

CHAPTER ONE

I Never Knew Eros (Sexual) Love Like This

It was a Monday morning, and a time when my consulting career was continuing to be far more rewarding than I had ever expected. I planned to start a new project that day and was looking forward to the challenges that come with a new consulting assignment. On my way to work, I reflected on how pleased I was with my career as a Management Consultant. I loved the dynamic nature of consulting as I was working on various projects in different industries, with diverse clients. The work provided excitement and professional development opportunities, which enabled me to enjoy and excel in my career. I had received many awards, accolades and, most important, promotions and raises, and looked forward to future career opportunities.

As it relates to my career, I always wanted to be in control of my own destiny. There's nothing worse than hating your job, driving in a car you dislike, returning home to a neighborhood you don't like, and sleeping in a house that doesn't meet your expectations of a home. I felt great about avoiding all of those scenarios in my life.

And Then Came John Newman

As I walked into my new customer's building, I noticed that it was rather dark and quiet. I had been told that there

weren't a lot of people who worked there and I even noticed that many of the offices were empty along the hallway. So I was hoping for an office all to myself and was disappointed to find that I would have an officemate while I worked there. I was also surprised to find that my new officemate was tall, dark and handsome, with a smile that lit up a room. He introduced himself as John Newman.

If I had to describe a picture of what my ideal mate was, he would have looked just like John. He shook my hand and looked at me like we were in a nightclub. The look seemed to say, "I'm going to hit that." But I didn't mind, I hadn't met many Black men in my field so working with him was bound to add more excitement to an already fulfilling career.

The first thing that comes to mind when I think of John is that he is the best liar I've ever met. Please understand me that when I say this guy was such a great liar, I mean he should have parlayed his skill for lying into a career! He was that skilled at lying, and it was a trait that I'd pay a price for later.

The next thing that comes to mind when I think of John is that he loved women. John had a knack for being intimate with women, not just physically, but emotionally as well. He was very fascinated by women and, most important, the sport of getting a woman. Plus, he loved women's bodies and, simply put, he understood more about the vagina than most females. Actually, not since I saw the play, *Vagina Monologues*, had I heard so many interesting stories about women and their vaginas. In fact, John should have written his own play. (A little side comment... I want to mention that going to the off-Broadway show, *Vagina*

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Monologues, was one of the most empowering experiences I've had as a woman. It was a really powerful play. Every monologue relates to the vagina, whether it be through sex, love, rape, menstruation, mutilation, masturbation, birth or orgasm. One of the funniest stories was about the various names that are used to describe the vagina. Through it all, the main message of the show was that the vagina was a tool of female empowerment. This is a message that many women do not understand today.)

Throughout college, I had heard about porn movies, but until I met John, I had never seen one. John had a collection of them that he would watch and enjoy as if he was watching a movie or sitcom. I remember when we were living together (I'll explain later how that happened), I came home one day and John was watching a porn movie, but not just any porn movie. John took everything to another level. He was watching a 3D porn movie and was sitting there in the bedroom with 3D glasses on. I laughed so hard because he looked like a fool. I thought every guy watched porn movies in 3D. However, over the years, I found that not to be the case.

Since John and I shared an office, I got to know more and more about him every day. One thing that I learned about John was a clue not to get involved in a romantic relationship with him; this was the fact that he was always broke. However, he earned a very good income, even more than I made!

At the time we met, John was living with a woman about 10 years older than he was who obsessed over him. She apparently adored him; however, since John's divorce wasn't finalized from his wife (who still prayed for John to come

back home to her and their two daughters), he wouldn't consider a serious committed relationship with the woman. I remember telling him that if you're living with a woman, whether you know it or not, you're already in a serious committed relationship.

John smoked, drank and gambled so much that it was hard to tell which one was his biggest vice. But at that time in my life, all of those things seemed trivial; and in fact, they made John even more intriguing to me. He was a bad boy.

One thing my grandma used to say was "It's good to live a sheltered life, that way you never have to find out what your vices are." Well, John introduced me to gambling. Let's just say that John took me to the casino and taught me blackjack, and I fell in love with it the first time I won a large "double down" bet. When I returned from my first casino trip, I decided to master blackjack. This was a great game for me because I had a college degree in mathematics and had a knack for numbers. I regularly studied blackjack, learned to count cards, and spent much of my free time in a casino. I think it's safe to say that blackjack became my vice.

