



Researchers find what Duncan and Audrey have known for years

Love holds the key to a long and happy life

By **KERRY FRASER AND AAP**
kfraser@scnews.com.au

ALL you need is love. To lead a long and healthy life, that is.

According to an Australian researcher speaking at the International Conference on Healthy Ageing and Longevity in Brisbane this week, love in all its forms may be able to slow the biological clock.

Mark Cohen, founding professor of complementary medicine at Melbourne's RMIT University, said the more love you had in your life — whether it was between partners, parent and child or even an artist's love of painting — the longer you were likely to live.

"Having love in your life will improve your chances of living a long life," Prof Cohen said.

"When you have love in your life it influences the laws of nature to . . . reduce the experience of time.

"So if you're doing an activity that you love to do, whether it's making paper aeroplanes or gardening or looking into the eyes of your lover, you get moments when time seems to stop, or it

seems like five minutes but it's really been an hour."

Prof Cohen said research backed up his claim that such moments were healthy for you and may lead to a longer life.

For example, when researchers studied rabbits on high cholesterol diets in the United States, they were perplexed when they found one group lived about 60 per cent longer than the others on the same food.

When they analysed what was happening, they found only one difference between the two groups — the longer-lived rabbits were fed by a laboratory assistant who cuddled and talked to them. Another study of 1000 Israeli men with heart conditions, found the relationship with their wives was important to their disease.

"The men who felt that they were loved by their wives had a 50% reduction in their angina and cardiac disease," Prof Cohen said.

University of the Sunshine Coast (USC) senior lecturer in cultural studies Karen Brooks said a belief in the positive effects of loving feelings was held

by many.

She said there also appeared to be truth to the term "dying of a broken heart", with many cases where elderly people died within just a short time of losing their partners.

Dr Brooks said having something to love allowed people to concentrate on something other than themselves.

"It really is about looking outside the self and to transfer a range of emotions towards something other than the self," Dr Brooks said.

"When the mind is distracted and people become emotionally involved it increases the quality of life.

"It's like people who take on study later in their life, or love to read, or always watch their favourite television show — they're engaged with that object or activity."

USC public health lecturer Lily O'Hara said the obvious health benefits of love served as a reminder to the medical profession of the need to think about health in a more holistic way.

"I think it's interesting that people know (the benefits of



love) intuitively, it's confirmed again and again by research, and yet it still doesn't make its way into our more medicalised view of health," she said.

"It often gets left out of health plans because it doesn't fit our medical model . . . where we can explain every behaviour and every risk factor with some sort of physiological condition."

IF love really does mean a longer life, a Maroochydore couple may just have a very good chance at beating the world record of 74 years of marriage.

Duncan and Audrey Brander

will celebrate their 62nd wedding anniversary this year, and say nine children and 17 great grandchildren later they are happy and healthy – with lots of love still to go round.

"We met at a picture theatre," Audrey said.

"My girlfriend introduced him to me and I didn't like him at first - he used to wear lairy shirts and I didn't go in for those lairy shirts, he had to be well dressed.

"But I took to him about three or four days after."

Duncan said he knew he

wanted to be with Audrey almost as soon as he saw her.

After many more trips to the pictures, the Audrey and Duncan had an engagement of just one week before getting married in the autumn of 1943.

They saved to buy a house and had their first child, a daughter, eight years later.

Audrey said even if it turned out love was not the key to longevity, a devoted partner and family were wonderful to have around regardless.

"Family is very important," she said.



LOVE: Duncan and Audrey Brander, yesterday, and, top inset, 62 years ago.