

CHAPTER 17

HOW TO KNOW THE TRUE FEELINGS OF SOMEONE YOU LIKE

The proper kind of dating is an excellent way for a man and woman to get to know each other. It can be a fresh, wholesome, constructive activity that is intellectually stimulating and physically upbuilding.

Yet, dating can have its challenges, too.

Often the time comes in a dating relationship when one becomes serious about the other. There's an underlying uncertainty, however, as to whether the relationship is mutually shared. He or she is unable to "read" the mind or intent of the other.

Now, this can be a traumatic experience, causing much mental anguish, and is a subject I would like to discuss with you in this paper. There is a way you can know.

THE PROBLEM DESCRIBED

To begin, let's take an example of a young man who is dating a charming and personable young woman. Several weeks have passed, and he's starting to develop strong feelings for her. Being discreet and not wanting to appear pushy, he begins to express his interest in a proper and courteous way. He takes her out to dinner, invites her to go for walks, does little things for her such as repairing a door lock, occasionally taking her shopping, or running some errands. Being a gentleman, his whole approach is one of giving — doing things and going places which they mutually seem to enjoy.

Without having to tell her outrightly that he cares, he tries every way possible to communicate the idea that she's "special." Yet, in spite of all his efforts, she's remained "noncommittal" and quiet. He's still unable to determine her innermost feelings and to know where he stands.

HOW YOU CAN KNOW THE FEELINGS OF ANOTHER

The secret to understanding the person you like can be summed up in a simple word — **RESPONSE**, or **FEEDBACK**. If that person has similar feelings and cares for you, he or she will **RESPOND IN LIKE MANNER**. That is, he will return the love you give through obvious, direct and overt actions.

It is simply a law of life that true love is a "sharing" principle. When you give of yourself in love and concern, the recipient of your affection will respond in kind — if that person is "turned on" toward you. This is not meant to imply that we should give in order to get. But, if a man truly loves a woman — and she's equally attracted to him — she will experience a desire to give love in return. Through outward signs and actions, she'll let her feelings come through. You won't find it necessary to "probe" for an answer. She'll express it in clear, tangible language so you'll have no reason to doubt.

If, on the other hand, you've been dating for a reasonable period of time and there's no visible response, wise up to the fact that she's probably not interested — hold your feelings in check. By a lack of response, she's saying in effect, "I don't have the same feelings as you do. I really don't want to get involved — at least not yet. I simply want to be a friend." We call this **NEGATIVE FEEDBACK**.

The test of **RESPONSE** or **FEEDBACK** is one you can always go by. Feedback is not something you should have to "dig out" of the other person. True love is not a one-sided affair — it's a relationship that will be shared by both. When love is true and real, the response will always be mutual and will flow naturally and spontaneously. **IF SHE'S NOT TELLING YOU SOMETHING BY NOW, THEN OBVIOUSLY SHE HAS NOTHING TO TELL.**

Also, if there is a high level of inconsistency in the attitude of the other person — on one date he or she seems turned on toward you, on the next date cold as ice — this is a good indication that it's **NOT** in your best interest to continue the relationship. True love is consistent!

WHY THE PERSON MAY NOT BE INTERESTED IN MARRIAGE

A word of explanation about NEGATIVE FEEDBACK. Just because the person you're dating does not respond to your overtures as hoped, don't allow yourself to become discouraged or think of yourself as being inferior or unworthy. There may be valid reasons why the individual does not want to get serious.

- 1) He or she may be interested in someone else.
- 2) The person may feel inadequately prepared for marriage.
- 3) He or she may have other plans such as graduating from college, or embarking on a career, etc.
- 4) There may be heavy debts to be paid off.
- 5) The person may think himself too young and inexperienced to enter into a confining relationship and needs more time to grow and mature.
- 6) There may be a lack of natural attraction or common interest between you.
- 7) The person simply wants to be a friend, and nothing more.

If these points apply, face the truth squarely and don't try to convince the person to change his or her mind. Be patient and continue to date others! Eventually the right person will enter your life.

SHOULD YOU EVER ASK FOR ANOTHER'S FEELINGS?

Is there ever a time to ask the person his or her true feelings about you? In most cases this will not be necessary if you have followed the above guidelines. The feedback you receive will tell the story. Let's suppose, however, that both of you have grown in love, but have not divulged your innermost secrets. If your relationship has progressed this far, you will of necessity want to open up and be candid with each other. The key is to wait long enough to be assured your love is real and that you both can talk comfortably about it. Until you can do this, give yourself a little more time to let the relationship blossom and flourish.

WHEN TO COOL A RELATIONSHIP

Let's assume you discover that the other person really isn't interested and doesn't want to get involved! Should you then break off dating altogether? Only if you are deeply entrenched, miserably frustrated, and can't get him or her out of your life. The Christian approach, however, is to discipline oneself and back off from dating too much when you find the relationship is not working out. Why allow yourself to get carried away when you can clearly see the handwriting on the wall? Whatever your decision, you should treat the person with utmost respect as you would any other Christian in God's Church. Don't hold a grudge and act spiteful. Forget the relationship, but continue to be a friend.

PUTTING IT ALL IN FOCUS

To sum up the matter, if there is doubt, uncertainty or any degree of negativism about how the other person feels — especially if there has been a long dating experience — it is wise to recognize the warning signs and honestly admit the truth: it is not a satisfactory relationship and should not culminate in marriage!

In a true love relationship, you BOTH will respond to each other within the framework of God's Law. You will share, give, help and serve each other. There will be a growing together, a learning process, a blending, a mutual attraction that is MORE than just physical. There will be a spiritual harmony which is based on respect, admiration and honor — and will involve the complete and total union of your hearts and minds.

When you've enjoyed a long dating experience and it has grown strong and durable through time, then you have the knowledge that, "YES, this person is the RIGHT one for me! We are in love! Marriage is the next wonderful, beautiful, and natural step in our relationship! There is NO DOUBT about it!"

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