

Book of Love may not have happy ending

Communication forms foundation for understanding

By Tammy Batey
Emerald Reporter

Love makes the world go round, or so the saying goes.

Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that love or romance makes your own world spin at a giddier pace.

But while a relationship can cause your heart to pound, your knees to grow weak and your head to spin, it is seldom a purely pleasant experience.

Dr. Nancy Robbins, a licensed psychologist, frequently counsels people on relationship issues.

In counseling sessions, Robbins treats the relationship itself, rather than either of the partners, as the victim.

She said she often works with people who are upset because their partners don't live up to their expectations.

"Everyone comes into relationships with certain fixed ideas about how supportive, how challenging, how smart, how valuable the other person should be and what psychological needs the other person should fulfill," Robbins said. "One person projects one's unconscious expectations on the other person, and those expectations do not always match reality."

Psychology student Ryan Stephens, who is involved in a relationship with another male student, said he has dealt with unmet expectations.

A problem is "wanting the relationship to be perfect when it isn't a perfect world, and you can't have a perfect relationship," Stephens said. "I'm always bugging him to talk about his feelings. I want him to say 'I love you' when he says 'You should know that.'"

Another issue that people deal with when they form relationships is whether they can retain their autonomy. "Can people act independently of each other?" Robbins asked.

Pre-journalism student Anessa Warren said that people often don't realize how dependent they are on their boyfriend or girlfriend until the relation-



Photo by Eric Evans

Having overcome all the barriers to a happy relationship, at least momentarily, University students Chris Loomis and Anessa Warren enjoy a milkshake and each other's company.

ship dissolves.

"I went out with someone for four years," Warren said. "You start to see yourself becoming more like them, and your whole world revolves around them. When they're gone, you have nothing."

Dr. Steve Schweitzer, a licensed psychologist, said 50 percent of the clients he sees have concerns about their intimate relationships.

Among the issues that spark anger and confusion in relationships are sex, money and trust, he said.

All problems ultimately have to do with communication, Schweitzer said, and he tries in therapy to rebuild the foundations of communication.

"I teach them to communicate how they're feeling clearly and the sense that they're being understood by the other," he said.

Psychology student Alyson Smith said people have to realize that their partners are not mindreaders.

"They're not always going to know what you're thinking," Smith said.

Almost every student interviewed for this article said the first month of a relationship is the period during which part-

ners stop believing in the romantic ideal that one will just know how the other feels and start establishing solid communication.

Once this period has passed, communication — though still a potential problem — becomes a major attribute of a monogamous relationship, Stephens said.

"There are certain things you share with your partner that you don't share with your friends," he said.

ship is "having someone to talk to, sharing the problems, sharing the joys, sharing time together," he said.

Another characteristic of a relationship is a sense of security, which to a certain extent is healthy, Stephens said.

But the most important gauge of a satisfying relationship is what Stephens called "being happy, separate while together." In other words, a person in a good relationship should be able to retain their personal

The best part of a relationship is 'having someone to talk to, sharing the problems, sharing the joys, sharing time together.'

-Sam Yu

Sam Yu, a pre-business administration student, said he believes "varying perceptions about what's really happening" is sometimes a problem between him and his girlfriend.

"She'll think she knows it all, and I'm just trying to tell her what really goes on," Yu said. However, communication can also be the chief benefit of a relationship, he said.

The best part of a relation-

happiness while being part of the couple, he said.

Drawing on lessons learned from previous relationships can be helpful for a person involved in a new relationship, Smith said.

One thing you learn is that "the people you chose to be with were not the right ones," she said. "You learn what worked. You learn what not to do."

Chronic fatigue support group meets today

Student parents meeting to organize a student-parent association will meet from 2:30 to 4 p.m. in the EMU Walnut Room. Call 346-2926 for details.

Et als

Martin Davies, a visiting scientist from the linguistics and philosophy department at MIT, will speak on "Facing Up to Eliminativism" at 4 p.m. in Room 242 Gilbert Hall. The event is sponsored by the Philosophy Club.

The chronic fatigue syndrome support group meets Sunday at 3 p.m. in the Emerald People's Utility District building, 33733 Seavey Loop Road. Call 686-0310 for more information.

The film *A Decade of Destruction*, which documents the struggles of rubber tree tappers in Brazil's rain forest, will be shown by the Latin American Support Committee at 12:30 p.m. in the EMU Ben Linder Room.

The Muslim Student Association Islamic Society of North America, the organization affiliated with the ASUO, will hold a session on racism in South Africa, Israel and the United States at 11:30 a.m. in the EMU Gumwood Room.

Muslim lecture and prayer, also being sponsored by the MSA-ISNA, will be at 1 p.m. in the Koinonia Center, 1414 Kincaid St.

The Newman Center, 1850 Emerald St., is holding Masses Saturday at 5 p.m. and Sunday at 9 and 11 a.m. and at 7:30 p.m.

Deadline for submitting *Et als* to the Emerald front desk, EMU Suite 300, is noon the day before publication. *Et als* run the day of the event unless the event takes place before noon.

Notices of events with a donation or admission charge will not be accepted.

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