

Relationship-Not in Love Anymore!

Has a friend ever asked for your advice about his (or her) relationship? Where do you begin? How would you help him so that his relationship could be fulfilling instead of disappointing?

In describing the problem, your friend would probably tell you what his partner was **doing** that made him so unhappy. And then he would tell you what his partner was **not doing** that caused him to feel particularly unfulfilled in their relationship.

But if you talked to your friend long enough, you would probably discover that his problems go beyond what his partner was or was not doing. You would discover what I have discovered in the majority of relationships I've counseled—your friend has fallen out of love with his partner. Whatever feeling of love he once felt for his partner is now gone.

How would you help your friend?

When it comes to solving relationship problems, sometimes it's easier to see the solution when it turns out to be somebody else's problem. In your friend's case it might be clear to you that if his partner would stop doing the things that upset him and start doing things that would make him feel more fulfilled, his feeling of love for his partner might return.

So you might begin by going to his partner with his complaints, and by trying to encourage his partner to make a few changes in the partner's behavior. But if his partner were like most of the partners I've counseled, you wouldn't get very far in describing those complaints. Assuming that the partner would even hear you out, after you had uttered your last word you'd be hearing the partner's litany of complaints about your friend—how he's been doing all sorts of outrageous things to upset his partner and how he's failed miserably in making his partner feel fulfilled in their relationship. And if the partner were honest with you about the partner's deepest feelings, you might also discover that the partner doesn't feel any more love for him than he does for the partner.

It wouldn't take long for you to discover that each of them understood the other person's problems, but not their own. And you would also discover that they did not understand how their mistakes contributed to their loss of love for each other.

This is where you give either (or both) my card and invite him or her to call me or ask if you may ask me to call them. Tell them that I place great value on the passion they want to share with each other but have lost their way.

I want to know how they affect each other; how they make each other miserable and how they have failed to make each other happy. I also find it important to estimate how much love they have lost for each other.

You see just about everything you and your partner do affects the feeling of love you have for each other. What you do either builds your love for each other, or it destroys that love.

How partners affect each other has a tremendous bearing on the success and failure of relationships. If your friend's partner would simply stop doing the things that upset him and start doing the things that make him feel terrific, your friend's complaining would be over, and something else would happen, too. Your friends would once again be in love.

Of course your friend would also have to make some changes. He would need to take his partner's complaints to heart and accommodate the partner's feelings. Then they would be in love with each other. But whatever it would take to restore their love would be worth doing because it would create something that they both want very badly: a fulfilling relationship!

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