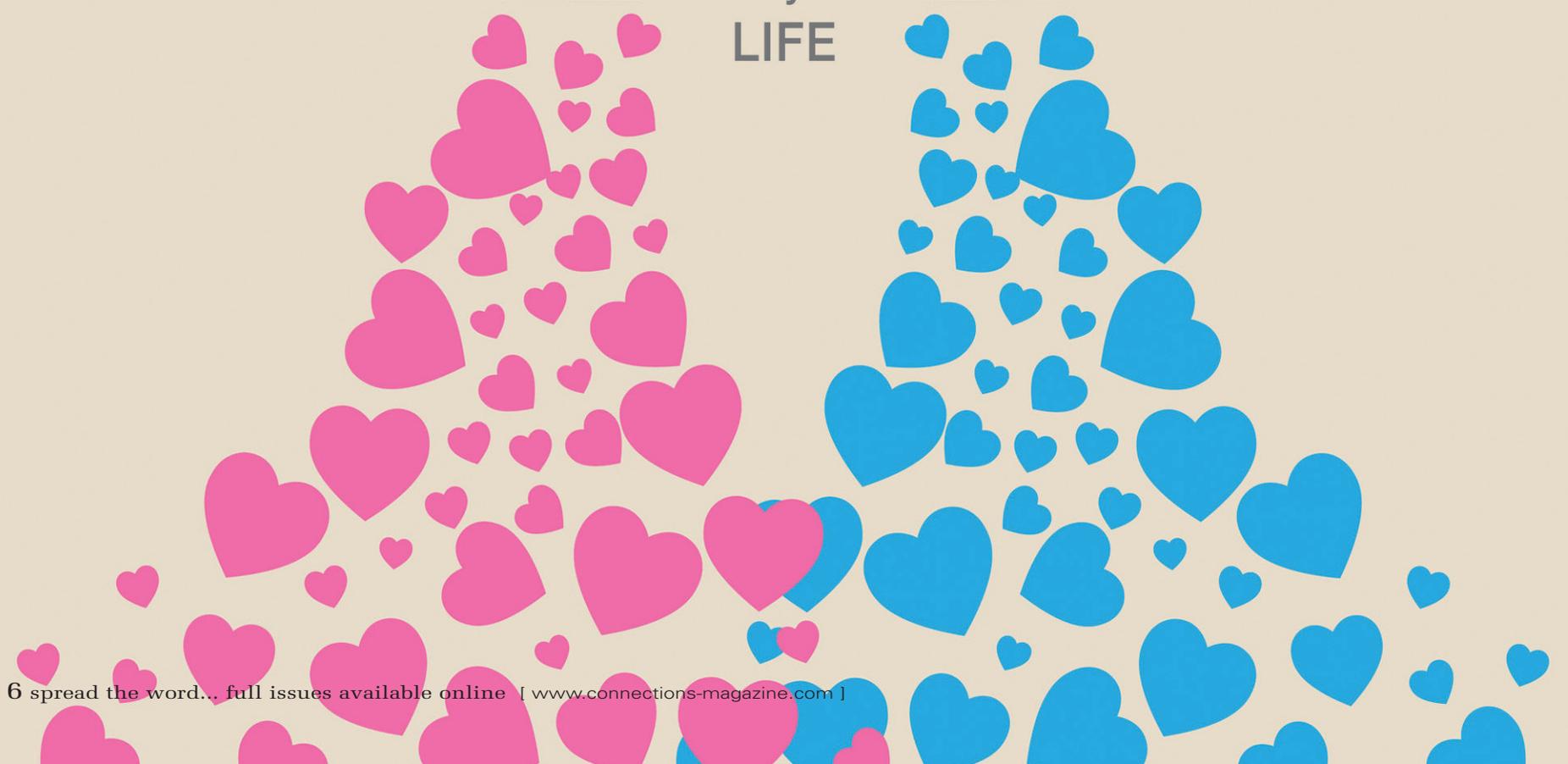


7 Reasons
You're Ruining
Your *Relationships*

By Sofia Milan



EXPERT
strategies
for how to
ATTRACT
more
LOVE
into your
LIFE



While most would respond with an emphatic “yes” if asked if they would like more love in their lives, I suspect few people welcome the extent of “work” required to achieve that outcome. Of course, the amount of work involved depends on how far away one feels they are from the level of love they desire. Just like achieving a diet, fitness or career goal, elevating the amount of love in your life requires commitment, change, vision, and patience—with yourself and with others. Towards this end, it’s entirely possible for sentiment-seekers to create a personalized plan to achieve love goals, no matter how short or long of a journey that lies ahead. In the weight-loss analogy, if you want to lose 5 pounds or 50 pounds, your personal trainer would have different advice for you. Similarly, if you want to increase the amount of love in your life by 5% or 500%, the means to achieve this would be different. To help get you started, here are seven things that may be undermining your love goals no matter how far along you are on the jubilant journey.



1 Not vetting the VIPs.
 Who is the most important person in your life? Did you say “me”? If not, it’s time to practice self-love and move yourself to the top spot on your VIP list! The most important person in your life *must* be you. Only you can choose a side salad over French Fries. Only you can choose to react calmly instead of angrily at the driver who cut you off. Only you can choose to surround yourself with positive people who enrich your life versus toxic people who break you down emotionally. I’m NOT suggesting that narcissism is good or giving you a license to be selfish. Just take a lesson from the flight attendants who instruct, “put your oxygen mask on first, before helping others.”

2 Failing to train your brain.
 Perhaps you’ve heard about how athletes and other competitors imagine themselves successfully executing their craft with perfection prior to the moment they are expected to perform. Top competitors practice, watch videos of themselves, mentally visualize their success, and practice some more. Similarly, a powerful tool is to visualize the love that you desire and imagine it in a way so that you can actually feel it. Imagine the warmth and security of an embrace. Feel the joy of spending time laughing with dear friends. Just like an athlete, this will train your brain to make it happen and to manifest what you desire. Another way to do this is to collect images and phrases either from the Internet or magazines and assemble them into a “vision board” collage. You need not be crafty, and the result may not look perfectly composed, but the exercise itself will help clarify exactly what you want your life to look like in the future. Then, keep that visual handy—optimally visiting it at least once daily. Not only is this a wonderful and more accurate way to envision the love and the life that you desire, but also to make it feel more real, accessible, and imminent.

