What is Romantic Chemistry?

"Chemistry" is our unconscious attraction to someone who we feel will meet our emotional needs.

How do we go about that? By falling madly in love with someone who has both the positive and the negative traits of our parents, someone who fits an image that we carry deep inside us.

Keeping the Love You Find by Harville Hendrix Ph.D.
Stages of a Relationship aka “Falling in Love”

When you look at romance from an academic perspective, you will recognize these phases in your past relationships.

Phenomenon of Recognition

“I know we’ve just met, but somehow I feel as though I already know you.”

That sense of deja’ vu, is the feeling of familiarity. On an unconscious level, we feel connected once again with our caretakers. Only this time, we believe our deepest yearnings are going to be satisfied. That someone is going to take care of us, and we are no longer going to be alone.

Phenomenon of Timelessness

“But even though we’ve only been seeing each other for a short time, I can’t remember when I didn’t know you.”

“I can’t remember when I didn’t know you,” is a testimony to the fact that romantic love gives the illusion of safety and security. Similar to the instinctual bonding between mother and her child, lovers will coo, prattle, and call each other diminutive names that they would be embarrassed to repeat in public. They stroke, pet, and delight in every square inch of each other bodies.

Phenomenon of Reunification

“When I’m with you, I no longer feel alone; I feel whole, complete.”

The reunification phase is when lovers develop a feeling of wholeness and oneness. We are acknowledging that we have unwittingly chosen someone who manifests the very parts of our being that were cut off in childhood. We have rediscovered our lost self. This is why when we attach to someone with complementary traits, we feel as if we’ve suddenly been released from repression.

Phenomenon of Necessity

“I love you so much, I can’t live without you.”

The necessity phase is when the lovers are feeling that they will die if they part.

What does this tell us about Romantic Love?

It shows us what we call the “chemistry” is actually us wishing that our lover will take care of us; just like our parents did.

Getting the Love You Want: The Guide for Couples by Harville Hendrix Ph.D.
A good relationship is one where intimacy develops slowly from a friendship to a commitment. He doesn’t have deep emotional scars from his childhood or a previous relationship. He is capable of trusting and being trusted.

A good relationship is one that is based on a commitment. You feel secure about the future of the relationship. There is no confusion or fear of abandonment. You feel relaxed and are not anxious about losing the relationship.

A good relationship is one where two people do not need each other. They are already individually strong – the relationship enhances their lives. There is consistent sharing of pleasurable activities. You are not constantly disappointed or irritated by your partner’s destructive habits: alcoholism, love affairs, drug abuse, or violence.

A good relationship is one where there is trust and concern about each other’s welfare and happiness. You can openly talk about your needs, and are listened to.

A good relationship is one where two individuals can resolve conflicts in a peaceful, calm manner. Feelings can be openly expressed safely. Conflicts are resolved by coming to a compatible agreement. There is no right or wrong person if the agreed decision does not work out satisfactorily.

By Nancy Kilmore
A healthy relationship will develop slowly from a friendship to a commitment. All relationships start with two independent individuals developing into the integrated “we”.

**Boundaries** are an important psychological line that separates you from another person in a relationship. It defines where you feel psychologically comfortable and what is psychologically healthy for you.

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<th>Signs of Unhealthy Boundaries</th>
<th>Signs of Healthy Boundaries</th>
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<td>Trusting appropriately in stages</td>
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<td>Tell all at once</td>
<td>Revealing a little of yourself gradually</td>
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<td>Talking at intimate level on first meeting</td>
<td>Moving step by step into intimacy</td>
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<td>Falling in love with a new acquaintance</td>
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<td>Being overwhelmed by a person, preoccupied by him</td>
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<td>Acting on first sexual impulse</td>
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<td>Being sexual for your partner, not for yourself</td>
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<td>Going against your personal values to please your partner</td>
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<td>Accepting food, drinks, gifts, touch, or sex that you don’t feel comfortable with</td>
<td>Saying “No” to food, drinks, gifts, touch or sex that you do not feel comfortable with</td>
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<td>Giving as much as you can for the sake of giving</td>
<td>Self respect is not giving too much in hopes that others will like you</td>
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<td>Letting others direct your life</td>
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<td>Letting others describe your reality</td>
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<tr>
<td>Letting others define you</td>
<td>Knowing who you are and what you want</td>
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WHAT? Does a healthy relationship look like?

**Trust each other:** Each person can count on the other in good times and in bad times.

**Respect each other:** They view each other as equals, with equally important needs.

**Value each other’s views:** Each person values the other’s opinions and ideas.

**Support each other’s goals:** They encourage the other person to do his or her best

**Share in making decisions:** They can “give” and “take” when they don’t agree.

**Express feelings openly:** They express worry, insecurity, and other feelings without fear of ridicule or put-downs.

They can disagree without fighting.

**Really listen to each other:** Each person takes the time to hear and understand what the other is saying.

**Encourage each other’s interests:**
They encourage each other to have friendships and interests outside the relationship.

