

The FAMUAN

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The

Heart

Break

Edition

Me, myself, and I

Dejana Oliver

Editor-in-Chief

At 21-years-old, I thought I would have experienced love by now.

Relationships and love have always intrigued me. Every time one of my family members introduced their new partner, or one of my friends would tell me they're dating someone, I would be fascinated. What did that feel like? What did that look like?

I, and nearly half the U.S. population according to the U.S. Census Bureau, have chosen to be single. However, in my case being single hasn't been much of a choice, but more so a forced necessity because of my insecurities.

I grew up never being comfortable in my own skin. I would wear clothes two sizes too big and try to hide myself, hoping no one would notice that I was "bigger" than other kids.

Being plus-size in our society is like a beacon calling all of the mean and selfish people of the world who join each other in tearing you down. I've gotten comments about my weight all of my life, and that trauma has manifested in my love life.

I can't help but think anytime I am interested in someone, they will reject me because of my size.

When I was in high school, it was a debilitating insecurity that affected how I spoke and interacted with potential partners. I shut down even the slightest possibility that someone was interested in me because I had already convinced myself they would never be attracted to me. Even now, sometimes that feeling persists.

Along with my confidence, my mental health journey has caused a pause in my love life.

One in five U.S. adults experience a mental illness, a sad truth that applies to me. I was diagnosed with chronic depression when I was 12, and it's been an ongoing issue I deal with. When I am



Photo courtesy of Dejana Oliver

in a depressive episode, which was more frequent when I was younger, I would shut everything out and hole up in my room. Now, that has manifested into a love of being alone.

I feel most at peace when I am by myself. It is when I can think clearly and process how I am feeling. When you're in a relationship, your space becomes someone else's and I don't know if I can sacrifice that. I find solace in solitude and I am not ready to give that up.

Being that I am young and still learning, my priorities align with my single status. Many young people have decided not to be in romantic relationships, a group of people that has increased. About three-in-ten women ages 18 to 29

are single as of 2020. Many of us have decided to not follow in the footsteps of generations before us. Women were married and had children young because they were told to value building a family, and now a new generation has decided we want more for ourselves than to be someone's wife/husband.

No longer are girls feeling pressured by society to have "Mrs." attached to our name. While being in a relationship does not necessarily mean putting your goals on hold, it can affect how you get them accomplished.

As someone who has put all their energy into making sure I have a successful future, I don't want to be in a position where I feel I have to compromise my

goals for someone else.

Every year, I grow and learn. While I may not carry the same emotional baggage about my weight and depression, compared to my high school self, I do still live with the after effects of it. I am on the path to healing but it takes time, and it's a path I can rely only on myself as I move forward.

Being alone isn't scary to me, nor sad, just like never having experienced a relationship isn't something I am ashamed of. One day I will fall in love and feel what my friends and family have felt, but that day is just not today.

And I'm okay with that.

Iyanna Peoples

Online Editor

It has become a common notion among some in Generation Z that the dating world lacks potential in terms of effort, standards and respect. College is a time many of us get to know people that we would consider as a potential partner, which sometimes results in finding a life-long relationship. While finding a college sweetheart may sound great for some, for others, there is a feeling of hopelessness.

While dating, it is important to know what standards you have for yourself to set the tone on how a relationship will progress. Ironee Casey is a first-year criminal justice student at FAMU who knows that she will not allow guys to treat her however they want.

"It has been hard to find someone that fulfills my standards because most men are looking for something quick and easy and I am not at all," Casey said. "I believe if you don't set standards or even have high standards, it allows the person to treat you in an unwanted way."

Many guys want similar characteristics

in the women they date. Junior political



Photo courtesy of Pinterest

science student Wilgames Jean says he has experienced fruitless relationships as a college student.

"I want someone who is very open-minded, non-judgmental, makes the relationship about me and them only and is motivated," he said. "It has been very hard to find someone with all of those qualities."

Loyalty and exclusivity are two attri-

butes people desire in their partners but, unfortunately, unfaithfulness is a popular problem in the dating world.

