to ignite some passion within. Once you feel love internally you are more likely to attract it externally.

One way to increase your faith in the elevating and expansive possibilities of love is through music, books, movies and poetry related to love. Make a 'love tape' with a compilation of all your favourite love songs. Play it whenever you feel despondent and feel the flow of love awaken in you. It may sound corny but this is the one thing that spurred us on to continue our search for each other before we'd met. Songs on our tapes included: "Say a little Prayer" by Aretha Franklin, "Vision of Love" by Mariah Carey, "I'm kissing you" by D'sree, "the Look of Love" by Bacharach and Warwick, "Your Love is King" by Sade and "Vivaldi's Song" by Michael Franks. In effect you are tuning your heart strings to resonate at a compatible frequency with your soul mate so you can pick them up on your...

LOVE RADAR

"There is nothing like dream to create the future. Utopia today, flesh and blood tomorrow" Victor Hugo

You are more likely to get what you want if you know what it is. This principle applies to buying a car as much as to finding your soul mate. The trouble is most people spend more time and energy choosing a car than deciding the type of person they would like to share their lives with. It's time to make a clear list of the values, character and shared goals your partner will have. Don't make the mistake many make by choosing a partner on the basis of one or two personality traits such as -they're funny, they like the same music I do. Of course these help compatibility but the essential things for a long-term relationship are reflected in shared beliefs, values, actions and attitudes. You also don't want a carbon copy of yourself, differences can add spice to a relationship, however, your core goals and values should be similar.

Keep in mind too that your soul mate isn't perfect but they're perfect for you. Relationships expert Barbara D'Angelis lists the following criteria as essential- Commitment to growth

- Emotional openness
- Integrity
- Maturity and responsibility
- Healthy self esteem

Don't be afraid to ask for too much. In "The Way We Were" Robert Redford says to Barbara Streisand "You ask so much" and beaming she replies "Oh but look what I've got..." The clearer the message we send out to the universe the stronger our soul mate is magnetised into our lives and the easier those unsuitable suitors are repelled. Once you've clarified what you want in a partner it's easier to move on from those who don't fit your criteria. This may sound heartless but in fact you're doing them a favour by not stringing them along with false hopes and your energy won't be tied up when the right person comes along.

You can add qualities to the list over time and begin the prayer with the clause-"Please unite me with my soul mate at the right time, at the right place, in the right way ONLY if it is in everyone's ultimate spiritual benefit"

In this way you are directing your destiny without forcing a possibly unbeneficial union. You can then proceed to list the qualities you will embody and the type of person your mate is. Say it with longing as if your prayer is incense rising to heaven drawing exhilarating graces from divine forces.

Patience and perseverance are vital at this stage. You may be tempted to forget your standards and go for a BTN (Better than nothing) relationship if you don't meet Mr. / Mrs. Right soon. You can lower your standards to have a greater chance of meeting someone but will they meet your needs? Mr./Mrs. Right Now may keep you warm at night but are they someone you could spend your life with?

Before meeting Rama I had a clear list of 50 qualities my soul mate would possess and 50 qualities I had to attain to be worthy of him. After being single for 6 years my friends told me I was being unrealistic and if I lowered my standards a bit I would be more successful. Successful at what? -I wondered. I thought of Somerset Maugham's words "it's a funny thing about life. If you refuse to accept anything less but the best, you very often get it." I held out for my best and we've together happily for the past four years. The whole experience left me with the firm conviction that only when the lover is ready the beloved appears.

Impatience is the greatest obstacle to meeting the right person. Rather than panicking because you're still single think of yourself as 'temporarily available.' Think of this as preparation time where you can enjoy building your character and health. You may feel ready for them but perhaps your soul mate has to go through some things before you can be together. Despite this you can imagine that there is someone pining for you with a vacancy in their life that only you can fill for as Rumi said "never does the lover seek without being sought by his beloved."

CUTTING TO THE CHASE

Carpe diem! Yes, now's the time to seize the day and take action. It is at this point that most people start to falter. They know what to do but fail to do what they know. They're afraid to go out of their comfort zone not accepting that sometimes we have to go out on a limb to get the juiciest fruit. With love there is a romantic notion that if we let go and let God everything will fall into our laps. It's true we have to ultimately detach from the end result of our efforts but we can actively help rather than hinder ourselves through our actions, attitudes and demeanor.

