



We tend to form relationships with people who seem familiar or make up for what we think we lack, says a psychotherapist.

# We seek the love we need



**BETWEEN US**  
Louisa Niehaus

**W**HAT do we seek out in love relationships? We seem to look for someone who has the predominant character traits of the people who raised us.

Unknowingly we try to recreate our childhood. This is so that we can heal old wounds or seek out a love that we are familiar with and therefore crave.

This familiar love can be positive or negative. We attempt to recreate the environment of familiarity.

We all have our own unique blueprint of love: this is the love that we perpetually seek to recreate.

Unfortunately, the psyche makes no distinction between whether this primary love is good or bad for us. We just want it because we are familiar with it.

**Where does the pursuit of love go wrong? With these thoughts:**

- I am unlovable.
- I am unworthy.
- I don't believe in love.

Some of these internalised beliefs we hold are the poison that prevent some singles or couples from building healthy relationships. It is also a reason we scupper the ones we already have.

Holding on to and ingesting belief systems from your

formative years can have an impact on your adult relationships. Think back to what you experienced during your formative years.

You may recall memories that are either positive or negative.

An example of a positive early memory of love is an activity such as baking, associated with homeliness, care and nurture.

Unconsciously you seek out this familiarity in a partner. If you can't find this particular experience or if it gets lost, you will feel unloved and experience a lack of nurture.

If you have had negative experiences during your formative years, it could be that you are looking to heal these childhood wounds – by engaging a partner that mirrors the same experiences you had as a child, such as, for example, an absent or unfeeling parent.

If you are unaware of your primary and early experiences of love, it's difficult to understand why you are feeling dissatisfied.

Your partner may be utterly bewildered as to why you are unhappy. Get to know what is important to you – your primal love needs.

Recognise these. Catch yourself seeking this pattern.

If your experience of love in childhood has been negative, don't

look to re-enact this with your partner as a means of healing.

Choose to heal yourself via self-awareness.

This holds true for friendships as well.

I am in a committed relationship and unhappy with the love I currently experience.

Even a healthy relationship or marriage doesn't protect you from attempts to fill in the deep yearning from your formative years.

If you don't do it in your primary romantic relationships, you try to recreate this via friendships and family relationships.

If you are unaware of what this primary love looks like for you, you will always subconsciously seek to heal those wounds by trying to recreate a similar situation and forcing your current relationship to be different.

**How to change old patterns if they're serving you negatively:**

Familiarity is like a worn groove. It's deeply entrenched and well worn. Changing this means forging new pathways; it doesn't feel comfortable or familiar initially and the temptation is to return to the norm. This applies to friendships as well.

Try to imagine being with someone who is the opposite of what you intrinsically crave. Healing can happen by choosing counter-intuitive actions.

We choose partners who mirror the aspects of ourselves that we need to develop.

For example, there's the person

who learnt as a child that to get attention and needs met, he or she would cry, hide or act weak and someone would eventually come to the rescue.

This person needs to find the strong part of the self that can feel stable and safe in frightening or anxious situations.

Instead of becoming more resilient as an adult, she or he would find a partner who would do that for them.

Consequently, this person is attracted to partners who are strong and capable because this is the part that needs to develop.

● *Niehaus is a psychotherapist who specialises in trauma therapy. She consults internationally and in South Africa to a broad base of clients, on relationships, personal growth, trauma, conflict management and self-actualisation.*

*She has a particular interest in the psychology of love, mid-life transition and awakening.*

*Unconscious motivators for behaviour, drives and relationships motivated her to establish an academy for adult actualisation, specialising in relationship insight and intrinsic growth using the principles of depth psychology and the symbology of myth and story-telling. She is a frequent contributor to Radio 702 and DStv's Real Health.*

● *Explore mid-life in more detail by joining Louisa Niehaus's course on Mid-life Mastery: <https://www.louisaniehaus.com/midlife-mastery/>*



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