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Don't Look for Your Soul Mate

By Rinatta Paries

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If you look for a soul mate, you are likely to find a relationship that leaves you bewildered and alone soon after it begins. Instead, look for a partner and a best friend to whom you are attracted.

I hear it over and over again; "We were so compatible...we fell in love at first sight...we committed to each other right way...we had so much in common...it is as if we have known each other all of our lives...etc." Yet the relationship fell apart, my soul mate's behavior radically changed. What happened?

What happens when you look for a soul mate? You look for someone with whom you can feel at home, right away. You look for someone who will understand you and give you what you want and need, right away. You look for an extraordinary sense of recognition, connection and attraction.

Instead, what you find is someone who is willing to melt with you, to let go of boundaries that define the self. You find someone who is willing for a time to be for you whomever and whatever you want. And you melt with him or her, let go of your own boundaries, become for him or her what is wanted or needed. Then the two of you feel like soul mates. But this can only go on for a time, and often a short time — about 6 weeks to 3 months, sometimes even less.

Eventually, both of you regain a sense of self, a sense of personal boundaries, needs and wants, distinctly different from one another. Your "soul mate" may not meet your needs and give you attention as readily as he or she once did. You realize you may not be as compatible as you thought you were. You find out things about each other you cannot accept. One or both people pull away, often without communicating to the other the true reasons for the distance. Eventually the relationship ends.

If you want to avoid having this kind of experience altogether, look for a person who has the capacity to become you partner and best friend, to whom you are attracted. The key words here being "partner" and "best friend" and "attracted." As in someone you can partner with to build a life, someone who will support, encourage and cheer you on, to whom you are attracted. All three of these qualities must be present for you to have the kind of relationship you dream of.

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Then, once you find him or her, follow five suggestions below to build a relationship:

1. Don't melt into the other person, but instead be strongly yourself.

The more you are yourself, the stronger your bond with the other person has a chance of becoming. That is if each of you — being yourselves — enjoys being with the other.

2. Don't try to be nice and don't give just to be loved or liked. Just be.

In a long-term relationship, one that hopefully will last for the rest of your life, you want to just be and have that be enough, have that be appreciated. So just be in the beginning — it will either be good enough, maybe even extraordinary, or not.

3. Don't rely on each other too much.

Don't need each other to fix life, emotional or financial problems. Emotions and loyalties get confused when new partners try to save each other. Keep the relationship clean and be together because you want to, not because you need to.

4. Slow way down.

Take the relationship very slow. Savor each milestone: the first time you hold hands, the first kiss, the first afternoon spent together. Don't rush in search of the holy grail of "relationships." If you end up together, these "firsts" will only happen once. If you don't end up together, you are more likely to end the relationship sooner and more cleanly if you have not rushed in headfirst.

5. Build a friendship.

Building a good friendship takes time, effort, risk, communication, compassion, honesty. Do it – it is this friendship that will serve as a foundation of your relationship.

Now doesn't this sound better than the cycle of finding love and then losing it again?

Your Relationship Coach,
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Having coined the phrase "relationship coach," Master Certified Coach Rinatta Paries works with

singles to help them attract their ideal relationship, and helps couples create more love and fulfillment in their existing relationships. Visit her web site at www.WhatItTakes.com or e-mail her at coach@WhatItTakes.com.

The Soul Mate Debate

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Are you looking or waiting for your soul mate? Many singles spend a lot of energy and time waiting and searching for their soul mate. But are soul mates found or created?

The notion of soul mates stems from the concepts of reincarnation and karma. Soul mates are defined as two souls reincarnating alongside each other over and over again, playing different roles to each other, such as lovers, adversaries, parent and child, victim and murderer, coworkers, etc. Some will argue soul mates were separated at the beginning of time, and so in each lifetime they seek to reunite in some way.

If you were to find your soul mate, the theory is you would be able to instantly recognize him or her. You would feel connected, at home, recognized, valued, loved again, instantly. The two of you will reconnect, fall in love all over again and live happily ever after.

Unfortunately, this is not quite how the soul mate thing works. Here are some sobering thoughts about the notion of soul mates:

- * Each of us could have an unlimited number of soul mates. We have many close relationships in a lifetime, so who is to say any one or all of them could be our soul mates?
- * Intimate relationships with soul mates are less likely to work out. That's because if someone is truly your soul mate, you have been around the block with each other too many times in too many different ways. Along with intense passion for each other, you will also feel intense anger and resentment.
- * If you instantly recognize or feel connected to someone, does that automatically mean he or she is your soul mate? It could be that this person simply has very similar childhood family patterns or adult dating patterns as you do, allowing you to feel instantly at home.
- * If you immediately recognize someone who was a lover in one past life and an adversary in another, how likely is an intimate relationship between the two of you to work out?
- * The idea that soul mates will find and instantly recognize each other presumes past life memories are at the surface and can be tapped into at any time. Do you remember your past lives, especially if you do not believe in past lives and reincarnation?

Because of the points above, I think those who say they are looking or waiting for their soul mate really

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mean they are looking or waiting for someone with whom love, relationship, and intimacy will happen instantly. Unfortunately, as I said, this very rarely has a happy ending. Relationships are not about instant gratification and instantly knowing whether you are "meant to be" with someone.

A healthier, more realistic, and more successful notion is one where you and your partner grow to become "soul mates." In other words, you grow to be in love with one another, to know each other

intimately, to cherish and support each other, to share closeness unequal to other relationships. And this can only happen with time.

How do you grow into "soul mates?" Here are some ideas:

- * When meeting potential partners, do not look for an instant feeling of recognition or a strong connection. Instead look for a subtle attraction and a subtle connection.
- * While dating, take time to become good friends and get to know each other. Do not assume you know the person you are dating before you have been with him or her for at least 6 months.
- * Emphasize excellent communication right from the beginning. Establish a standard of communication both of you are comfortable with, and hold each other to that standard.
- * Accept each other for who you are. Neither of you will be exactly like the other, nor will you do things in exactly the same ways.
- * Accept and appreciate each other's shortcomings even as you accept and appreciate each other's good qualities. No one is perfect – not even your soul mate.

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