

## **Gender and Love**

### **Men tend to**

- conceptualize love more in terms of passion

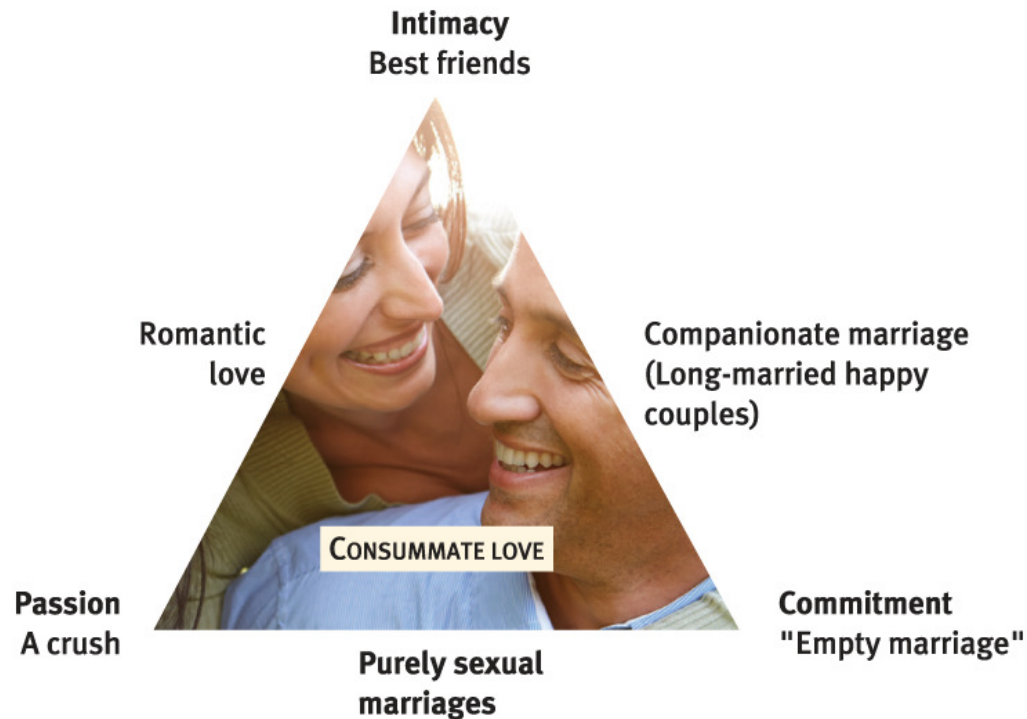
### **Women tend to**

- think of love more in terms of friendship
- are more expressive and affectionate than men in marriage
- disclose more to romantic partners, and wish their husbands would reciprocate more.

## The Triangular Theory Perspective of Happiness

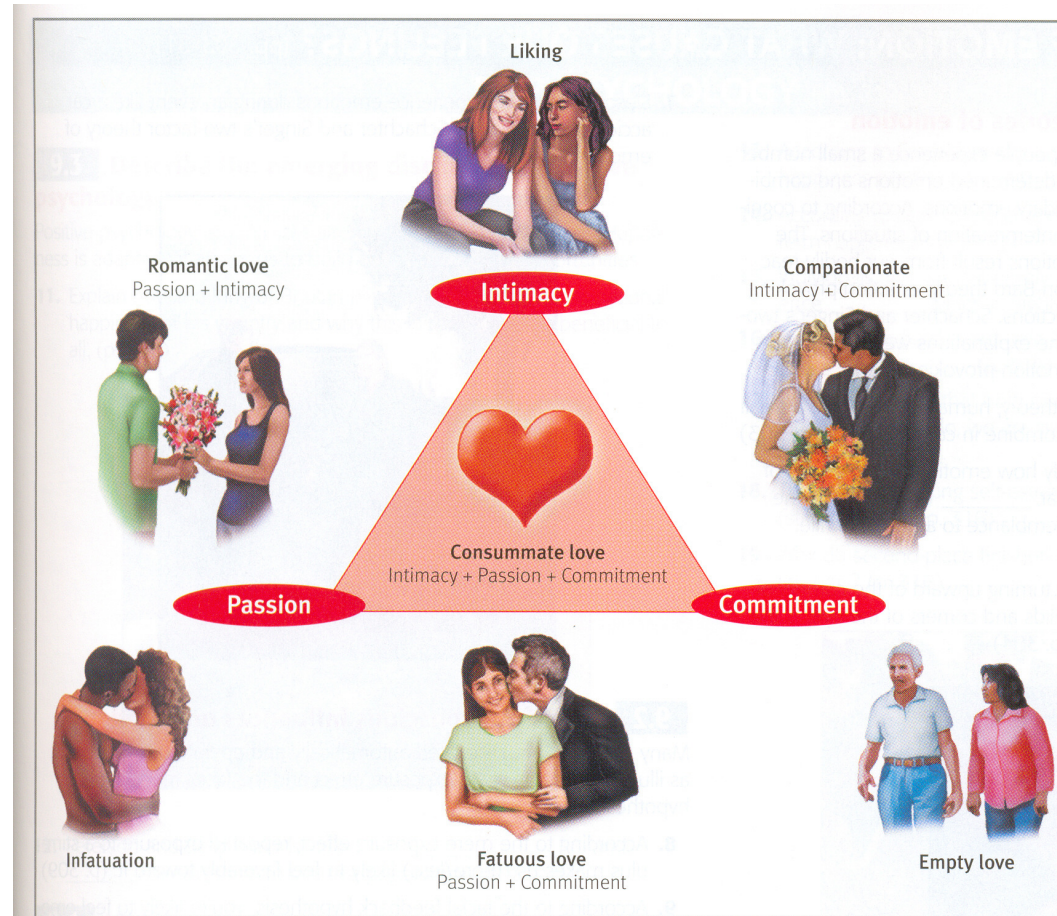
Sternberg's triangular theory of love (also referred to as the triarchy of love) has three components:

