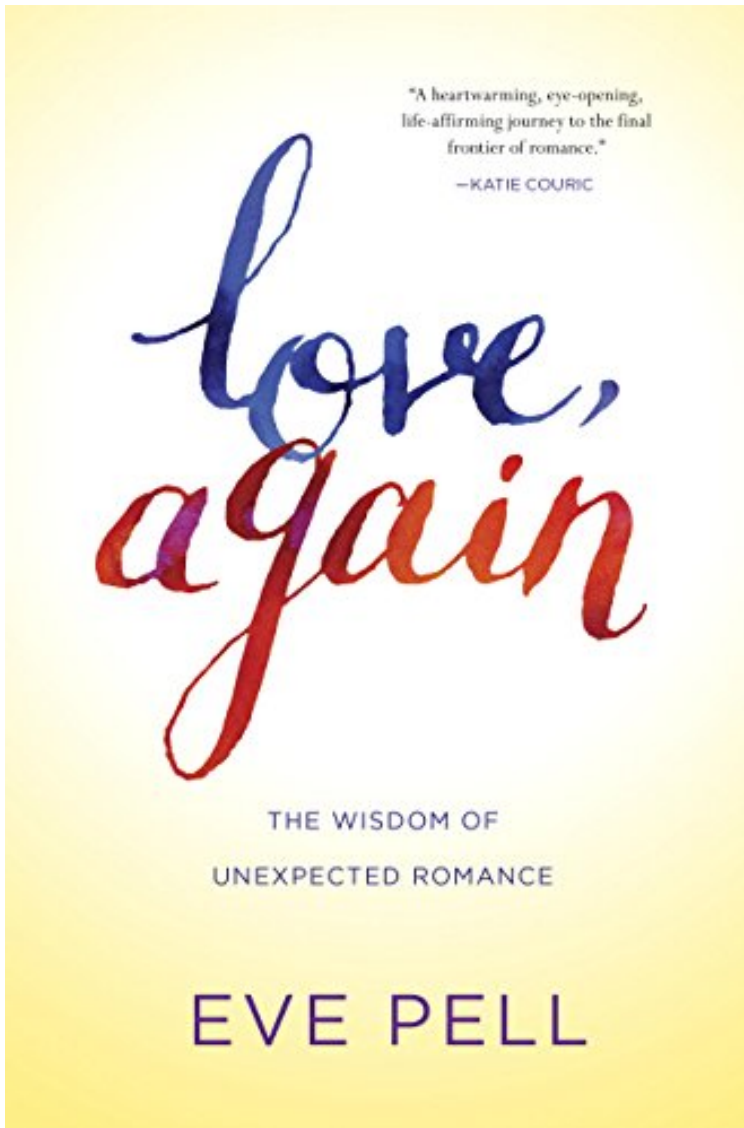


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Love, Again: The Wisdom of Unexpected Romance



Par Eve Pell
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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurIn Love, Again, Eve Pell beautifully and thoughtfully concludes that life experience adds dimensions to the art of connectionand that we all stand to learn something from unexpected romance. How do old people meet new loves? Eve Pell was 68 when she convinced a friend to set her up with Sam Hirabayashi. Ten years her senior, Sam, a fellow runner, was handsome and sweet. Soon Eve and Sam were plunged into a giddy romance that began with a movie date. It was crazy, Pell writes. It was wonderful. Pell wrote about their romance in a New York Times Modern Love column and received a wave of responses from people who recognized their own stories in hers. This thing, this late-in-life love: Its growing, its

everywhere, and its transformative. In staggering numbers, old people are meeting and falling in love in senior living facilities, in retirement homes, in bars, in grocery stores, on cruise ships, on the Internet brazenly, quietly, unexpectedly. People once written off as too old for intimacy are having romances, beginning intense affairs once thought to be for the young. Part memoir, part journey to a new frontier, *Love, Again* is illuminating and heartwarming. Speaking with poets and artists, a retired nurse and a retired coach, environmentalists, philanthropists, and teachers couples whose partners ages range from 61 to 96 Pell reports on their relationships, from saying hello to knowing they'd found the one, from blending routines and traditions to overcoming judgments and challenges. These widows, widowers, divorcees, and never-marrieds open up about old love versus young, the thrill of sex, and the looming shadow of mortality. At the core of this book is wisdom: what we all can learn from the experience, regardless of age. Fall in love with who someone is now not who they someday might be. Always be honest, but don't feel pressure to share everything. And most of all: The heart can continue to expand. Advance praise for *Love, Again* A heartwarming, eye-opening, life-affirming journey to the final frontier of romance, this is a beautiful book about the possibility of late-in-life love and the life-changing lessons we all can learn from those who have been lucky enough to find it.