ACTIONS

"Even if you're on the right track you'll get run over if you just sit there"-Will Rogers

There are no guaranteed ways to meet your soul mate but sitting at home alone is definitely not one of them. The important thing is that you follow your intuition and do what feels right for you. With the happy couples we polled we found that they did what they loved and the love came. Go to places and do things that your soul mate would be interested in. Keeping busy with enlivening pursuits, also set aside unstructured leisure time. Let your supportive friends and family know your criteria for a partner and encourage them to introduce you to suitable people. Try to go out on as many dates as possible. This increases your odds of meeting the 'one.'(If you don't believe us see the hilarious documentary on video called "20 dates.")

If you were interviewing people for a job would you take the first applicant that came along without seeing the others? Of course not. But many people do just that with relationships - getting involved with the first offer they receive out of desperation. Happy couples we know met at the most unlikely places so keep your mind and eyes open at every opportunity. Although internet chatrooms, dating services, singles events, and classified adds smack of a certain forced artificiality- they may be successful avenues to consider.

Wherever you are, act as if you are already in love. Having a generous, loving spirit towards everyone is not only food for the soul it's also magnetically attractive.

ATTITUDE

Don't take God's delays as God's denials. Rather than dwelling on negative feelings see them as a call to take some positive action. Remain optimistic, even though you're alone you don't have to be lonely.

To stave off self-pity develop your interests and ambitions, evolving into a more interesting person to meet. Avoid becoming obsessively focussed on finding your soulmate. See it merely as a bonus to your already happy life. "All good things come to those who persevere" tell yourself in order to stay determined rather than lapsing into panicked desperation.

DEMEANOR

Would you approach a person who had their arms and legs crossed, an aggressive stare, hunched over and a bored monotone voice?

Or would you be more likely to speak to the person, who appeared relaxed, open, centred, smiling and genuinely interested in conversation? Use your glance to express a thousand welcoming words and your body language to create an aura of attraction.

If you are interested let them know with subtle flirting gestures like a pat on the elbow, leg or shoulder. Smile a lot and look into their eyes. Don't talk too much, revealing too many details about your life. Keep some mystery about you so they are inspired to get to know you further. If you're easy to be with but hard to get it makes them appreciate you more when you're eventually together. Be a good listener and show genuine enthusiasm for your common interests. Add a few sincere complements and the deal should be sealed.

Dating shouldn't appear to be torture. Relax and have some fun with it. If you're not interested in a person keep a little more reserved but there is no benefit in being rude to them. Who knows, they might turn out to have a yummy best friend or become great a friends themselves.

HEARTBREAK HOTEL

In your search for your Prince/Princess you will have to kiss some frogs. To make it as painless and quick as possible as soon as you realise they don't meet your needs break it up. You may think this is harsh but in fact you're being kind by avoiding their further attachment to you which would result in a more prolonged and painful break-up. They may meet some of your short-term needs for, say, intimacy but is that at the expense of attaining your long-range relationship goals?

It's always harder if you're on the receiving end of a break-up. As they launch into the "it's not you its me" routine ripping your heart out and stomping on it, you may wonder if loves all a cruel joke. If you have fragile self-esteem this can shatter your hopes and paralyse you from moving on to greater love. However if you have a healthy self-esteem you will quickly see that this relationship wasn't in your best interests and that someone more compatible is waiting for you in the wings. You deserve someone who feels as strongly about you as you do for them. It may be bewildering at the time but with hindsight's 20/20 vision, you will see how wrong you were for each other. You actually feel sorry for them as their misguided taste and judgement led them to miss out BIG TIME on a fantastic partner. They'll realise this later when you introduce them to your fabulous mate. To clear some space for that person to come in you need to have emotional and physical closure with this person, (the loser). Make sure you communicate your feelings to them so you can have an amicable parting and move on to the real love of your life...NEXT!

DOES THE SHOE FIT?

You've met a possible partner. Do fall to your knees, profess your undying love and propose to them on the spot? Or do you rip their clothes off and jump into bed with them at the first opportunity? STOP-take a deep breath and stay centred. You are standing at the precipice of the rest of your life. Getting involved with the right person can elevate you to untold ecstasy but entanglement with the wrong person may drag you down to the deepest pit of despair-be careful. You don't want to judge them too hastily and live in regret. However before handing over the keys to your precious heart and body you've got to check whether they have a valid license to love. That means checking for fatal flaws such as addictions, violence, sexual dysfunction, fear of commitment, dishonesty, untrustworthiness and being a control freak. It's a nice sentiment but love DOESN'T conquer all, especially these dangerous ingrained traits. They should also fare well on your soulmate checklist. Compatibility should always come before commitment or copulation.

