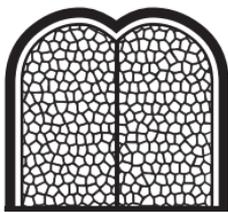
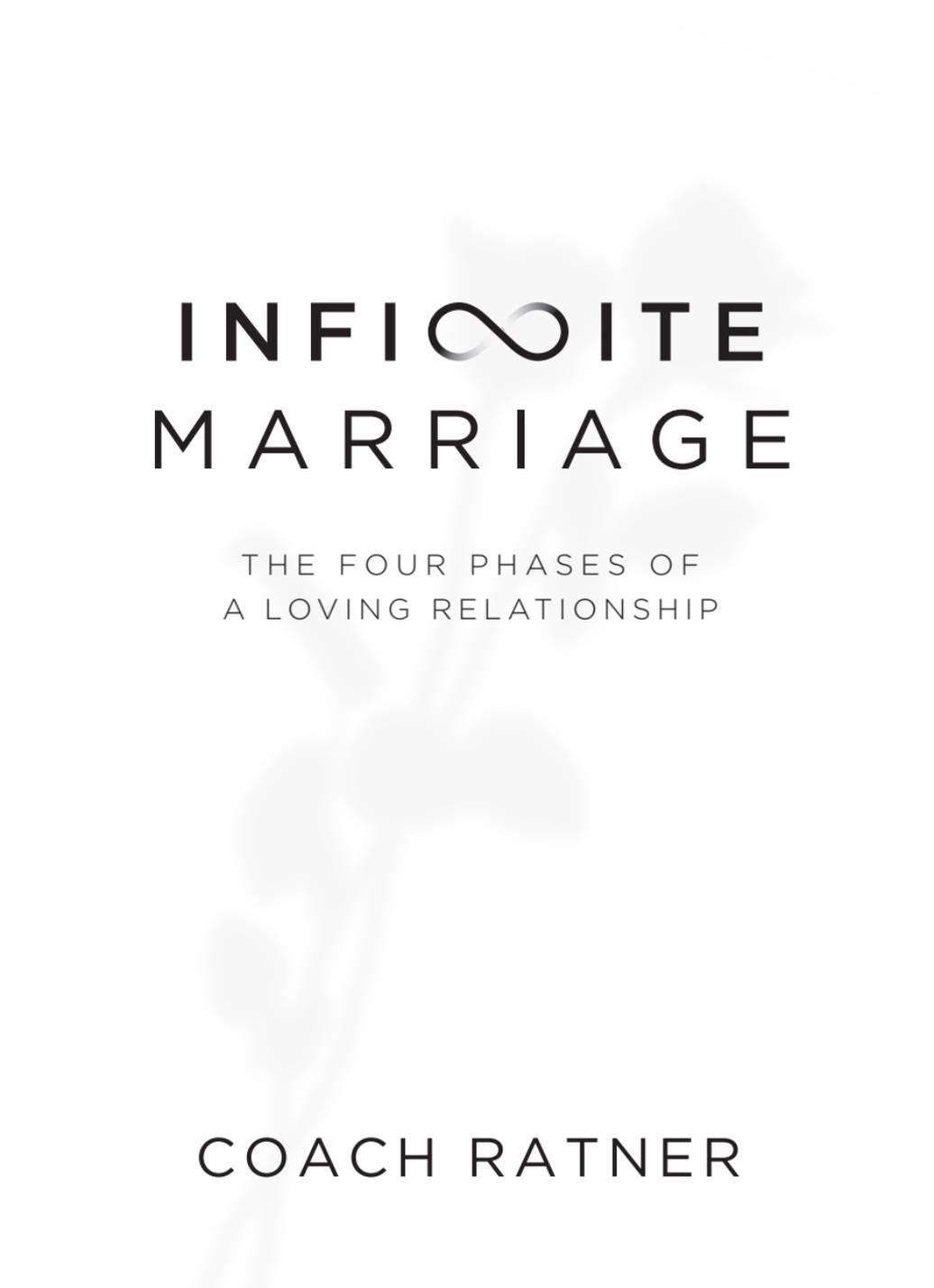


INFINITE
MARRIAGE



MOSAICA PRESS

A faint, light-colored rose is visible in the background, centered behind the text.

