

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a white sleeveless dress and black high-heeled sandals, is walking on a paved road. She is looking down and to her left. In the background, there are green hills, trees, and a cloudy sky. Several colorful balloons (green, purple, pink, orange, yellow) are floating in the air to her right.

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Enigmas

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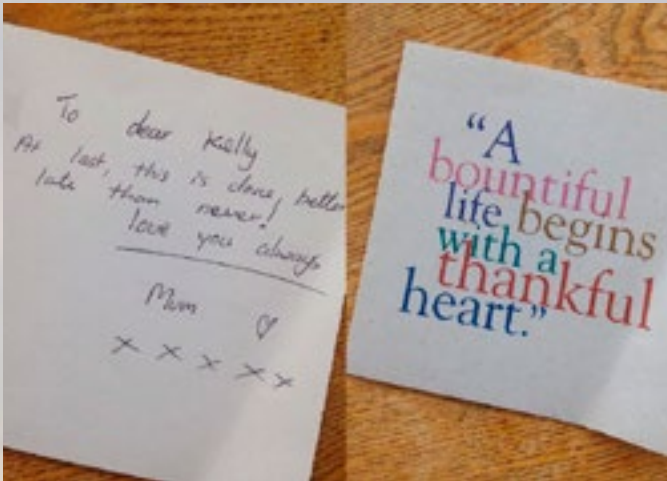
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Today I received a card from my mum

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UNDERSTANDING WOMEN:

9 PIECES TO OUR PUZZLING MINDS

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Designed by



Editor's Note

Hey there everyone,

Welcome to this month's edition of Life and Love. We're talking about 'Enigmas'; the little mysteries in life that puzzle us.

Kelly Sargent shares with us her thoughts on a mysterious card of encouragement from her late mother, which finally found its way to her after a long journey, in 'Today I recieved a card from my mum'.

We have a wonderful poem from Madison Manning about the enigma that is anxiety in 'The Devastation of Anxiety'.

Preet Kaur talks about the puzzling effects of the pseudo relationship in 'I Don't Know'.

And finally, we have an insightful look into the female psyche from Ashlee Long in her article 'Understanding Women: 9 Pieces to our puzzling minds'.

Enjoy!

Aimee

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Independent Media Inspiring Minds

We aim to inform, entertain, teach, encourage, educate and support the community at large by facilitating communication between all Australians. By providing the opportunity for all opinions to be shared on a single website.