3 Holding steadfast to your “filter.”
 Do you know someone who can always cite a litany of reasons why something won’t work? Or the cynical person who thinks everyone has a clandestine ulterior motive? Or the conspiracy theorist that really thinks everyone is out to get them? How many people do you know truly see only the goodness in other people and the world overall? How would you rate? Does your own perception “filter” need an upgrade? In today’s crazy and stressful world, whose doesn’t? Whether it’s with respect to romantic interests, friends, or family members, rather than focusing on the flaws and shortcomings with a critical eye, instead try to see the person’s goodness. Consider the positive reasons you have crossed paths with this person and practice seeing their good qualities when you interact with them. A critical eye can always find something wrong. We’re all human, after all. Not only will you feel better just by making this small shift in the way you regard and relate with others, but they will also sense the favorable shift in you. The more you practice this, the more love you will feel in your own life. Even beyond those you know, try looking a stranger in the eye and smiling while imagining you are sending them happy thoughts, blessings, or even love. Do so with no expectation of a positive response in return. If you get one, great. If you don’t, do not be discouraged and keep practicing. Notice how you feel. You have nothing to lose.

4 Lacking a “Love Action List.”
 Make a list of “Love Actions,” which are specific things that special someone in your life can do that would make you feel loved. Make sure that small, no-cost gestures are included as well as bigger items. For example, this list might include things like, “bring me coffee in bed,” “whisper in my ear and make me blush when we’re out,” “plan an outing for us to look forward to,” “send me flowers for no reason,” and other sweet or spicy gestures. Obviously, some of these are not so easy to do for yourselves. However, you can buy yourself flowers and plan things to look forward to! Making the list—and even acting on it for yourself—will be a message to the universe that you wish to attract someone willing and capable of doing all of these things and more. Note, if you do choose to do this exercise and share your list with your significant other, it’s imperative that you do not judge the items on their list! Do make sure you understand them, as the list represents the key to their happiness. Be thankful that you no longer are expected to be able to read his or

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4 Lacking a “Love Action List.”