Jaleigha Williams is a junior pharmacy major at FAMU who has been disappointed by guys wanting more outside of their relationship.

"I do not think I have experienced someone who has been able to not be invested in other people and actually focus on what we had going on rather than focusing on their ex's or other women," Williams said.

It's easy to point fingers and blame other people for your problems in the dating scene, but Casey, James and Williams all believe that men and women are both playing a role in turbulent relationships.

"I think that both men and women play a part," James said. "It's hard for both men and women to trust each other due to having different agendas."

If people clearly communicated their intentions when entering a relationship, Casey thinks the dating pool would

improve. She believes that the lack of communication is another problem that is producing negative relationships.

Gaslighting has also become a prevalent problem in the dating pool, which is when someone manipulates you into thinking that how you feel about something isn't right or truly how you feel.

"I feel like gaslighting isn't talked about enough," Williams said. "There is definitely a lot of manipulation when people are dating to get them to do things that they don't necessarily want to do so that the other person can have their way."

According to the National Domestic Violence Hotline, gaslighting is a form of emotional abuse that causes a person to lose their perception of reality and mistrust their own perspective.

Gaslighting seems to be impacting the dating pool. Victims of this phenomenon are more vulnerable and have less self-confidence in their decisions to be

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Single parents date, too

Naya Campbell

Staff Writer

Parenting is a challenge. It takes a village to raise a child but being a single parent could feel like carrying a whole village alone. Imagine what it is like trying to prioritize the responsibilities of being a parent while learning to navigate the dating world.

Today's dating scene is different from what it once was, which makes seeking partnerships considerably tougher. Perspectives have changed from past generations and old traditions no longer hold the same weight.

Akena Stevens, a single mother of six in Norfolk Va., has been searching for a companion who can bring more to the table than just casual conversation.

"Genuine people are harder to find

nowadays," Stevens said. "I tried dating sites in the past and everyone has not been factual about themselves. It's very misleading."

Many people would agree that dating websites are tricky. On one hand, there are some beautiful love stories that can come from an internet romance, but there are others who have had terrible experiences.

According to Pew Research, "Roughly seven-in-ten online daters believe it is very common for those who use these platforms to lie to try to appear more desirable."

Once there are children involved, single parents tend to be a lot more strategic when picking a partner. It comes down to

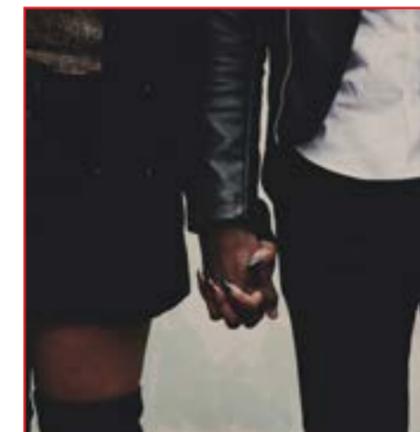


Photo courtesy of Tobe Mokolo

who is compatible with the family struc-

ture that has already been created, and what will be established together moving forward.

"Single mothers need to be selective in who you choose. Make sure every aspect is safe and don't be too quick to bring anyone around your kids. It takes time," Stevens said.

Jumping back into dating has proven to be just as troublesome for single fathers. There are many stereotypes surrounding African American fatherhood.

Tyrell Williams-Bedell, 23 and father of two in Jacksonville, Fla., is present and attentive in his children's lives. He also has a stable job and living environment.

"My biggest obstacle as a single father

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Feminine men face hurdles

Cordell Jones
Staff Writer



Photo courtesy of medium.com
Men with feminine qualities struggle with dating.

As the dating scene's new generation

develops and expands, there is a specific community within this sphere that isn't being represented, nor talked about. This community is feminine men and their dating lifestyles.

While subjective in its description, femininity in men refers to someone who possesses traits that would be considered more feminine than masculine; this can range from having high emotional intelligence, taking proper care of oneself, or filling roles that aren't considered to be conventionally masculine.