INFI∞ITE MARRIAGE

THE FOUR PHASES OF
A LOVING RELATIONSHIP

COACH RATNER

Mosaica Press, with its team of acclaimed editors and designers, is attracting some of the most compelling thinkers and teachers in the Jewish community today.

Our books are impacting and engaging readers from around the world.

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DEDICATED TO MY FAMILY
AND TO ALL THE RABBIS
AND REBBETZINS WITH WHOM
I HAVE LEARNED



Coach Ratner's latest masterpiece, "Infinite Marriage," gives his readers an arsenal of tools to guide them through the intricate phases of dating and marriage. This book is a journey of self-discovery, offering a treasure trove of tools to navigate the complexities of any relationship.

Infused with thought-provoking concepts, easily recallable acronyms, and the richness of Jewish philosophy, "Infinite Marriage" will be a source of depth and purpose to every reader. From the wisdom of "Your Ego is Not Your Amigo" to the concept of "Sunscreen Love," Coach Ratner captivates readers, keeping them stimulated and engaged. His unique blend of humor, energy, and passion permeates the pages, reaching deep into the reader's soul.

This book transcends religious boundaries, making it a must-read for individuals of all backgrounds. Coach Ratner's "Infinite Marriage" is a must read for anyone who wants to achieve the relationship of their dreams.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Burg".

Rabbi Steve Burg
CEO
Aish Global

Rabbi Chaim Aryeh Zev Ginzberg
Rov of Chofetz Chaim Torah Center
in Cedarhurst, NY

The distinguished author of this new book called "Infinite Marriage" has once again provided a valuable resource to the world community to help focus & improve on the most significant relationship that humans can have, & that is the relationship between husband & wife.

A previously published author Coach Ratner after a successful career in business had moved several years ago to Yerushalayim & has become an influential educator at Aish Hatorah . He focuses all his talents & efforts on fostering meaningful relationships amongst married couples that can & will enhance & increase Shalom Bayis in many homes.

Coach Ratner discussed some of his thoughts & insights with me & I found them to be original, creative & innovative in helping to foster better & stronger relationships amongst couples .

I highly recommend this new book & extend a tremendous collective "Yasher Koach" to him for making this book available to the larger public, who will without doubt benefit from the refreshing ideas & concepts that are outlined in these pages. We have grown accustomed to working on our relationships with fellow workers, siblings & the general community. However we have been neglectful in working on the most important relationship that we have & that is the one with our spouse. Now Coach Ratner has provided the tools to do so.

I wish him much Hatzloach in this new book, as well as the other projects of self improvement that he is involved with. May the improvements that will come from this book help each & every home to be stronger & better & that will provide the next generation with the proper role models to improve their homes as well.

Respectfully submitted,



Rabbi Chaim Aryeh Zev Ginzberg
Cedarhurst, NY
Chanukah 5784



ES'D

Rabbi Kalman Winter

גב'ל

FOUNDER

Rabbi Menachem Winter

ROSH KOLLEL/DEAN

Judah Lifschitz

PRESIDENT

I have known Mr. Daniel Ratner for many years and delighted in seeing him thriving in his many roles as a community pillar, generous philanthropist, מְכַנִּיס אִוְרוֹחַ, extraordinary and passionate teacher.

Daniel brings much freshness, insight, experience and most of all passion to all he touches, especially his many efforts in sharing his learning and Torah thoughts. Daniel's words are tailored for the practical everyday living, and not left for abstraction and hypothetical.

Daniel, a prolific teacher and author has now embarked on a project to share his many powerful insights on the sacred institution of marriage. Anyone encountering Daniel's ideas on this will have much to grapple with, considering their breadth, perspective, clarity and wisdom.

I wish Daniel continued success in all his many outstanding endeavors and may he and Ilana, his אִשָּׁת חַיִּיל, and entire family have continued בְּרוּכָה וְהַצְלָחָה!

