

Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote the famous lines, "How do I love thee? Let me count the ways. I love thee to the depth and breadth and height my soul can reach..."

This is a great example of our continual search for a means of describing the way we feel. I have a problem, because I certainly am not the poet that Ms Browning was. But I still try to find ways of expressing my feelings. Sometimes I have better luck finding an image (worth a thousand words, perhaps) that says what I want to say.

I am a scientist by vocation, and one of the pictures that I have been considering lately is certainly not very poetic. But in physics and chemistry we rely on visual models to explain complex theories. The model of the atom is not an exact image of reality, but it helps us understand the basic principles.

It occurred to me that True Love was like DNA's double helix – the geometry of the molecule that contains the code of life. I think of each of us (Soozie and I) as one of the support rails, with the connections in between (like rungs in a ladder) representing the many "ways" that attract us. There are variety of these rungs - many points of connections that give the structure great strength. Each rung attaches due to similarities or complementarities. They reach from each side and grasp their counterparts; as love grows, these bonds continue to grow in strength.

The helix wraps us around each other in an ever-tightening spiral. The rails are not identical, but they are equal in value, and complementary in nature. From a distance, the double helix appears as one string.¹ The bonds are not about physical characteristics, but beliefs and goals. The double helix is not about bodies, but about souls that are entwined. And it is the integration of these souls that gives us our unique characteristics as a couple.

I can imagine a scene where an angel "soul scientist" watches our relationship develop under a special microscope. At first they would see the two sides of a ladder that come close together and begin the handshaking between all of the rungs. Then as the bonds grow in strength, and more rungs are added, the ladder begins to twist around itself to form the double helix. The structure becomes tighter and tighter as time goes on and our love grows.

The scientist in question would have seen many "molecules" that suffered separation due to poor connections, missing or broken rungs, or rungs stretched beyond their capacity. Some would appear to have been battered as though a bombarded ship or fortress. In these, there would remain attachment at only a few places, and they would not support the stress of life for very much longer. The rails would separate and would soon be independent again.

But I have faith that our double helix will not be broken. I know how deep love can truly be – it can reach beyond this life and into the next. It is difficult to describe or explain, but as Solomon said, "Love is stronger than death... Many waters cannot quench love..."² True Love is vividly beautiful when you are a part of it. In thinking of the main forces that we know of in the universe, we might say that there are the gravitational, electromagnetic, weak, and strong forces; but the greatest force of all is **love**³.

1. see Ephesians 5:31
2. Song of Solomon 8:6-7
3. see 1 Corinthians 13:13