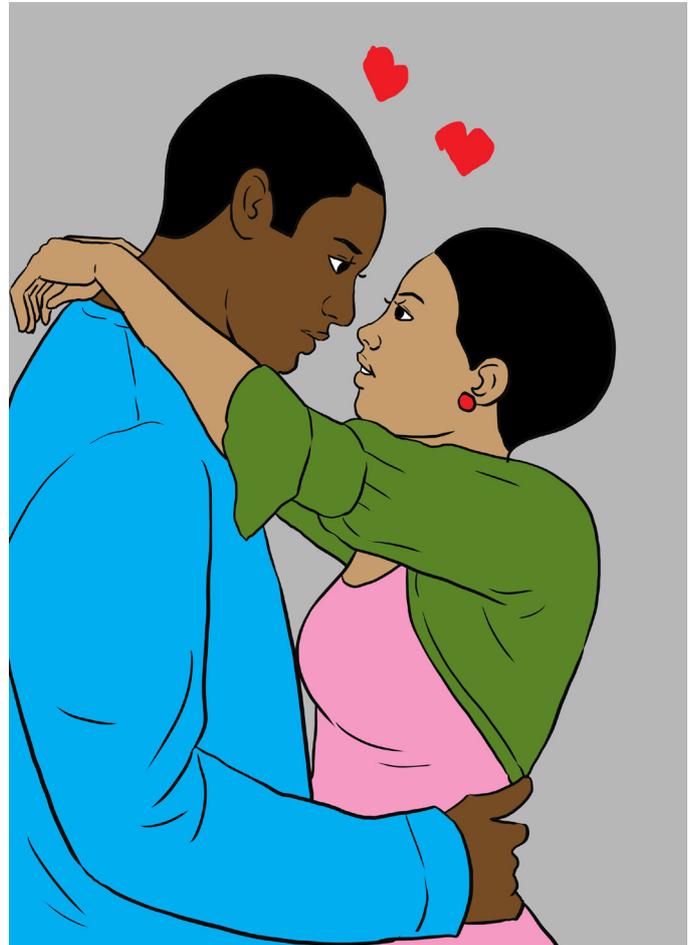


# Loving and Living a lovely fulfilling love life: Love and finding meaning in relationship

By Dr Geoffrey Wango

Words are just that— a combination of letters—until the letters are conjoined to form words and someone gives the word a meaning. A rose by any other name would smell as sweet. Yes, but what we call a rose is not just any other name or flower; it is a unique flower that is the symbol of love. The smell, the colour and liveliness of a rose has such deep meaning because rose and love are intertwined.

I'm not sure if you know any other two words that are so most crucial in life. They are actually life and love. They are some of the most difficult words that have been defined yet still defy meaning. The Bible, the Quran, Charles Darwin (in 'The Origin of the Species'), Frank (in 'A search for meaning'), Shakespeare's classic books, movies and endless songs are all an effort to define and describe these two rather elusive words.



## Love and loving

I can bet that whatever your age, you must have seen, heard and uttered the word 'love' so many times that it will be part of your vocabulary. That is where I want us to begin with a definition of love as well as the implications.

Our attempt at defining ourselves and our world are all the same. Thus, Philosophy, Language, Communication and Psychology are all related. Put in another way, our life is our philosophy. Our philosophy is made up of our world. Our world consists of the knowledge stored in our minds. An expression of our knowledge includes our desires and wants, and when we express it, this is called communication. Communication includes art and language. So, if you say you love someone (or state that you don't), you are expressing a state of mind. You must therefore be expressing your thoughts and you choose how to do it to make it meaningful to the person. In essence, your philosophy must encompass who you are, your thoughts, feelings and actions.

Now that we are discussing about love, be careful though because although your philosophy may not believe in love this does not imply that you do not have a definition of the word or concept. It does not matter as much whether your embodiment of love is positive, negative or undefined (not clear). Your perception of it is entirely another matter. Still, we define our world in our terms.

