

Love at First Sight

When Pamela Claypole was 56 years old, her whole life changed. She was outside working in her garden on a Saturday morning when suddenly she felt dizzy. That's all she remembers. Neighbors found her lying on the ground, unconscious. At a nearby hospital, doctors made their diagnosis: Pamela had had a stroke. She couldn't move the left side of her body, and she couldn't see, hear, or speak. Gradually, she got better. In a few months, she was able to use the left side of her body again, and she was able to hear and speak. But she still couldn't see. Her doctors told her she might be blind for the rest of her life.

Pamela came home from the hospital and began learning to live without her sight. It wasn't easy. Pamela was single, and she lived alone. There were days when she wished she hadn't survived the stroke. But as time went on, she began to adjust. She learned to take care of herself—to cook, to clean, to shop. There were just a few things she couldn't do. She couldn't fix things in her house, for example. When something broke, her friends had to help her.

One morning about three years after her stroke, Pamela was washing dishes and realized that the water wasn't going down the drain in her kitchen sink. It was probably clogged. "Call Mitch," her friends told her. Mitch was the local handyman. He fixed things for people and helped them with jobs around the house. He was middle-aged and single, and he loved his work.

Pamela called Mitch. "I hear you're a pretty good plumber," she said. "I've got a problem with my kitchen sink. Can you come over?"

"I'll be right there," Mitch told her. He fixed the sink in just a few minutes. "All done," he said.

"Thank you. How much do I owe you?" Pamela asked.

"Nothing," Mitch said. "But a cup of tea would be nice."

Pamela made some tea, and she and Mitch sat at her kitchen table and talked. He told her he would be happy to help her anytime.

Over the next two years, Mitch came to Pamela's house often to fix something or to

work with her in the garden. He never accepted a penny from Pamela for the work he did; he said a cup of tea and a little conversation were payment enough. The truth was that Mitch was in love with Pamela. He never told her, though. Mitch was not a handsome man. "If she could see me," he thought, "she wouldn't love me."

One morning Pamela woke up early. She turned her head on the pillow and saw the hands on the alarm clock next to her bed: 5:30 A.M. She could see! She ran to the front door of her house and looked outside. She could see the flowers, the trees, the houses across the street. She cried with happiness. Then she went to the phone and called her best friend, Mitch.

"Hello, Mitch," she said. "It's an emergency! Come quick!"

Mitch thought about Pamela's phone call as he threw on some clothes. What kind of emergency could there be at 5:30 in the morning? Was there water everywhere? Was someone trying to break into her house? He ran the half mile to Pamela's house.

Pamela opened the front door. "Pam, are you okay?" Mitch said. Pamela looked at him and smiled. "Your eyes are brown," she said.

"What?" he asked.

"Your eyes are brown," she repeated.

"You can see?"

"Yes!" Pamela said and threw her arms around Mitch. Mitch was happy for Pamela, and he was also happy for himself. "She can see me, and she still likes me," he thought.

A few weeks later, Mitch asked Pamela to marry him, and she said yes. He told her that he had loved her from the first moment he saw her, when he came to fix her sink.

"Why didn't you ever tell me?" Pamela asked him.

"I thought you wouldn't want me because I'm not handsome," Mitch said.

"I don't care what you look like," Pamela told Mitch. "I've loved you for years."

"Well, why didn't you tell me?" he asked.

"I thought you wouldn't want me," she answered, "because I was blind."