**Understand the need for time alone:**
They don’t insist on constantly being together.

**Accept each other’s differences:**
They don’t try to change each other.
People can only change themselves, not another person.

*Qualities of a Healthy Relationship*
by Channing L. Bete
Are the signs of an unhealthy relationship?

Believe it or not, being responsible for your own happiness and only your own happiness is at the core of a healthy relationship. This is completely the opposite of our experiences with "romantic love."

These are some of the tell-tale signs that your relationship is no longer based on healthy basics.

- Having an expectation that your partner will take care of you.
- Willingness to put your partners goals ahead of your own.
- Having an expectation to help your partner to change.
- A relationship that vacillates between passion and hate.
- Feeling the need to rescue your partner.
- Caring for a partner for what he can provide to you.
- Expecting your partner to fulfill your needs.
- Being inclined to point out what is lacking in your partner.

Whenever these conditions exist, the relationship is based on BARTERING. (If you meet my needs, I'll do what you want)

The relationship is doomed to failure.
WHY? Are abusers charming early in the relationship but don’t stay that way?

It's not premeditated. He is looking forward to the future, where a woman can meet all his needs. He sees himself as a generous and thoughtful partner and just wants to live by the Male Role Belief System (MRBS) model. Abuse is not his goal. Control is! So he feels justified to abuse to regain control.

How can you tell?

He starts using language of mutuality

"We are going to be really good for each other."

"I want to be with you all the time."

"I really want to be there for you."

He is creating the kind of relationship he wants through charm and dishonesty and expects it to continue in that mode for good.

When he does start to tear her down or frighten her later, he will blame it on her.
**Can I tell if the man I’m seeing will become abusive?**

How can you tell whether you should worry about a new partner? Fortunately, most abusers put out warning signals before their abuse goes into full gear. The signs to watch for should be part of every girl’s education before she starts dating.

**He speaks disrespectfully about his former partners.**
A certain amount of anger and resentment toward an ex-partner is normal, but beware of the man who is very focused on his bitterness. Be cautious of the man who says that you are nothing like the other women he has been involved with. Notice whether he seems to accept any responsibility for what went wrong in his previous relationships. If everything was always the women’s fault, you will soon be to blame for all difficulties in this new relationship.

**He is disrespectful toward you.**
If a man puts you down or sneers at your opinions, if he is rude to you in front of other people, if he is cutting or sarcastic, he is communicating a lack of respect.

**He does favors for you that you don’t want.**
Or does he show too much generosity to the point that it makes you feel uncomfortable. These can be signs of a man who is attempting to create a sense of indebtedness.

**He is controlling.** At first it can be exciting to be with a man who takes charge. Control usually begins in subtle ways. He drops comments about your looks; is a little negative about your family; starts to pressure you to spend more time with him.

He then shows hints of his impatience when you resist his recommendations and begins to act bothered that you don’t share all of his opinions about politics, personal relationships, music, or other tastes.
He is possessive.

*Jealous behavior is one of the surest signs that abuse is down the road.*
Possessiveness masquerades as love. A man may say: “I’m sorry I got so bent out of shape about you talking to your ex-boyfriend, but I’ve never been so crazy about a woman before. I just can’t think of you with another man.”

His feelings for you probably are powerful, but that’s not what he wants; he is keeping tabs on you, essentially establishing that you are his domain. Jealous feelings are not the same as behaviors. A man with some insecurities may naturally feel anxious about your associations with other men, and might want some reassurance. But if he indicated that he expects you to give up your freedom to accommodate his jealousy; control is creeping up.

Nothing is ever his fault.

He blames something or someone for anything that goes wrong. As time goes by, the target of his blame will increasingly become you. This style of man will tend to make promises that he doesn’t keep, coming up with a steady stream of excuses for disappointing you or behaving irresponsibly.

He gets serious too quickly about the relationship.

Because so many men are commitment-phobic, a woman can feel relieved to find a partner who isn’t afraid to talk about marriage and family. But watch out if he jumps too soon into planning your future together without taking enough time to get to know you and grow close, because it can mean that he’s trying to wrap you up tightly into a package that he can own. Take steps to slow things down a little. If he won’t respect your wishes in this regard, there is probably trouble ahead.

He intimidates you when he’s angry.

Intimidation, even if it appears unintentional, is a sign that emotional abuse is on the way – or has already begin – and is a warning flag that physical violence may eventually follow.

Any of the following behaviors should put you on alert.

- He gets too close to you when he’s angry, puts a finger in your face, pokes you, pushes you, blocks your way, or restrains you.
- He tells you that he is “just trying to make you listen.”
- He raises a fist, towers over you, or behaves in any other way that makes you flinch or feel afraid.
• He makes vaguely threatening comments, such as “You don’t want to see me mad” or “You don’t know who you’re messing with.”

• He drives recklessly or speeds up when he’s angry.

• He punches walls or kicks doors

• He throws things around, even if they don’t hit you.