Whether within the LGBTQ+ community or not, feminine men have a different dating experience compared to those who fit within general masculine archetypes.

TikTokker Ismael Santana provided perspective on navigating the dating scene for effeminate men in a recent post.

"The way I noticed that I would get less attention on dating apps like Grindr or Tinder if I put feminine pictures of myself, but if I put pictures that made me

look slightly more masculine, my phone would blow up. The masculinity obsession is strange to me," he posted on Twitter.

While feminine usually refers to behaviors or emotional processes typically associated with women, the term "effeminate" is usually used as a derogatory phrase to say that a man is less than a man.

Both uses of the word help add to the negative stigma in dating men who are more in tune with their feminine energy.

Dave Noble, a first-year business administration student at Florida A&M University, shed more light on this perspective in his dating life.

"Within the gay community, femininity is ironically looked down upon. The majority is attracted to feminine energy, which leaves effeminate people like me to feel underappreciated in my community, as well as in my dating life," Noble said.

"I feel like fewer guys approached me for being effeminate compared to if I was masc presenting."

These experiences and countless others echo the reality that most effeminate or feminine men have to deal with whenever looking for a partner.

These negative viewpoints on femininity are largely based on subconscious biases to actually being with someone who is more feminine and less masculine.

Relationships with men more in tune with their femininity also offer more positives in the long run.

"[Since] society values toxic masculinity, it would help to engage with a man ... more in tune with people's feelings, more emotionally intelligent, and [to] be more open to flexibility in traditional gender roles that we see in relationships," said Brittany Griffin, a psychology professor at FAMU.

This shows a glimmer of how male femininity in relationships should be regarded as a good thing and not as something that would ruin your chances

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Love: a feeling or choice?

Jayla Smith
Staff Writer

Love can be defined as great interest and pleasure in something or someone. While some may think love is a feeling you can't control, in some ways the concept of love is founded on choices rather than feelings.

The main concept is that love is a decision that people make to show their partners they have feelings for them.

Terri Orbuch, a distinguished professor of sociology at Oakland University, said, "I think love can be a feeling, but then it becomes a choice whether you accept those feelings and act on them or not."

Feelings can usually fade in long-term relationships, leading to separation. Choices can make a huge difference in a relationship.

The issue with love as a choice is that people in love often make many sacrifices for each other. For instance, disagreements and conflicts can ruin the feeling of love in relationships. However, these problems are easier to get through when two people have made a choice to love each other.

Carlos Conyers, a Leon County resident, believes that love is more of a feeling rather than a choice.

"It's a feeling more so than a choice. Although you choose who you love, it's still a feeling first," Conyers said.

This idea also makes the idea of true love questionable. Some may feel you can love more than one person.

"I think the idea that there is only one single person who is your perfect match sets people up for unhappiness and frustration," Orbuch said.

This can result in anyone being someone's true love, or soulmate, as long as both parties are willing to put in the work to make the relationship last.

Kaylen Hayes, a junior pre-physical therapy student at FAMU, believes that love is a choice rather than a feeling be-

cause you can fall out of love.

"Some may even say the choice of love is an investment. The choice of an [investing in] love is work put in, trusting the process and hoping for a great outcome," Hayes said.

Since you can love more than one person, it can be hard finding out if the other person has the right qualities or not. Love stands out as a choice and not a feeling because when you find a person, sticking around through trials and tribulations is easier.

Choosing to love comes with lots of commitment and sacrifices, but can better the chances for a relationship to make it, paving the way for commitment, a practice that is not guaranteed when feelings are involved.



Carlos Conyers with his girlfriend, Amaya Smith.

Photo courtesy of Carlos Conyers

Women want men with money

Kyra Rolle
Staff Writer

To be a "city girl" has several meanings but, to put it simply, a city girl is a woman who values financial gain over relationships.

One may call this new standard exploitation, but the simple fact is that these women want to be taken care of by men.

