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**TOPIC ARTICLE**

## "Romeo and Juliet - The Perils of Infatuation"

August 2025

It is a well-established fact that when our minds are in an altered state, we don't always behave rationally or safely. In fact, altered states can sometimes cause us to act in significantly irresponsible or high-risk ways.

Altered states can be caused by a myriad of naturally occurring, as well as unnaturally occurring, contributing factors. Drugs, alcohol, and traumatic life events are some examples of external factors capable of inciting altered states of being. Natural causes such as fear, anxiety, depression, and a heightened sense of euphoria, for example can also all contribute to putting humans into altered states of being.

Certainly, body chemistry plays a very significant role in our emotional states. Puberty unleashes a flood of hormones that intensify emotions and create new drives. Even as adults, the sources of attraction to mates and significant others can sometimes spiral obsessively out of control.... contributing to both good and not so good outcomes.

Teen infatuation — like adult infatuation — can provide joy, confusion, disappointment and/or anger. Rejection, whether from peers or an important figure in your life, can be a devastating blow to a person's self-worth. Isolation can make emotions feel more intense, especially for vulnerable people who may feel they must suffer in private.

Adults often develop coping mechanisms to deal with life's disappointments over time. However, even with their additional life experience, some adults still engage in high-risk behaviors. Teenagers, who lack life experiences, are even more vulnerable. The consequences can be tragic, leading individuals to lash out at themselves or others.

When emotions feel overwhelming and a situation seems impossible to resolve, remember that your perception is likely distorted. Don't act rashly. Intense emotional states can make things feel unbearable, but this feeling is often a temporary result of being trapped in a negative headspace.

The person you admire and feel you can't live without may be worthy of your devotion, but that relationship should never become an obsession that clouds your judgment and reason.

Advice and words of caution often feel inadequate when faced with the intense emotions that can arise from infatuation. These feelings can swing wildly from extreme joy to deep desolation and rage. How, then, can we de-escalate these overwhelming passions?

There is no single solution for the complexities of dysfunctional relationships. When a situation feels overwhelming and begins to control your life, the first step is to confide in people you trust. Allow them to help you, especially when you feel isolated and alone.

It can be difficult to seek help, and you may feel that your options for support are embarrassing or unrealistic. You might not even realize what resources are available to you, especially when an infatuated or obsessive state clouds your judgment. This can lead you to consider harmful, irrational actions.

If you find yourself in this situation, it is crucial to resist any thoughts of harming yourself or others. Instead, assert your strength and reach out for support. Numerous professional and personal resources exist to help you navigate these overwhelming emotions. They are there for you; even though those options might not seem clear and available at the moment.

A popular cliché is that “you are never alone.” It happens to be true. There are spiritual options, therapists, counselors, friends, trusted acquaintances, sympathetic mentors and adults and so on. Let's repeat... do not act in a rash manner that you might regret later. There can be life altering consequences to your actions... affecting not only you, but others that you care about as well.

Another cliché that is often true is that "...this too shall pass." What seems to be an out-of-control obsession may naturally subside and relent in time. It is difficult at the time, if not impossible, for an infatuated person to know whether the associated, intense emotions that they are experiencing will eventually become less obsessive and more controllable.

It is equally difficult for those who care about your safety and well-being to discern what might be a passing phase, or something more consequential. Their efforts to intercede might actually contribute to amplifying the emotions involved and cause a concerning situation to escalate and become even more dire and disconcerting. If something becomes unbearable, seek immediate help... talk to someone you trust. Again, always make a concerted effort to remain rational and not react impetuously, or irrationally.

When in despair or a crisis, it's crucial to activate your innate sense of self-preservation. Allow yourself to reach out for support—whether through counseling, therapy, medication, or family and friends. These resources can help you navigate the moment, find a way to cope, and look forward to better days. Remember, your well-being and the well-being of those around you are well worth the effort.

**-End-**

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**EMERGENCY**

In a crisis call “911” immediately

● If considering self-harm, call “988”  
The National Suicide Intervention Lifeline

**SEXUAL MISCONDUCT**

To speak to a counselor,

Call (800) 656-4673  
RAINN

**BULLYING/HAZING, VIOLENCE,  
ADDICTIONS & SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

For helpful resources,

[thebmsproject.org/Safety](http://thebmsproject.org/Safety)

**CHILD ABUSE**

To report suspected child abuse,

Call (800) 422-4453

Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline

**It is recommended that incident(s) of serious misconduct be reported to law enforcement.  
Minors should report incidents of misconduct to their parent(s) or guardian(s).**