

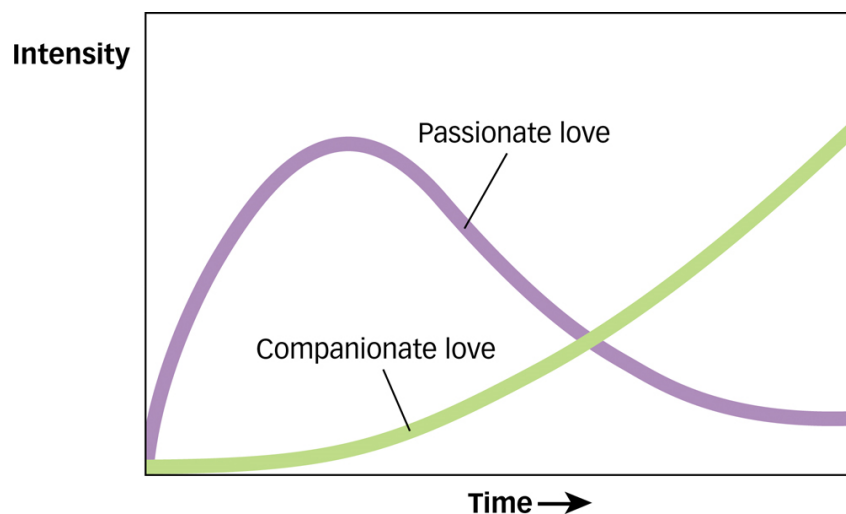
Love is an Important Component of Romantic Relationships

Passionate love is a state of intense longing and sexual desire (page 558)



Psychology of Science, 4th Edition, Figure 12.21a
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Passionate love tends to fade over time. In most enduring relationships, passionate love evolves into companionate love.



(image source: Schacter, Gilbert and Wegner, Psychology, 2nd edition)

Companionate love is a strong commitment to care for and support a partner. This kind of love develops slowly over time because it is based on friendship, trust, respect and intimacy.



Psychology of Science, 4th Edition, Figure 12.21b
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Staying in Love requires Work

Passionate love tends to fade over time. Unless people develop other forms of satisfaction in their romantic relationships—such as friendship, social support and intimacy (sharing personal details about the self), the loss of passion leads to dissatisfaction and the end of the relationship (page 561).

How Can Psychology Help My Romantic Relationship Thrive?

It will take work. If a couple has about five positive interactions for every negative one, chances are good that the relationship will be stable.

The task of any couple is to seek opportunities for positive feelings and interactions within the relationship such as the following:

- (1) Show interest in your partner
- (2) Be affectionate
- (3) Show you care*
- (4) Spend quality time together
- (5) Maintain loyalty and fidelity
- (6) Learn how to handle conflict**

Languages of Love*

- Physical contact
- Quality time
- Words of affirmation
- Acts of service
- Gifts

**Many people incorrectly believe that good relationships do not have conflict. Good relationships do have conflict, but resolve the conflict in a respectful manner.

Dealing with Conflict

The way a couple deals with conflict often determines whether a relationship will last.

John Gottman describes four interpersonal styles that typically lead to the end of a relationship.

- Overly critical
- Holding the partner in contempt
- Being defensive
- Mentally withdrawing from the relationship

When a couple is more satisfied in the relationship, the partners tend to express concern for the other, even while they disagree. They manage to stay calm and try to see the other person's point of view.

Attributional Style