Although the theory has been practiced for centuries, the actual term was coined by the rap duo City Girls, which is composed of Jativa Johnson and Careesha Brownlee. In their music, they talk about using men for their money.

While these provocative lyrics may seem absurd, college students idolize this. Some even use certain men of influence, such as rappers, as a standard when searching for a partner.

In honor of Valentine's Day, it's time to shed light on the group of women who demand more out of men.

Some may think that this new ideology is materialistic and shallow, but the truth is women are becoming more successful and are able to take care of themselves.

Franchesca Bellevu, a senior at Florida State University, feels that "city girl mentality comes from women wanting men to contribute to their already successful lives."

This makes women ask what men bring to the table other than intimacy.

"To live comfortably, it's natural for a woman to prefer a man with money because, together, they can afford to live a better life. And this does not mean she's



Photo courtesy of thesource.com
Rap duo "City Girls."

materialistic," blogger Chris Lai said on HuffPost.

Since the beginning of civilization,

women have gravitated toward wealthier men. We've seen this phenomenon in Egypt with Cleopatra thousands of years ago. Coupled with World War II and the "Rosie the Riveter" era, women have been working harder, making their standards for men increase to what it is today.

The outdated gender roles of the man working hard to provide while the woman stays home with the kids with little to no education simply does not apply in today's western society. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 57.4% of women participated in the labor force in 2019.

This means women are bringing money into the household as well.

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“Pick me, choose me, love me”

Pam Rentz
Online Editor

The term “pick-me” refers to females who go out of their way to impress guys and try to appear different from other females. Some believe it is a result of internalized misogyny. It’s no surprise some find pick-me female’s antics annoying after too many interactions with them.

The common characteristic of these females is that they seem to build their entire persona around being desirable to men, even if it’s at the expense of other women.

Pick-me females would much rather have a cold beer than a Bahama Mama Martini, because who even likes those soft drinks?

“Pick-me girls are very unnecessary because why are you trying to prove that you are different? Just be yourself. I’m not too fond of them, and sometimes girls belittle women to get male recognition,” said Manica Joseph, a third year criminal justice major at Florida A&M University.

The trouble with these women is clear, but how are these personalities created?

In nearly every aspect of life, women are raised to seek male validation. Innocent comments like, “When do you plan on getting a boyfriend?” or, “You know, men don’t find all that makeup attractive,” are instilled in women who believe they can only be themselves inside the parameters of what their future husband would find appealing.

Devin Lloyd, a third-year engineering student at FAMU, says pick-me females may appear easier to date in the eyes of most guys, but his views are changing now that he’s older.

“The more I’ve matured, the more I’ve realized that ‘pick me’ girls don’t often respect themselves as women or have some sort of trauma that has led them to seek