- Passion (sexual arousal)
- Intimacy (feelings of closeness),
- Commitment (a lifelong bond)



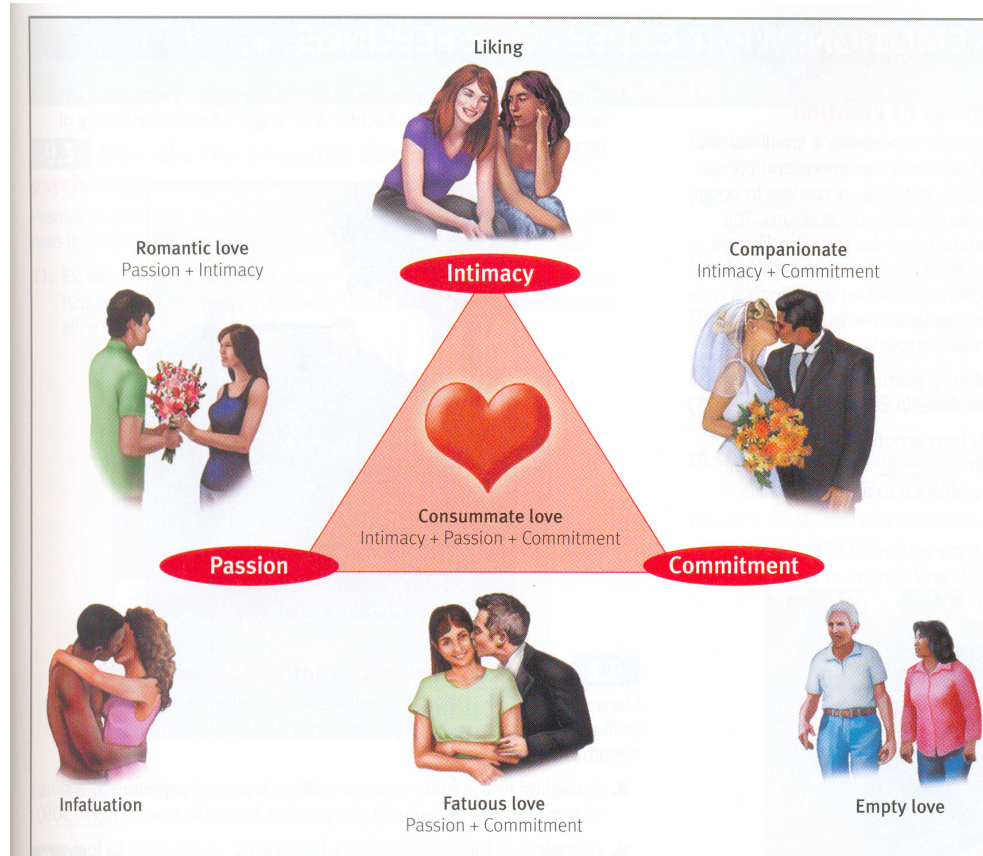
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## The Triangular Theory Perspective of Happiness



Consummate love tends to be fragile because the physiological arousal from your partner can fluctuate over time. This is why, I suspect that you and your partner should find engage in activities that you both enjoy and are stimulating.

## The Triangular Theory Perspective of Happiness



What components of love do the following individuals have?

## **The Five Languages of Love**

Dr. Chapman identified five emotional love languages—five ways that people speak and understand emotional love.

The way you and your partner may communicate love may be different from one another. In order to effectively communicate, you will need to recognize your own language of love as well as your partner's (or future partner's). Because love is something you do for someone else, it is important that you learn the love language of your partner.

