

UNITED WISDOM

Falling in Love and Getting to Know Someone: How Our Image of Them Changes

Relationships

Andrey Zarinsh & Maria Evilkut

R03 · EN

@andrey.zarinsh @ilkutki

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Epigraph

> *“Let me hear.” — Song of Songs 8:13, a brief World English Bible fragment, with display capitalisation. A poetic address to another’s voice; neither contact demanded against refusal nor a promise of infallible understanding.*

What this article is about

Early in an acquaintance, some details become particularly vivid. Someone names a favourite book, stays beside us after a meeting or answers a question with unexpected precision. A large image can emerge from these small episodes: being together will be easy, they understand what others need explained at length, and life beside them will take a new form. This is an actual experience which need not immediately be called a mistake. Yet the image already contains more than was said or done. Some belongs to the encounter, some to my hope, and some remains unknown. Getting to know someone begins where new material can enter that image and matter in its own right.

This article describes no compulsory stages of love, specifies no deadline for a feeling to change and assesses no particular couple. Falling in love and getting to know someone are considered as different, sometimes neighbouring activities: experiencing attraction and learning how another actually answers, chooses and participates. Every warm impression need not be cooled or an exhaustive fault list collected. What matters is room for surprise about differences as well as attractions. A new detail need not immediately destroy a feeling. Equally, feeling does not make it irrelevant when an actual agreement, refusal, harm or further participation is involved.

Imagine a fictional scene. Olga and Ilya met at a small book discussion. Talking about travel felt easy, and Olga imagined them stopping without a plan in little towns. When an opportunity for a weekend walk arose, Ilya said he liked choosing a route beforehand and leaving time for rest. Olga hears this and notices that her image of a spontaneous companion emerged from one pleasant conversation. This is no real client case or proof of a theory. It shows how an answer can enter an acquaintance without making the earlier evening false, Ilya a disappointment or Olga someone unable to love.

@andrey.zarinsh @ilkutki

I. Between an episode and an entire image

A pleasant conversation contains actual words, tone and participation, rather than someone's whole way of living. Ilya really was interested in travel. It did not follow that he always prefers no plan or is ready to spend every weekend on the road. Olga may have connected these things because that particular togetherness was what she wanted to imagine. The scene establishes no hidden personality mechanism. Distinguishing what happened from what was added can suffice. An encounter's warmth can remain while broad conclusions arising afterwards are clarified, without automatically treating them as promises another supposedly made through interest and kindness.

An image need not arise from one episode alone. Meetings, messages, someone's self-description and my preferences all contribute. Each has a different status. An account of a habit is their description; observed action is an event; future life imagined is not yet fact. These distinctions require no continuous internal report during a date. They can be revisited when relevant. Olga wants to understand this walk's terms, rather than assess every earlier conversational word. One limited question can refine an image without making the whole acquaintance an endless investigation of reliability.

Getting to know someone does not give access to a final, unchanging person behind every impression. Others change too, act differently under different conditions and cannot always describe their preferences immediately. More definite material can arrive while retaining context. Ilya preferred a plan for this weekend; that is no complete account of his attitude towards all spontaneity. Equally, the stated condition cannot be ignored until an exhaustive character theory exists. For this walk it matters now. An image may become more precise through particular clarifications, without promising eventually to eliminate every unknown part of another person.

II. Imagination adds light

In the selected On Love passage, Stendhal depicts a lover attributing new perfections to the beloved, compared with a branch becoming covered in crystals. This literary image helps distinguish a person from the representation emerging around them. It is no validated biological model, universal stage sequence or reason to declare every hope unreliable. Historical gender, possession and behaviour prescriptions are not adopted as contemporary relationship rules.

An imagined shared life may be attractive in itself. Olga pictured an open road, a small station and conversation continuing without watching the clock. The image also concerns what she wants. Her desire can be seen without requiring Ilya to confirm every detail. Hope need not vanish through that distinction: some parts may become shared, others need discussion, and

others remain a personal dream. Status matters. A desired future image is not yet an agreement between two people, even where it emerged from actual warm contact and feels highly convincing.

The metaphor of attributed perfections should not become a universal debunking tool. Someone may notice a real quality which others do not encounter in their circumstances. Warm regard can coexist with attention to facts. The question is not whether I am cold enough to qualify my view as correct. It is whether the representation permits new information and another's answer. If Ilya names rest as necessary, that can be heard as stated. He need not immediately be called boring or persuaded that he has not yet understood his true love of spontaneity. Another person need not remain a convenient confirmation of my first impression.