The more deeply involved you become with an intimidating man, the more difficult it will be to get out of the relationship. Unfortunately, many women believe just the opposite: They think, “Well, he does scare me a little sometimes, but I’ll wait and see if it gets worse and I’ll leave him if it does.” But getting away from someone who has become frightening is much more complicated than most people realize, and it gets harder with each day that passes. Don’t wait around to see.

**He has negative attitudes toward women.**

A man may claim early in a relationship that he views you in a light different from that in which he sees women in general, but the distinction won’t last. If you are a woman, why be involved with someone who sees women as inferior, stupid, conniving, or only good for sex? He isn’t going to forget for long that you’re a woman.

Stereotyped beliefs about women’s sex roles also contribute to the risk of abuse. His conviction that women should take care of the home, or that a man’s career is more important than a woman’s, can become a serious problem, because he may punish you when you start refusing to live in his box.

**He treats you differently around other people.**

Adult abusers tend to put on a show of treating their partners like gold when anyone is watching, reserving most of their abuse for times when no one else will see. In teenage abusers the opposite is often true. He may be rude and cold with her in front of other people to impress his friends with how “in control” and “cool” he is but be somewhat nicer when they are alone.

**Why Does He Do That: Inside the Minds of Angry and Controlling Men**

*by Lundy Bancroft*
When? Is the way he treats me abuse?

The line in-between subtler kinds of mistreatment and abuse beings with the following actions:

He retaliates against you for complaining about his behavior. Another way he can retaliate against you for resisting his control is to switch into the role of victim. “All right, I’ll just listen and you talk,” and acts as if you are oppressing him by calling him on his behavior. This is an effort to make you feel guilty for testing his control and is the beginning of abuse.

He tells you that your objections to his mistreatment are your own problem. When a woman attempts to set limits on controlling or insensitive behavior, an abuser wants her to doubt her perceptions, so he says things such as:

“You’re too sensitive, every little thing bothers you. It shouldn’t be any big deal.”

“You’re just angry because you aren’t getting your way.”

He apologies and demands that you accept them. In his world he feels that you should be grateful for his apology. But, his tone communicates the opposite of his words. He in fact feels entitled to forgiveness, and he demands it. He also feels that it is his prerogative to insist that she accept his version of reality, no matter how much it collides with everything she sees and hears. He apparently sees her mind as part of what he has the right to control.

He blames you for the impact of his behavior. If his verbal assaults cause her to lose interest in having sex with him, for example, he snarls accusingly “You must be getting it somewhere else.” If she is increasingly mistrustful of him because of his mistreatment of her, he says that her lack of trust is convincing her to perceive him as abusive, reversing cause and effect in a mind-twisting way. If your partner criticizes or put you down for being badly affected by his mistreatments, that’s abuse.

He denies what he did. Some behaviors in a relationship can be matters of judgment; what one person calls a raised voice another might call yelling, and there is room for reasonable people to disagree. But other actions, such as calling someone a name or pounding a fist on the table, either happened or they didn’t. So while a nonabusive partner might argue with you about how you are interpreting a behavior, the abuser denies his actions altogether.

He undermines your progress in life.
Interference with your freedom or independence is abuse. If he causes you to lose a job or to drop out of a school program; discourages you from pursuing your dreams; causes damage to your relationships with friends or relatives; takes advantage of you financially and damages your economic progress or security; or tells you that you are incompetent at something you enjoy, such as writing, artwork, or business, as a way to get you to give up, he is trying to undermine your independence.

**He touches you in anger or puts you in fear in other ways.**
Physical aggression by a man toward his partner is abuse, even if it happens only once. If he raises his fits; punches a hole in the wall; throws things at your, blocks your way; restrains you; grabs, pushes, or pokes you; or threaten to hurt you, that’s physical abuse. He is creating fear and using you need for physical freedom and safety as a way to control you. Even if it doesn’t, so-called “lower-level” of physical abuse can frighten you, give your partner power over you, and start to affect your ability to manage your life.

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<tr>
<th>What?</th>
<th>Can I do if I suspect he is potentially abusive?</th>
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<tr>
<td>No single warning sign above is a sure sign of an abusive man, with the exception of physical intimidation. Many non-abusive men may exhibit a number of these behaviors to a limited degree.</td>
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<td><strong>Although there is no foolproof solution, the best plan is:</strong></td>
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<td>1. Make it clear to him as soon as possible which behaviors or attitudes are unacceptable to you and that you cannot be in a relationship with him if they continue.</td>
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<td>2. If it happens again, stop seeing him for a substantial period of time. Don’t keep seeing him with the warning that this time you “really mean it,” because he will probably interpret that to mean that you won’t.</td>
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<td>3. If it happens a third time, or he switches to other behaviors that are warning flags, chances are great that he has an abuse problem. If you give him too many chances, you are likely to regret it later.</td>
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Finally, be aware that as an abuser begins his slide into abuse, he believes that you are the one who is changing. His perceptions work this way because he feels so justified in his actions that he can't image what the problem might be him. All he notices is that you don't seem to be living up to his image of the perfect, all-giving, deferential woman.

Why Does He Do That: Inside the Minds of Angry and Controlling Men by Lundy Bancroft