Today I received a card from my mum

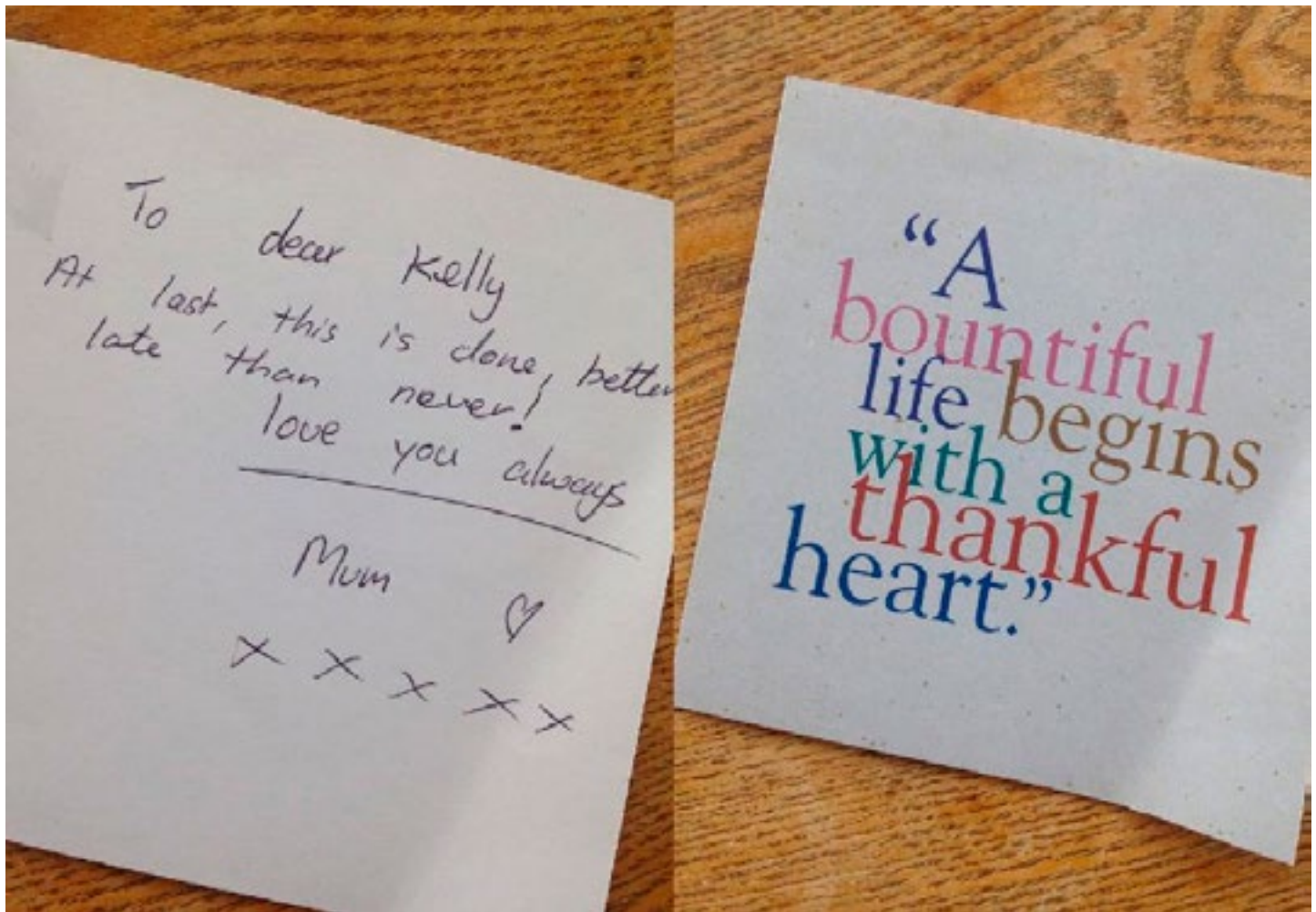
Kelly Sargent

Today I received a card from my mum who passed away a year and a half ago, at 58 years young. The confusion and mixed emotions of this surprise arrival sparked many emotional questions.

The front of the card says, “A bountiful life begins with a thankful heart.” Which is quite fitting considering I’ve been feeling incredibly lucky and thankful lately for the many opportunities that have come my way. Inside the card there is a simple note that I’ve never laid eyes on before; in my mum’s handwriting were the words,

**“To Dear Kelly,
At last, this is done, better late than never!
Love you always, Mum xxxxxx”.**

Seeing her familiar cursive brought pangs to my heart, I felt joy and pain simultaneously; I was instantly flooded with memories of her notes, mostly letters to teachers about school excursions and late excuses. I know her signature well – not so much ‘Mum’ but ‘Jennifer Sargent’ as I copied her cursive perfectly to fill out on my detention forms so I could pay my dues without her knowing, or write myself ‘late notes’ to turn up to school at a time I saw fit. I was reminded of a different time, a different life when seeing her writing was not so unusual or confronting.



Kelly Sargent

While it was so much better to see 'Mum' over 'Jennifer', at first sight the message with its strange familiarity just seemed so unbelievable. I promptly rummaged around to find other notes of hers to compare. I found my 26-year-old birthday card (written a year and two days before she passed away), and there it was; the same 'm's and the same 'k's, the same 'love' and 'Mum'.

I was elated to have this card sent to me, yet it provoked more questions than answers because:

1. *I have never seen the card before.*
2. *How did it get to me over a year and a half past her death?*
3. *What is done, Mum? What was better late than never?*

The first question is not entirely true as I had seen the card before, as a blank card in the 'card-drawer' in the family home where we used to live, when Mum was on this earth and I was an awkward teenager. It was a different life then, one where we had

parties, birthdays, shared meals and struggles and finally, where she took her last breath after a long, arduous, awful illness in October 2014. I had seen the card. I thought I'd use it for a dear friend. Around five years later it's come back to me with a note of love from my deceased mum, a welcome interruption to my day and it's a reminder of what was and what's no longer. It is bitter sweet and I'd like more.