Menachem Winter

Rabbi Menachem Winter

Rosh Kollel/Dean

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface	xi
Acknowledgments	xiii
Introduction	1

PHASE ONE

The Crush	13
<i>The Feeling of Being in Love / Defining Love / Chopped: Fire Up Your Relationship! / Clarify Why You Are Dating / To Catch the Right Fish, You Need the Right Bait / Perception Is Everything: You Are the Grey Goose! / The Three Date Rule / Beware of the New Face Factor / Merit Your Bashert / The Worksheet to Discover Your Soulmate</i>	

PHASE TWO

The Research	51
<i>Learning to Listen / Read the Back of Your Shirt / Shared Meaningful Life Goals and Values / What Is Your Shared Meaningful Life Goal / Inviting Spirituality into Your Life / Understanding the Body and Soul / How to Identify Soul-Oriented People / Your Ego Is Not Your Amigo / Defining Marriage / You Must Love Yourself</i>	

PHASE THREE

The Commitment	99
<i>The Three Questions You Must Ask before Getting Married / Sunscreen Love / When to Criticize Your Spouse / Making the Relationship Feel</i>	

New Again / Exercise / Get Rid of the Uncertainty! / Fire and Water Don't Mix Well / The Monthly Honeymoon / The Infinite Marriage Matrix / When Divorce Is Necessary

PHASE FOUR

Never Leaving	143
<i>The Twenty-Four-Hour Rule / Don't Let Politics Trump Your Marriage / Think before You Speak / What's Important to You Is Important to Me / Attention, Affection, Appreciation, and Awareness / Attention / Attention: The Needs of the Man / Attention: The Needs of the Woman / Three Aspects of Connecting with Your Spouse / Affection / Appreciation / Awareness / Your Ego Is Still Not Your Amigo / Sometimes You Have to Be Wrong to Be Right / SLIM: Sometimes Less Is More / The Story of Never Leaving</i>	
Final Words	195
Preview of Next Book.	197

PREFACE

THANK YOU SO MUCH for picking up my new book on dating and marriage. My goal for you is to not only find your soulmate, but to be passionately married to them, forever. It has been a long road to get to this point, but I believe that this book has many of the tools needed for you to find and keep your spouse. Based on the responses I've received from my students in my live classes, this may be one of the most impactful books you will ever read.

I did not grow up in an observant Jewish home, so many of the ideas in this book are coming from an unusual perspective. It is certainly a different viewpoint when an observant Jew looks back at the dating life they had when they were *not* religious.

Growing up, I had such a warped idea of what it meant to date in the observant Jewish world. It was only until after I was married and started to learn more about it that it became clear that the Jewish community has a great thing going on. Although there is a crisis in the dating world where singles are having a hard time finding a spouse, it is still better than the alternative ways of meeting your soulmate, or what is also typically referred to as your "*bashert*," such as meeting at a singles event or, if you're

lucky, finding someone on a dating app. That's generally not going to work out so well.

I started dating in my early twenties but had absolutely no idea what my goals in dating were nor what it meant to be in a relationship. I had to rely on what I learned from my friends since I would have never considered learning from a rabbi or *rebbetzin*. Looking back, so few of my friends ended up having successful marriages, but they were the only ones I had to learn from! Where else would I go to get advice on dating and marriage? I certainly never saw any classes about it at my local community college. This is the reason why I wrote this book.

Many of the concepts in dating that you will read about have come from my own personal experiences. This is why—no matter if you are religiously observant or not—some of the ideas will be new to you. I have lived in both worlds, and that is why I believe this book will help you tremendously...until there is another book with the final word. But until then, have a great time and a lot of fun reading!

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

THERE ARE MANY YEARS of work that went into this book. What started as one class on dating and marriage has morphed into an entire seminar. This book is a compilation of many classes, thoughts, acronyms, and even some crazy ideas that are always permeating my brain.

This book is dedicated to my family and all the rabbis and *rebbetzins* with whom I have learned throughout this journey.

The foundation and motivation for this book all started from the wisdom that **Rabbi Yaakov and Lori Palatnik** instilled in me early in my Jewish journey. They were the spark that started my speaking and writing career. It began with Lori coming into my Washington, D.C., hospital room in 2013, just after my lung had been removed for cancer, and telling me, “This will make a good class someday”—words that have been immortalized in my brain. That was the mic drop moment. I saw that a person can take a challenging moment and turn it into a creative and inspirational moment. The wisdom that both of them teach is incomparable, and they are a true inspiration not only to me but to tens of thousands of people.

