

Social Psychology

Lesson 13: Attraction and Intimacy

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TOPICS

- ♥ Need To Belong
- ♥ Factors of Attraction
- ♥ Cultural Similarities and Differences in Attraction
- ♥ What Men vs. Women Want
- ♥ Romantic Love
- ♥ Triangular Theory of Love
- ♥ How Are Relationships Maintained
- ♥ Styles of Love
- ♥ Ending Relationships
- ♥ Jealousy in Relationship
- ♥ Language Of Love

EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES

- ✓ Explain the evolutionary and psychological importance of human connection, and how the deficit of belonging affects well-being.
- ✓ Identify and evaluate the key drivers of interpersonal attraction.
- ✓ Compare how individualistic and collectivist cultures view romance.
- ✓ Examine the evolutionary and psychological roots of jealousy, contrasting how different triggers affect partners.
- ✓ Identify the core predictors of marital longevity.
- ✓ Identify distinct ways individuals express and receive affection.

NEED TO BELONG

- A motivation to bond with others in relationships that provide ongoing, positive interactions
- Examples:
 - ♥ Wanting friends
 - ♥ Wanting romantic relationships

NEED TO BELONG

Belonging:

- improved health
- improved happiness

Ostracism and social rejection:

- depression, anxiety, withdrawal
- self-defeating behavior
- treat others badly
- brain activity similar to physical pain



INTERPERSONAL ATTRACTION



- ♥ Refers to positive feelings about another person.
- ♥ It can take many forms, including liking, love, friendship, lust, and admiration.



FACTORS OF ATTRACTION

Physical Attraction

Proximity

Similarity

Reciprocity



01. PHYSICAL ATTRACTIVENESS

- Physical appearance is the top predictor of early attraction.
- Men tend to value physical looks more than women do.
- How attractive you think you are influences who you pursue.

The Matching Hypothesis:

- People typically choose partners with a similar level of attractiveness.

THE HOTTY FACTOR

- Physical attractiveness predicts dating frequency (they date more).
- They are perceived as healthier, happier, more honest and successful than less attractive counterparts.





Some components of what is attractive vary across culture

02. PROXIMITY

- **Proximity** – the physical closeness between two people.
- People are more likely to become friends with people who are geographically close.
- Shorter distances increase repeat contact and mutual attraction.
- **Mere exposure effect** refers to people's tendency to like novel stimuli more if they encounter them repeatedly.

Proximity → Interaction → Attraction

STUDY: Festinger et al. (1950)

- **Findings:**
 - Same building vs. different building: 10x more friendships
 - Same floor vs. different floor: Significantly more friendships
- **Distance & Likelihood of Friendship:**
 - Next door → 41%
 - Two doors apart → 22%
 - Opposite ends of hall → 10%
- **Conclusion:**

Physical distance directly predicts friendship formation

STUDY: Mckenna, Green, & Gleason (2002)

Interaction can happen without proximity: Online relationships

Findings:

- Met online first → more favorable impressions than in-person first meetings
- Relationships remained intact 2 years later

Conclusion:

Online interaction can build lasting relationships without geographic proximity

03. SIMILARITY

People also tend to pick partners who are similar to themselves in characteristics such as:

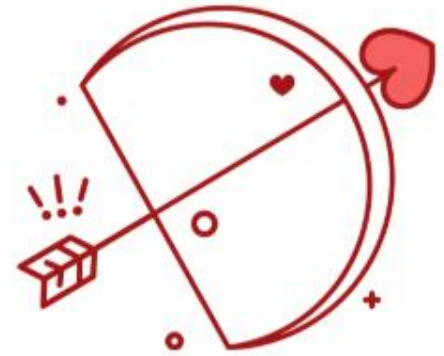
- ♥ Social class
- ♥ Age
- ♥ Race
- ♥ Religion



- ♥ Personality
- ♥ Education
- ♥ Intelligence
- ♥ Attitude

04. RECIPROCALITY

- **Reciprocity** – the exchange of what we receive for what we get, which can include liking those who like us back.
- People tend to like others who reciprocate their liking.
- **Reward theory of attraction** says we like those who like us and give us rewarding experiences.



CULTURAL SIMILARITIES

Universal traits in partner selection:

Mutual Attraction

Kindness

Intelligence



Emotional Stability

Dependability

Good Health

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

Individualistic Cultures

View romantic love
as a prerequisite
for marriage.



Collectivist Cultures

Often accept
marriages arranged
by family or third
parties.

