



**Do not
mix
LOVE
with
PASSION!**

by Lars-Eric Uneståhl

I UNDERSTAND if you react with surprise over the headline as love usually is related to passion, but my intention with this article is to show that LOVE WITHOUT PASSION is the best and more durable love.



WILL SHOW that *the negative side effects of passion in summary are bigger than the positive effects.*

I WILL TRY TO EXPLAIN why *passion based on neuroscience can be regarded as a pathological state with changes of "normal" perception and behaviors.*

However, the headline is just valid for love and passion in human (and religious) relations.

THUS, I WILL JUST TAKE UP THE CONCEPTS OF LOVE AND PASSION BETWEEN PEOPLE – the content of this article is not valid for love of and passion for areas related to work, hobbies, etc. Passion in these areas is instead often regarded as an important success factor.



LARS-ERIC UNESTÅHL
PhD in Psychology

President SIU –
Scandinavian International
Univeristy

siu.nu – unestahl.com

Photo: belongs to Lars-Eric Uneståhl

WHAT is LOVE and PASSION?

Love

30 years ago I was touring Sweden together with bishop LENNART KOSKINEN and the famous film actor CHRISTINA SCHOLLIN. The topic was Love.

Lennart was talking about *Agape* (the divine love), Christina about *Eros* (the physical love) and I was talking about *Work- and Life-Love*.

The Greeks had several names for various kind of love besides *Eros* and *Agape*. *Storge* for love for your family. *Phileio* for your friends etc, while English (and Swedish) only have one word - Love.

The common meaning of **Love** is an affection to give something to someone unconditionally and without reservation.

Love between people is a spectrum of feelings and attitudes that are characterized by tenderness, affection, affinity and willingness to sacrifice, while **love directed to abstract things** like art or a nation, or to more general concrete things like nature or a sports club or to more specific concrete objects such as one's home, one's pets or one's close fellow, including one's own, has somewhat different characteristics.

Self-love, love for one's own person is sometimes seen as something negative by the surroundings, where self-love might be expressed in actions that increase one's own wealth or well-being at the expense of others.

On the other hand is "true Self-love" very important for a good life. The Bible says that it is difficult to love somebody else if you do not love yourself first (*Love your neighbor as yourself*). Thus Self-love and Self-insight/Self-knowledge

Passion

Passion that comes from the Latin word *patio* meaning suffering, has a Christian background with the suffering of Christ (*Passover*) but also the passion of the Holy Spirit (*Pentecost*)

However, the importance has more and more shifted from suffering to flaming, that is, an expression of a strong and intense feeling for something that we love.

Love and Passion are two very powerful emotions. They may overlap sometimes but most often there is generally a clear cut difference between them.

Passion refers mainly to the sexual and romantic feeling while *Love* is a strong affection for someone close to us.

Passion is often a part of the love between a couple, while it is not a part of love between a mother and a child.

There are also other important differences, for instance concerning duration, where passion is a temporary emotion which lasts for a short while, while love can last the whole Life.

The Essence of Love is a deeper understanding, while Passion does not require that. Love has always positive connotation and seeks the best for another while Passion also contains many negative connotations like jealousy, dependency, OCD like control, etc. There are two question we can ask ourself to separate love from passion.

- ❶ Do I want to live with you? Yes (*Love*)
- ❷ Can I live without you? – No (*Passion*)

IN SUMMARY: Love is a **State of Living**, while **Passion** is a **State of Being**.

LOVE ...



Xenia (greek)
Guest-Friendship Love



Storge (greek)
Familial Love



Agápe (greek)
Divine Love



Philautia (greek)
Self-Love
Self-Compassion
Self-Obsessed Love



Eros (greek)
Sexual and/or
Romantic
Desire/Love



Phileio, Philia (greek)
Love between Friends

... PASSION

(greek) to Suffer

Patio, Pati
(lat / Christian)
Suffering,
to Suffer



The Passion of Christ

Illustrations / Public Domains: - Faith / Pikist

- Mme George Charpentier with her Children, August Renoir, 1878

/MetMuseum - Family Portrait with Guests, 1951/Library of Congress

- Narcissos, Caravaggio, 1595/Wikimedia Commons, - Love, Thomas Rowlandson, 1785/MetMuseum