Before I got really good at blackjack, I would lose lots of money. John and I would drive up to Atlantic City after work, and gamble all night, and then drive straight to work the next day (with no sleep). I remember one time we lost plenty of money and John had this bright idea to return the next day to win it back. But given the fact that John had lost all of our money the night before, I didn't know how this could be possible. John decided to take his company laptop to a pawn shop so we could use that money to win

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back the money we had already lost. And I actually thought this was a good idea! Thanks to God's grace and mercy, we won, and we were able to get his laptop back. If we hadn't won, and he couldn't retrieve his company's laptop, John would have likely lost his job. So, in some ways, we had no choice but to win, and we did.

I acquired so much skill at playing blackjack that eventually people would ask me to teach them how to play. In fact, a few years later, I taught a guy that I was dating how to play blackjack and he learned to maximize his blackjack play. One day after his skill level had significantly increased, we went to Atlantic City and my boyfriend said he needed to and planned to win \$50,000. I replied, "Well, in that case, win about \$10,000 for me." That seemed like such a ridiculous amount of money to try and win, but I soon realized that he wasn't joking. I helped him count cards and he had a focus that night that took all of the fun out of gambling. But when we left, he had won about \$38,000. So I guess we both have John to thank for my blackjack skills. Even today, if I ever get in a bind, I know I could easily win \$1-\$2k with ease at any casino.

As John and I worked together every day in that small dark office, we became great friends. We started hanging out after work, during lunch, and eventually weekends. John and I became very close, but given that he still lived with his girlfriend, I didn't want to get involved with him.

John Moves in with Me

One morning John came into the office and said he and his girlfriend broke up and he needed a place to stay during his transition. I didn't hesitate to allow him to stay with

me, because we were such great friends, and after all, friends help friends. I guess I was also secretly thinking that now John could be my guy. I thought this would be perfect, but it took less than two weeks before things started to blow up.

One day while we were both at work, the older woman (supposedly his ex-girlfriend) showed up at the job. The woman was furious because she didn't know where he had been for the last two weeks. Apparently, she didn't get the memo that they had broken up. I could tell she was really worried about him, and had no clue that he had "ended" the relationship. After this scene, John said that the woman was in denial, and that she knew they had broken up, but she was just crazy. So, from the very beginning of our relationship to the very end, there was always drama.

In the beginning, the drama was his ex-girlfriend showing up at the job frequently, calling him every hour during work, and constantly sending flowers to our office. Since I shared an office with him, I took offense to the fact that he put the flowers on his desk and enjoyed them, as well as all the attention of receiving flowers from her. One day John received the flowers, and as usual, he proudly placed them on his desk. As soon as he went to the bathroom, I took the flowers outside and threw them in the dumpster because I was so sick of the damn flowers. To this day, I hate to see people receive flowers at work.

As months went on, the drama continued. If it wasn't his ex-girlfriend, it was new women calling his cell phone all hours of the day and night. I knew this because I was both living and working with him, which created a living hell for me day and night.

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Given all this drama with John, one would have to ask why in the world would any woman want to deal with this man. Quite frankly, the sex was the best I've ever experienced in my life. So this caused me to accept circumstances that I just wouldn't imagine that I would tolerate. Since my book isn't a "sexy urban novel," I will spare you the details. But let me just say that John was a perfect lover and the worst boyfriend I've ever had. Throughout this relationship of one year (yes, John ended up staying with me for nearly a year), I never felt more insecure and inadequate in my life. In fact, because of John, I know the pain of infidelity because I have experienced it. The pain that won't allow you to sleep because your boyfriend said he was going to call or come by at a specific time and the sun has risen and there's still been no word from him. John would get home around 5 and 6 in the morning after "hanging out with his guy friends." I don't know of any club that is open until that hour. But John always had a good excuse, with supportable evidence and friends to vouch for him. I could never catch him in a lie, but I always knew that he was lying to me. A woman's intuition is typically right.

The Break-Up

One day, John and I had plans to go see a movie after work. I remember this so vividly because it was a Will Smith movie that I had been waiting weeks to see. As we were about to leave work, John told me to go ahead and return home alone because he needed to work late. I asked how he would get home and John said he could catch a ride. I thought to myself, "Let the lies begin!"

When John arrived home that evening, he indicated that he and some of his guy friends were planning a weekend ski trip... and leaving that night. I asked, "How could you have a ski trip planned when I never heard about it until now?" John said, "The other guys already had everything planned, and originally I didn't want to go... but they talked me into it." I sat on the bed and thought to myself that as of that day, I would accept no more lies from John. I also thought that when John left, I would cut up all his clothes while he was away. But then I thought that would be childish, especially if John really was on a ski trip. I then got a better idea. Since John's cell phone rang like a telethon hotline, I thought I'd somehow try to get his voicemail code and see where he was really going for the weekend.

