

A Most Valuable Lesson in Chemistry!

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Finding that undefinable spark with a new partner is like looking for a needle in a haystack. We don't know how to describe it or how we'll find it, but we're certain we'll know it when it comes along. Let's look at the laws of attraction and explore what personal chemistry truly is. What draws us to others? And what should we be looking for when we want a relationship that will stand the test of time?

When it comes to the laws of attraction, chemistry is not as mysterious or elusive as it may seem. And it's a lot less magical and mythical than it's cracked up to be.

The story of your attraction starts way, way back, at the beginning. As children, from an early age, you create blueprints by watching and learning from your family of origin. The first people you observe are your parents. You watch, listen, absorb and model their behaviors... how they eat, laugh, cry, relax, and relate to one another. The way your parents treat one another is how you learn to love, respect, give and take. The way they deal with conflict is your blueprint for conflict resolution. You also absorb the values, work ethics, religion, people-pleasing behaviours, anger, lack of boundaries and other characteristics from your family of origin.

Years later, long after we're grown and on our own, we're still operating from these blueprints, both consciously and unconsciously. It's these blueprints that can make connecting with some people almost instantaneous. They seem comfortable to us... familiar. We are at ease, and at home with them. We even feel that elusive spark of chemistry many times.

Chemistry is familiarity

Simply put, chemistry is familiarity. That's right. That new friend or romantic partner you instantly and easily connect with, and the spark you feel, that *chemistry*... it's familiarity. It is why some people connect with us easier than others. As well, the more similar traits

two people share, the stronger the familiarity, or chemistry.

It's why so many people say things like: *'You'll probably end up marrying someone just like your father (or mother).'* Indeed, marrying someone just like a parent is something that emerges from our blueprints. Familiarity has its upside. If you have a very similar temperament to your mother, and you find yourself attracted to men who share many of your father's traits, and your parents have a supportive, happy marriage, it's all good.

From desired to undesirable

Relationships that start with a chemical bang often end in despair. This happens if we are building a relationship based on a flawed or painful blueprint, and unwittingly repeating negative patterns we grew up with. Subtly, unconsciously, this person we find irresistible reminds us of something difficult and unresolved from our childhood.

For example, Martine meets Marty, a wonderful man, who just happens to be in the same profession as her father. Marty works hard, just as her father did her whole life. Her father was proud of his beautiful wife who gave up her career to raise three well-behaved children to his exacting standards, while he devoted his time to building a successful business. Marty is also similarly driven. After dating for several weeks, just as she is getting comfortable with Marty's take-charge plans for her free time, Marty lets Martine know that if they were to marry, he

would insist on her staying home with the children, just as his mother had. Martine soon recognizes an all-too-familiar trait: Marty's domineering and controlling nature. Once again, Martine has chosen someone just like the overbearing and critical father she grew up and struggled with for many years. She now sees that she is in a relationship that appears to be similar to her parents' dynamics. She wants nothing more than to end their relationship and break the cycle of choosing domineering men to make her life choices, once and for all.

Breaking negative cycles

To break negative cycles, we need to recognize patterns and be aware of the familiar — or familial — traits we carry, and the situations we unconsciously recreate and attract. The more we resist acknowledging our traits and vulnerabilities, the more they persist in our lives and show up. The moment we own the traits and patterns that make us susceptible to reliving negative cycles, we enable ourselves to shift and change. Only through awareness can we break negative cycles and patterns from the past we grew up with.

Back to Martine: Once she becomes aware of her vulnerabilities, her tendency to people please, and allow others to take control over her time and plans, as her father once did with her and her mother, she can learn to spot the negative but familiar allure of the controlling partner she most definitely does not want in her life. She can learn to own her part in allowing someone to be taking charge and controlling of her, and spot the warning signs of someone with traits similar to her

domineering father. She can then end, once and for all, a negative cycle that has been repeating in her life.

From chemistry to compatibility

We all carry the blueprints of our families, good, bad, and indifferent. But we needn't be sentenced to a life of repeating unhealthy cycles like people-pleasing, abuse, control, and other maladaptive patterns. Once we take the time to recognize our good traits and acknowledge our negative ones, we can choose to make meaningful and positive changes. We can begin to understand the dynamics of familiarity in full, see beyond chemistry, and seek a compatible partner... someone who aligns with our values and goals and supports our aspirations. It is compatibility that stands the test of time and makes for an exciting and fulfilling relationship.

An inter-personal chemistry test!

Acknowledge the good and bad traits you carry from your family blueprints

Ask yourself what positive traits you share with a new partner

Pay attention to familiar negative feelings like dread, fear or self doubt when they arise

Recognize warning signs, like familiar negative traits, roles and behaviors

Commit to choosing a partner who supports and aligns with your goals and aspirations, that's very attractive!

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About the author

Dr. Monica Vermani is a Clinical Psychologist specializing in treating trauma, stress and mood & anxiety disorders, and the founder of Start Living Corporate Wellness. She is a well-known speaker and author on mental health and wellness. Her upcoming book, A Deeper Wellness, is scheduled for publication in 2021. <https://www.drmonicavermani.com/>

Dr. Vermani has recently launched an exciting online self-help program, A Deeper Wellness, delivering powerful mental-health guidance, life skills, and knowledge that employees can access anywhere, anytime. <https://www.aeeperwellness.com/>

