

By
John Kenny
John Kenny Coaching

Understanding Drama Cycles

“How can I love them one minute and hate them so much the next?”

“I feel they are my soul mate, so why do we constantly fight?”

Sound familiar?

If so, you are not alone.

Most “love relationships” eventually turn into “love/hate” relationships. Feelings of love can turn into drama, hostility, attack, or withdrawal of affection, at the flick of a switch. **This duality of pleasure and pain is considered “normal.”**

Many people believe that if you love the person it will all “work out.” Sadly, this is not the case.

The reality is that the relationship will probably get worse. Other areas of your life will begin to be affected: you snap at your children more or fight in front of them, you withdraw from your friendships, or you are distracted at work.

You’ll keep the cycle going for a while until it grows so destructive that the relationship finally collapses (or explodes).

You are trapped in an impossible addiction that maintains a destructive game: It makes you feel so good, and at the same time it is eating you alive, figuratively and literally.

It might seem “normal,” but this is not what you want, is it? “Normal” is not an aspiration to strive for. If you want to stop the love/hate cycle you need to know why it happens and how to make changes before the relationship drives you crazy.

First, let’s look at why the drama begins.

The path of a typical relationship:

What phase are You in?

1. You’re “in love.” You feel alive. Your life feels more meaningful, someone needs you, wants you and makes you feel special. You feel whole. The feeling can be so intense that the rest of the world fades into insignificance. It feels as though you are healed, your pain is gone. (Although in reality it is just temporarily covered up.)
2. It feels great until your partner fails to meet your needs or expectations in some way. You develop a feeling of neediness and clinging.
3. You are addicted to the other person (or rather, to the euphoric feelings you experience due to the chemical reactions and hormones produced by your brain when you are “in love.”) They are like a drug. You are on a high when they are available, but even the possibility that they might not be there for you can lead you to feelings of fear, insecurities, abandonment, and rejection.
4. The numbing quality of the drug wears off and you, again, feel the pain you had before the relationship. This time, however, you believe your partner is the cause.
5. This is when the drama begins. You both may begin to feel jealousy or resentment, and you take offense to practically everything your partner does and says. You become possessive and controlling, you withdraw, demand, criticise, judge, blame, and attack, all in attempt to coerce your partner to go back to meeting your maladaptive needs.

So, you begin the love/hate cycle of drama, but now you're not just addicted to the love, you're addicted to the drama itself. It makes you feel you are in the familiar, your body and subconscious are craving this this space!

Because...

Research shows that relationships that are full of drama can be more addictive than most drugs, even though it isn't actually an addiction.

You have a **compulsion** to return to this space over and over.

How can this be true? Well, the simple answer is that when you fight your body has an adrenaline rush. This adrenalin eventually crashes and you calm down.

Have you ever heard the phrase, "There is nothing like making up after a fight"? The reason the make-up period is great is because when you come down from the hormonal "high" you are usually apologetic and "loving"—so you both swing back into the positive-feeling (and the brain releases other hormones, such as dopamine and serotonin), making you feel happy and euphoric once again.

Unfortunately, this state is short lived because, like with all drugs, your body will start looking for that "high" of the adrenaline rush all over again. Eventually the rush loses its strength, and as a result, you have to keep increasing the dose or look for alternatives to fuel the need (addiction).

In other words, the more of a routine it becomes to fight the more adrenaline you are going to need, and so you find yourself fighting more often and with greater intensity. Maybe the make-up period continues to feel good to you, that is, if you are looking to experience a roller coaster ride in your relationship.

This pattern is almost certainly based in your experiences as a child and then reinforced as you got older. You have created relational patterns, expectations and a normality of chaos and destruction.

(if it isn't you that exhibits this, is it your partner or someone you know?)

IRC looks at this in much greater depth, so that you can understand your own patterns, why they exist and repeat themselves.