As John started gathering his clothes for the weekend, his phone continued to ring, and as usual, he let his phone go to voicemail. I discreetly followed him to every room in the house, because I was determined to get his voicemail code when he checked his messages. Finally, he pulled the phone out of his pocket. I turned my back to pretend I wasn't looking, but I looked out the corner of my eye, and quickly memorized the code number. As John packed his bags, I ignored him the entire time because I was focused on when I would get an opportunity to check his voicemail messages. And the chance arrived when John went to take a shower. I picked up his cell phone, dialed his voicemail, and began listening to his voicemail messages. There were romantic messages from two different women who I didn't know and then the ex-girlfriend (the older woman) had left a message confirming what time they were going on a ski

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trip to celebrate their anniversary. I was sick to my stomach. I finally realized that the entire time we were together, he had continued to see his ex-girlfriend. As I sat there, I was too hurt to even be mad. In fact, I was devastated and very sad. In my heart, I knew then that all the drama would come to an end that night.

When John came out of the shower, I asked him where he was going for the weekend. I was surprised to find that he told me the city, the state and which guy friends were going. Even after hearing the voicemail from his ex-girlfriend, it sounded really believable.

After John walked out the door, I tried to decide what my next move would be. I couldn't think clearly and started to cry and apparently fell asleep. When I woke up, it was about 9 p.m. and I really needed evidence to bring closure to the relationship. I decided to go to his ex-girlfriend's house and see if his truck was there. I remember that when I woke up I had on purple plaid pajamas and purple slippers, and I thought to myself that since I'm already dressed I might as well go and get my evidence. It never dawned on me to put real clothes on because it really didn't matter what I had on, as I was on a mission.

I was so angry while driving down Constitution Avenue in Washington, DC that I never really noticed any of the stoplights. However, after about the third or fourth light, apparently one turned red. I ran that red light and hit a black car in the intersection. I would soon come to find out that this was not just any black car.

As I sat in my car in disbelief, I looked down at my clothes and thought, What am I doing out looking like

this? Still sitting behind the steering wheel, I soon noticed that not only did one police car arrive, but there were about 20 police cars that had surrounded me. I wondered about so many police cars being there, and I would soon learn why.

A gentleman in a black suit came over to the car and said, "Ma'am, please get out of the car." I said, "Sure," because how much worse could this get? As I got out of the car, a policeman came over and stared at my attire and my hair (which was a hot mess) and said, "Ma'am, are you ok?" For some reason, I just rolled my eyes at him and refused to answer. He told me that I had hit a car in the President's security detail/entourage and they needed to investigate me. I replied, "You have got to be kidding me." Soon another police officer came over, and asked what happened. He also wanted to know if I needed a coat or jacket to put on. I rolled my eyes at him too and said, "I'm dressed, thank you."

I then called the one person who I knew would understand my situation and that is my best friend, Barbara. Everyone needs to have a true best friend, that person who never judges and is always supportive of both the good and the bad in your life. *This is Barbara*. I also knew that she was the only person who could make me feel better about this situation.

Because of what I hit, it must have taken three hours before I was cleared to leave. I had to leave with Barbara because my car wasn't even drivable. As we left the scene of the accident, I asked Barbara if there was a chance that we could still drive by John's ex-girlfriend's house to see if his truck was there and she said, "Hell no!" She told me

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that I got the evidence I needed through his voicemail, and didn't need any more; it was time to move on.

Barbara proved to be right; that was the last night I dealt with John. She took me home and helped me pack up his things. As I balled up his clothes and threw them in the trash bag, she would go behind me and neatly fold them. She kept saying, "You don't want to let him have the satisfaction of knowing how angry you are." After we packed up John's clothes, we also decided to go see that Will Smith movie because when I awoke that morning, that's all I had hoped for that day—none of the drama, lying, stealing voicemail codes, hitting cars. I just wanted to go see the Will Smith movie. I enjoyed the movie and started to prepare my mind for the pain and recovery that was to come.

When John returned on Sunday night, I told him to take his things (which thanks to my best friend were all neatly packed in a bag) and to go back to his ex-girlfriend's house. John said, "What are you talking about? Is that where you thought I was?" He added, "You can call one of my boys and they will tell you that I was with them." I answered, "I have no doubt that they will, but it really doesn't matter now." He continued to come up with more creative lies, but I wasn't even listening. I just stared at the TV, for I was done with that relationship. My grandma used to say, "Don't try to hold on to things that God is trying to take out of your life; just let them go." So I just let go.

