

“Does the fire go out?”

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“Does the fire have to go out?” When I recently asked a group at a Create & Relate symposium this question, indicated that this is true. “The fire does go out.”

Falling in love is wonderful, effortless and energizing. This experience is often the subject of many songs, poems and stories. I enjoy recounting the story of meeting my wife, Pat, and of those early months and years of our relationship. I really think this is the only story I retell that doesn't turn my children's thoughts to “here we go again!!!” while referencing the most available time piece. The word “falling” speaks to the ease of this magical time when this experience matches unconscious fantasies about relationship. The accompanying chemical change that decreases the need for sleep, food, and routine energizes us into bizarre behaviors while the thought life is obsessed with the loved one. The soul and body are ignited with passion. The new behaviors we engage seem to come without thinking; willingly pushing to the edge and beyond the repertoire of old fixed behaviors.

Passion, one of three critical components of love, is the “intense state of longing to be with the other”.¹ Passion is the motivational part or energy of love which manifests as physical attraction and relies on intermittent reinforcement to be sustained. Falling in love most often happens when both individuals are living their separate lives. Getting together requires planning, ordering of priorities, time allotment, effort and tremendous initiative. Few are able to just immediately stop their lives and shift completely to a life with the loved one. The time they spend together has great value which adds energy or

If you want the ‘fire’ to go out, select a partner committed to keeping things the same!
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passion to their relationship. Their passion is reinforced intermittently; on a set schedule or spontaneously. Meeting around existing commitments of work, school, and/or family creates

the intermittent reinforcement. The possibility of an unexpected meeting can give passion a boost.

The energy of passion constantly causes each partner to push their boundaries. Each one carries the DNA of the universe in every cell – this coding is always for expansion and greater expression. The attraction stage of our relationship abounds with the expansion and greater expression of our being! We are at our best when we are passionate! We are alive! We are in the present! We are in the Here and Now! Who wouldn't want to remain here?

What happens to cause the passion to diminish? Sternberg's definition helps answer the question. Physical attraction and intermittent reinforcement are the key elements of passion. Physical attraction can remain as continual reinforcement replaces the intermittent reinforcement in the relationship. Continual reinforcement becomes habit. Habituation, from the Threshold Model of Relationship² indicates this happens when

¹ Robert Sternberg, 1986

² Hardesty, Russ 2007 Threshold Model of Relationship©

one's focus or attention is shared or subjugated to other interests or concerns. Passion can't be maintained without focus or attention. The initial and secondary stages of relationship (attraction and appreciation) is energized with passion and as either or both partners begin to habituate their roles in the relationship, the "fire begins to diminish". To keep the "fire" burning, each partner must understand the fundamental nature of passion and continually engage in the experience.

How do you keep the fire burning? The simple answer. Keep doing what created the fire in the beginning. Simple doesn't mean easy! Passion is the energy of our DNA; the drive for expansion and greater expression. Our conscious mind most readily connects the passion with our physical attraction. The physical connection often becomes the definition of our passion. Our subconscious understands the greater connection. Our self-esteem, our sense of well-being is enhanced; our attitude improves as does every aspect of our lives seems to be in the peak of 'health' or 'wholeness'. Happiness describes the experience very well. During the attraction and appreciation phase of our relationship, our time reference was very much in the "here and now" in which the power of fixed beliefs and fixed behaviors were less than the power of intentional thinking. Intentional thinking, consciously using of the Law of Attraction, is a vital to creating and maintaining passion. At these moments the lovers are tapping the infinite power of the universe – the power of creation. These moments in one's life are those moments when there is connection with the creative energy of the universe.

The fire will go out when either or both of the partners limit their passion to the physical. Increasing the level of awareness to a greater level is essential to keeping passion present in the relationship. The universe doesn't accommodate sameness. Everything is

Only if you reach the boundary will the boundary recede before you. And if you don't, if you confine your efforts, the boundary will shrink to accommodate itself to your efforts. And you can only expand your capacities by working to the very limit." Hugh Nibley

expanding or disintegrating. This principle applies to relationships. Passion is kept alive and expanding by each partner's own personal growth and expansion. Growth and expansion

has a definite spiritual quality – those moments when we are in connection with the Infinite! Awareness of this aspect of passion causes expansion, not disintegration.

Partner selection has three primary aims: romance, desire for a partner and sex. . Passion is the beginning point in most relationships. Sex and passion are often used synonymously in our culture and a discussion of passion without discussing the sexual component of passion would be incomplete. To build passion, self-esteem of both partners must continue to increase. A growing connection or affiliation between partners' aspects of intimacy maintain and increases passion.

On sure way to extinguish passion is to enter roles for which our early experiences have programmed each of us. These roles may not be conscious, but the lines and roles emerge. Automatically responding to those cues and settings that seem so familiar from our past we begin acting and reciting the lines from whence we came. The graceful movement of a couple on the dance floor mirrors a growing passion. The dancers move constantly exchanging energy; from dominance moving with ease to submission.

Fulfillment is essential to maintaining and increasing sexual passion. It is really difficult to have a healthy understanding in our culture with regards to our sexual nature. Most often our sexual nature is treated at a physical level, separate from our spiritual nature. This disconnect seems to take the form or belief that our spiritual nature must transcend our physical needs and desires. In various ways our culture has separated the physical and spiritual. Our physical well-being has become an object of profit for capitalistic greed. Constantly, our populace is bombarded with media suggesting that physical pleasure and appearance is the ultimate human experience. Religion has no doubt played it part in this great onslaught of disconnection of the physical and spiritual nature. Expansion and greater expression of passion is integration of the mental, physical and spiritual energies. Synchronizing these energies expands and creates a dynamic relationship.

Sexual energy enhances the love in a relationship. Sex can meet basic human needs for fun and creative expression which is a celebration of life. The law of attraction brings a heightened awareness to the relationship through a growing passion. Mysteries are revealed when our physical and spiritual natures are honored and shared. Sexual passion joins to the partner in a way that both become one; meeting the basic need for connectedness. *Isn't the secret intent of this great Earth, when it forces lovers together, that inside their boundless emotion all things may shudder with joy?"* - Rainer Maria Rilke³

Passion is the power of intention or the Law of Attraction. Thoughts alone changes little; The Law of Attraction responds to the action. It is a choice to maintain and grow passion. Increasing awareness is essential. Learning to live not knowing the next step is fundamental to growing passion. Complacency, acceptance of status quo or seeking to recreate the past is a sure plan for disintegration of passion.

³ 20th Century German Poet