Katie Couric Eve Pell's career as an investigative reporter served her in discovering such couples and learning their stories, which, along with her own love story, she imparts with fluency and zest. *Love, Again* is a joy to read, full of humor and heart and sweet collective wisdom, a book for all ages. Susan Trott, author of the *Holy Man Trilogy* I remarried at 75 and have followed one hundred marriages from age 50 on. Eve Pell knows what she is talking about. Her book is touching, eye-opening, inspiring, and wise. In addition, it is beautifully written.

George E. Vaillant, M.D., author of *Triumphs of Experience: The Men of the Harvard Grant Study* In this inspiring exploration of fifteen late-in-life romances, Eve Pell illustrates the human appetite and capacity for romantic love at any age. As these men and women widowed and divorced, gay and straight share their stories of forging deep connections in their 60s, 70s, 80s, and, yes, 90s, they deliver a heartwarming message: We are never too old for new love.

Jill Smolowe, author of *Four Funerals and a Wedding: Resilience in a Time of Grief* From the Hardcover edition. **Chapter 1 Start Here** We turn not older with years, but newer every day. Emily Dickinson Sam and Me Pursuit How do old people meet new loves? Here's how it happened for me: I schemed. I never was any good at love, or maybe I was just bad at finding the right man. In 2004, at the age of 67, I broke off the most recent this isn't working relationship. I'd had two husbands and a few not-husbands along the way and was once again single. I had delightful children, grandchildren, and friends, fulfilling work as a writer, and a sort of second career as a nationally ranked senior runner. I lived in a sweet if somewhat run-down little cottage in Mill Valley, north of San Francisco. Over the years I had learned or had been forced to learn how to live on my own. But though I knew how to manage as a single woman (keep in touch with your friends and family, exercise regularly, work in your garden, see a therapist when your need for support is more than friends should be subjected to), I liked life better when I was part of a couple. So, once I was over the breakup, I was on the hunt. I looked around for boyfriend candidates. I thought of two possibilities. One was a charming younger man I'd met while hiking in the Sierras. We had gone out a few times, and I liked him. But on the most recent date, he'd let me know that he was involved in a long-term relationship with a woman who lived in New York and that, though the relationship was problematic (hence, I suppose, his interest in me), he was not going to leave it. Even I knew that was a nonstarter. I had met the other one through running, but our acquaintance was minimal. I knew that Sam Hirabayashi was a widower, ten years older than I, and most likely single. He was strikingly handsome, with a sweet smile, and very easy to talk to. He'd become something of an icon in the running community because, seemingly impervious to age, he routinely bested far younger competitors in races and also because of his extraordinarily good nature. Even if he'd had one training run in the morning, followed by breakfast with his teammates, he would cheerfully do track workouts the same evening with other runners and go out to dinner afterward. I wanted to get to know him better. But how? He was older and probably quite proper not the kind of guy I could imagine going up to and saying, You're cute. I like you. Let's go out sometime. I devised a plan. Janet, a friend we had in common, had a small movie theater in her house; she often invited me to parties. I called her. This is very seventh grade, I began. But I'd like you to invite Sam to one of your screenings. I'll come to any movie he's coming to. She laughed and agreed. Soon after, she called. He's coming on Thursday. I'll be there, I said. There were eight or ten of us that evening. After the movie, as we were all standing around and chatting, someone mentioned *The Motorcycle Diaries*, a new film about Che Guevara. I'd like to see that, I said. I would too, said Sam. There was a short pause, and I held my breath. He looked at me. Would you like to go? Suppressing the urge