Photo courtesy of yesgurl.co

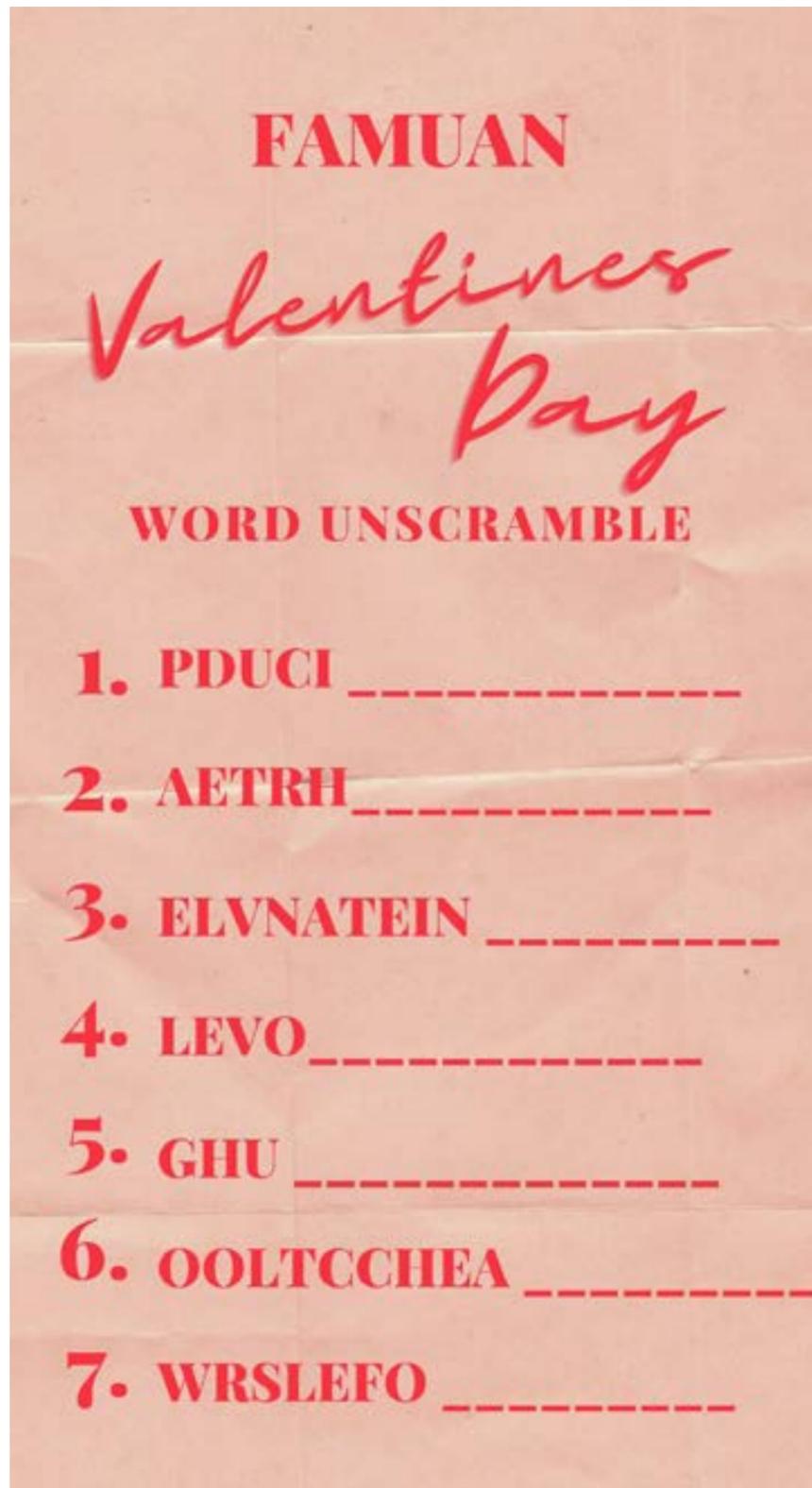
attention from men,” Lloyd said.

The origins of pick-me females come from patriarchal ideas that determine what and who is desirable. Despite these desperate attempts to intentionally become the spitting image of what a man wants in a woman, pick-me females putting other women down is counterproductive.

Women empowerment is gaining momentum and beating all the odds that this patriarchal society dishes out. To cross the next threshold of becoming a more inclusive and less judgmental generation, we need to stop blaming women for becoming exactly what society has made them to be.

“At the end of the day, the only opinion that should matter is yours. Be content with that and leave the boys alone for now,” Raquel Govia, a fourth-year psychology major at FAMU, said.

Prioritizing self love in girls, regardless of who’s compatible with them, will decrease the need to be desired. This Valentine’s Day, spend time doing personally satisfying activities with no regard for anyone else, whether that’s putting on a full face of makeup or crawling into bed and binge-watching “The Bachelor.”



A pricey day for many of us

Tatyiana Hayes
Staff Writer

Valentine’s Day is supposed to be the day when a person and their partner decide to broadcast the love they have for one another. Some may say that this particular day is just a regular day; that it isn’t something people need to make such a big deal out of.

Spending quality time with someone and allowing a person to feel special on Valentine’s Day is nice, but to show some love is supposed to be year-round.