In late 2019, Lori told me that I should write a book. My first book, *The 10 Secrets to Find the Love of Your Life*, made its debut in early 2020, and shortly after that, I released *The 10 Secrets to a Passionate Marriage*. A few books later, and now *Infinite Marriage* has made its way to the marketplace. It is no surprise that Lori has gone on to start the largest and most successful Jewish women's movement in the history of the world, Momentum. Whenever I see a Jewish Women's Top 50 list, or any Jewish influencer list, invariably Lori is on it, I laugh to myself that it is impossible to compare her to anyone, because there is no comparison. She is a chart of her own.

I would also like to thank the **staff at Aish HaTorah** in Jerusalem for allowing me to teach in all their programs. It is in their Essentials Programs where teachers can try out material and build a repertoire of classes. These are daily classes where anyone can walk in and join. These classes have allowed me to try out material in front of a live audience. It has allowed me to take chances on topics and concepts when most people would have never had the chance. Some of my ideas worked, and many just fell flat—from winners like “Body, Soul, or Poke Bowl” to failures like “Get Wise or Get Fries.” I realized that once I was given the opportunity to teach there, I had been given a gift, and it was not to be taken for granted. In my

over four years teaching there, I have never turned down an opportunity to teach, and I always take each one very seriously. I approach every class with the attitude that I am about to change the world with my words.

Next, I would like to thank **my family**. They have always supported me in my endeavors, and they are an inspiration to me and to anyone else that meets them. I am very blessed to have them all in my life. I feel like I won the lottery every time I come home.

I would finally like to thank my wife, **Ilana**. She is my rock and my source of inspiration. She always tells me to be asking and thanking God, constantly. She has proven to be right on so many occasions that I feel like I am living with someone who walks with God. There is no comparison between the love I have for my wife now and the love I had for her on my wedding day.

My blessing to all my readers is that you meet your soulmate and enjoy the ride reaching the fourth Phase of Love, the point of Never Leaving, so you can all achieve an Infinite Marriage.

INTRODUCTION

*What is the difference
between complete and finished?
If you marry the right person,
you're complete. If you marry
the wrong person, you're finished.*

IN THE MORNING, I found her sleeping on my front porch. She was stalking and harassing me nonstop. Later that day, I was on the phone with the county police trying to stop an unnecessary suicide on the shoulder of the highway. This was after she called me incessantly, about every thirty seconds. I had dated a lot by this time in my life, but I have never experienced a situation where a break-up turned into such a distressing situation.

She used my hidden spare key to get into my house, rummage through my home office, and write herself a check for \$20,000. She left the check sitting on my desk so I could see it. I don't think she ever intended to steal any money. After that, I walked into my bedroom hesitantly, probably because I was expecting to see some unimaginable scene on my bed. The 20k check was just

2 *Infinite Marriage*

her way of telling me that she was having a bit of a mental breakdown. And that was probably putting it nicely.

This is what can happen when you can't define what it means to be in a real loving relationship.

Who knew that the results of a breakup after two months of dating could lead to such internal trauma. I thought that I was a good catch—but not good enough to die for. Unfortunately, from previous experiences, I know what it is like to be dumped. It is a constant pain inside your gut, and the only cure is time, but threatening suicide was a new one for me.

When you are dating, you need to be aware that both of you have different perspectives of how you feel about each other. Feelings don't have a universal scale of measurement for all to see. They are internal, and only you know how great the emotional pain is. You can't transfer that feeling on to someone else. This is why there is no such thing as an easy breakup, and the pain from a divorce can be exponentially worse than a few months of dating.

When a relationship does not go as you had dreamed, this is when the world crumbles around you.

There is one thing that everyone is striving for, whether you know it with clarity or you are only yearning for it hidden deep down: to be in a loving, passionate relationship for your entire life. I truly believe that everyone reading

this book has a great chance to achieve this. Unfortunately, very few people will get to this point in their lives. It requires mental training, the ability to control your emotions, and the permission that you give yourself to let someone into your heart and be vulnerable. Just by picking up and reading this book, you are already headed in the right direction.

Being in a loving relationship is about two people opening themselves up and allowing the other to share their feelings and thoughts, but more importantly, it is about being there for one another emotionally, intellectually, and physically.