III. One difference does not decide the whole of love

The route answer may disappoint Olga because an important hope was touched. That experience matters. One difference nevertheless does not establish that they are unsuitable for each other or feeling has ended. The subject can come first: how important planning is to each, which walk is possible and whether both want it. This article guarantees no compatibility through that conversation. It preserves scale. A particular answer needs particular examination until broader material appears. Equally, a person can regard a difference as significant for their choice without first proving relationships universally impossible.

New information sometimes adds attraction. Olga might discover that a chosen route leaves time for places that interest her. She might hear that rest follows a demanding week rather than contempt for her idea. These are possible fictional continuations, not established causes or a promise that every disagreement proves favourable. A reassuring explanation need not be invented for another. If they are willing, a particular condition can be clarified. An unknown answer remains unknown. Acquaintance permits different outcomes rather than preparing a story in which greater attention necessarily rescues the initial dream.

Sometimes a difference does change a decision. Olga may decide that the proposed weekend does not suit her now and decline the walk. Ilya need not thereby be declared a wrong sort of person. He can decline her version too. Refining an image reveals participation boundaries without obliging an acquaintance to continue merely for more information. Personal conditions and another's answer matter. Choice remains possible with available knowledge. Complete understanding need not be proven before a proportionate decision about one meeting or whether this contact is wanted at all.

IV. Another answers in their own voice

Information arrives through someone’s answer as well as my observation. Olga can ask which weekend Ilya wants, rather than why he is less free than he seemed. The second question already invites an explanation of failure to fit an image. The first leaves room for his proposal. This is no universal truth-getting method or guarantee of a pleasant conversation. Someone may decline to answer, remain uncertain or change their mind later. The subject nevertheless stays clearer: participation available now, rather than a verdict on authentic character from one preference.

Another’s account provides no complete access either. Ilya can state walk terms without explaining every personal circumstance of his week. Olga can ask about an important agreement; he can retain some material privately. If information is necessary for a decision, that can be named and a suitable format selected. Full disclosure should not be demanded as proof of serious feeling. Getting acquainted permits personal information limits. It differs from covert data collection, monitoring correspondence or testing someone through a deliberately created situation designed to obtain a more revealing response. Relevant material comes through actual permitted interaction under both participants’ conditions.

Even a good conversation may leave open questions. The route can be clarified while desired frequency of later meetings remains unknown. That makes no falsehood of the current agreement. Different questions have different deadlines and scope. Olga need not discuss an entire future life before one walk where she does not wish to and circumstances require no more. Equally, Ilya’s agreement with broader plans cannot be inferred from an agreed weekend. Material refines a particular image part. Other parts receive no automatic confirmation merely because one conversation ended in a mutually suitable decision.

V. Warm regard need not conflict with reality

In Murray, Holmes and Griffin’s 1996 study, dating-couple participants reported idealization and relationship measures three times across a year. Greater initial idealization accompanied more favourable subsequent changes. The official indexed abstract was read here, not the full analysis. This does not make every warm image harmful; nor does it justify ignoring refusal, violence or an important broken agreement, or establish this practice’s benefit.

A personally special quality can be loved without requiring every observer to evaluate it identically. Ilya’s way of spending time over a map might irritate one acquaintance and appeal to Olga if a calm conversation accompanies it. Differing regard is not automatically a false judgement. A warm image becomes questionable where unknown conclusions are inferred from it or an important answer ceases to matter. Kindness and revisable understanding need

not exclude one another. Olga can appreciate Ilya's attention while hearing that this day's pace differs from what she imagined.

No choice is required between admiration without clarification and acquaintance solely through fault-finding. Either can turn a person into a predetermined object: one requires perfection, the other evidence for exposure. A limited question concerns the episode: what did I see, what did they say and what conclusion did I draw? This is editorial examination rather than attachment-style diagnosis or a validated relationship programme. A small distinction sometimes suffices. A great quality list is unnecessary, and warmth need not become indifference for one condition to be considered honestly.

VI. Clarification need not become accusation

An answer differing from an image can feel like deception. Actual deception sometimes occurs and its facts matter. In this scene, however, Ilya never promised always to travel without a plan; Olga added that. Distinction allows disappointment without automatically alleging a broken, unstated promise. It does not require blaming Olga for having a dream. She expected this togetherness and now hears another proposal. The subject becomes an actual difference, rather than a contest over whose personality must explain the whole unwelcome turn.

An actual promise retains significance. Its breach cannot be reduced solely to expectations in the person affected. An agreed route changed unexpectedly is another episode from first discussing preferences. It needs material about agreement, change, capacities and responsibility. An inner image may contribute to experience without cancelling an external event. A more accurate view does not automatically excuse every action. New knowledge sometimes makes a breach clearer; a boundary, protection or declining further participation may then be appropriate. Getting acquainted preserves evaluation of real behaviour alongside examination of an image.