2. VOCABULARY

◆ LOOKING AT THE STORY

Complete the sentences with the words in the box. Write the correct words on the lines.

accepted	dizzy	nearby	stroke
adjust	handyman	owe	threw on some clothes
clogged	might	sight	unconscious
come over			

1. Pamela was working in her garden when suddenly it seemed that everything was going around and around. She felt dizzy.
2. When neighbors found Pamela, her eyes were closed and she was lying on the ground. They couldn't wake her up. She was _____.
3. Neighbors took Pamela to a _____ hospital. It was only a mile from her house.
4. Pamela couldn't move the left side of her body, and she couldn't hear, speak, or see. She had had a _____.
5. Pamela asked her doctors, "Will I see again?" They said, "We're not sure." They told her she _____ be blind for the rest of her life.
6. When Pamela came home from the hospital, she couldn't see. It was difficult to live without her _____.
7. Pamela had to change the ways she did things. She had to learn new ways of cleaning, cooking, and shopping. She had to _____ to being blind.
8. Mitch fixed things for people and helped them with small jobs around the house. He was a _____.
9. Pamela wanted Mitch to come to her house to fix the sink. So she called him and asked, "Can you _____?"
10. The water wasn't going down in the sink because there was something in the drain. The drain was _____.

11. Pamela wanted to know the cost after Mitch fixed her sink. "How much do I _____ you?" she asked.
12. Mitch didn't take any money for his work. He never _____ a penny.
13. Pamela called Mitch and said, "Come quick! It's an emergency!" Mitch didn't take time to dress carefully. He just _____ and ran to Pamela's house.

◆ LOOKING AT A NEW CONTEXT

Read these sentences. If the sentence is true for you, circle **Yes**. If it is not true for you, circle **No**. Explain your **Yes** answers. Write your explanations on the lines. Then share your **Yes** answers in a small group. Here, for example, is what one student wrote about a **Yes** sentence.

Someone owes me money.

YES NO

My brother owes me \$200.

1. I have been unconscious.

YES NO

2. I need a handyman to do some work in my home.

YES NO

3. I know someone who had a stroke.

YES NO

4. Sometimes I just throw on some clothes and don't take time to dress carefully.

YES NO

5. This year I had to adjust to something new.

YES NO

6. I owe someone some money.

YES NO

7. Someone owes me money.

YES NO

8. A lot of my relatives live nearby.

YES NO

10 Surprising Health Benefits of Love

Lower Blood Pressure, Fewer Colds, Better Stress Management Are Just the Beginning

By Sherry Rauh

FROM THE WEBMD ARCHIVES ⓘ

"I need somebody to love," sang the Beatles, and they got it right. Love and health are intertwined in surprising ways. Humans are wired for connection, and when we cultivate good relationships, the rewards are immense. But we're not necessarily talking about spine-tingling romance.

"There's no evidence that the intense, passionate stage of a new romance is beneficial to health," says Harry Reis, PhD, co-editor of the *Encyclopedia of Human Relationships*. "People who fall in love say it feels wonderful and agonizing at the same time." All those ups and downs can be a source of stress.

It takes a calmer, more stable form of love to yield clear health benefits. "There is very nice evidence that people who participate in satisfying, long-term relationships fare better on a whole variety of health measures," Reis tells WebMD.

Most of the research in this area centers on marriage, but Reis believes many of the perks extend to other close relationships— for example, with a partner.

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parent, or friend. The key is to “feel connected to other people, feel respected and valued by other people, and feel a sense of belonging,” he says. Here are 10 research-backed ways that love and health are linked:

1. Fewer Doctor’s Visits

The Health and Human Services Department reviewed a bounty of studies on marriage and health. One of the report’s most striking findings is that married people have fewer doctor’s visits and shorter average hospital stays.

“Nobody quite knows why loving relationships are good for health,” Reis says. “The best logic for this is that human beings have been crafted by evolution to live in closely knit social groups. When that is not happening, the biological systems ... get overwhelmed.”

Another theory is that people in good relationships take better care of themselves. A spouse may keep you honest in your oral hygiene. A best friend could motivate you to eat more whole grains. Over time, these good habits translate to fewer illnesses.

2. Less Depression & Substance Abuse

According to the Health and Human Services report, getting married and staying married reduces depression in both men and women. This finding is not surprising, Reis says, because social isolation is clearly linked to higher rates of depression . What’s interesting is that marriage also contributes to a decline in heavy drinking and drug abuse, especially among young adults.

