

How do you know

How do you know when you have found love and when love has found you?

An interesting question. A very interesting conversation. How do you know when love is so very hard to define. Many people feel like they are in love, only to find that this feeling fades in time. Do we often confuse lust, desire or loneliness with love? Do we confuse our other feelings with love? So it is a difficult question to answer. We really need to pin down what love is.

We know all kinds of love. Some of us "love" certain foods. We love our pets. We love our children. We love our friends. We love our spouses, or any other term you want to use for a romantic love. Except for the food, all of those other loves denote some form of caring or concern for someone or something else. While we feel that animals can return our affections, most think that the love we feel toward our pets is a one way deal. With people the love can be and often is something shared between two people. How that love is expressed or even identified depends on who and how we love.

Now since the original query was relating to a more romantic type love, I will just skim over the other "loves". Love of children, siblings, parents and friends don't always need to be reciprocated. While we like the people we love to return our caring, it is often not essential to our outpouring of love. It is nice to have and does allow for more expression of our love. But we have all seen where someone cares deeply for another, but that caring is not returned. It can change how we feel, but often does not.

With a romantic love, it is almost mandatory that the love be returned. Without that return it is difficult to show, expand and grow in that love. But what is that love? In my very

humble opinion, love is a combination of many different feelings and relationship experiences. Our physical chemistry, our mental compatibility, our communication level, our specific likes and dislikes, and various other conditions that define who we are play into what we think love is. And through this, love grows, changes and becomes defined by the people in a loving relationship. Knowing that it will change is important to remember.

After defining love (at least I hope I did), we can ask how we know if we found love or if love found us. You need to open your heart, emotions and mind to see what you feel. You need to ask and talk to your partner to find out what they think and feel. If compatible, and the two define their relationship as love, then you have found love and love has found you. But, and this is a big but, you must always remember that love changes. People change and the relationship between those two people will change. By keeping the lines of communication open, two people can keep love open and growing. Everything else is really secondary if communication is absent.

Many may ask how in the world I know any of this. I have experienced love in my life, and that love grew and changed for 20 years. I've known feelings that were close to love, but the lines of communication were never really open. I've confused feelings of desire and loneliness with love. I know what love did for me and how it changed my life. I also know that because of the love I shared, I am open and would welcome a new loving relationship. Love made me a better person than I was, and opened my eyes to all two people could be together.

We were better together than we ever could have been apart.

Or to answer the questions posed. When you are you better together than you are apart, you have found love and it found you.