

## **When you no longer “love” each other**

**By Marlene and Bob Neufeld**

Couples often come to us asking what to do. They may say something like, “we aren’t in love any more”. Our experience is that what people really mean when they say this, is that the pain in the relationship exceeds the potential they can see.

When they first meet, couples often see a huge potential in each other. They have fantasies that this is the person who will finally meet all of their unmet needs, this person really sees and understands them, this person is the other part of them that they’ve been looking for.

Of course, some of this is the chemicals of dopamine talking, that rush of hormones which makes everything the other person does look exciting and interesting.

However, after a period of time, due to an inevitable rubbing up against each other’s “sore spots” many people start to feel that the pain in the relationship has gotten more than any possible potential. Not only are their fantasies proven wrong, but they are no longer willing to give the other person the benefit of the doubt. Stinginess takes over from generosity and expansive appreciation.

We believe that to keep love alive you need to ensure that the pain is reduced. This can be done by revealing, listening generously to each other, understanding how conflict happens and learning to communicate in blame-free unarguable ways. [Note that we have expanded on these topics on our website, see [www.marleneandbob.com/articles.htm](http://www.marleneandbob.com/articles.htm). We can also become sensitively aware of each other’s “sore spots”, not to protect each other from them, but to become generous when we inadvertently rub against them.

We can also keep love alive by ensuring that the potential is enhanced by generating appreciation, and taking risks and approaching our discomfort by moving towards our partners.

It is important to remember that love is a conscious choice not just a nebulous feeling of attraction fueled by dopamine. It is not something that happens to us and then disappears or lasts. When we first meet, we put our best self forward, give each other the benefit of the doubt, and usually are willing to do things that interest our partners, just to be with them. If we continued to act like that in our long term relationships, we might have fewer people who say they no longer “love” each other.

*Marlene & Bob Neufeld practice body-centered Coaching and Psychotherapy. They are a couple who help couples learn life-changing skills and create closer, more loving relationships with one another. To learn more, see [www.marleneandbob.com](http://www.marleneandbob.com) or call 613-594-9248 to arrange a complimentary 1-hour introductory session.*