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Romantic love lasts only a year

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29 November, 2005

THE ARTICLE

Romantic love lasts only a year

Italian scientists have found that the chemical in the brain which makes us romantic disappears over a year. They say this explains why the happy, wonderful and confident feelings we experience at the start of a relationship do not last forever. Researchers from the University of Pavia discovered that levels of a chemical called Nerve Growth Factor (NGF) greatly increase when a person first falls in love. NGF levels come from the rush of adrenalin and love of life that occur when new love blossoms. The chemical fades over a year or so after people become more secure in a relationship.

Research leader Dr. Enzo Emanuele reported: "We have demonstrated for the first time that...levels of NGF are elevated among [people] in love, suggesting an important role for this molecule in the social chemistry of human beings." His team analyzed 58 volunteers who had recently fallen in love. The researchers compared NGF levels in this group with those in people who were single or in steady relationships. They found increased levels of NGF in the new romantics. They also said NGF caused sweaty palms and butterflies in stomachs, and perhaps made young men buy red roses and candlelit dinners.

WARM-UPS

1. WONDERFUL WORLD: You are very, very, very happy today. Walk around the class and tell other students why you are happy and why you think the world is wonderful. Ask each other why you are so happy. Ask what wonderful thing or things have happened recently. Change partners often.

2. DATES: Are these things are important when going on a romantic date. What experience(s) have you had with them? Talk about this in pairs / groups.

- Red roses
- Candlelit dinners
- Movie theaters
- Moonlight
- Love poems / Love letters
- Holding hands
- Goodnight kisses
- Your idea _____

3. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

Italians / scientists / the brain / romantic love / relationships / chemicals / adrenalin / love / social chemistry / volunteers / being single / steady relationships / roses

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

4. ROMANCE: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "romance". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

5. WORDS OF LOVE: Look at these partners for the word 'love'. Walk around the class and ask other students questions using these words. Write down any new 'love words' you learn. Change partners often.

- puppy love
- true love
- love at first sight
- madly in love
- first love
- fall out of love
- head over heels in love
- secret love
- deep love

6. ROMANCE OPINIONS: What do you think of these opinions on romance? Talk about them with your partner(s).

- a. Scientists can never use chemistry to explain love and romance.
- b. I want to know why my relationships become a little boring after a year.
- c. Some races or nationalities are a lot more romantic than others.
- d. Being head over heels in love is the best feeling in the world.
- e. People talk about being in love too much.
- f. The best part of being with a new boyfriend / girlfriend is the first few weeks.
- g. Who needs romance? It's too expensive.
- h. Being in love makes us do crazy things.
- i. Red roses and candlelit dinners are very important.
- j. I wish people were more romantic.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- a. Scientists say a romance chemical in the brain lasts for just one year. T / F
- b. The chemical can make wonderful feelings last forever. T / F
- c. Levels of the chemical increase when people first fall in love. T / F
- d. The chemical gets stronger when we have a steady partner. T / F
- e. People who study chemistry have more successful social lives. T / F
- f. All of the volunteers in a study had just fallen in love. T / F
- g. People who have just fallen in love get butterflies in their stomach. T / F
- h. The chemical may be the reason why some young men buy red roses. T / F

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------|
| a. disappears | hands |
| b. experience | continue |
| c. last | stable |
| d. first | develops |
| e. blossoms | increased |
| f. demonstrated | feel |
| g. elevated | led to |
| h. steady | fades |
| i. caused | shown |
| j. palms | initially |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| a. the chemical in the brain | in love |
| b. feelings we experience at | forever |
| c. do not last | red roses and candlelit dinners |
| d. a person first falls | fallen in love |
| e. people become more secure | the start of a relationship |
| f. the social | steady relationships |
| g. volunteers who had recently | in a relationship |
| h. people who were single or in | in stomachs |
| i. sweaty palms and butterflies | which makes us romantic |
| j. young men buy | chemistry of human beings |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words in the column on the right into the gaps in the text.

Romantic love lasts only a year

Italian scientists have _____ that the chemical in the brain which makes us romantic disappears over a year. They say this _____ why the happy, wonderful and confident feelings we experience at the start of a relationship do not _____ forever. Researchers from the University of Pavia discovered that _____ of a chemical called Nerve Growth Factor (NGF) greatly increase when a person first _____ in love. NGF levels come from the _____ of adrenalin and love of life that occur when new love _____. The chemical fades over a year or so after people become more _____ in a relationship.

