



Your “Inner Child” Is Running Your Love Life

By Carista Lumiare and Lion Goodman

We all *yearn* for love – because we all *need* love. However, most of us are *confused* about love. We don't know what healthy love is, or what it's not. This confusion leads to all sorts of irrational behaviors and reactions in our relationships. It can impact our ability to make or keep commitments. It can result in withdrawal or anxiety, or lead to infidelity and feelings of betrayal.

If real love creates bliss, *confusion about love* creates a mess.

What's often missing in relationships and what's needed at our core, is a simple human feeling: *I feel safe. I trust you. I feel secure being with you.*

Here is some good news for those troubled by love's confusion: **There is a simple science, and a practical art, to experiencing dependable and passionate love – both in and out of the bedroom.**

You can learn the basic building blocks of love – essential steps that create a thriving relationship. It begins by uncovering childhood patterns, and healing the wounds of your Inner Child in a very direct and practical way.

My husband and I are both in recovery from love's confusion. **Like you, we've had glorious ideas about what love *should be*, and terrible disappointments in what love *turned out to be*.** We dedicated ourselves to cracking the code, and we accomplished our goal. We've rewired our brains and we now enjoy a secure, passionate, and creative relationship. It *is* possible. If we can do it, you can do it.

Deep inside, you have an intuitive sense of *how love ought to feel*. This isn't just a fairytale fantasy. Every infant knows innately what love feels like. We are all born with this instinct – and neurological need – to be loved in this way. We never outgrow this need to be deeply connected to someone we trust. Whether infant, child, or adult, we want our core needs to be a priority for someone.

The latest neuroscience research suggests that our brains are neurologically wired to receive and give love. Babies are happy when their needs are met consistently and they're *held in a safe and dependable way*. The optimal mother-child bond feels tender and warm, safe and secure. As the infant grows, he or she feels seen, recognized, and cherished. This vital connection greatly enhances intelligence, health, and self-worth. This type of bond is called ***secure attachment***.

Here's the problem: As infants, few of us got this kind of love. Our parents were not secure in themselves. They didn't know how to offer healthy love. They had their own difficulties to deal with, along with a household, other children and an imperfect marriage. They weren't able to offer a safe and consistent harbor. Consequently, most of us got the other kind of bond – ***insecure attachment***.

Before we could talk, our brain got wired for a certain kind of love. Your particular *attachment style* was locked in – we call it your *Love Operating System*. If your L.O.S. was badly programmed by repeated

experiences of abandonment, rejection, or criticism, this stress can cause a wide range of problems in your adult love relationships, including emotional insecurity or difficulties forming secure partnerships. Body symptoms may appear such as illnesses, sexual dysfunction, or even addictions.

The essential nature of healthy Love is simple: it is generous, reliable and caring. It feels like a nourishing connection we can rest in. We feel comfortable revealing our deepest needs, and our highest aspirations. We know we can expose our true self, including our greatest fears and our genuine magnificence.

What's *confusing* about love is that it's often mixed with a host of other feelings, such as anxiety, shame, or anger. If that's the type of love you experienced during the first years of your life, you've probably felt insecure about love in the past, and you may still feel this way. If so, you may be afraid of being hurt, and wary about letting anyone into your heart. You might have difficulties developing a positive, dependable bond with someone.

Our parents were our original teachers about love. For most of us, they were not ideal mentors. What we learned from them wasn't secure, healthy love. It was an unhealthy substitute, a mixture of their desire to love, along with their insecurities and need for control. Their feelings of love for you were probably mixed with their own childhood conditioning. They didn't know *how* to love you, because their parents didn't know what healthy love was. If one or both parents were absent, you learned that love is mired in avoidance and rejection.

In the worst cases, their "love" may have included emotional or physical neglect, abandonment or abuse. Some adults unconsciously re-create these traumatic dynamics with their partners, resulting in vicious processing cycles that never resolve. We call this *traumatic attachment*, which usually requires professional support to heal.

Combining all of these factors, you have a perfect formula for the chaos that most of us experience in our primary relationship.

No wonder most of us are confused about love!

The great news is: All of your past conditioning can be healed and re-wired with a little bit of effort. To do so, return to the basic building blocks you missed when you were younger. Change the programming your Inner Child received, and re-learn what *secure attachment* feels like.

Learning to *love with confidence* is no different than learning any other skill. All it requires is some study and practice. Regardless of your natural talent or previous experience, you can nurture your ability to love, starting with understanding the basics. The results include more mutual security, passion, and joy. And for those who want it, more hot sex!

It's never too late!