The second question is not as exciting as I am making it out to be; I know where it came from, I just don't know how it got there to begin with. The letter came from the bottom of a box that's travelled through three states of Australia these past five or so years, moving with my ex-boyfriend as his life took him beyond our time together. I'm very grateful he cared enough to send it, especially given our breakup wasn't totally civil, it was hurtful and hard, yet being a decent guy he did send it (possibly because he knows too well the value of a lost loved one, that pen on cardboard, those words 'love' and 'Mum'). Regardless of this, how he got it seems obvious as there's a million scenarios, the most obvious being I left it at his house sometime; but it bothers me because I've never seen this card before. Seems I must've taken it to his house

four or so years earlier when we were together; but taken it and not read it?

More complexing is my ex has moved interstate multiple times so this irreplaceable card of gratitude and love is now safely on my desk after its trip in the bottom of a box around Australia – it's clear how I received it today, but why now after so many years?

Mum, if you're sending a message from Heaven, kudos on not being cryptic with the delivery as a written card is a sure way to go – but I don't know about the message, what is done?

This really bothers me; I have a card from my deceased mother that I haven't seen before and I don't know what it's referring to.

I am unaware of what may have taken me awhile to do that she thought important enough to give a card about it. We weren't particularly the card-giving family, at birthdays sure; but also it wasn't totally unusual to receive a present without a card, and the same goes for Christmas. I didn't draw out University, or school, nothing noteworthy comes to mind; what did I seemingly complete that made her feel moved enough to write a card, of somewhat congratulations,

that I don't understand, or worse, remember?

It's probably a waste of time trying to figure this out and I should probably take the love unquestioningly and bathe in its warmth and cry in its grief; yet it bothers me I don't know what she's referring to and moreover, had she been waiting for me to complete something to give the card?

Today I received a card from my deceased mother; today I had a mix of feelings from the cutting reminder of the loss, to her love that transcends

time and touches me this sunny afternoon. The card's a thoughtful and loving gesture, her thoughts are gone yet I'm still here. I am still here. That part of life is gone, yet the memories live on, not always, yet today they do, today I remember, rejoice and cry.

I'm ultimately grateful for the interruption and reminder of her love that's able to touch me today.

I'd like to forward the gesture to those still reading, giving a part of your day to read and care about this – so I have a card for you:



Dear wonderful human reading this,

At last, things can be done – it's better late than never! Always! Live now, live with purpose and love generously – it all goes too fast.

With love, Kelly and Jennifer Sargent

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The Devastation of Anxiety

Madison Manning |||



Life's managed to get hard again. The etherealness has been drawn from my veins, and I'm heavy, drained, and unsteady again.

How can I drift through motions that impede me and strangle my breath? I'm not creative anymore; I'm tightly wound, on the edge of skin and severe. My thoughts are harsh and hurt my heart; I'm riddled with tensions, forced, by myself, to keep surviving.

Haven't I survived enough? That's why I'm lacklustre, it has to be, my

strength has been deteriorated by life so far. I would implore for sanity and a sense of being centred but nothing good ever comes from begging. I will ride the waves, relax the jaw and unclasp my fists.

I've already come undone. I'm not afraid. I do long to be alone when I feel such erosions, but I'm surrounded by people at this point in my narrative and I cannot escape. How guarded do I have to be? To stay within my mind and not let the nerves fall out of my skull, onto my toast.



*||ꞑ To stay within
my mind and not
let the nerves fall
out of my skull,
onto my toast. ꞑ||*

Madison Manning

**Life's embarrassing.
The moments I
can't share because
of fear, because
of apprehensions
that make logical
sense but make
me seem insane.
Even that sounds
unreasonable, like
a mad woman's
thoughts. Why can't
you enjoy the sea-
water, the eighteen-
thousand win, the
jolt of a different
surrounding?
I'm painful, I'm
obtrusive and
insular. I make no
sense. But it all
seems normal to me.**

I've been unwell for too long, I don't know what it's like to have enjoyed life and had positive experiences that lead oneself from A to B. It's a catastrophe, my path, my past, the ever-present. I'm unheard, not understood, too dandy to be female. I've choked.