Never get sexually involved before they have at least passed this initial screening. Some people take one sniff of attractive person's pheromones and they check their brain in at the foot of the partner's bed. Although physical attraction is an important component to a relationship, registering compatible mating chemistry and a good energy synergy, it can seriously impede our love IQ, blinding us to major incompatibilities. Once the embers of passion have cooled you may find yourself with very little foundation for an enduring relationship. For this reason its better to hold off making love until you've connected well on all other levels.

Initially love interests are on their best behaviour putting their best image forward to attract you so it can be difficult to know their true character. Don't base your understanding of them solely on what they say or do. You'll get a much clearer picture by asking friends, family, past girlfriends and even a good astrologer about their nature. Also observing how they treat those closest to them, especially the opposite sex, will be very revealing.

Every Tom, Dick and Harriet may offer their expert relationship guidance at this stage if you let them. They don't have to live with the outcome of your choices so it's easy for them to tell you what to do. Don't place too much importance on outside unsolicited advice, as nobody can know the intricate dynamics between two lovers anyway (although they may profess to.) Only consider consulting people you respect, who have healthy relationships themselves and who have trust in your power of discrimination. This may bring you some valuable objective clarity in territory that can become hazy with emotion.

Naturally everyone has some flaws, you just have to decide whether you can and want to live with them. Are you clipping loves wings by judging them too hastily? If you see their potential as a partner but there are some problems you may like to agree on a time period before total commitment during which you both willingly work on the issues. If you commit too early your partner doesn't have much impetus to change as they've already got what they want.

Another aspect to consider is that according to eastern philosophy you share the karma of your mate. If your potential partner has a shady sin-riddled past you may have to share the burden of their karmic repercussions. If you really love them this may be a price you're willing to pay believing as Mata Amritanadamayi teaches that "in pure love there is no burden."

If everything appears to be lovey-dovey until now, before committing there are four final questions you should be able to answer unequivocally YES to:

- 1) *Am I getting more pleasure than pain from this relationship?*
- 2) *Would I want to be with this person if they never changed or became physically impaired?*
- 3) *Will life be more fulfilling with this person?*
- 4) *Can I meet their expectations and will they meet my expectations? (You have to know what their expectations are especially regarding children, career, house duties, finances, lifestyle and fidelity)*

HAPPILY EVER AFTER

"We find rest in those we love, and we provide a resting place in ourselves for those who love us" -St Bernard of Clairvaux

Some people equate the word "committed" with being trapped in a mental asylum. They will do anything to avoid the "C" word. Others view commitment as a liberating experience. It allows them to totally relax and surrender to the certainty of being loved and loving an appreciative person. Settling with our soulmate can be a welcome respite from the emotional drain of dating. Many experience that becoming loving towards one person strips us of our defensive emotional armour, making us more loving towards everyone.

However, sustaining a satisfying relationship is where the real challenge lies. Love is not a solution to life's problems; it's a process of transformation and growth. To make anything grow we need to nurture it with positive input. To keep a relationship growing and happy focus on it's strengths, potential and shared rich history rather than analysing its faults and predicting when it's going to end. Focus on the blessings and lessons brought to you through the relationship and take the time to bond with your partner in fun and exciting ways. Never lose sight of the beautiful qualities they have that originally brought you together.

What is the secret to a good marriage? Recent statistics indicated that the most important element to an enduring marriage was friendship. A fact Nietzsche deduced decades ago when he concluded "it is not lack of love but lack of friendship that makes unhappy marriages."

In a good relationship we find inner strengths and joy that we never knew we were capable of. In a bad relationship we lose our sense of self and become dependant on our partner for happiness. It is essential to keep our own centre by maintaining friendships and interests apart from our relationship. This allows you to bring fresh energy to your partnership rather than recirculating the same stuff, which can become stale after time. We also need to continue working on ourselves rather than focusing on our partner's issues. At times when we criticize our partner we are unfairly comparing them with others or are actually externalizing frustration with ourselves. Divorce and break-ups may appear to be the easy way out but if we give up before really trying to resolve problems we are likely to run straight into the same conflicts with others. Honestly see how you are contributing to the problem and by shifting your perspective and behaviour you may be able to trigger a shift in your partner. A happy relationship involves mutual compromise, tolerance, respect and emotional openness. People universally crave love because they instinctively know that what one gives is far outweighed by the joy one gains. In a true-life story similar to the movie "Life is Beautiful", psychologist Victor Frankl attributes his survival in Auschwitz during the holocaust to the love he had for his wife. His words are a tribute to this- "love allows us to transcend ourselves, inspires us to become greater than we would be alone and allows us to endure otherwise unimaginable hardships"

We wish everyone true love, health and happiness.