## Exploring love

The reason why I have taken such a view in exploring love in the first issue of our magazine is because you need to define what love is, and of course in understanding what love is defines a relationship. It is difficult if not impossible to try and understand something that you do not know. Knowledge implies awareness of, an understanding of something.

Love is a relationship and a commitment. This means commitment in terms of time and other resources like money and emotions. It is not just the two of you being together; it is about the meaning of why you are connected to each other and hence your relationship.

Love is double-edged; if you love someone, they also love you. In that case, you strive to give each other as much as you expect from your partner. Love is marked by care, concern and respect. That way, the union benefits the partners equally and perennially. Yet many people are whipped up by emotions because they do not understand love. They cannot distinguish between lust and infatuation. The problem with whipped up emotions is that while it sometimes works well, in other instances it sparks a strong negative impact. The best in love is to succinctly express what's on your mind.

Your loving someone can be inconsequential unless he or she reciprocates. The vantage point is when the two of you are complementary.

It is interesting that humans are the only species that are capable of making such elevated consciousness about love and love making. Loving and endearing a partner in particular has been demonstrated among animals including lions, whales and ducks. Well, not in such precise, elaborate detail or emotional proportions, but still providing a way of evaluating our loving model.

Relentless effort by one person to establish or sustain a relationship is futile. This is because such effort is neither appreciated nor rewarded, tending to be diminished or wiped out by a largely unreciprocated response that eventually wrecks the (outward) approach or efforts. This eventually marks the end of the relationship.

A good thriving relationship is a mutual effort among the partners. A poor relationship is where there is lack of desire among partners, or where there may be effort of one partner while the spouse has given up, is unconcerned or busy with other priorities.

Love can feel like a tussle between destiny and reality; destiny because you feel entangled, like Romeo and Juliet because you were destined together, but reality because we ultimately live in a real world.

An association exists because of each other, and must surpass selfishness and personal effort. This is because if the other person is not as interested in the association, they feel encroached or drowned.

## True love leads to true happiness

Love, for instance, comes with self-awareness, availability (physically and emotionally), support, loveliness, honesty, honour, empathy, forgiveness and being generally concerned and interested in each other. This requires a willingness to listen and discuss several issues with each other. This is because you both care and are concerned. Love has much more than passion. Love carries understanding, sharing of joys, hurts and having a stable relationship.

**Time decides who you meet in life, your heart decides who you want in your life, and your behaviour decides who stays in your life.**



Such a fulfilling life is full of peace night after night and certainly not regret. There is gratitude in being with one another, and gratitude for being confident about tomorrow and a hope for the future. Love has a lot of respect and admiration, instead of greed, denial and deceit. Respect is earned through hard work, doing the right thing, and bringing out the best in self and in others. Admiration is experienced in the contentment with the person that you love.

In the end, love brings good health and emotional stability. This is reflected in vitality, vigour, energy, physical endurance and happiness. This is because happiness is a process of satisfaction in a relationship rather than a product of love. Love itself comes to thrive with a need for passion, perseverance and determination. These are treasures of a caring

and understanding mind. Such true love does not have lost time but priceless time and living. Each day is a new day, a chance to stir up the feeling of bonding between the lovers. It is confident and responsible and these are evident in the mode of living.

**Only love — not lust — is worth marrying for.- Chris Hart, Sunday Nation**

Finally, such care has fancied fleeting pleasures. This is because it is mutual and a fulfilling relationship, rather than a selfish motive or desiring someone for personal gain. True love is the little thing that makes a day and life wonderful indeed.

### Love and loving and life

Love and loving are about a relationship. The relationship must be skilfully developed. This represents an equal zeal in desire to develop a mutual relationship. Hence, there are generalities and specifics of love.

It must be admitted that there is a general feeling of a marked rise in failed love. This can be attributed to various aspects of our modern world such as the materialistic aspect in relationship building. Money and finances are key factors in relationship because of the demands of modern living. It is good to be careful with mere rhetoric and be cautious about misleading love that is marked by invariably prompt responses, whether unsolicited for or simply imagined.

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