What Men vs. Women Want

Females choose males based on:

- good financial prospects
- ambition and industriousness

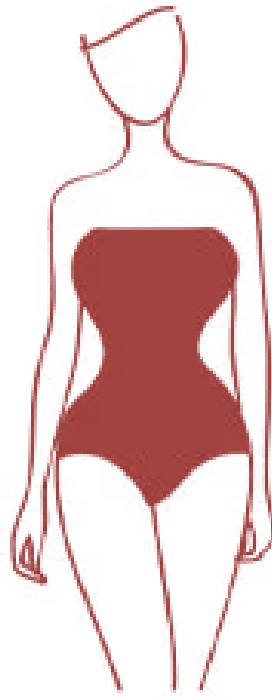


Males choose females based on:

- good looks
- chastity

EVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVE

- ♥ **Facial Symmetry:** Signals good health and normal development.
- ♥ **Waist-to-Hip Ratio:** An "hourglass" figure signals high reproductive potential.



- ♥ **What Men Value:** Youth and attractiveness → signals fertility and reproductive success
- ♥ **What Women Value:** Status, wealth, and ambition → signals the ability to provide for offspring

ROMANTIC LOVE

Passionate Love

- ♥ Initial spark
- ♥ Intense emotion & high desire
- ♥ Emotional "roller coaster"
- ♥ Dominates the start of romance

Companionate Love

- ♥ Long-term bond
- ♥ Calm, stable and deeply trusting
- ♥ High tolerance and shared life experiences
- ♥ Dominates long-term relationships

Hormones and Close Relationships

♥ **Oxytocin**

a hormone that is important in female reproduction and that also influences social behaviors, including the development of long-term romantic attachments.

♥ **Testosterone**

Male sex hormone that relates to liking particularly for passionate love.





- ♥ Brain scans prove romantic love is an innate chemical reaction.
- ♥ Dopamine and norepinephrine fuel excitement and bliss.
- ♥ Present in both humans and non-human animals.

