

Three Special Valentine's Day Releases

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University of Lethbridge

February 11th, 2005

On Love That Lasts

by Reginald W. Bibby

Lest anyone had any doubts, a recent national study has found that this Valentine's Day just about everyone is looking for love. If they have found it, they want it to last. According to the study carried out by University of Lethbridge sociologist Reginald Bibby for the Vanier Institute of the Family, there is virtually nothing more important to Canadians than having a good relationship with a special someone.

What should a person be looking for in a partner? Looks? Personality? Money? Brains? The answer? None of the above. Canadians, say that, far and away, the most important characteristic to find in a partner is honesty – sometimes expressed in terms such as “trust,” “loyalty,” “integrity,” and “faithfulness.” The second most important trait? Plain and simple “kindness.” Forget about sex appeal and financial security. Honesty and kindness, say people across the country, are far more important.

And once you are in a relationship, what's the key to having it last? The survey has found that the Canadian top-5 list of keys to a happy and lasting relationship reads like this: number 5 respect; number 4, patience; number 3, love; number 2, communication; and number 1 – and you should have guessed it or your own relationship may be in trouble – honesty.

In describing what they think makes relationships work, people from Newfoundland to British Columbia use words and phrases that should resonate with the experiences of most of us. Try some of them on and see how well they fit: “confidence,” “trust,” “the need for give-and-take,” “being good friends,” “taking care of your partner,” “being willing to work things out,” “not controlling one another,” “forgiveness,” “doing things together,” “common sense,” “communication of feelings,” “100% commitment to the relationship,” “being flexible,” “acceptance of each other's goals,” “equality,” “sharing ideas,” “frankness,” “the ability to compromise,” “common interests,” “fidelity,” “dealing with things rather than getting angry,” “love and enough money,” “telling the truth,” “listening,” and, of course, “passion.”

The Top Five Keys to a Happy and Lasting Relationship

1. Honesty	23%
2. Communication	20
3. Love	12
4. Patience	10
5. Respect	8

Source: Reginald Bibby, Future Families Project, Vanier Institute of the Family, 2004.

These are among the findings of Vanier's national survey of 2,093 Canadians who expressed their hopes and dreams concerning relationships and family life. The findings have been released recently in a report entitled, *The Future Families Project*. The survey results are accurate within approximately 3 percentage points either way, 19 times in 20.

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More information on *The Future Families Project* is available at both
www.vifamily.ca and www.reginaldbibby.com.