With pressure, humiliation or danger, the question exceeds whether I imagined someone correctly. Complete motive understanding need not precede suitable help or ending unsafe contact. This article assesses no particular case and prescribes no dangerous conversation to test an image. Important legal, medical or other professional circumstances require corresponding expertise. Falling in love cancels neither refusal nor boundaries. Getting to know someone is no obligation to remain until an explanation makes every act acceptable. Feeling can exist alongside necessary safety decisions and actual actions.

VII. Change an image without rewriting the past

Olga may later see the pleasant talk as one acquaintance part and a planning preference as another. Nothing requires declaring that the beginning contained no truth. Earlier joy really concerned that evening; the wider imagined future promise had another status. Preserving distinctions permits revision without destroying the whole story. Equally, an earlier assessment need not be defended at every cost. New facts may change earlier words' meaning, especially where an actual contradiction emerges. The change should be named with its new basis, without inventing knowledge supposedly present from the start.

Revision concerns both people. Ilya may also have imagined Olga differently after the book meeting. Discovering how much route freedom matters to her, he may offer another format. She need not remain convenient for his initial impression. Each receives material and retains choice. This scene contains no sole observer investigating an immovable object. There are two participants whose information and intentions can develop. Mutuality requires neither symmetrical disclosure of every detail nor identical decision speed. Actual conversational conditions matter more than an ideal of both understanding and stating absolutely everything simultaneously.

Acquaintance's quality should not be judged solely by whether contact continues. Continuing may suit, declining may be chosen, or a question remain open. This article calls neither every change beneficial nor every separation growth. What became known and how it relates to each person's participation can be considered specifically. One clarification should not receive credit for the whole later outcome. One's own decision, another's response, external conditions and subsequent events differ. Together they do not prove that a sufficiently attentive person can guarantee a relationship develops in the desired direction.

VIII. Leave room for unknowns

An unknown is not always a deficiency requiring immediate elimination. Early in an acquaintance, many questions simply have not arisen in life. Olga does not know how they would organise a longer trip. This can be acknowledged without rehearsing every possible situation. Equally, necessary current participation terms cannot arbitrarily remain uncertain where a decision depends on them. Circumstances distinguish the questions. Not every unknown needs checking now, but warm hope replaces no agreement about what has already become necessary for an upcoming meeting or actual joint action.

A complete question list does not make someone completely known. Much information can arrive without establishing how it will appear in an event. That is no reason to dismiss an account or make contact suspicious. Proportionate confidence can suffice. Ilya named rest as needed; Olga can accept this as his current position and choose a response. Changed

conditions later bring further material. Deliberately creating difficulty, making someone wait, provoking jealousy or breaking an agreement to reveal a true reaction is unnecessary. Such tests change the situation itself and authorise no complete, reliable personality portrait from what follows.

A question can remain open without promising continued relationship. Available material sometimes already suffices for a personal choice while another's motives remain unknown. Another ordinary meeting may be wanted where voluntary and safe. A suitable conversation about one's own question may be needed instead. These differ from completing an image at every cost. Olga need not choose a great future today from one weekend. An actual weekend arrangement nonetheless has a deadline: openness about a larger question does not silently change time already agreed or obligations to another person.

IX. Consider one safe clarification

For a voluntary small trial, choose an ordinary episode involving neither danger nor coercion nor urgent professional need. Name three parts: what someone actually said or did, the broader picture I added, and information needed now. This is an editorial format rather than a validated love scale or partner-selection programme. It may be shortened or unused. No provocation, disclosure of private messages or manufactured conflict is needed to check a view. Uncertain memory should be labelled. An approximate recollection should not become an exact quotation supporting an accusation.

Olga might note the travel conversation, her image of an open road and a question about this weekend's suitable route. Where appropriate, she can ask about that condition without demanding confirmation of the whole fantasy. An answer enters with its status: a preference account is an account, an agreed version is an agreement, and hope remains hope. If discussion is unwanted or no answer arrives, an unknown can remain and a proportionate decision be made. Neither an overall person rating nor proof that feeling was wrong is necessary. One more clearly named subject may result without a final conclusion about the person.

After clarification, consider what changed in the image and matters for actual participation. Immediate emotional ease is unnecessary. A difference may be clearer while sadness remains, or a suitable shared format may emerge. These are possible results rather than promised effectiveness. A personal note can stay private. Another need not read it fully or disclose symmetrical material. Greater difficulty permits stopping and appropriate support. Actual harm, breach or danger retains significance regardless of this format's success; necessary action and competent assistance do not await completion of small self-inquiry.

