

## Why a foolish instinct for love?

*The following is an edited excerpt.*

I remember the specific moment when I was 13 that I became aware of the 1950s hit [“Why Do Fools Fall in Love”](#) by Frankie Lymon & The Teenagers. As I’ve grown older I’ve also started to ponder the lyrics a bit more. Not out of any sense of sensitivity toward music criticism, but because of the evolutionary implications.

A few quick points about these selections of the lyrics. They allude to the possibility of love among birds. This is appropriate because birds are notionally monogamous. Though the anthropomorphizing is probably not for the best, there is a real analogy with the pair bond; the behavior of lovers has analogs in the wider world. It’s not just a human creation. Second, the reference to the skipping of one’s heart beat points to the physiological reality of how love manifests itself. Love and infatuation aren’t abstract concepts, they’re made real by the fact that they change your own internal equilibrium. Third, love is often unrequited. The physiological responses in this case are not very appealing, and likely they put one in a vulnerable situation, increasing stress and reducing fitness.

So the question then comes back to why? And this is an evolutionary question.

**View the original article here: [Why a foolish instinct?](#)**