

Is love nothing more than brain chemicals?

Love evolved to bribe us to commence and maintain... relationships – with lovers, children, family and friends – which we require simply to stay alive and perpetuate our genes. And this biological bribery comes in the form of a set of four neurochemicals that underpin attraction and love: oxytocin, dopamine, serotonin and beta-endorphin.

Oxytocin is important during attraction as it lowers your inhibitions to starting new relationships by quietening the amygdala, the fear center of your brain, meaning that you're confident when approaching a new acquaintance.

Dopamine is always released at the same time as oxytocin. It's your body's reward chemical and is released whenever you do something you enjoy.

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Unlike the other chemicals, serotonin drops at the start of a relationship, which is why your mind tends to be overwhelmed with thoughts about your new love.

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And finally, we have beta-endorphin. This is the hormone of long-term love. Humans can be in relationships for decades and oxytocin, in particular, is not powerful enough to underpin love in the long-term.

Further, oxytocin is mostly released in significant amounts only in situations related to sexual and reproductive love meaning it's not capable of underpinning friendship – a key, survival-critical human bond.

[This is an excerpt. Read the original post here.](#)