No one really thinks too much about a loving relationship when they are young, but once they reach their late teenage years, they start to think about dating. Have you heard of anyone taking a class on dating and love *before* they start to date? This is probably unheard of. Most people just go out and do it by trial and error and hope for the best. Do you want to make the most important decision of your life by just rely on hope and luck? That would seem insane.

Much of what we know from marriage comes from what we experienced growing up in our homes. If our parents had a healthy marriage, then we have something good to emulate. If not, then we may have a little more work to do to build a healthy marital relationship.

4 *Infinite Marriage*

Another place we get an idea of what marriage is supposed to look like is from romantic comedies and Disney movies. Unfortunately, movies give us a false sense of what marriage is about. What is usually the last scene in every romantic comedy? It is usually the wedding. Why don't they ever show the couple twenty, thirty, or even forty years after the wedding? Because it would not be a romantic comedy, it would be a horror movie! Unfortunately, Prince Charming is not going to automatically turn your life around as we are led to believe. Thinking that you will find the perfect prince or princess, you may never decide to marry because there's a possibility that this person may be just around the corner. This may be a reason why people are getting married so late in life, or not at all.

Has access to internet dating increased your chances of finding love? It may or may not have. Because dating is so easily accessible, people may be more likely to not settle for anyone that is a few pounds overweight or has a pimple on their nose. Because there are so many ways to find someone else to date, you may make any little excuse to keep looking, even though you found a person that you could be in a passionate relationship with. This is called the Paradox of Choice Theory.

We may believe that having multiple people to date actually makes it easier to choose one that we are happy

with. This theory stipulates that in reality, having an abundance of options actually requires more effort to make a decision and can leave us feeling unsatisfied with our choice. It's kind of like going to a restaurant with a lot of menu options. How many times have you ordered the chicken marsala and then were immediately disappointed because you didn't try the salmon piccata special?

The paradox of choice was popularized by American psychologist Barry Schwartz in his book, *The Paradox of Choice: Why More Is Less*. Schwartz, who has long studied the ways in which economics and psychology intersect, became interested in seeing the way that choices were affecting the happiness of citizens in Western societies. He identified that the range of choices that we have available to us these days is far greater than people had in the past; however, consumer satisfaction has not increased as much as traditional economics theories might expect.

Rates of marriage in the US have consistently been falling since the early 1970s. The peak was in 1946 from a high of over sixteen marriages a year (per 1,000 people). In 1973, that number was only eleven marriages per year to now only under seven marriages per year.

Dating used to be simple: if you found someone who was nice and had a job, you married them. Today's singles

6 *Infinite Marriage*

are less likely to settle for someone that people may have settled for in the past.

This is why understanding the different stages of love will help you to have a more satisfying relationship and also make it much easier for you to find love. Is reading this book going to guarantee that you will find love? No, but it will guarantee that as long as you are willing to learn the Four Phases of Love, turn yourself into an open vessel that will accept someone else into your heart, you will significantly increase the odds of finding your soulmate.

It's just like anything else you do in life. If you don't know the steps involved, you will be more likely to quit. Imagine you are taking yoga for the first time and the instructor teaches you downward dog and nothing else. Do you know how to do yoga? Yes, but your yoga will never flourish because you were not taught all the variety of poses, and whatever joy you had for it will eventually fade. This is true for our relationships. If we don't know the phases involved to acquire true love, we may find ourselves falling out of love with our partner or spouse, and then becoming another failed statistic.

We think that we understand what love is and can succeed at it with our current knowledge, but as the marriage and divorce statistics show us, it is much harder than we

perceived. It is unlikely that couples who go down the aisle are thinking that *they* are going to be one of these statistics. Nevertheless, don't leave it to chance that you will have the relationship of your dreams.

The divorce rate in the Western world is somewhere between 50 and 60 percent. But if you take into consideration the marriages that don't end in divorce, the ones that are currently active, how many of them do you think consider themselves in a happy, passionate relationship? Let's just say it is 50 percent, which is probably generous. That means if you are involved in a relationship today, whether it be marriage or not, the chance of you having a long lasting, passionate, happy relationship is less than 25 percent. This book is going to attempt to destroy this trend and help improve the statistics. I realize that the divorce rate in the observant world is much lower, and although there are times when you should divorce, it is still not as low as it should be—which is close to zero.

