

Love used to be

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Love used to be so much easier when you were younger. I mean a lot younger. About the time when the term 'rubber' was still only something to describe what you used to erase pencil marks rather than a form of contraception. Remember the days when you had those funny feelings about someone special that meant at times you couldn't even eat properly? Just being in their presence was enough to make life spectacular. You weren't trying to get into anyone's pants and they weren't trying to get into yours.

Then puberty hit and you noticed that people had bits that you hadn't noticed before. Life started getting exciting, maybe sometimes too exciting. No matter how much your teacher wanted you to come to the front of the class there was no way you were leaving that seat. Even then, when you could hardly contain yourself, the sensations you had for others still had some sort of innocence about them.

I remember I didn't just 'like' girls, I loved them. Well I thought I did anyway. Ever since kindergarten I'd always had a special someone that made me weak at the knees. From year 7 to year 10 I had a crush on one girl. Every time she looked in my direction or wafted past I would feel all tingly. If there was a day where we had a good chat, afterwards I would be in a blissful daze. My friends would get frustrated because I couldn't maintain a conversation. Whether my life was ecstasy or hell was completely in her hands.

The problem is, as you grow up, this innocent love is lost because you start to have real relationships. Real relationships have conflicts and consequences. Eventually, you become so emotionally scarred and bruised that you can barely recognise yourself in the mirror. I know I can't. The innocence of young love has been beaten out of me by the reality of the adult relationship.

Now I wonder if love even exists at all. I am still attracted to people. I still really like people. Only now it seems to be only like. Last summer I actually caught up with the girl that I had a crush on in high school. It was some good summer lovin' *Grease* style. My boyhood fantasy had finally come true. It felt very zen. In fact it messed with my head a little. I felt like I was in the end of some sappy romantic film that had spanned a decade.

But it's different now than it was then. Now we are in our early 20s not our early teens. The burdens of adulthood have scarred us so much that any glimmer of innocent infatuation is stifled. I still really liked this girl but I no longer loved her in the way I once did. She did not get my heart racing and it made me wonder if it ever will race again. Some friends tried to comfort me by telling me that it is all a consequence of growing up. I have my doubts. I think it may just be a consequence of compromise.

Adam Brodie-McKenzie