Research leader Dr. Enzo Emanuele _____: "We have demonstrated for the first time that...levels of NGF are elevated _____ [people] in love, suggesting an important _____ for this molecule in the social chemistry of human _____." His team analyzed 58 volunteers who had recently fallen in love. The researchers compared NGF levels in this group with those in people who were _____ or in steady relationships. They found increased levels of NGF in the new romantics. They also said NGF caused _____ palms and butterflies in _____, and perhaps made young men buy red roses and candlelit _____.

falls
last
found
blossoms
levels
explains
secure
rush
single
stomachs
role
sweaty
reported
dinners
among
beings

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Romantic love lasts only a year

Italian scientists have found that the _____ in the brain which makes us romantic disappears over a year. They say this _____ why the happy, wonderful and confident feelings we experience at the start of a relationship do not last _____. Researchers from the University of Pavia discovered that levels of a chemical called Nerve Growth Factor (NGF) _____ increase when a person first falls in love. NGF levels come from the rush of adrenalin and love of life that occur when new love _____. The chemical fades over a year or so after people become more _____ in a relationship.

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AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'romantic' and 'love'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the gap fill. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT "ROMANCE" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about romance and being in love.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- | | |
|---------------|---------------|
| • disappears | • elevated |
| • feelings | • chemistry |
| • researchers | • volunteers |
| • rush | • steady |
| • blossoms | • butterflies |
| • secure | • roses |

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- b. Do you agree with the headline?
- c. Are you romantic?
- d. How many times have you been head over heels in love?
- e. When was the last time you had happy and wonderful feelings?
- f. Are you happy now that you know the reason why romantic love disappears after a year?
- g. Would you like scientists to make a drug that keeps NGF at very high levels in the brain for as many years as you want?
- h. Do you wine and dine your partner / Do you like to be wined and dined?
- i. What is the most romantic action you can think of?
- j. Do you have a love of life?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. Are you interested in social chemistry?
- d. Does your behavior change when you are in love?
- e. What kinds of things give you butterflies in your stomach?
- f. Why do you think we have feelings of romantic love?
- g. Do you think some races or nationalities have higher NGF levels than others?
- h. Is it fair that young men buy the red roses and candlelit dinners and not young women?
- i. Do people usually fall out of love after the NGF wears off?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- b. Was there a question you didn't like?
- c. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- d. What did you like talking about?
- e. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

SOCIAL CHEMISTRY: You are an expert in social chemistry. You must make a presentation about what happens in the minds of men and women during the early part of a relationship. Think of reasons why there might be differences between men and women. In pairs / groups, talk about ideas for your presentations.

	MEN'S MINDS	WOMEN'S MINDS	REASONS FOR DIFFERENCES
The first eye contact			
The first conversation			
The three hours before the first date			
The very end of the first date			
The day after the first date			
After one week of dating			
After one year of dating			

- Change partners and compare and share your ideas.
- Give each other feedback on how to improve on the ideas.
- Give your presentations.
- In pairs / groups, discuss the content and quality of the presentations and vote on the one you thought was best.
- Talk about whether the information in the presentations was similar to your experience of romantic love.

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information on what people in different countries do when they go on dates. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson. Did you all find out similar things?

3. ROMANTIC ENGLISH: You are head over heels in love with English. Just thinking in English makes you very, very happy. You get sweaty palms when you read English and get butterflies in your stomach when you hear English. Write a love letter to the English language. Show what you wrote to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all have similar ideas? Who was most in love with English?

4. IN LOVE: You are head over heels in love. Your new love has given you a love of life. Write your diary / journal entry for one day in your romantic life. Explain how love changes the world and makes everything different. Show what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. T b. F c. T d. F e. F f. T g. T h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------|
| a. disappears | fades |
| b. experience | feel |
| c. last | continue |
| d. first | initially |
| e. blossoms | develops |
| f. demonstrated | shown |
| g. elevated | increased |
| h. steady | stable |
| i. caused | led to |
| j. palms | hands |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| a. the chemical in the brain | which makes us romantic |
| b. feelings we experience at | the start of a relationship |
| c. do not last | forever |
| d. a person first falls | in love |
| e. people become more secure | in a relationship |
| f. the social | chemistry of human beings |
| g. volunteers who had recently | fallen in love |
| h. people who were single or in | steady relationships |
| i. sweaty palms and butterflies | in stomachs |
| j. young men buy | red roses and candlelit dinners |

GAP FILL:

Romantic love lasts only a year

Italian scientists have **found** that the chemical in the brain which makes us romantic disappears over a year. They say this **explains** why the happy, wonderful and confident feelings we experience at the start of a relationship do not **last** forever. Researchers from the University of Pavia discovered that **levels** of a chemical called Nerve Growth Factor (NGF) greatly increase when a person first **falls** in love. NGF levels come from the **rush** of adrenalin and love of life that occur when new love **blossoms**. The chemical fades over a year or so after people become more **secure** in a relationship.

Research leader Dr. Enzo Emanuele **reported**: "We have demonstrated for the first time that...levels of NGF are elevated **among** [people] in love, suggesting an important **role** for this molecule in the social chemistry of human **beings**." His team analyzed 58 volunteers who had recently fallen in love. The researchers compared NGF levels in this group with those in people who were **single** or in steady relationships. They found increased levels of NGF in the new romantics. They also said NGF caused **sweaty** palms and butterflies in **stomachs**, and perhaps made young men buy red roses and candlelit **dinners**.