We are going to break down love into four phases. Learning about each phase will help you in the development process of the ongoing relationship. Once you have decided that one phase is complete, you can then focus on getting through the next phase, and so on. This process will help you avoid the big mistake of marrying the wrong person or of being in a horrendous relationship.

8 *Infinite Marriage*

Most people will get through the first three phases. But this is not the reason why I am writing this book. It is the fourth phase that will get you to the bliss that you dreamed about after watching movies about princesses and Cinderella.

Phase One is the “Crush Phase.” The crush can happen after going on the first few dates. If you do not have a crush on the person you are dating after a few tries, then you should probably not be going out again. The crush may also be called an infatuation. This word usually has a negative connotation because it means the relationship may be only based on short-lived physical desire. While this may be true, you still will most likely need to have a feeling of infatuation in order to get to the love that you ultimately want. Infatuation, or having a crush on someone, can turn into love. It’s the confusion between infatuation and love that causes many relationships to fail.

Phase Two is the “Research Phase.” This happens when you decide that there are enough positive aspects with this person that you consider yourself “dating.” It is the process of getting to know someone fondly and in the innermost way. What are their likes and dislikes, what makes them tick, and how do you connect emotionally to each other. This is the exciting part of building a relationship because everything is new. Your time spent with them is trying to

learn everything that you can. This is the part where you decide whether or not you are ready to commit to them for the long term.

Phase Three is about the “Commitment Phase” of the relationship. This is where the marriage happens. This is where you are willing to put the work into building the relationship to a point where you both want to spend the rest of your life together. This is the point where many couples will get to, but getting this far won’t guarantee you anything. Instead of looking at this point as the end-game—which I have a feeling that most people view it this way—you need to look at this as the beginning.

Compare this to someone who wants to get into a professional sports league, like the National Basketball Association (NBA). Once they sign an NBA contract, they feel they have made it in life, but that is only just the start. Now they have to play at a high level every week so they don’t get cut from the team while trying to win a championship. This is the same as marriage. It is just your entry into the league of a legal marriage contract, it doesn’t mean anything else. It doesn’t mean you will win any games. It doesn’t mean you will play very well. It just means you have a shot at the championship. The championship in a marriage means being in a loving and happy relationship, with the same person, for your entire life!

If you want the greatest chance of having the marriage of your dreams, you will need to learn and live with the last phase.

Phase Four is called “Never Leaving.” It is the most pleasurable phase of your marriage. This is where you get to the point where your spouse is the sole focus of your life. This is where you finally live with the clarity that nothing can get in the way of your marriage and every decision you make will take into account how it will affect the feelings of your spouse. This will generally occur after many years of marriage.

Even though the Commitment and Never Leaving seem similar, there is a major difference between them: There are many things people are committed to, until they are not committed anymore. Your commitment level to many things may be lessened or it may disappear entirely. Think about how many times you have been committed to something and then were no longer committed to it. You may have stopped being committed to working out, eating healthy, following a sports team, praying in your house of worship, or even being proud of your country! Never Leaving is the highest level of commitment where nothing will ever get in your way of being together; you will stick by one another through thick and thin, persevering through good times and bad. You will be willing

to do anything to keep the relationship as your number one focus.

This is the ultimate goal of this book: to get you to the point in life where you have an infinite union with your soulmate, where you have butterflies in your stomach just from the ache of missing them for just one day. This is the point in life where you finally know that you are both so committed to having a happy, passionate, loving marriage: when you finally get to the point that you are “Never Leaving.”

PHASE ONE

THE CRUSH

Date them, don't mate them.

THE FEELING OF BEING IN LOVE

Before we even get into understanding the first phase of love, we must have a common definition of what love is. The reason for this is that what love means to you may be different than what love means to the person you are dating. Defining your terms *before* you get into a serious relationship will cause you to avoid many headaches in the future. At the very least, you need to agree on a common definition of love, even if you don't agree on mine. The reason that you want to define love is that it can easily be confused with infatuation. Infatuation can eventually transition to love, but you may not know when that transition happens, or if it will happen at all. That can be a recipe for a disastrous relationship.

I have decided to add an additional explanation of love. Besides the definition, I will introduce the idea of what it feels like to be in love.