There's no love in here, where my pulsating stress overbears my conscious. It's all hate and anger and discontentment. I'll always be that, it circulates my core, I've long accepted it. But what rage is delicate and endearing?

It would be heinous to exude that rage. So I keep it wrapped in glitter. The love's extinct, or never even was.

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I don't know

Preet Kaur



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It had been almost six months and I was thinking to myself where is this all going? I really liked the guy, it seemed he really liked me, but for some reason things weren't moving forward. I lacked clarity about the type of relationship I was in. We kissed with such passion and made love with intensity, but he was still an enigma to me.

When we started the whole thing he did mention that he wasn't ready for "this", whatever the hell "this" was. But then, what did the hugs, kisses and sex mean? I asked if it was a casual sex thing and the response was "I don't know". So I asked, "Okay then, do you know what you want from me?". He said "I don't know, I want you to be around, I want us to be friends, clearly I'm not relationship material and I'm not ready".

Let me tell you, if you hear those words “I’m not ready yet” get out right now. If he isn’t ready YET, he will never be ready. But, the fact is, it doesn't matter if he's ready or what he's waiting for, this isn't about him, this is about you. This is about what you want and expect out of a relationship and out of a partner.

The response is always going to be “I don’t know” in this type of unclear relationship. Is this phrase just a cop out so one doesn’t have to think, or do any sort of introspection? I like to think that I live in a world where grown men and women know what they want out of a partner, or at least have some idea. I totally understand that some people have a hard time expressing how they feel, but I also like to live in hope that one day when you meet the “right” person you will do anything to try and get out of your comfort zone and tell them how you feel.

So, almost six months of casual,

once a week sexual activity was the life I found myself in. There was no clarity as to the direction of the relationship, no discussion of feelings and no commitment; it was literally the “Netflix and chill” relationship. I have to admit though, this so called “relationship” actually worked for me at the start. Why? Because I was also used to not being open with people, and having most of my conversations through texts. But the difference is that I’m trying to work on myself.

Now that it’s all over I look back and think, what has this experience taught me? Because every person comes into our lives for a purpose, either to teach us a lesson, or so we can help them with something they need. For starters, this has taught me to be more open and expressive with family and friends, to be more assertive about what I want and not just say yes to others’ demands. Most significantly, this has taught me to love and respect myself. Even though I loved him beyond any other guy I had met so far, and I wanted the relationship

to last, I chose to step out. Why leave something that had hope, you ask? Because I can't spend my life living in hope, because sometimes feeling the loss, and showing someone the consequences of their actions, is necessary. Mostly because it is my declaration to the universe that I value myself, that I love myself, and that I deserve someone who wants to spend every spare moment with me, someone who wants to take me out on dates.

Looking back on things you always know they worked out for the best because you can see the good things that came to you afterwards, but it's about building faith in difficult times, when nothing is going your way, that no matter what, everything is going to be perfect and the universe has your back. All you have to do is show the world that you love yourself enough to be treated like a priority and not like an option.



