

The Selfish Path to Romance: How to Love with Passion and Reason

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Among the most popular self-help books on the market, guides to finding romance compete for shelf space in bookstores and libraries. The real problem begins when determining whether the process is an act of giving, a process of receiving, or an elusive mist we must chase. Complicating the matter further is the legal and financial transaction of marriage, which, in itself, has not always been related to love throughout the course of Western civilization. Advisors who have attempted to bypass any mystery and magic, opting instead for a “realistic” approach in acquiring a lover, often fail to convince those clinging to the inexplicable concept of romantic passion.

The Selfish Path to Romance has arrived just in time for Valentine's Day. Based on the Objectivist philosophy of Ayn Rand, this manual instructs the reader on how to build and preserve a mutually fulfilling sexual relationship with the romance equation boiled down to a point-by-point, easy-to-understand workbook, complete with intellectual exercises at the end of each chapter. The authors explore the importance of self-love in this concise text that breaks down the method of seeking a “soul mate.” They believe that achieving romance involves negotiation, as well as nurturing, between respectful individuals exhibiting self-esteem and common sense.

Divided into six parts, this intriguing book begins by defining romantic love as a positive experience built on egoism (i.e., there must be something in it for both parties or it won't work), but eliminates altruism and narcissism as stereotypically bad courses of action. Making yourself appealing to a potential mate is addressed at length, along with choosing an appropriate partner and making the correlation thrive. A section devoted exclusively to sex precedes the final segment on resolving conflict. Included is an appendix on the termination of a relationship in the event of irreconcilable differences.

Edwin A. Locke is an award-winning psychologist as well as a senior writer and a speaker for the Ayn Rand Institute. He has fifteen years of clinical experience and has been a professor of psychology and management at the University of Maryland for over thirty years, writing frequently on human behavior. Locke earned his Ph.D. at Cornell University.

Ellen Kenner is also a psychologist and the host of “The Rational Basis of Happiness,” a syndicated radio talk show. Known for applying Rand's Objectivism to the topic of mental health, she conducts workshops on relationships and family. Kenner received her Ph.D. from the University of Rhode Island and maintains a private practice in the state.

True love, according to these experts, is not an accident, nor is it mystical. It is a rational interaction between two people that can be learned.

JULIA ANN CHARPENTIER (January 17, 2011)

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