As you could imagine, work was awkward, but over the next few weeks, John and I remained cordial and friendly. After all, men will only do what you allow them to do, so I had no one to blame but myself. From the first day I met him, John had showed me who he was, and when people

show you who they are, always believe them the first time. I knew who John was and what he was about and I deserved better than what he had to offer.

After the break-up, I would think about that relationship and sense that there was something different that I felt about this guy, but I couldn't quite understand it. I honestly could say that I loved him and hated him, sometimes even in the same day. Although I didn't understand it while I was in the relationship, I knew that the love I had for him was very powerful, but not of God. I had to explore and dig deeper and I asked God to lead me to an understanding so I could have peace again.

As I reflected on the relationship, I sat down one Saturday afternoon to read the Bible. I feel that God begin to reveal something to me through the Scriptures and it really blessed my heart by giving me a better sense of understanding of my situation. I began to understand much more about love and the types of love. I went online to continue studying and have been blessed to this day by what I learned.

Understanding the Three Types of Love: Eros, Philos and Agape

Through self-study and exploration, I learned that there are three types of love: *Eros*, *Philos* and *Agape*. I had never known that before, but understanding this concept has been enlightening for me. Here's what I learned:

Eros Love: The English word "erotic" is derived from Eros, and it has to do with the sensual passions. It is not found in Biblical usage. Eros love is also known as romantic or emotional love, and it constitutes the feeling of being

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“in love.” This love is best expressed through our senses—touch, sight, hearing, etc. Eros is similar to lust, which is that intense sexual desire or overwhelming longing or craving for someone. Eros or lust is generally hormonally driven. Estrogen and testosterone are the hormones that work like magnets to draw men and women together. Eros love is good in a relationship if it is balanced with the other two loves because it allows for intimate sexual relations with someone and keeps the flame and spark in the relationship. Eros love may be the number one illusion for single women.

Philos Love: This type of love is the natural affection between people. Philos love is about companionship and connecting with people to share life’s journey. It is sometimes called “friendship love,” and friendship is the foundation of a successful relationship. This is true whether it is a marriage, or boyfriend-girlfriend, a relationship between family members, a relationship with co-workers, an employer, etc.

Agape Love: This type of love is from God, and it is an unconditional love. Agape love is above Philos and Eros love. It is a love that is totally selfless; like when a person gives love to another person even if this act does not benefit her/him in any way. Whether the love given is returned or not, the person continues to love (even without any self-benefit). This type of love provides the stability and binding commitment to a marriage. Agape love helps bind the marriage commitment because you vow to love your spouse as God loves—unconditionally. Agape love is not helped by emotional infatuation or highs, but is as constant as God’s love.

All three types of love are necessary in a marriage or committed romantic relationship. Agape love (unconditional love) helps make the marriage commitment last, Philos love (friendship love) will make it strong, and Eros love (emotional/erotic love) will make it sweet. If your marriage or relationship has all three of these elements, you're on your way to something very special and rare that you should treasure with all that is in you.

Understanding the Effect Sex Has on Our Relationships

Many of us don't understand the effect sex has on our relationships. As women, we have to be extremely careful of who we have sex with. I date a lot but have very few sexual relationships. When a woman has sex with a man, hormones are released into her body that create a chemical bond, regardless of whether she wants that bond or not. This may be why many women feel conflicted emotionally when they have sex with a guy; there has been a bond that was created through the sex act.

When you have sex with someone, your soul becomes one with them. My grandma used to say that every time we have sex with someone in our bed, their spirit stays there. Likewise, when you end an intimate relationship with someone, it takes time to recover who we really are because we lose a part of ourselves in the other person. We have to spend quality time with ourselves to recapture who we really are.

Recovering from Eros Love

If you've found yourself in a primarily Eros love relationship, don't worry. Realize that this relationship has

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provided an opportunity for you to learn and grow so that you can attract the right man who will offer you a higher type of love. The unfortunate reality is that some women don't want to grow; they just want a man, at any cost. As a result, women end up repeating a cycle of unsuccessful relationships.

My best sexual relationship ever (with John) was also my toughest relationship to get out of and the same relationship that took me away from who I really was as a person. I came out of the relationship with John and focused on strengthening my relationship with God. I began my journey by deciding to be celibate for over two years. For me, celibacy was more than abstaining from sexual intercourse; it was also about abstaining from any type of deeply committed relationship. During this time of celibacy, I was able to devote time and energy to focus on my spiritual growth and development.

Now I am grateful that my Eros love led me to my deepest, most fulfilling relationship with God and helped me understand Agape love and its powerful presence in my life.