to high-five Janet, I said yes. We set a date for the following week; he'd meet me at the theater. It was December 10 an anniversary he would always remember. I saw him there as I drove up, waiting for me, standing in front of the theater. But our movie was sold out. What to do? We looked at what else was playing (thank goodness for multiplexes) and chose *Sideways*. I have a vague memory of something about men and wine but a sharp memory of sitting next to Sam. And when *Sideways* was over, we decided that since we hadn't met our objective, we'd see *The Motorcycle Diaries* another day. The ice was broken, and though we didn't know it yet, we were on our way to becoming a couple. I never told him I schemed to get us together. The process of coupling is as intoxicating at 70 as it was at 16. Sam and I were giddy; our conversations became flirtatious and delicious. I heard echoes of this as I traveled around the country interviewing the couples in this book and learning how they met. Some connections, like mine, were engineered; some were pure happenstance. Sometimes children or friends became matchmakers. For the truly motivated, there was the Internet. The most common, however, was what I call re-meeting—connecting with a person from one's past who may not have been significant back then. That's what happened with Aggie and Jack. Aggie and Jack Unexpected Aggie and Jack are poets and artists in San Francisco's North Beach. She is 67 and he 80. Members of the Revolutionary Poets Brigade, they are bohemian descendants of the Beat Generation who have spent their lives challenging what they see as the soul-destroying values of capitalism and embodying with their lives the pursuit of art and human expression. A friend suggested that they might be fine examples of a pair who got together late in life, and they agreed to talk with me. The faded burgundy paint on the door was scratched and worn. Upon being buzzed in, I walked through a dark tunnel past rows of utility meters to reach their garden and the stairway to their front door. Aggie greeted me and guided me down a narrow hallway, past rooms that were crammed with stuff, into their small kitchen, cluttered and bright. The bells of Saints Peter and Paul Church rang out the hours; a cable car track hummed a half block away. Jack proudly calls himself a commie poet and signs his books *Comradely, Jack*. He is a bear of a man, tall and broad-shouldered. He smiles easily and kids around, makes eye contact, pays attention to his surroundings. Some of his teeth are missing; a bushy mustache hangs down over his lips. His wrinkled face and longish graying hair show his age, and he looked like an old hippie in his baggy black pants and suspenders. He has a deep and rumbling voice and speaks seven languages. At a gathering shortly before we were introduced, I heard him read a poem in Italian language I don't speak and I about swooned from the exhilarating mixture of passion, rhythm, and pure emotion in his voice. A committed Marxist, Jack taught at UCLA but was fired during the Vietnam War for encouraging his students to resist the draft. He was named poet laureate of San Francisco in 2006. A helpful and kind person, before he left our interview he wanted to make sure that I had gotten what I needed. Aggie is also tall. Stylish, elegant, and self-possessed, she wore a black scarf around her hair, a loose gray sweater, a long skirt, and silver rings on her fingers. Bangs fall over her forehead; her eyes are blue. Lines on her face show that she is no longer young, and she wore no makeup. Like Jack, she seems comfortable in her skin. Unlike me, neither Aggie nor Jack was looking to meet someone new when they connected. She was widowed and figured that she had already had a great love; he was living with another woman. As Aggie told the story, when she first encountered Jack, she was living with Asa Benveniste, a man with whom she was madly in love. A poet and a publisher of poets, he co-founded *Zero*, a magazine in Paris, and *Trigram Press* in London. His gravestone reads, Foolish enough to have been a poet. As Aggie reminisced about her life in London forty years ago, Jack broke in, loudly spelling out Asa's last name and looking at me to be sure I got it right. B-E-N-V-E-N-I-S-T-E, he rumbled, with professorial precision, a pause between each letter. Aggie looked on patiently. Then she continued. Asa published Jack's poetry, and they were very dear old friends who wrote to each other all the time. In 1980 Jack came to visit us with his then girlfriend; he came in like a storm, this very cadaverous-looking man, and he gave a reading in London. I remember I was impressed with his work, but I wasn't falling in love with him or anything; I was deeply in love with Asa. Then Asa and I moved up to Yorkshire, where he died in 1990. A year later Aggie decided, because she was so grief-stricken, to take a long trip and drop off mementoes to Asa's old friends. When she got to San Francisco, she found that the poet who had been so cadaverous was no longer cadaverous. He had put on so much weight, I remember saying, My God, what happened? There were a few lovely days together, though Jack was living with another woman. I absolutely did not want a relationship, she says. I had had love with Asa. I was fine for the rest of my life. But still, the reading Jack gave in London stuck in my mind because it was so powerful. By 1995, Aggie was working for a group in Yorkshire that organized poetry festivals and events. So, remembering how impressive he had been when he visited London years before, she invited Jack to perform. He came and stayed for two months on and off

while traveling around the country, she recalled. We were kind of in my house. I lived in this huge house where a few other people lived also, and we came circling around each other. I thought, God, maybe do I feel something? So Aggie, although believing she had no interest in a new romantic relationship, became interested in Jack, a man whom she had known years before. Howard and George