X. Feeling can meet new knowledge

Getting acquainted need not end falling in love. It may add depth: someone who talked easily about travel also likes rest and definite plans, can propose another version or state participation limits. Such details promise no happy development. They provide material against which desire can be considered. Olga need not choose between the first evening's joy and Ilya's answer. Both events can remain while a suitable walk is selected. Feeling does not become false through an image changing; an image does not become untouchable because feeling was strong and significant.

Song of Songs' poetic address remains one perspective on another's voice. Stendhal's imaginative image and contemporary relationship research have different functions and limits. They form no single law of love. For this question, the distinction may suffice: I experience an encounter and keep getting to know a participant entitled to answer differently from my hope. Acquaintance may be partial, warm, uncomfortable or lead to declining. No outcome needs complete knowledge of someone or cancels personal boundaries. A new detail can revise a representation while both participants retain choice about further involvement.

What this means in practice

Distinguish an episode, someone's account, personal hope and an agreement. For one ordinary safe question, notice the broad picture added to a meeting and information actually needed now. Clarification concerns a particular condition rather than compulsory exposure or proof of true love. Warm regard need not vanish; new words and acts should be allowed to revise it. One answer confirms no entire imagined future, and incomplete clarity makes no proportionate current agreement impossible. Uncertain memory's limits are named, without invented words, frequencies or a condemning verdict based on a reconstructed scene.

Create neither jealousy nor conflict nor unsafe contact nor hidden tests to get acquainted. Another can decline and retain private material; personal terms and choices remain too. Actual promises, breaches and harm matter regardless of expectations or feeling's intensity. Danger requires appropriate real action and local help; important professional matters need relevant expertise. The format can stop, unknowns remain, or conversation be rescheduled within agreed conditions. The practical result is modest: what I know about this person here, what I added and what participation is actually possible for both of us now become clearer.

Key quotation

> *“First crystallisation.” — Stendhal, On Love, chapters II and IV, a brief fragment of Cecil N. Sidney Woolf and Philip Sidney Woolf’s English translation. A literary name for an image of emerging perfections, rather than a confirmed stage, compulsory timeline or diagnosis.*

Connections between traditions

• **Stendhal:** an image of attributing perfections to the beloved. Historical stages, timelines, gender and ethnic generalisations are not adopted as contemporary science.

• **Song of Songs 8:13:** a poetic address to another’s voice. Neither forced response nor justified jealousy nor a safe-contact guarantee.

• **Murray, Holmes and Griffin, 1996:** research on idealization in dating couples. The official indexed abstract was read; favourable associations authorise neither ignoring harm nor promising this practice’s benefit.

• **Editorial approach:** warm regard considered alongside openness to new material, preserving unknowns, boundaries and choice.

Sources

1. Stendhal. On Love, selected chapters II and IV. Project Gutenberg 53720. Translated by Cecil N. Sidney Woolf and Philip Sidney Woolf; title page states first published 1915, reprinted 1920, Brentano’s, New York. PG released 12 December 2016, updated 23 October 2024. Selected passages 471–499 and 583–598, surrounding text and metadata were read, not the whole book or French critical text. Rights UNKNOWN; source text is neither imported nor embedded.

2. Song of Solomon 8:13. World English Bible, chapter 8. The complete short chapter and public-domain text declaration were read. Traditional attribution to Solomon is not presented as verified historical authorship. The Russian fragment is editorial rather than a branded Russian WEB. Source text is neither imported nor embedded nor used for training; the work’s quotation limit remains.

3. Sandra L. Murray, John G. Holmes and Dale W. Griffin. The self-fulfilling nature of positive illusions in romantic relationships: love is not blind, but prescient. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 1996, 71(6), 1155–1180. PubMed, PMID 8979384; DOI 10.1037/0022-3514.71.6.1155. The complete official indexed abstract and metadata were read in search results; two direct opens returned an empty page. The full paper, methods and data

were not read, and mirrored PDFs were not used. Rights UNKNOWN; no direct quotations, and source text is neither imported nor embedded.

Tags

falling in love, getting acquainted, image of another, relationships, encounter, imagination, hope, idealization, attraction, attention, new material, question, answer, voice, difference, unknowns, choice, boundaries, voluntary participation, agreement, responsibility, breach, safety, support, understanding, revision, personal notes, togetherness, Stendhal, Song of Songs, crystallisation, warm regard

About the authors

Andrey Zarinsh is the author and founder of United Wisdom. He explores inner transformation, the unity of traditions, intercultural dialogue, and contemporary spiritual discipline. Instagram: @andrey.zarinsh.

Maria Evilkut is a co-author of United Wisdom. Alongside her research, she seeks to test these ideas in practice and observe how principles of unity and mutual understanding work in real life between people and cultures. Instagram: @ilkutki.