Triangular Theory of Love

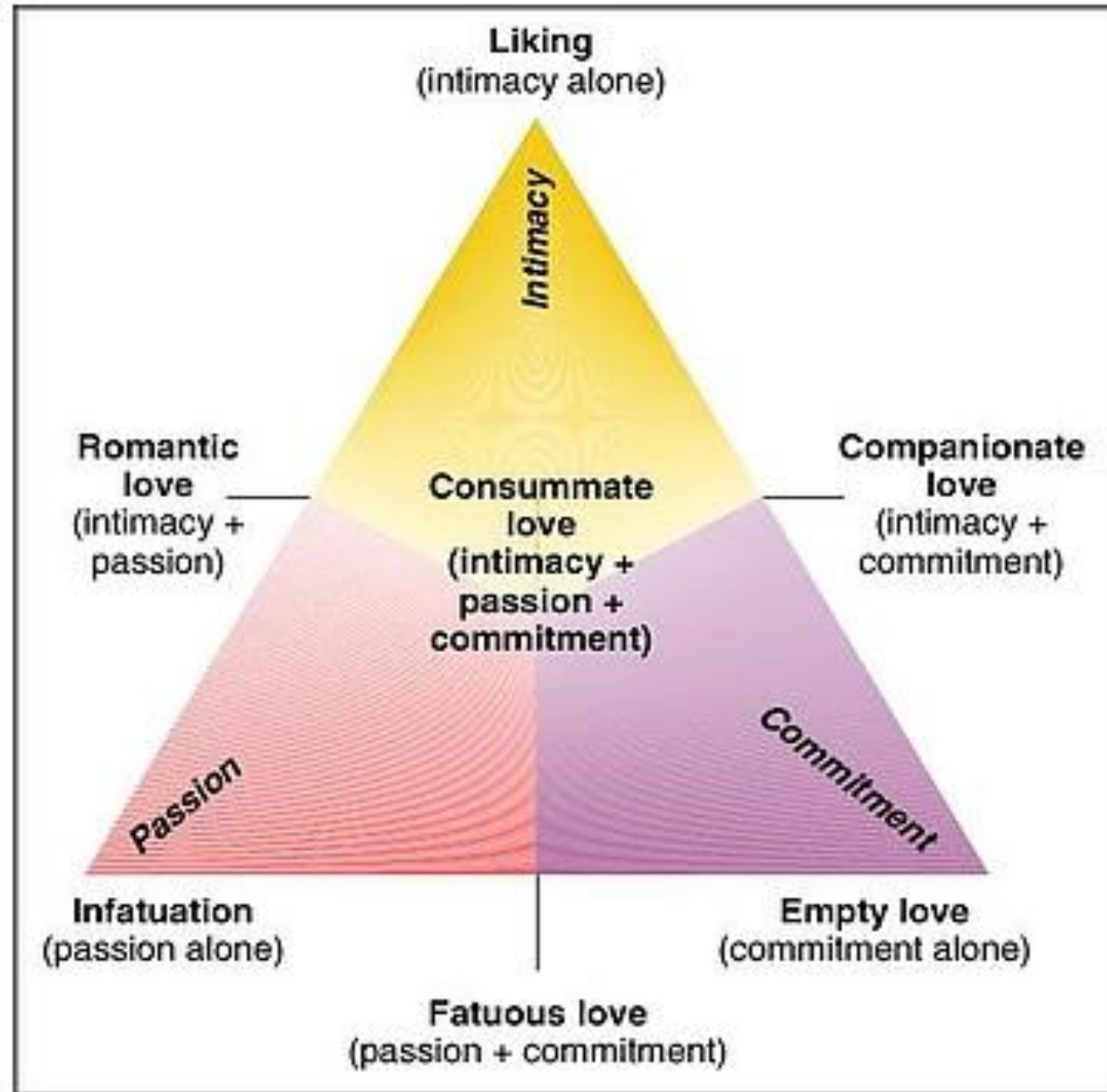
Proponent: **Robert Sternberg**

Components of love:

- ♥ **Passion**
- ♥ **Intimacy**
- ♥ **Commitment**



Source: <https://psychwire.com/profiles/dk7xi1/robert-sternberg>



Source: <https://tconline.texarkanacollege.edu>

Intimacy & Passion (Silberman, 1995)

- ♥ Intimacy is the strongest predictor of marital satisfaction.
- ♥ Passion remains a critical secondary predictor.

Commitment (Acker & Davis, 1992)

- ♥ Commitment is the strongest overall predictor of satisfaction.
- ♥ Weight increases significantly over time in long-term relationships.



IS MARRIAGE THE END GOAL?

- ♥ **Marriage benefits:** economic well-being, children's outcomes, overall health
- ♥ Satisfaction: Unhappily married < single individuals



Cultural Considerations:

- ♥ Arranged marriages: some studies show higher satisfaction than love-based; others show no difference
- ♥ Satisfaction depends on context, not just marriage type

IS MARRIAGE THE END GOAL?

Same-Sex Couples & Marriage

- ♥ Most marriage research focused on opposite-sex couples (due to marriage bans)
- ♥ Hatzenbuehler et al. (2010): Gay marriage bans → increased mood, anxiety, and alcohol use disorders in LGB individuals
- ♥ Kurdek (2004): Same-sex couples as happy as (or happier than) opposite-sex couples



HOW ARE RELATIONSHIPS MAINTAINED?

Social Exchange theory

Equity theory

The Investment Model

Exchange & Communal Relationships

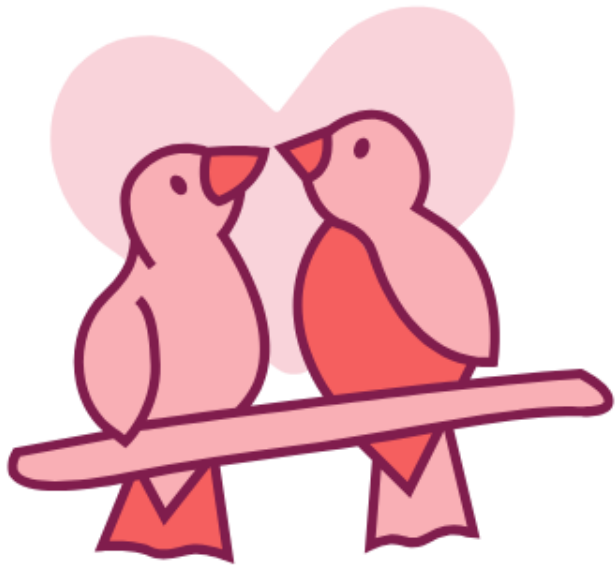


SOCIAL EXCHANGE THEORY

High Benefits + Low Costs = Fulfilling, Long-Lasting Relationships

- People evaluate relationships by maximizing benefits and minimizing costs.
- Relationships last longer and feel more fulfilling when rewards outweigh the effort required.

EQUITY THEORY



Relationships are more satisfying when the ratio between the benefits and contributions is similar for both partners.

THE INVESTMENT MODEL



- **Investment** – those resources that have been devoted to a relationship that cannot be retrieved.
- If you've put a lot into it, it's harder to break it off.
- People generally more willing to work through problems if they have more invested in the relationship.

EXCHANGE & COMMUNAL RELATIONSHIP

- **Communal relationship** – are those in which partners expect strict reciprocity. Seen in: strangers, casual acquaintances and between business partners.
- **Exchange relationships** – are those in which partners expect mutual responsiveness to one another's needs. In these relationships, people seek to take care of one another without expecting anything in return. Seen in: close friends, romantic partners, and family members.