The Internet Howard and George had never laid eyes on each other before they met on the Internet. Both had ended relationships and were looking to meet someone new. But as gay men who were sexually active during the AIDS epidemic, both had to overcome fears before undertaking a search for a new partner. They had seen too many friends and lovers die. But after long periods of not dating, they each went back onto the Internet, refusing to follow the path taken by friends who simply stayed celibate rather than risk contracting the disease or suffering another loss. Howard is 72, George 68. I met with them at Howard's house in Bowdoinham, Maine, a small and pretty town on the water, with an old church and tree-lined streets typical of New England. Howard's white saltbox house sits on a little hill, surrounded by a shady lawn. The house looks traditional from the outside, with one exception: The shutters are a bright greenish blue that I have never seen before, unorthodox and strikingly beautiful; Howard calls it Bermuda blue. Inside, Howard's sculptures decorate the walls. Constructed from found objects, they are irreverent, imaginative, and fun, incorporating such things as old typewriter keys, medieval paintings, dice, and lace. Howard taught history at Tufts University for years; instead of the standard course material of empires and rulers (nicknamed maps and chaps), he focused on the lives and stories of common people. In 1989 Howard's then partner died of AIDS. At that time, people knew that AIDS could be spread by sexual contact and that it was fatal. Survivors like Howard were terrified of contracting the disease. From 1989 to 1995, he had no physical intimacy. Howard remembers that when a fellow gay activist who had come for dinner sat next to him on a couch and moved a bit closer, Howard moved away from him, stopping any intimacy in its tracks. In 1995 he had an *annus horribilis* including a ruptured appendix, peritonitis, and a horrific car accident. After surviving all that, he concluded that the universe must have more in store for him. He took a sabbatical and moved to Philadelphia, where he immersed himself in Jewish spirituality and mysticism. He also did some work with a group called Body Electric, learning to get over his fear of touching and sexual relations, and soon met up with a new partner, whom he was with for a decade. After they broke up, he wanted a new relationship. George grew up in an Italian family in New Orleans. After graduate school at Louisiana State University, he settled in West Virginia, where he taught university-level English and writing for twenty years. Later on, he edited a business newspaper and worked as a literary agent. A superb cook, he also wrote articles about food and travel for local papers. Hospitable and friendly, the two invited me to come for breakfast. Howard and I sipped *café au lait* at the tiny kitchen table while George energetically mixed, fried, and stirred at the stove. Throughout my visit, the two kept up a stream of amusing chatter. They looked rather alike, with twin balding heads, neat mustaches, and trimmed beards; both wore blue Hawaiian shirts. Plainly of the same tribe, they could have been relatives. Their resemblance and similar style made a statement they were not trying to blend in and look like ordinary Maine people. They were smart, verbal, aware of their surroundings, and tuned-in. I liked them immediately. Over a delicious breakfast of shrimp and grits, George described how he and Howard first connected, starting with his previous relationship. In 1996 I met a guy who I really fell madly in love with, George began. This was my first experience with what I call silly love, the kind of thing most people go through in teenagehood but I never did. I was really just crazy about him. Unfortunately, he was dying of AIDS. So it was a real struggle for me, but it was the first experience that I thought was as close to being divine love as I had ever experienced. I'm not exaggerating. But it was obsessive, it was too all-consuming for me. I was almost relieved when he died, though it's troubling to say that. Devastated and heartbroken, George was mostly single for eleven years afterward. But, finally recovered from his grievous loss, he decided to engage again. Online dating had been pretty well established by then, he said, so I decided to try it. Many of the gay dating sites were really hookup sites, but I was more interested in something serious, so I chose Match.com, which by its reputation seemed like a site for people looking for relationships. Howard had also gone on Match.com. I am pretty gutsy in many ways, he said. I know I am a survivor there have been moments in my life when I should have been dead but I woke up the next morning. So I felt that I had nothing to lose. *Revue de presse* Advance praise for *Love, Again* A heartwarming, eye-opening, life-affirming journey to the final frontier of romance, this is a beautiful book about the possibility of late-in-life love and the life-changing lessons we all can learn from those who have been lucky enough to find it. Katie Couric After several disappointing marriages and relationships, Eve Pell, in her seventh decade, dared to love again. Sam Hirabayashi, whom she loved and lost, was the inspiration

for this book. She decided to seek out others who had found love in their final years. Her career as an investigative reporter served her in discovering such couples and learning their stories, which, along with her own love story, she imparts with fluency and zest. *Love, Again* is a joy to read, full of humor and heart and sweet collective wisdom, a book for all ages. Susan Trott, author of the *Holy Man Trilogy* I remarried at 75 and have followed one hundred marriages from age 50 on. Eve Pell knows what she is talking about. Her book is touching, eye-opening, inspiring, and wise. In addition, it is beautifully written. George E. Vaillant, M.D., author of *Triumphs of Experience: The Men of the Harvard Grant Study* In this inspiring exploration of fifteen late-in-life romances, Eve Pell illustrates the human appetite and capacity for romantic love at any age. As these men and women widowed and divorced, gay and straight share their stories of forging deep connections in their 60s, 70s, 80s, and, yes, 90s, they deliver a heartwarming message: We are never too old for new love. Jill Smolowe, author of *Four Funerals and a Wedding: Resilience in a Time of Grief*