- The Card Players, Paul Cézanne, 1890/MetMuseum - A Couple in a Passionate Embrace, José Guadalupe Posada, 1900/Library of Congress - Passion, Timusi/Pixabay, - Film Poster, 1920/Library of Congress,

- Four Scenes from the Passion, follower of Bernard van Orley, 1520/MetMuseum

THE BACKSIDE of COMMITMENT and PASSION

In my research about **Success Factors** I started to cooperate with CHARLES GARFIELD in the beginning of the 70's. Charles was one head of the famous Apollo project (the first man on the moon). He got so fascinated of what they did to realize the content of president Kennedy's famous speech in 1961 about landing on the moon 1969, that he decided to start research about reasons and factors behind exceptional performances. As he found the same four Success Factors that I had found (*Self-Image, Goal/Motivation, Attitude and Feelings/Moods (Inner Success)*), we started to cooperate.

However, he emphasized one factor more, as he said:
The strongest Success Factor is Commitment. As Commitment is stronger than Engagement, it is more like Passion.

This fit very well into the American philosophy with the common belief that everyone can succeed, everyone can become President (many agree today). Intelligence is more genetic but Commitment is self made (the self-made man). The result was the creation of a new profession – The Motivators who wanted to create motivation and passion in people. Some of them got famous all over the world and one is still active (Anthony Robbins).

● FROM PASSION TO GLOW

Unfortunately, the result was often what I call a "yoyo-effect" in the Mind in a similar way as in yo-yo dieting.

Temporary passion followed by "mental hangover" when you returned to "reality". (Also Robbins detected that some years ago and started to use the training concept for long-term and endurable change.)

I then replaced the passion concept with a smooth, endurable and life-long "glow", that is maintained through energy from your personal vision and from the "mental room".



Illustration: adapted from Kindlana

● BURNOUT

The next blow to passion came with CHRISTINA MASLACH's research about *Burnout* where the concept of burnout spread like wildfire all over the world.

One idea was that in order to be "burned out" you have to burn, so the most vulnerable to be burned out was the passionate people.

THE PASSIONATE LOVE

The third battle against passion has been through the mixture of love and passion, the mixture of love and falling in love.

In a flight between Fiji and Los Angeles

40 years ago I had a young Indian lady beside me. I asked where she was going. "To LA to unite with my husband", she said. It turned out that she had only met him once before, at the wedding day. Her husband was chosen by her parents.

When I asked her about her idea to move together with a stranger, she said. "I think our system, where our parents chose our mate is better than yours. You meet someone, fall in love and marry. And then when the passion is over you divorce. We build up something together and learn to love each other."

I remember that I thought that it was a strange system, but since then I have been a visiting professor in Indian universities and have found that this is a rather common system even on a doctoral level.

When they are trying to convince me that their system is better than ours they point to the number of divorces, which are many times higher in the western world than in India. Here are some numbers: Sweden has the highest % divorces in the world with 54,9%, more than the other Nordic countries (Finland 51,2, Denmark 44,5, Norge 40,4 och Island 39,4%). India has the lowest divorce rate in the world with 1,1 %. The easiness to divorce in Sweden compared with India can only explain a small part of the difference. My belief is that the main factor in the explanation of the difference between Sweden and India has to do with the fact that most marriages in Sweden happen in the pathological state, called passion, where we can not see if the bases for a good marriage exist.

THE NEUROPHYSIOLOGY of PASSION

IN ORDER TO GET A SCIENTIFIC EXPLANATION OF THE PASSION STATE, I asked my oldest friend from Uppsala university, ÅKE PÅLSHAMMAR, to describe what is happening in the "Passion illness state". Åke is the educational radio expert on the brain and has a youtube channel called "The Brain channel". Here is his description:

"The prefrontal cortex is involved in emotional control, especially in the case of love and so-called passionate love. This normally occurring affect regulation is important in order to exaggerate emotional expressions and experiences, but it may also distort our perception and perception of reality. As many have been able to realize, these regulatory and inhibitory functions are disrupted by strong feelings of the passionate love type.