Continued

her mind. Also, do not keep score. If you choose a “Love Action” from his or her list to show that you care, do so lovingly rather than regarding it as yet another chore and, just as importantly, do not expect anything in return. You are giving a gift, and s/he needs to accept it as a gift graciously, with no anxiety about what to do in return. Give and receive with love and no strings attached.

6 Foregoing fun.

Many of us are very busy doing things for others—work, family, community. Imagine if all of those people who are siphoning your time and energy not only stopped, but also instructed you to do something that makes you truly happy. Imagine them all saying in unison, “We give you permission to take time to do whatever makes your heart happy.” What would you do? Take a long walk in nature? Dance? Sit by the river and read? Go to a jazz club and let the music wash over you? You might be surprised how difficult it can be to identify what exactly will make you feel happy and fulfilled. Look at your calendar over the next month and commit to doing whatever it is that brings you joy. If you need to practice more self-love, plan to go solo, so that someone else’s “stuff” does not interfere with your experience and you can truly connect with your own needs. If being alone feels uncomfortable to you, consider why and wonder if that is exactly why you should go by yourself. And barring some major league disastrous circumstances, commit to your event like you would to the most important person in your life. Do it without guilt, as it is for your own health and well-being. The more connected you are to your authentic self and the better you feel inside, the more positive energy you have to devote to others. If you are already in a long-term relationship, a key to long-term happiness is “shared experiences.” Find something that has nothing to do with your family or running your household that you both truly enjoy doing together. Find the time and commit to doing that and not talking about work or family. Solely focus on enjoying the experience and being entirely present in the moment. The more that the shared activity can enable the physical touch factor, the better.

5 Raising roadblocks.

There are probably plenty of examples in your life, or in the lives of those dear to you, that make a good case for remaining aloof, building those proverbial walls up around your heart and not letting people “in” to experience the real you. If you wish to experience the kind of deep-seated love you’ve trained your brain to imagine, there is likely some work that you need to do to remove whatever self-limiting beliefs, fears, pain, or negative feelings are lurking in the dark recesses of your psyche. These are your emotional roadblocks, and you need to figure out how to step over, get around, or completely annihilate these barriers. To do so, you’ll first need to identify what is

blocking your ability to love fully and fearlessly. Then you can do the internal work needed to transform those negative thoughts into positive ones: for example, a current belief of, “my first marriage was a waste of time and energy and my spouse was a cheating, lying, selfish jerk.” These thoughts are essentially agreements to attract yet another person who is and does the same thing. Instead, you should say out loud daily, until you truly believe it at your core, an affirming statement such as: “My first marriage taught me a great deal about myself, how deeply I can love someone, and demonstrated that I have the courage and strength within me as well as the support around me to recover from painful circumstances. Thank you for the lessons I needed to learn. I am strong, loving, and deserve true love.”

7 Not gifting unconditional love.

A key word in this strategy is “gift,” and this is one you must give to yourself as well as others. In giving a gift to others from your heart, you must do so with no expectations of a positive response or a gift or gesture in return. And loving unconditionally, truly and literally, means that you love with no conditions—physical, financial, spiritual, intellectual, emotional or otherwise. For example, I will still love you if you gain weight or get sick, if you are rich or poor, if you switch religions, if you make more money than I do, and when you are crying when I don’t understand it. What is sometimes harder is to fire your internal critic, banishing it from your psyche, and replacing that pessimistic voice with a more loving one that says, “I love and value myself no matter what. I am proud of who I am, what I’ve learned and who I’m becoming.” By addressing these seven issues, you are sure to attract more love into your life and realize the happiness and fulfillment you’ve always dreamed of. And remember, you deserve it!



Sofia Milan is America's spiciest and sweetest relationship expert dedicated to helping people have amazing relationships. Her relationship blog on Facebook regularly realizes engagement in the tens of thousands, serving as a credit to the honesty, vulnerability and witty insights she offers. Milan may be reached online at www.SofiaMilanBooks.com.