STAGES OF LOVE

I. Lust or Passionate Love
   a. Intense absorption in another, feels out of control
   b. A deep sense of need to be with the other
   c. Elevated levels of the hormones Dopamine and others that mimic adrenaline
   d. Feels out of control
   e. Racing heart, flushed skin, sweaty palms, intense energy, sleeplessness, loss of appetite focused attention on partner

The purpose is to draw people together through attraction. Lasts 3-4 years then the relationship begins to change. Our bodies can’t keep up the initial stream of feel good emotions.

II. Romantic Love or Power Struggle
   a. chemicals begin to decline
   b. self disclosure, learning about one another as individuals
   c. perceptions of partner change – what use to attract now can irate and cause problems
   d. this is the “work” stage
   e. Can be the beginning to deeper intimacy and connection if partners are willing to stick it out.
   f. Many marriages/relationships break up at this time because the “flame” has gone out. They don’t feel in love anymore.

This is the work stage of love. Acceptance of on another’s faults and personalities is important. Opening up more (self disclosure), trusting and communication is very important in this stage. It’s your perception about the behavior that has changed – not the behavior

III. Attachment – long term
   a. cherishing one another as separate individuals
   b. true partnerships – best friend
   c. developing interests separate of your partner
   d. Different chemicals play a role in attachment. Oxytocin (mothers in labor and breast feeding produce this chemical also) bond the relationship
   e. develops slowly compared to other two stages

Tips to making it through the years

Don’t sweat the small stuff
Focus on what you can control – YOU
Learn to communicate and fight in a healthy manner
Think back to the 1st stage and what attracted you to your partner in the first place
Appreciate/focus on your partner’s good qualities – not negatives
Bring spontaneity into the relationship to throw you back into the unexpectedness of
stage one

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