STYLES OF LOVE

- Ludus
- Pragma
- Eros
- Mania
- Storge
- Agape



STYLES OF LOVE

- ♥ **Ludus** – Love as a game; avoids intimacy
- ♥ **Pragma** – Practical; values economic security
- ♥ **Eros** – Passionate, romantic, intense
- ♥ **Mania** – Possessive, jealous, out of control
- ♥ **Storge** – Calm friendship; no passion; deep respect
- ♥ **Agape** – Selfless giving; expects nothing in return



“If, by the time this letter reaches you, I am old and gray, I know that our love will be as fresh as it is today.”

“It may take a week, or it may take years for this note to find you... If this should never reach you, it will still be written in my heart that I will go to extreme means to prove my love for you.



*Your husband,
Bob*

ENDING RELATIONSHIPS



Four Horsemen of Apocalypse

(John Gottman, 1994)

1. **Criticism:** Attacking a partner's character instead of a specific behavior.
2. **Contempt:** Mockery, sarcasm, or eye-rolling driven by disgust (the #1 predictor of divorce).
3. **Defensiveness:** Making excuses or denying responsibility instead of resolving the conflict.
4. **Stonewalling:** Shutting down and withdrawing from the conversation (more common in men).

WHO DIVORCE?



Individualistic

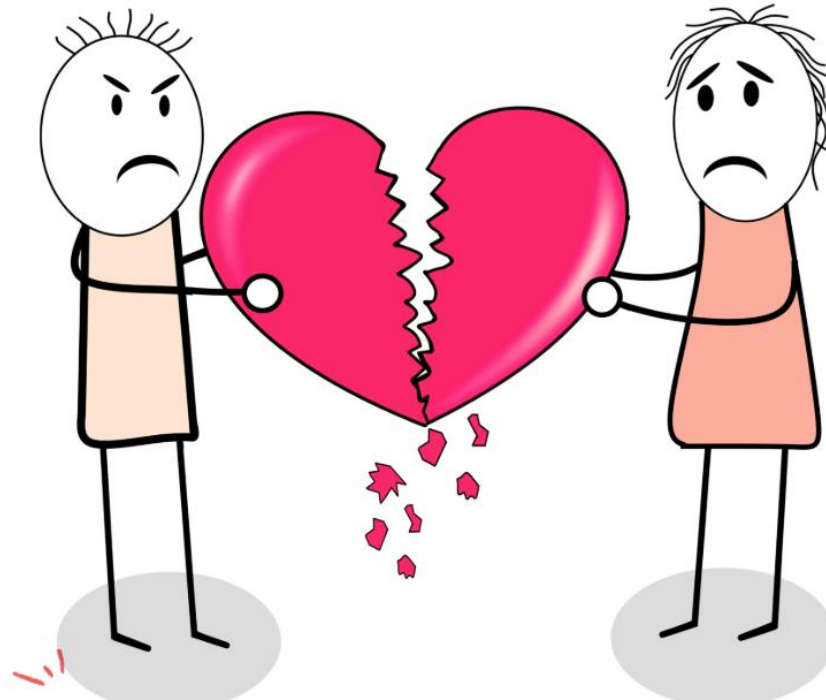
“What does my heart say?”

Collectivist

“What will other people say?”

JEALOUSY IN RELATIONSHIP

Males are more jealous when they imagined their partners flirting with someone powerful and successful



Females are jealous when imagining their partners flirting with physically attractive people

In a survey conducted by Buss, Larsen, Westen & Semmelroth (1992)...

Men & Sexual Infidelity (60%)

- The Fear: More upset by sexual cheating.
- Evolutionary Reason: Risk of investing resources into another man's offspring (paternity uncertainty).

Women & Emotional Infidelity (83%)

- The Fear: More upset by emotional betrayal.
- Evolutionary Reason: Risk of losing the partner's resources and protection for her children.

People usually stay married if they:

- ♥ Married after age 20
- ♥ Both grew up in stable, two-parent home
- ♥ Dated for a long while before marriage
- ♥ Are well and similarly educated
- ♥ Enjoy a stable income from a good job
- ♥ Live in a small town or on a farm
- ♥ Did not cohabit or become pregnant before marriage
- ♥ Are religiously committed
- ♥ Are of similar age, faith and education

THE MOST ROMANTIC LOVE STORY ISN'T
ROMEO AND JULIET WHO DIED TOGETHER...



BUT GRANDPA AND GRANDMA
WHO GREW OLD TOGETHER.

LANGUAGE OF LOVE



- ♥ Words of affirmation
- ♥ Acts of service
- ♥ Receiving gifts
- ♥ Quality time
- ♥ Physical touch

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Images:

- Triangular Theory of Love by Robert Sternberg. Retrieved from: <https://tconline.texarkanacollege.edu/mod/book/view.php?id=704559&chapterid=221546>
- All graphic images were taken from Canva at <https://www.canva.com>