“Just because it’s Valentine’s Day doesn’t mean you treat your significant other any more special ... they should feel special every day,” said Cornell Smith, deputy branch chief of information technology and cybersecurity at the United States Department of Defense.

The holiday has become less about showing love to those around you and more about a day for thousands of dollars to be spent. Valentine’s Day is overhyped because our culture has converted the day into a money maker.

“There are a million ways to say I love you, and it does not have to be buying chocolate and flowers on one day,” Florida A&M University sociology professor Helen Brethauer-Gay said.

According to Statista.com, planned Valentine’s Day spending for this year is expected to reach \$24 billion, which is a \$2 billion increase from 2021.

“This day has nothing to do with a truly intimate relationship. It’s only an expression,” Brethauer-Gay said.

The intense amount of love-spreading and gift-giving also creates an illusion for singles who may not receive anything, leaving them feeling bummed.

Even within a relationship, tensions arise. The expensive holiday, in some ways, has made people feel entitled in terms of what they think they should receive.

“Sometimes your partner doesn’t expect a gift but in reality, because the day is so hyped up, most times you already know the deal,” Smith said.

It’s a common thing to expect your partner to already know what you mean without saying what you actually mean. However, sometimes people would rather be surprised, or feel like the gift they are

receiving came from the heart.

For some households, however, the tradition of Valentine’s Day is an important one that they feel should always be around because they don’t get to show certain loved ones how special they are due to extenuating circumstances.

“Being on the ship sometimes two out of three weeks in the month and not having service to even talk to your partner makes you feel a certain way, but you know the situation beforehand so I can’t always do what [my partner] wants,” Shawn Wiley, a merchant seaman, said.

For too many reasons, the United States is turning Valentine’s into a day dedicated to making money rather than [Click link to continue: https://rb.gy/2nwopp](https://rb.gy/2nwopp)

My own Valentine

Jaelen Patrick
Opinions Editor



Photo courtesy of istockphoto.com

Self-love in its truest form is There is no shame in being your own valentine, so, this Valentine’s Day, make it about you.

Take the day to show your-

self just how much you love you. Use it as an excuse to treat yourself to the things you have been holding back on.

Make your own plans, of your own liking, on your own time.

Here is a list of places you can go to do just that this Valentine’s Day:

Go to the movies: Seeing a movie alone is definitely an underrated experience. This could be a great way to become more comfortable with your own company, which is a part of loving yourself. So, throw on some comfy clothes, pick a time to watch a movie that you

have been dying to see, and buy all the overpriced snacks your heart desires. You can visit CMX Fallschase or AMC Tallahassee 20 to give it a try.

Visit a bakery: A part of self-love is treating yourself, and there’s no better way to do that than to indulge your sweet tooth. Give in to your guilty pleasures by visiting The Cake Shop or Decadent Delights Tally and picking out all your favorite sweet treats that will satisfy your cravings. By doing this, you are guaranteed to fulfill all your desires. Besides, who wants those cheap assorted chocolates anyway?

Go to the park: Visiting the park on Valentine’s Day is a great way for you to catch up with yourself. Riding your bike, setting up a picnic with your favorite lunch, reading a good book about self-love, or even journaling your thoughts are all great ways to enjoy some time alone in the fresh air. Cascades Park provides the perfect atmosphere to relax and unwind outdoors.

Take yourself to dinner Dinner for one is not as intimidating as it sounds. Taking yourself out to your favorite restaurant, ordering that new

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Starting over, with love

Kayla McKinney

Managing Editor

I have always felt uncomfortable hearing people say “I love you” to each other before hanging up the phone.

I feel the discomfort more so when people say it to me, expecting to hear the words back. It always follows with an awkward silence and some strange, unexpected response like “Thanks.”

For a long time, I envied anyone who could make the statement freely and mean it. It has often made me feel like I am missing a crucial part of my brain; like there’s some wire in there that’s disconnected, resulting in sporadic system failures.

