

Nate Bagley, founder of [The Loveumentary](#), quit his job and spent a year traveling the country interviewing over 100 couples.

Nate says he was tired of hearing stories of divorce, infidelity, and scandal, and the unrealistic expectations from shows like *The Bachelor* and Disney movies. He interviewed rich couples, poor couples, gay couples, straight couples, religious couples, atheist couples, couples who have been together for a short time, and couples who have been together for over 70 years, and he even interviewed couples in arranged marriages and polygamous couples.

... And here is what he found...



[Mo Riza](#)

Self Love

The happiest couples always consisted of two (sometimes more) emotionally healthy and independently happy individuals. These people practiced self-love. They treated themselves with the same type of care that they treated their partner... or at least they tried to.

Emotionally healthy people know how to forgive, they are able to acknowledge their part in any disagreement or conflict and take responsibility for it. They are self-aware enough to be assertive, to pull their weight, and to give love when it's most difficult.

Commitment

After that emotional health came an unquestioning level of commitment. The happiest couples knew that if shit got real, their significant other wasn't going to walk out on them. They knew that even if things got hard – no, especially if things got hard – they were better off together. The sum of the parts is greater than the whole.

Trust

Happy couples trust each other... and they have earned each others' trust. They don't worry about the other person trying to undermine them or sabotage them, because they've proven over and over again that they are each other's biggest advocate. That trust is built through actions, not words. It's day after day after day of fidelity, service, emotional security, reliability.

Establish that foundation, and you're in good shape.

Intentionality

This is the icing on the cake. There's a difference between the couple who drives through the rainstorm and the couple who pulls their car to the side of the road to make out in the rain. (Yes, that's a true story.) There's a difference between the couple who kisses for 10 seconds or longer when they say goodbye to each other rather than just giving each other a peck... or nothing at all. There's a difference between the couples who encourage each other to pursue their personal goals at the expense of their own discomfort or inconvenience... even if it means their partner has to stage kiss another woman.

The couples who try on a daily basis to experience some sort of meaningful connection, or create a fun memory are the couples who shattered my perception of what was possible in a loving relationship.

Similar personalities or opposites

It was honestly almost a 50/50 split. Some people swore that opposites attract, and really needed to have similar interests and personalities. Others were convinced that birds of a feather flock together, and that you need to compliment and balance each other out..

I think what was most important was not so much that people had the surface stuff in common, but that **they had the same values, and similar goals.** (ie: someone who is dedicated to personal growth was rarely found with someone who was happy to be complacent, someone who didn't want kids was never found with someone who did.)

Jealousy

Jealousy is the cancer of love.

Jealousy eats away at the trust in a relationship. Jealous feelings come from distrust and are founded on speculation. Our inner crazy person starts reading into little things and makes up an outrageously creepy web of assumptions.

Be honest: crazy you is almost never right about what he assumes, and typically the conclusions you reach when in jealousy mode only do damage to your relationships.

The best way to combat jealousy and defeat crazy you is to approach everything from a place of love. Remind yourself of the trust and love you've built over time with your partner. Lean onto that confidence. If you need extra help getting into a place of love, write a love note. Perform an act of service. List the things that you love about your significant other. Always assume the best. And, whatever you do, do it from your heart.

The more love you give, the more you get back. Love doesn't have boundaries or limitations. And if you're spending your time and energy loving, there's no time or energy left to spend worrying, fretting, being insecure, or being jealous.

Don't take your problems outside your relationship.

Work out your relationship problems where the problem exists. When you take your troubles to family members or friends, they begin to make judgments about your partner while only getting one side of the story.

The fastest way to make everyone you love dislike your significant other is to complain about her.

Suck it up. **Be mature. Talk it out. Work together to find a solution.** Give each other a hug and a kiss. Say, "*I love you.*" Then shut the door in the issue.

Best advice

One woman in Georgia gave some pretty amazing advice. She and her husband have been married for over 60 years, and after being asked what her best relationship advice would be, she paused and said...

"Don't be afraid to be the one who loves the most."

Cover photo by [Adriano Aquino](#).

Credit: [reddit.com](#)