

UNEXPECTED LOVE

Most of us in our lives are searching for that unconditional love. Love is an amazing feeling that we have deep in our heart. As humans, we want to be loved and feel respected. Many of us, including me, have failed in making this happen for our partners in our relationships. We are in search for that perfect person or many times referred to as that “one of a kind” love.

What is a one of a kind love? This is a great question. We are all looking for it, but no one clearly can define what that would be for everyone. The perfect love is something that just happens. You see that person and the feeling or attraction is immediately there. The more that you are around that person the deeper your feelings are. It is so natural and effortless. They just make you smile and feel warm inside. I want this don't you?

Why can't we all find this kind of love? We all want it. Our world today is so full of heartache, disappointment, sadness, and pain. The divorce rate is the highest it has ever been. More couples are living together to see if they are compatible before getting married. I am not judging anyone, but for me I am looking for that: “one of a kind” love that leads to marriage.

My dream was always to find this lifetime partner and have a family. As a kid, I wanted to have this great experience of being married, owning a small farm or ranch, and live in a loving community. Do you remember what they said on Cheers, "Where Everyone Knows Your Name"?

I had seen my parents, aunts and uncles, and grandparents live their lives. They all seemed so happy and in love. So I got married expecting it to be forever. I never realized how hard it would be and the effort it would take. I wanted to have a perfect marriage. To some, getting a divorce would be a sign of failing. The marriage vows were always important to me and something that should be valued.

Disabilities and disease can play a huge part in a marriage ending. The challenges and struggles of a good marriage or long term relationship can be a lot of work. Both parties must want to work and change. If the efforts are not made by both parties, then the two may start doing more and more on their own. It is fine to have some space and have a time for yourself. The problem is when each person starts living their own life while still married. We all have seen this happen.

So now I am divorced. You may have experienced something similar or be in a marriage that is struggling. Please do not think that I am a fan of divorce. God will heal us and help us find that perfect love. For me, this time, this love and marriage will be forever. God can help by strengthening your marriage, get over a relationship, or find that one person that makes you smile.

If your spouse or long time partner is still your “one of a kind” love then do everything you can to preserve this relationship. Maybe you entered that relationship thinking that you could change that person or grow to love them more. Sometimes this happens, but most of the time it doesn't. As parents and individuals that are single, we need to serve as a role model for the younger generations. We need to coach our children to wait for their “one of a kind” love. Our generations have been brought up to be very self-centered. Only considering what they want and ignoring the needs of their partner. The Bible is very clear that men are to value and cherish their wives as God cherishes the church. Men are to meet all the needs of our spouse and give them amazing love. Wives are to treat their husbands the same. The principle is for each to think of the other first. If both parties do not do this, then one of them is going to be very unhappy. There are justifiable reasons when a person should get a divorce, especially when it's best for the children or the safety of all.

Please understand that I am not a marriage counselor or minister. I am just like you.

In the first paragraph, I mentioned unconditional love. There is only one person that has shown us all unconditional love. This person was Jesus. He came to earth to show us how to love and extend to us mercy and grace. The great thing is that we did not have to do

anything to receive his love. What a perfect role model! I want to be like him. I want to extend my love to all my family, friends, and anyone I meet. I will definitely have to seek God daily to do this. I will fail at times, but he will not give up on me. He will strengthen and help me with his unconditional love.

Wouldn't it be amazing if we could show our partners or future partners this unconditional love? All of us have become so unforgiving. We all say and do things that hurt our partner, family, friends, and co-workers. Why can't we go to that person and ask for forgiveness and the person just forgive them. As individuals, including myself, we just hold this in and let the hurt build.

I am not an expert but know what I have done and continue to do. Marriages, relationships, and friendships are all weakened by our unforgiving behavior. Even if parties get a divorce, why do we have to fight and try to destroy the other? No one gains. It would be great if we could show the other party unexpected kindness and love. Remember, you loved this person once. If you can't work it out, why not end the relationship without all the pain and hurt.

God clearly has shown me unconditional and unexpected love. I want to make a difference with my life and knowing how to love is the most important step for me to learn. His word is very clear, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness and all these things will be added unto you" Matthew 6:33. So my plan is to do just that. If we seek Him first then maybe He will bring us that "one of a kind" love. We will need to show this person great love, forgiveness, mercy, grace, and friendship just like God has shown us. Our partner for life is a gift from God. We no longer have to be alone. We are to care for, love, cherish, support and encourage them.

My trust in God has to be greater than many of you because I am vision impaired. But in other ways, I have a huge advantage. Most see the external beauty of a person first. I hear their heart and sense their kindness first. What a blessing this is! I can truly get to know a person and who they are before knowing about what they look like. I no longer know what I look like so why should it matter? Using words

like beauty or describing a person as being beautiful can have many different meanings. Many think it is just skin deep. As a vision impaired person, my definition of being beautiful is the person that shows me amazing kindness, one that I can't wait to be with, that I can laugh with, dance, and makes my heart skip a beat.

Thank you, God for your love. Please help all of us experience amazing love again. We want to find that beautiful lifetime partner to spend the rest of life with. If we give this to Him, He will help us. Will you join me in this prayer?

My dream is to get married again. I do not want to be alone. When God gives me this partner, I now know, I must value her more than all riches, gold, silver, and jewels. God help me not fail.

Maybe you already know yours and are just having a difficult time with your relationship. Ask God for His help and seek Him first. I too want you to feel that unconditional love that He can offer. By having this kind of love; it is my hope that we can change our world to become a place of forgiveness.

With God's unearned and unexpected love, we all have a chance to find unconditional and "one of a kind" love. I realize that loving others is what gives me great joy. I am asking everyone that I have hurt in my life for forgiveness. I also forgive all that have hurt me. Will you join me in forgiving and asking for forgiveness? If we do this then God will give us love like we have never felt. Thank you, God for that future partner that you are going to give us to love and cherish for the rest of our lives. I too will pray that God will rebuild, strengthen or establish your "one of a kind" love relationship.

Now let's wait for that wonderful partner that God has for us. During this waiting time, God can prepare our hearts for love. This will clearly be a time for all of us to feel loved and know happiness. Let's change our relationships. Please join me in showing others love when they don't expect it and especially when they may not deserve it.

**How great it will be to share our love as Christ has loved us.
Remember that you too are love. Go find that “one of a kind” love.
Let's don't stop, until we do!**

Dr. Dennis W. Atkins

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