

July 25, 2003

Finding Your Soulmate
Part I
By Kenneth A. Sprang

Loves mysteries in soules does grow.

--John Donne

I have been thinking about soulmates a lot lately. Recently a fellow relationship coach told me the story of Heather, a woman in her early 40's. She has never married, though she has had several lengthy relationships over the years. Then late last year she met Andrew. There was something different about Andrew. The conversations were richer, the walks in the park more romantic, the time together more comfortable and more vibrant. Heather is pretty intuitive, and this relationship felt different than any other she had experienced. She knew she had fallen in love and found someone with whom she could make a life commitment.

Andrew, however, was resistant. He acknowledged that their time together was special, that he loved Heather and that he really felt energized being with her. But, he said to Heather, "I don't think you are my soulmate." Andrew recalled a past relationship in which he and his partner would often find themselves simultaneously thinking the same thing. He also said that he envisioned a "soulmate" as being very much like himself, thinking that such similarity would help assure the success of the relationship.

Andrew also pointed to differences between them. He was from the South, while Heather was from Boston. Heather's parents had graduate degrees and were upper middle class, while Andrew's parents were working class folks. In addition, he noted, his company required him to relocate periodically and to travel a lot. He feared Heather would resent those moves, though she insisted she would not.

Despite Heather's pleas to reconsider and her attempt to persuade Andrew that his resistance was contradictory to his description of their relationship, Andrew insisted that they end their relationship, though insisting he wanted to remain "friends." Heather was heartbroken and puzzled. Did Andrew have it right—were they not really soulmates? But if that were true, why did her time with Andrew *feel* so right. What does it *really* mean to "find your soulmate?"

Thomas Moore, author of *Soulmates*, suggests that a soulmate is "someone to whom we feel profoundly connected, as though the communicating and communing . . . between us were not the product of intentional efforts, but rather a divine grace." My wife and I have often referred to ourselves as "soulmates." Thinking about Heather and Andrew has caused me to reflect more on what that really means. It certainly does not mean that we always agree—we don't. Nor does it mean that we are exactly alike. We're not. What then does this elusive term "soulmate" mean?

I would like to suggest that there are two criteria for a soulmate. First, a soulmate is one who shares your vision and attitude about life and views the world "through the same glasses" as

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you do. Second, a soulmate is as concerned about your happiness and your pursuit of your life's dreams, as he/she is about his/her own.

As I worked through the pain, grief, and inevitable self-discovery following the end of my first marriage of over 25 years, I begin to realize that my first wife—a fine person with whom I continue to enjoy a valued relationship—and I viewed the world from a completely different perspective. I often told the story of being with our two children on Mt. Mansfield in Stowe, Vermont. One can drive to the peak of the mountain, but then it must be explored on foot. One of the natural attractions is the “Nose,” a rock formation that requires some modest agility to climb. My daughter—10 or 12 at the time, promptly scampered up to the crest of the nose. I followed as far as I could go before my fear of heights stopped me. When we climbed down, her mother asked “Why on earth would you climb up there?” My daughter Heidi promptly answered “Because its there.” I understand exactly what Heidi meant, though her mother did not. When I met my wife Carol I discovered that she was always the first one up the mountain—“because its there.”

I invite you to think about your vision of life and its purposes. Where is your life leading you? What is your purpose in life? What to you want to be, do, and have in life? Give some time to forming your vision or world view. Then armed with your vision be alert to a partner who brings a similar vision to life. Then be aware of whether this partner is as genuinely concerned about encouraging you to follow your dreams and pursue your life vision, as he or she is about pursuing his own. If you find all that, chances are you have found your soulmate. Write and share your thoughts.

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