



Desperately Seeking Love

by Michelle Kelley, LCSW

Why are so many people desperately seeking love – as if it can be found outside of them or in another person? What is love? And can a single description or label contain the essence of love?

I won't pretend to know everything about love, but I contend there are different types of love.

For example, I believe there is only one pure form of love, which the Greeks called Agape. Agape love is a more perfect form of love. It's the love between a mother and a child or between God and man.

There is another form of love which many of us feel very connected to and that is Eros love. Eros was the Greek god of love. This form of love represents romantic or sexual love.

In our Westernized civilization it can be difficult not to over-focus on romantic love. The media and our culture seem to place high value on romance. We have eaten of the apple and many of us believe or act as if this

form of love is most important.

I would say that all love is important and equal in value. So why do we allow one form of love to take precedence over another?

Possibly it is because we have not stopped to really think about this. We need to challenge our thoughts and the messages we have received from others, our culture and the world. I encourage you to do so now.

I have counseled many girls and women who are “desperately” seeking love. Sometimes it's to help them feel complete, to feel valued or special, or to cover up their feelings of lack or not feeling good enough.

Being in love or falling in love can be equated to a euphoric state – similar to a drug-induced state. Yes, it's fun and exciting but whether we know it or not, it's usually just temporary. And then what happens? Then our old feelings of not being good enough or feelings of lack may resurface. We might even think we are with the

“ BEING IN LOVE OR FALLING IN LOVE CAN BE EQUATED TO A EUPHORIC STATE – SIMILAR TO A DRUG-INDUCED STATE. YES, IT'S FUN AND EXCITING BUT WHETHER WE KNOW IT OR NOT, IT'S USUALLY JUST TEMPORARY. AND THEN WHAT HAPPENS? ”

wrong person or we are the wrong person. Our thinking can get very wonky when it comes to love.

Around the end of elementary school is when I have noticed a trend with girls. They start the “boyfriend talk”. And by middle school they are in full swing dating mode. Of course “dating” means they officially like each

other and it could last for several days or several months, on average. During this time girls share with me how “special” they feel and how important it is to them to “fit in” and be in a romantic relationship.

The point is that early on girls are receiving messages about the importance of being in a romantic relationship. Some begin to search for or desperately seek what they consider to be “love” for the rest of their lives.

Unfortunately some women never outgrowing this “someday my prince will come” mentality. I know plenty of women – single, divorced, widowed – who are still searching, and I fear they are searching for the wrong thing.

Several years ago when I was talking to my youngest daughter, I mentioned that we were in a relationship. I could tell she was a bit shocked at my use of the word “relationship” because she probably was thinking about a romantic relationship. After talking with her about all of the different types of relationships in existence, she then asked me if we could break up. Of course, my response was “Never. I will never stop being in a relationship with you – even if you one day choose not to be in a relationship with me.”

In case you didn’t know, it only takes one person to be in a relationship. This is definitely contrary to popular



belief. Relationships are created and nourished within one’s heart, and so the other person’s participation is not necessary though it may be desired. Remember, love is not controlling or demanding.

We should broaden the container we have created for love. Love need not be confined to a special, romantic relationship for love makes all relationships special.

So in this month of February, the so called “love” month, how about focusing on different types of love...the love you have for your children, your friends, your family, your work, your pets or even life itself. If we look for love in places other than romance, then we will most likely find it wherever we look.



Michelle Kelley is a licensed counselor and confidence coach for women and girls. Her counseling practice is located in downtown Warrenton, Va. Specialty areas include confidence building, relationship counseling, and managing anxiety in a super stressful culture. “I teach girls and women how to live with integrity, authenticity and self-awareness.” Please visit www.GirlsStandStrong.com or call 703.505.2413 for more information.

