

The Supernatural Secret to Falling Back in Love With Your Spouse

Feeling in love is a heady exhilarating experience for most people. Your stomach has butterflies, your eyes only see stars and the sky is full of fireworks whenever you even think of your sweetheart. You're connected and happy. What could ever go wrong?

And one day the butterflies, stars and fireworks are gone. What happened to your love?

A distraught husband wrote about the shifting feelings in his marriage. Only a couple weeks ago, his wife had told him how much she loved him, but now she is acting cold and distant. When he confronted his wife about the change, she replied, "That's how I felt then, but I don't really feel like that now." They can't understand what's wrong.

This couple is on a very dangerous path. Using feelings to measure the health of your marriage or the reality of your love will leave you vulnerable and at the mercy of things outside of your control. Periods of intense feelings are wonderful. But God never intended love and marriage to be built on feelings.

So enjoy the good feelings when they're there. It's fun! It feels wonderful. But that's not love.

And when the feelings lapse, what then? Have you fallen out of love?

As Mr. Buford says to Melanie in *Sweet Home Alabama*, "Only if you want to be."

Love and Feelings

Love and feelings may overlap, but love has very little to do with feelings. Love is a choice. Love is a commitment, a covenant, a decision.

Sometimes I almost wish the butterflies, stars and fireworks didn't happen, because so many people take those exciting feelings to mean they're in love. But that is so not true. I suppose God built those feelings into the experience of romantic love because without them, few people would have the courage to pursue relationships and marriage.

Feelings are real, but they are fickle. Feelings of connection and joy involve brain synapses and chemicals such as oxytocin, serotonin and endorphins. A million things can come along to change those chemicals, and thereby change your feelings; stress at work, loss of sleep, change in diet, the weather, physical illness. Some of those things you may have control over, and some you don't.

I also wish young people (and older people) would learn this truth before marriage; it might save a lot of heartache. But all the hormones and brain chemicals flooding your system during the flurry of many early relationships make learning this difficult.

But you can learn it now. And if you've lost those loving feelings of connection and joy, there are things you can do to get them back.

Get Those Feelings Back

Talk to any couple who has been married more than a short time, and they will tell you that feelings for each other change. Long-lasting marriages are not those where husband and wife magically maintain feelings of being in love, but those where each spouse made the choice to remain committed to each other regardless of feelings.

Neuroscience has told us a lot about how our brains work and what brings on or squelches various feelings. If you want those happy feelings back, there are actions you can take to help those feelings along. You cannot control everything that affects your feelings, but the things here are those you can do something about.

Taking these actions will help stir up those feel-good brain chemicals and you may well “fall in love” all over again.

1. Decide to Love

Our choices are not the sole determinant of our feelings, but they have a much bigger impact than most of us realize. As Abraham Lincoln is credited with saying, “I’ve come to the conclusion that most people are about as happy as they choose to be.” The same goes for love.

Make the decision to love your spouse. That’s what you promised when you said, “I do.” If you’re married, then loving your spouse is what you are called to do. Settle in your own mind that you will be the one to love your husband or wife, regardless of whether your feelings line up right now or not. Decide that you will keep loving them “for as long as we both shall live.”

2. Act Lovingly

Acting in a certain way toward your spouse has an impact on your feelings. Choose to treat your spouse kindly, to focus on the best in them, to put their needs above your own, to seek to understand them, to learn and grow in whatever way you need to in order to love them well. Choose to take care of yourself well enough so that you have as much of yourself as possible to offer your spouse.

Acting lovingly does not mean being a doormat or accepting dangerous or bad behavior. It may mean lovingly confronting your spouse, protecting yourself if your spouse becomes

abusive or getting outside help if needed. Acting lovingly may look quite different during different seasons of your marriage.

3. Invest in your Relationship

We invest in what we value. Friendships, character, career, relationship with God—nothing of value grows without ongoing investment, and your marriage is the same.

Investing in your marriage means things like spending time together, learning skills where you may lack them (such as in intimacy, communication or other areas), choosing to enter your spouse's world, seeking to continually understand your spouse better, praying together and more. It may even mean doing some hard work of healing if your own past is interfering with your ability to love. Investing in your marriage will help it grow stronger, and your feelings may well come along for the ride.

4. Connect with the Source of Love

The deepest truth is that none of us can love well on our own. As humans we are selfish, and that's the opposite of love. Saying "I love you" based on feelings really means, "I love how you make me feel." Real love is unselfish. And that only comes from God.

Many of us have not been loved well. It takes divine intervention and intentional learning for us to learn a different way to love. Consciously spend time in God's presence letting Him love you. Become quiet long enough to hear from Him how He sees you. Invite Him to show you how He loves you, and then to put His love into your heart—specifically, His love for your spouse. That's something He is eager to do.

Keep intentionally learning to love well, and you'll never be sorry you did.

Your Turn: How have you responded when your feelings of being “in love” seem to change? What are you going to do to invest in your relationship going forward? Leave a comment below.
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