

Men Don't Fall in Love the Same Way Women Do

The Rules Revisited | 10 March, 2013 | by Andrew

A reader recently asked me if I've learned anything new about women from writing this blog. I have. To be specific, I've learned one thing - one important thing. I want to explain that one thing here, because the corresponding lesson for women is equally important.

So many of the women that write to me for advice have stories that go something like this...

I met my boyfriend through mutual friends. I wasn't very attracted to him at first. He wasn't the best looking guy in the world and he was a little quiet. I never really considered him a potential boyfriend, but then he asked me out. I agreed because I wanted to give it a chance, and I hadn't been on a date in a while.

The first date went OK, so we kept seeing each other. Before long I started getting attached and soon I found myself falling for him. We spent a lot of time together, and by three months I was in love. Now we are five months into the relationship and things have stagnated a little. He seems to be losing interest. Our phone calls are getting shorter, we see each other less frequently, and he's been answering my texts sporadically. In general the excitement he showed at the outset seems to have faded. I don't know what to do... I am completely in love with him and don't know if I can handle a break up. Is there any way I can re-spark his interest? What can I do??

Obviously this is just a paraphrase; the details of each story vary. But the common thread among them, and the thing that I found so interesting, was that the woman's love grew gradually, over months, often starting as complete indifference. It amazed me that a woman could end up being so in love with a man that, initially, she wouldn't have seriously considered dating.

In fact, I was so surprised by this that I initially doubted the truth of the stories. I speculated that the women writing to me were subject to some kind of wishful thinking or tunnel-vision, by which they focused only on the good in their boyfriend rather than the advantages of other men. But this really couldn't explain the phenomenon. A woman couldn't wishfully think herself into a degree of love so strong that she would feel compelled to write me for help. I eventually realized that these women were being genuine, and I was forced to admit that there was a uniquely feminine mechanism at work.

By now most of you have probably recognized the important point for women, which is implicit in my astonishment: **men do not fall in love gradually**, and they do not find themselves suddenly falling for women in whom they weren't initially interested. I was surprised because I had [wrongly assumed](#) that women work the same way as men in this respect. But this is not the case.

Now, let me qualify a couple things before going any further. By "love" I mean deep romantic attraction, as opposed to lust or long-term attachment. Lust is primary, physical and fleeting for both sexes, and long-term attachment takes years of shared experience to develop in either sex. Also, I am not saying that this is the only way women fall in love, or the most common. I recognize that women can experience something closer to "love at first sight."

The important thing to recognize is that you cannot expect (much less make) a man gradually fall in love with you in the same way that you might fall in love with a man. It doesn't work that way for us. Male

romantic love is something that either starts early and continues, or else doesn't start at all.

Since recognizing this difference in the sexes, I've had time to consider why it exists, and I think I have a reasonable understanding of what is going on. The information that a man needs to trigger romantic love is information that he can perceive within a few interactions with a woman. I believe this is true for a couple reasons:

1. **A great deal of his attraction to a woman is physical**, and her approximate physical beauty can be demonstrated by seeing her in a handful of outfits (or, to some degree, through photos).
2. **A great deal of his attraction to a woman is rooted in her personality and energy**, which can be demonstrated by experiencing her in a handful of moods. This takes longer than the physical attraction, but is still possible within a fairly limited number of encounters.

Other data, such as a woman's religious or political beliefs, her social class, [her family](#), etc. are either immediately available to a man via conversation, or else far less significant in garnering his attraction. So, in general, a man can evaluate a woman quite quickly.

Now, for women, the situation is different. Many of a woman's triggers for romantic love are less immediate:

- **His personal strength and emotional stability**, which can only be demonstrated by seeing him react to challenging situations, and these are unlikely to arise on a daily basis.
- **His intelligence and confidence**, which - although more readily assessed - can also take time to evaluate, as they are best demonstrated via situations in which his [wit or knowledge](#) is pitted against others', or by seeing [how he responds to other men](#) in a variety of real-life social situations.
- **His commitment**, which is only demonstrated in proportion to its duration. The longer he is with you, [the longer he is likely to stay with you](#).

In other words, while a man judges his woman primarily in relation to himself, which he does quite quickly, a woman evaluates her man on how he relates to the outside world, and this takes longer. In addition, and perhaps more importantly, a woman needs to gauge her man's reliability, and this demands time.

From an evolutionary biology standpoint, this makes good sense: the man who propagates his genes successfully does not need months to judge the reproductive potential of his mate, or her ability to nurture and raise children; he can see these things from [physical cues](#), as well as her energy, moods, and her instinct to take care of him. But the woman who propagates her genes is one who accurately judges whether the man with whom she mates is not only strong, but also stable - that is, capable of protecting and providing for her children until they are grown.

The implications of this are enormous for both sexes in dating, but let me underline the biggest lesson for women: **if a man isn't falling for you from an early stage - say, the first month - it isn't going to happen**. Don't wait around for his feelings to "grow" the way yours sometimes do. They will not. While this doesn't necessarily mean that he should be ruled out as a potential boyfriend or husband, it does mean that he will never be the woozy, infatuated lover [you've seen in the movies](#). And if this is something you can't live without, you'd do better to [break up with him](#) now than to become more [emotionally or sexually invested](#) before breaking up with him later.

If you liked this post, you'll definitely like my book, [Beyond the Breakup](#), which explains everything you need to know about dealing with you ex: what he's thinking, what is motivating him to stay friends with you, how to maximize your chances of getting him back - and if that doesn't happen, how to focus on your future.

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