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A happy marriage is good for your blood pressure. That's the conclusion of a study in the *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*. Researchers found happily married people had the best blood pressure, followed by singles. Unhappily married participants fared the worst.

Reis says this study illustrates a vital aspect of the way marriage affects health. "It's marital quality and not the fact of marriage that makes a difference," he tells WebMD. This supports the idea that other positive relationships can have similar benefits. In fact, singles with a strong social network also did well in the blood pressure study, though not as well as happily married people.

4. Less Anxiety

When it comes to anxiety, a loving, stable relationship is superior to new romance. Researchers at the State University of New York at Stony Brook used functional MRI (fMRI) scans to look at the brains of people in love. They compared passionate new couples with strongly connected long-term couples. Both groups showed activation in a part of the brain associated with intense love.

"It's the dopamine-reward area, the same area that responds to cocaine or winning a lot of money," says Arthur Aron, PhD, one of the study's authors. But there were striking differences between the two groups in other parts of the brain. In long-term relationships, "you also have activation in the areas associated with bonding ... and less activation in the area that produces anxiety." The study was presented at the 2008 conference of the Society for Neuroscience.

5. Natural Pain Control

The fMRI study reveals another big perk for long-term couples — more activation in the part of the brain that keeps pain under control. A CDC report

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complements this finding. In a study of more than 127,000 adults, married people were less likely to complain of headaches and back pain.

A small study published in *Psychological Science* adds to the intrigue. Researchers subjected 16 married women to the threat of an electric shock. When the women were holding their husband's hand, they showed less response in the brain areas associated with stress. The happier the marriage, the greater the effect.

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6. Better Stress Management

If love helps people cope with pain, what about other types of stress? Aron says there is evidence of a link between social support and stress management. "If you're facing a stressor and you've got the support of someone who loves you, you can cope better," he tells WebMD. If you lose your job, for example, it helps emotionally and financially if a partner is there to support you.

7. Fewer Colds

We've seen that loving relationships can reduce stress, anxiety, and depression -- a fact that may give the immune system a boost. Researchers at Carnegie Mellon University found that people who exhibit positive emotions are less likely to get sick after exposure to cold or flu viruses. The study, published in *Psychosomatic Medicine*, compared people who were happy and calm with those who appeared anxious, hostile, or depressed.

8. Faster Healing

The power of a positive relationship make flesh wounds heal faster. Researchers at Ohio State University Medical Center gave married couples

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blister wounds. The wounds healed nearly twice as fast in spouses who interacted warmly compared with those who demonstrated a lot of hostility toward each other. The study was published in the *Archives of General Psychiatry*.

9. Longer Life

A growing body of research indicates that married people live longer. One of the largest studies examines the effect of marriage on mortality during an eight-year period in the 1990s. Using data from the National Health Interview Survey, researchers found that people who had never been married were 58% more likely to die than married people.

Aron tells WebMD marriage contributes to longer life — mostly through “mutual practical support, financial benefits, and children who provide support.”

But Reis sees an emotional explanation. Marriage protects against death by warding off feelings of isolation. “Loneliness is associated with all-cause mortality -- dying for any reason,” he says. In other words, married people live longer because they feel loved and connected.

10. Happier Life

It may seem obvious that one of love’s greatest benefits is joy. But research is just beginning to reveal how strong this link can be. A study in the *Journal of Family Psychology* shows happiness depends more on the quality of family relationships than on the level of income. And so we have scientific evidence that, at least in some ways, the power of love trumps the power of money.

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immense, agonize, ups and downs, perks, striking, vital, cope

Is finding a partner a source of stress for you?

What is one perk of having a partner? What is one perk of being single?

How did you meet your best friend? What keeps you together? Do you keep each other honest?

Has friendship contributed to your well being during the pandemic?

What is vital for your well being?

What makes you anxious?

How do you face a stressor?

When have you had to support someone?

What adds to the quality of your life?

Are you currently feeling the “ups” or “downs” of life?

What is one perk of being a university student?

After reading this article, what do you think about getting married?