



YOUR CHILD'S BRAIN IN LOVE

Even healthy teen romances have a touch of obsession, according to Helen Fisher, Ph.D., research professor in the department of anthropology at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey, and author of *Why We Love: The Nature and Chemistry of Romantic Love* (Henry Holt). Brain scans that she and colleagues have done of teens and young adults in love show how the emotion triggers the brain chemical dopamine to shoot sky high. Meanwhile, Fisher hypothesizes, levels of another chemical, serotonin, significantly drop.

Low serotonin is linked with obsession and may explain why teens in love can't stop thinking about each other. Researchers have also found that romantic passion deactivates parts of the brain that process negative emotions and read other people's intentions, suggesting that brain function truly helps make love blind. "Love isn't just an emotion, it's a drive, like hunger," says Fisher. "And teens don't always have the emotional resources to deal with it."