Compatibility versus fun

Dear Alice,

I was wondering whether compatibility and dependability are more important than passion and fun, in terms of relationships.

? Learning

Answer

Dear Learning,

To answer your question, both compatibility and fun are likely to be necessary for a healthy, fulfilling bond. However, the weight given to each may vary based on the different types and stages of relationships; it also depends on who the people are and what they?re looking for in the relationship. And, for a relationship to work over time, it takes more than just finding the right person ? it's also a matter of being the right person. It also takes work from everyone involved to strengthen a connection and keep it alive.

Compatibility may encompass a variety of factors including having similar interests or being at the same phase in life; whether or not the individuals involved want the same level of commitment in the relationship; and comparable willingness to accept each other's differences and pursue the relationship. Fun and passion may often be more prominent in (though certainly not exclusive to) the earlier stages of getting to know someone, and compatibility and dependability may become increasingly prioritized as the relationship progresses. There?s no set pattern that determines the type of connections people choose throughout their lifetime. For example, at some points in life, a person may be interested in fun and excitement and at other times they may seek longer-term companionship and stability. Types of relationships and the reasons individuals choose them are as varied as the individuals themselves. However, a lasting relationship may entail a balance of fun, dependability, passion, and compatibility, among a number of other factors. What gets thrown into the mix that makes up that bond depends on the people involved, their values, and their choices.

For you and others who may be wondering about what?s vital to them in a relationship, a little self-reflection may be in order. Consider the following questions: What can you offer right now to a potential partner? Do you have the time and desire to devote yourself to a long-term relationship, or are you looking for something with a lower level of commitment? Whether a person wants lasting love or just casual dating, they also may consider where they are in life and what expectations they have of the people they date. When they get to the point of...
meeting someone they might like, going slowly and learning about each other first? interests, family, values, culture, tastes, quirks, etc.? may help create a healthy, mutually satisfying partnership.

Ultimately, those involved will dictate the priorities and dynamic of their own relationship. Whether the relationship is casual, serious, intense, or lighthearted, it?s possible for all of the factors you mention to be present in a partnership.

Alice!
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