

## Finding Your “Soul Mate”

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*“It was love at first sight!” “We were meant for each other.” “I feel like I’ve known him forever.” “We belong together.”* These are all feelings of people who believe they have found their “soul mate”! Can this be true or is it merely “lust at first sight” or just infatuation? I can identify with the “love at first sight” phenomenon because I had this experience with my wife of 30+ years. More times than not, however, this is generally a false alarm... a mere emotional or visceral response.

How do you know then if he or she is your future soul mate? By taking the time to really “get to know” this person you are having such an overwhelmingly positive reaction to! Here are some suggestions from Dr. John Gottman, a psychologist, who studied 700 couples and their relationships for over 20 years:

- 1) **Get to know everything there is to know about your partner.** What are their hopes, dreams, feelings, favorite things, fears, doubts, goals, interests, regrets and thoughts. Stay in touch with how these change over time and you will never get bored.
- 2) **Nurture your fondness and admiration for each other.** Show affection, be playful, maintain your sense of humor, express appreciation and make memories together. Recognize how you are a better person for being with your partner.
- 3) **Turn toward each other regularly.** Add to your “emotional bank account” by sharing how your day was with each other. Acknowledge the another when she enters the room. Give the benefit of the doubt, try harder to understand rather than making your point, and be the first to make amends when a conflict arises.
- 4) **Let your partner influence you.** Couples who respect each other’s opinions and are open to the other’s point of view, experience a gradual transformation toward greater maturity and competence as individuals over time. Those who “know it all”, prefer to “do it themselves” and would rather learn from their own mistakes, run the risk of becoming isolated, embittered and negative about life. Who wants to live with someone like that?

True soul mates are those who began with all the unique mutual attractions couples initially have but gradually knit themselves together in an emotional tapestry that results in bringing out the best of them both. A masterpiece like this requires two souls who are willing to be molded to achieve God’s ultimate plan of fulfillment for their lives.

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