

## LOVE CALLS FOR CAREFUL NURTURING

I remember a song by Nat King Cole in which he sings about a friendship slowly and imperceptibly turning into love. We are quick to talk about “falling in love.” Well, if we do fall, it is in slow motion

There is, of course, swift and almost instantaneous attraction. When a man meets a beautiful woman and is immediately drawn to her, even before she says a word, he must be careful not to call this love. Males and females, by nature, get attracted to one another. Beautiful females and handsome males may, at first sight, be more attractive. However, there is a world of difference between attractiveness and love. A person may get hurt badly if he or she is unable to distinguish one from the other.

The woman who believe she has “fallen” in love at first sight is walking a dangerous path. Because she is so sure that she is deeply in love (even if she is not) she is not careful about looking critically into her relationship. She does not question nor does she allow herself to doubt. And anyone who is thinking of a life-long commitment should certainly question. She should also permit all her doubts to surface so they can be dealt with and erased.

Love is a plant of slow growth. It rarely flares up and takes strong root overnight. It must be nourished and cultivated in fertile soil if it is to bloom. Love is not a miracle plant. It does not grow well anywhere and everywhere. It needs a special kind of environment. It calls for careful nurturing.

People who are quick to “fall in love” usually end up just as quickly falling out of love. Loving is a multi-dimensional experience, one that cannot be had in a day. Any week-old or month-old love is indeed something fragile.

It may be spectacular in its quick intensity, but if it is to become lasting it must have a reservoir of slow-burning coals. And this can only happen if it has burned for some time.

What is tricky about loving is that it is such a heavy mixture of so many things. It will be influenced by countless factors. One’s prevailing mood. All kinds of emotional and psychological needs. Even the material needs. It is so difficult to measure these factors and weigh their influence on love.

That is why there is so much confusion about love relationships. People feel strong feelings. These feelings evolve. They vary in their levels of intensity. They sometimes disappear altogether only to surface again later on.

Knowing that love (real, deep and authentic love) is more complex than meets the eye helps. It helps because when one understands that, the approach reflects one’s understanding. Do not expect quick answers. On the contrary, brace yourself for lots of soul-searching. Look for quality in relationships. If you care to make the effort and take the time, you will usually find the love you seek.