It wasn’t until I was in college that I realized just how much of this uneasiness was the result of my own childhood and home life.

In most homes, hugging, kissing and saying “I love you” is customary. For me, the concept of any of it happening, especially on a daily basis, was foreign.

Although my mother will argue that all three existed for a time in my younger years, the memory is very faint, if not nonexistent, and when I think of home now I think of warm, fond memories of four cohabitants versus a Brady-bunch style family.

The hard truth is our parents are the foundation for who we become. They are the first people we look up to and, no matter how our personalities begin to take form in our teenage years, we take more from our parents than we’d like to admit, including how we learn to give and receive love.

Alicia Jackson, the coordinator of clinical programs at Florida A&M University, has learned much about this “observational learning” style in her six years with the Office of Counseling Services.

“How our parents see friendship, talk about friendship, and illustrate friendship to us affects how we think about what is healthy [or] unhealthy in friendship,” Jackson explained.



Photo courtesy of Pinterest
Relearning how to love is not easy.

“If we have abusive, dysfunctional, and/or emotionally unhealthy relationships with [our parents]; we then begin to replicate what we think is love, intimacy, affection in our personal relationships with others,” she added.

In a way, your social personality is almost genetic. My mother is quite shy when it comes to meeting new people. Very rarely would she ever walk up to a new person in a room and spark a conversation, a trait I undoubtedly inherited from her.

Neither of my parents have a lot of friends, either, which could be the reason both me and my sister fancy smaller circles.

When considering love, the absence of affection in my home makes it difficult for me to perceive love in relationships, whether romantic or platonic, because the traditional things that symbolize this connection don’t register as endearing.

In contrast, it pushes me to distance myself from others sometimes because the sight of them is almost ingenuous to me, no matter how well intended the

opposing party meant for it to feel.

Like me, many others struggle with breaking free from the effects of emotionally toxic home environments when entering the dating scene.

People whose parents never told them they loved them may have difficulty telling this to others. Those of us who grew up without experiencing consistent affection tend to struggle with sensitivity and being affectionate in a relationship. Others whose parents have never been in a long-term relationship, or whose parents only engage in polyamorous relationships, may feel incapable of commitment.

When you throw in societal standards and gender roles, the mixture can feel chaotic and impossible to overcome. However, a lot of this is just a mental game.

Though we came from them and adore them, we are not our parents, unless we choose to be.

It seems an unlikely statement, considering there have been countless studies that confirm that people often suffer the same fate in marriages and relationships that their parents did.

Oftentimes we forget that our parents are just like us and learned how to feel and show love from their own parents.

Not showing affection became a tradition my mom passed down from her parents, who didn’t believe in public displays of affection in front of children. My father comes from a Caribbean household, which I’ve learned is traditionally emotionally unexpressive; love is an idea that is understood versus shared.

The reality that you could end up in the same cycle your parents are caught in is a daunting one, but it is possible to overcome.

“Just because you never experienced love, remember you are worthy of love, you can still give love, and you can choose to live your life differently than you were raised. The way you began, doesn’t have



Photo courtesy of Kayla McKinney
My father, Kevin McKinney, holding up the Bahamian flag.

to be the way you end,” Jackson said.

For a long time, I faulted myself for the barriers I created when it came to relationships in my life. Then I realized if I created them, I could dismantle them.

It’s not at all easy, but we are capable of creating any reality we want. However, it all begins with a choice. You must start with some reflection and decide to make a commitment to yourself and what you want.

For me, it was realizing that whether or not I needed it growing up, I want to prioritize affection and showing love in my own life.

The challenge with this becomes how do you learn to do something you have never seen modeled, and most importantly, how do you unlearn what you know.

Jackson, a mental health professional, says therapy could be a good place to start uncovering and understanding the root of certain behaviors in relationships, and just how you can change them.

“Therapy is a great way to determine what are those things that are most important about love that I seem to lack or I am not the best at conveying,” Jackson said. “Often, people find that there are some deep, private and hidden things

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