

# Can Two Hearts Really Beat As One?

“Two hearts beating as one” has long been the topic of love songs and poetry. But is this feeling of connectedness just a romanticized ideal or is there something to it? Some interesting research done in the past decade is helping to answer that question, and is, in my opinion, providing some new food for thought about how we can positively and negatively affect our relationships.

If you’ve ever walked into a room and picked up on someone’s “energy,” whether it was positive or negative, you’ve experienced the phenomenon that is a transfer of bio-energy. Research shows that the energy signals from another person are picked up in our own bodies in a number of different places, including the heart, gut, and the brain. Interestingly, the heart gets the information *moments before* the brain, which may explain why we are sometimes aware of a feeling before we are aware of our thoughts. This makes sense from a survival perspective, because a fight-or-flight reaction often kicks in before we are aware of the nature of the danger. A “gut reaction” or intuition is more than just a feeling – your body, not just your conscious mind, does in fact receive important information from the world around you.

Your body will copy the signal sent to you by your loved one, be it positive, neutral, or negative (e.g., danger). For example, let’s say you’re upset because the wedding is days away and one of your vendors just fell through. Or your family members are making last-minute demands about who needs to be added to the guest list. If, while ruminating over this dilemma, you direct these thoughts towards your significant other, it is very likely that his or her body will show similar changes in heart rate or blood pressure as if the upsetting thought were coming from him or herself. This ability to “synch up” two different heart beats is called “entrainment,” and when these two signals come together, the energy grows stronger. Whose signal will dominate and determine the pattern? Typically, it is the stronger or the more coherent of the two signals. Many types of biological signals can synch up in this way.

One of the most important synching up of signals occurs in the mirror neurons of the brain. As soon as we come into the presence of another human being, these neurons reflect what we observe the other person doing as if we were performing the behavior ourselves.

Scientists suspect that these mirror neurons are the home to empathy, imitation, mind reading, and learning language. Clearly the ability to mirror another person’s experience is essential for human connection and learning. Without empathy – the ability to see someone else’s point of view – we would not have the capacity for compassion and understanding.

So how can you use this information to build a strong and loving relationship?

Be aware of how powerful your thoughts and intentions are even when they are unspoken – just thinking the thought sends some form of bio-energy to your spouse-to-be. Given that, if something is bothering you, put it on the table and address it so you can let it go rather than continuing to have a negative cloud between you.

Stay calm when there is a disagreement and your partner is becoming angry; your more “coherent” energy will perhaps entrain him or her back to a calmer state.

Listen to your gut and heart. If you sense that something is off but your partner is not a talker, find a way to compassionately start a conversation about what might be bothering him or her.

Since we know that couples who are more emotionally and psychologically connected are better able to synch up their signals with one another, this connection is something very important to work on! While I could write pages on what generates psychological and emotional connection, I’ll give you what I think are the two most important ingredients: 1) having an accurate picture of who your spouse is and what makes him or her “tick” (needs, values, morals, beliefs, etc.), and 2) empathy and compassion. It’s one

thing to “know” someone and another to tolerate and respect them. Your mirror neurons will give you the basis for “seeing” your significant other, but you need to strengthen the muscle of being a compassionate and loving human being in order to generate respect.

Know that it is not just in your imagination when you feel in synch with your partner. In that moment it is very likely that you are two hearts beating as one.

*For more information on the research in the area of intentions and bio-energy, the reader is recommended to read *The Intention Experiment* (2007) by Louise McTaggart.*

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