



Preface

Love . . . ahhhh. Love . . . arghhh. For as long as men and women have inhabited the earth, these ahhhs and arghhs have expressed the ambivalent nature of our most powerful emotion. We want love. We dream about it, seek it, ache for it, fantasize about it. And sometimes we find it. But even when we find it, why does it so often remain an ahhhh-arghhh experience? Why do some people seem to “get” the nature of romantic and long-lasting love and why does it elude so many others?

It’s because so many men and women, especially in our high-tech, tabloid-driven, “pop” psychology society, have not learned the ingredients that go into passionate, committed, enduring relationships. Ingredients? Are we speaking about chocolate cake? In a way, yes. But while love can be even more delicious than that sugary, endorphin-boosting confection, its contents involve more than sugar, vanilla, and rich chocolate. Rather, deep and long-lasting love requires values and beliefs and intense feelings that must hold fast not only through the hectic pace of everyday modern life but through reversals of fortune, illness, and even tragedy.

Arghhh again, you may say. Is love so complicated? Yes and no. *All About Love!* will tell you some rather simple ways to stop seeking, aching, fantasizing about, and yearning for love and show you how to find it. One way is to consider some basic rules. No, not “the rules” that are simply rehashed “tricks” from the 1950s, more designed to snare a partner with cleverness and

guile than to attract and be attractive to the person with whom you hope to spend the rest of your life. Rather, the rules of lasting love involve an ongoing understanding of what makes you and your partner tick and the courage to change some basic assumptions, attitudes, and behavior that get in the way of giving you what you would love to experience forever. They also include spiritual awareness, an appreciation of the place that each of us occupies in the vast and incomprehensible universe that is our home for a mere seven or eight or, if we're lucky, nine decades.

All About Love! is decidedly *not* another treatise on pathetic women and their so-called innate masochism. Nor is it a discourse on the much-maligned lowly male and his macho egotism or penchant for shying away from commitment. Instead, it's a guide to what *works* in good relationships and in good marriages and an answer to the questions: What's good about commitment, what adjustments must be made, and what does the all-powerful ego have to do with deciding these things? (The Talmud says, "We do not see things as *they* are. We see things as *we* are" [italics added].)

Whatever your background, whatever you may have perceived of interpersonal relationships (especially marriage) at an early age, and however your past experiences or the modern age seem to conspire to doom long-lasting liaisons, these need not dictate the blueprint you create for your own life. In fact, there is no one blueprint, no single strategy, that works for everyone, but there are many ways to arrive at the same goal.

It is my hope that *All About Love!* will convince you that a loving and committed relationship is what "the good life" is all about and that it is worth the effort it takes to have such a relationship in your own life. May this book help you make the changes that will allow you to raise a champagne glass of celebration and joy on your fiftieth anniversary!

Joan Swirsky