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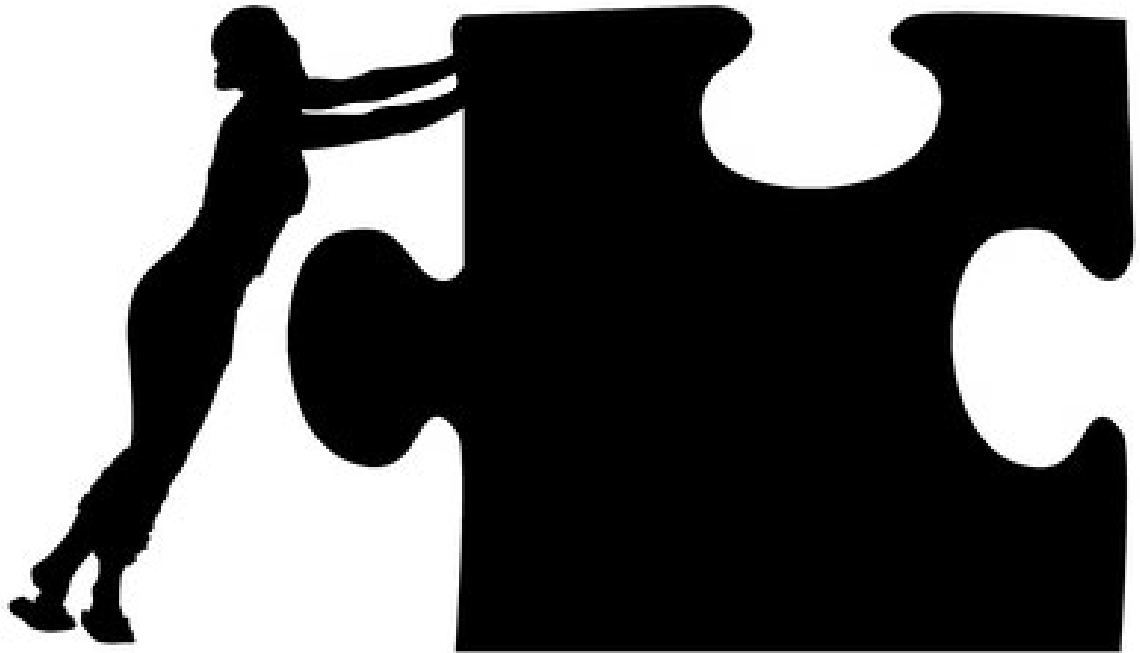
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UNDERSTANDING WOMEN:

9 PIECES TO OUR PUZZLING MINDS

Ashlee Long



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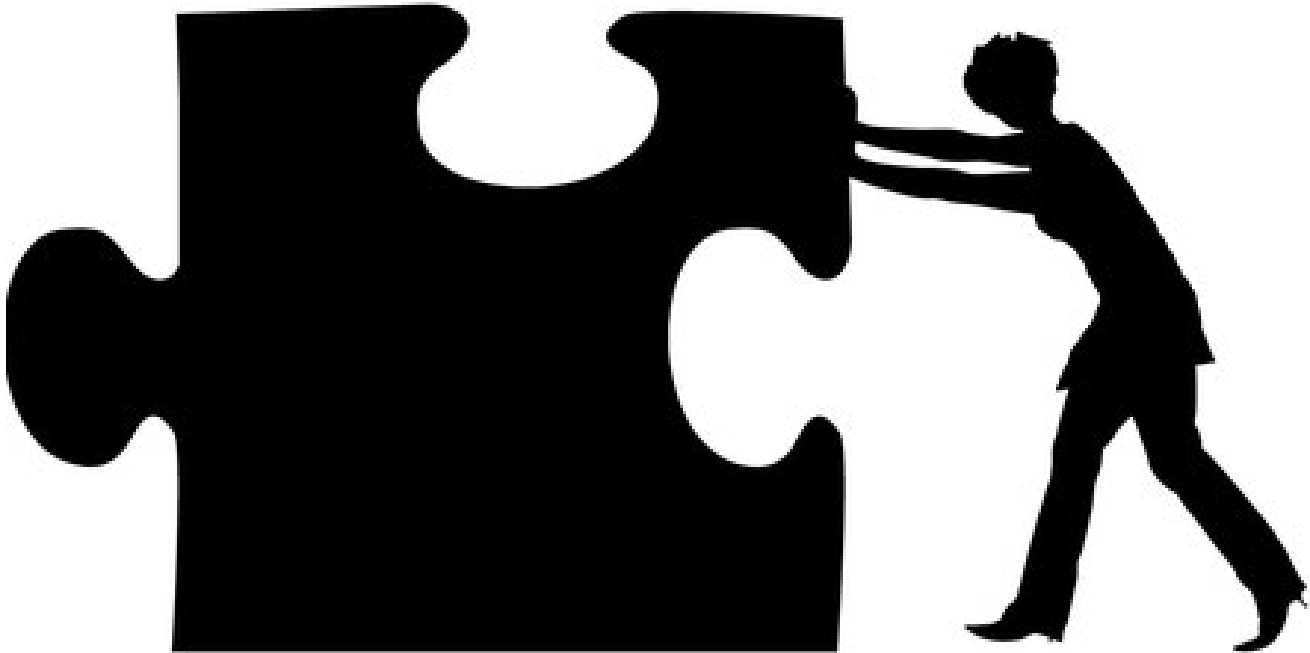
I am a woman and sometimes, I don't even understand my own behaviour. I can't even begin to imagine how men feel! When we're mad, we refuse to tell you why. When we're upset, we don't let you see us cry. When we're asking if our butt looks big, we expect you not to lie.