The ability to critically look at a situation, make important cognitive choices, make decisions, see new solutions are all examples of so-called executive functions, usually mediated through network areas in prefrontal cortex, that is, the cerebral cortex in the lobes.

These functions are valid in the "normal state" but are disrupted and changed in a passion state which lead to various experiential and behavior deviations from what usually will be the person's way of reacting, thinking, and acting.

Some examples of these pathological changes are for example behaviors of type OCD, ie obsessive thoughts and behaviors (jealousy) or depending - "sickness", where we get withdrawal symptoms, when we do not get enough contact with the loved one.

And our energy, our thoughts and our perception, which are largely governed by the prefrontal functions of the brain, are strongly shaped by the emotions for the desired person, just as an addiction."

Wanting these dopamin kicks and feelings of well-being in life is a natural need. If you do not know this or can create these feelings naturally within yourself, it is common to seek it outside of yourself not only through your partner but through alcohol, food, sweets, shopping, sex, drugs, careers, money and work, extreme training ("exercise addiction"), risky activities, gambling, etc. These high amounts of dopamine can easily create dependencies. However, since these activities do not satisfy our deep, emotional needs, it will only be a harmful escape from everyday stress and other problems in life.

Descriptions of brain washing have indicated that those who resisted longest was the most faithful to the new ideas after the brainwash. Another study showed that there is a relation between emotional intensity and distance from the average or middle point.

This can be seen when passionate love change into hate after being betrayed or deceived which sometimes ends in violence and even killings.

CHOOSING A PARTNER BASED ON PASSION

Our decision guru ARI RIABACKE use to compare the base for the two most important decisions in Life:

1. To get some place to live - and -
2. To get someone to live with.

Before we buy a house we make very careful inspections and take good time to look at advantages and disadvantages before we make a decision. When we select a partner it can sometimes be at "the bar in an intoxicated state".

However, as passion also is a kind of intoxicated state it will be difficult to see in this state if the criteria for a longterm love is met.

Thus, since passion distorts perception, it will be difficult to choose a partner for "eternal love" when we are passionate in love. As this state also often last only a short time we will too late detect that the bases for love is not there. If we also marry before the passionate love is over it often leads to divorce as there is a natural decrease of passion and intensive feelings when the marriage gets more "automated" and "boring". One part can then meet someone new and "fall in love", break up the old relation and after a while will find that the passion goes away again with a new search for a stimulating and exciting partner. Some people will continue in that way until no one longer wants them and they will spend the final part of Life alone.



» SINCE
PASSION DISTORTS
PERCEPTION,
it will be difficult to
choose a partner
for "eternat love"
when we are
passionate in love.«

EMOTIONAL CONTROL by MENTAL TRAINING

Two occasions from my coaching courses made me make a special program to regulate passion and the need for passion.

One course participant told me in secret that she was going to divorce. When I asked about the reasons she said:
"I know that my husband is the best one both for me and my kids, but I do not feel anything for him any more."

In another course one participant told me an opposite story:
"My husband beat me both mentally and physically but I am so in love with him and our sex moments are gorgeous. I know intellectually that I should divorce him but I can't".

These were two situations that made me start to develop mental training for emotional control in order to be able to move from emotional Victims to emotional Masters.



» *START
TO LEARN
EACH OTHER
when you are
emotionally
sober - and
you will know
that the
relationship will
last also when
the passion
is over.*«

Illustration: kropekk_pl

SO WHAT TO DO with the **NEED** for **LOVE** and **PASSION**

As the base for a long marriage seems to be friendship – wanting to do everything for each other, to share the ups and downs of life etc which is difficult to determine in a passionate state where everything seems rosy, I will suggest the following:

Start by learning to know each other when you both are emotionally sober.
When you know that the relation seems to fulfill the criteria for love, then you may allow also this wonderful emotional state called *passion* to come.

At the same time you will know that the relation will last also when the passion is over. ●