Just in case you've been trying to find ways to de-code our little puzzled minds, I'm here to help you understand what we actually mean by the actions we make, and the words we speak! Get ready to take some notes; this is an intuitive insight into the female mind!

“This outfit makes me look fat!”

1

Men need to understand that we women tend to compare ourselves with other women, and a lot of us feel insecure with appearance. When we put ourselves down, we aren't looking for compliments or sympathy. We are just seeking reassurance that we are beautiful. If we say something like this, all you need to do is give us a cuddle and reassure us, that you love us the way we are.



“She is such a b*#ch!”

2

WARNING! We can lose a best friend within 24 hours, but have her back just as fast. We are very sensitive and hormonal at times. Sometimes fall out with our best friends. This is normal on the odd occasion, it's just us. When this happens, we will come to you for advice. All you need to tell us is that it's going to be okay, and things will sort themselves out soon.



Pixabay: lambhappiness

3

“Fine, go! No wait...come back.”

We can tell you to get out one minute, and beg you to stay the next. Do us a favour and just come back and say you're sorry, we will say we're sorry too and we can make up. Whether we were in the wrong first or not, sometimes we're stubborn so be the bigger man and say sorry first. Trust me, 99% of the time it works.

4

“Not tonight, I'm too tired...”

No, we really are tired. Some nights we just can't be bothered and that's all you need to understand.

5

**“I'm hungry!” “What do you want?”
“I don't know.”**

It's normal okay? We love food! But sometimes we just don't know what we want, all we know is that we want food and we want food now. Just keep suggesting things, we will make up our minds eventually. ;)

6

**Why do we question your involvement
with other girls?**

We feel threatened, we need reassurance, we feel jealous, we feel insecure – the list goes on! All you need to do is remind us you love us, and that your heart is ours forever. You probably tell us this all the time, but for the sake of avoiding an argument, please just say it again.

We are crying, but say we're fine.

7

Okay, there could be two reasons for this. The first, being that we don't want to talk about it at that moment because it'll make us cry even more. And the second, is probably because we don't feel like you'd understand. All you need to do here is ask if we need anything, give us a cuddle and say, 'Please come talk to me about it when you're ready. I'm always here.'

We overthink.

8

Yes, we overthink some things...okay, we overthink everything. There is never just one thought on our minds and I don't know why, there just isn't. This is why we make such great multi-taskers. Sorry guys, but this is just the way we are. All you need to do is always be honest, so that way, when we do overthink, we won't be putting lies in the mix to make your actions even more questionable.

Mood swings.

9

Why? Periods. On average, once a month we experience an imbalance of hormones which can cause cravings, headaches, nausea, period pain and much more. We really don't mean to be hormonal, just know that it's normal for us to go through erratic mood swings at this time, and we are sorry.

So there you have it; nine pieces to our puzzling minds. When you're able to see what's going on behind the surface, everything does make sense. Sometimes we are moody, and we change our minds a lot, but we are also human. We feel, we breathe and we love - just like men. See? We aren't that confusing after all.

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Welcome to the Life and Love magazine; a publication celebrating the musings on all things life and love! We aim to connect with readers through social commentary, shared experiences and personal exploration of lessons learned.

We wish to hear from people who feel they have some advice or a story to share; whether it be a heart break, an accomplishment or a life-changing event, please get in touch. It's by sharing experiences we're reminded that we're not all so different; we all suffer, all rejoice, all love and are all living this life, right now.

We're a warm and welcoming team; if you wish to contribute to Life and Love please read the contributor page information here: <http://www.theaustraliatimes.org/contributors/> and email Lifelove@theaustaliatimes.com.au





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