Dr. Chapman's Five Languages of Love

- Words of Affirmation
- Acts of Service
- Receiving Gifts
- Quality Time
- Physical Touch

## **Languages of Love**

### **Words of Affirmation**

Words of affirmation, positive and supportive statements toward your partner are important for building and maintaining relationships.

Some people need verbal appreciation and encouragement in order to feel loved. Complement your partner. It may be as simple as

- “You look great in that suit,” or
- “You are the best yard guy we have ever had”, or
- “I know you will finish your degree”.

### **Acts of Service**

Sometimes simple chores or tasks around the house can communicate to another person love. These tasks are done out of kindness, not out of obligation.

## **Languages of Love**

### **Receiving Gifts**

It is one thing to remember birthdays and anniversaries. It's quite more to learn how to give "little gifts" of thoughtfulness through the week.

It can show that you are thinking about the person and if you know the person, demonstrate your knowledge of them (certainly, bad gifts can work against you).

### **Quality Time**

Quality time is more than being in the same room. It's about focusing all your energy on your partner. It is interacting and doing things together and paying attention to their needs. It's turning off the TV and giving each other quality time—quality listening time and doing something together.

### **Physical Touch**

Many feel the most loved when they receive physical contact from their partner—a hand on the shoulder, a hug, a kiss, holding hands as well as sexual touching.



## Languages of Love

### The 5 love languages

Affirmation: Your coffee is delicious

Acts of service: I made you coffee

Receiving Gifts: Here's a coffee

Quality time: Let's go out for coffee

Physical Touch: Let me hold you like  
a coffee



## Marriage

When asked about the reasons for their marriage to last, many reported having a positive attitude toward their partner.

Spouse are seen as their best friend and they like him or her as a person (see unconditional positive regard). They are aware they have their faults, but their likeable qualities outweigh their shortcomings ([page 268](#)). Marriage takes work and both partners need to work at solving their problems.

It is important for you to know what your life goals are, what your values are and what your self-concept is AND live your life in a way that moves you in that direction. You need to be honest with yourself about your goals, values and self-concept and when you are deviating off from it.

Trust and goodwill are important for self-disclosure and deepening relationships. If you aren't honest with yourself, you are going to hesitate in disclosing information.

## **Successful Marriages Start Off on the Right Foot**

Conflict resolution is important for successful marriages, but there are characteristics that successful marriages have already in addition to good communication and conflict resolution skills.

- Successful relations can be predicted from how couples fight, and how they interact when they are not fighting (see DARVO: denial, attack, reverse victim and offender).
- Successful marriages are less likely to have arguments that can't be resolved (unsuccessful marriages have arguments that can't be resolved and too much time is spent trying to resolve the unresolvable).

## **Why Marriages Succeed or Fail**

John and Jane Gottman observed couples' interactions, quarrels, and attempts at resolution. Within five minutes of an argument, they can accurately determine whether a couple's relationship will last.

When couples were observed, a partner would try to make a connection with the other (in the article, he called it a bid). The following was copied from the article, Masters of Love (Masters vs. Disasters)

For example, say that the husband is a bird enthusiast and notices a goldfinch fly across the yard. He might say to his wife, "Look at that beautiful bird outside!" He's not just commenting on the bird here: he's requesting a response from his wife—a sign of interest or support—hoping they'll connect, however momentarily, over the bird.

The wife now has a choice. She can respond by either "turning toward" or "turning away" from her husband, as Gottman puts it. Though the bird-bid might seem minor and silly, it can actually reveal a lot about the health of the relationship. The husband thought the bird was important enough to bring it up in conversation and the question is whether his wife recognizes and respects that. People who turned toward their partners in the study responded by engaging the bidder, showing interest and support in the bid.

Those who didn't—those who turned away—would not respond or respond minimally and continue doing whatever they were doing, like watching TV or reading the paper. Sometimes they would respond with overt hostility, saying something like, “Stop interrupting me, I'm reading.”

These bidding interactions had profound effects on marital well-being. Couples who had divorced after a six-year follow up had “turn-toward bids” 33 percent of the time. Only three in ten of their bids for emotional connection were met with intimacy.

The couples who were still together after six years had “turn-toward bids” 87 percent of the time. Nine times out of ten, they were meeting their partner's emotional needs.

By observing these types of interactions, Gottman can predict with up to 94 percent certainty whether couples—straight or gay, rich or poor, childless or not—will be broken up, together and unhappy, or together and happy several years later. Much of it comes down to the spirit couples bring to the relationship.

Do they bring kindness and generosity; or contempt, criticism, and hostility?

“There’s a habit of mind that the masters have,” Gottman explained in an interview, “which is this: they are scanning social environment for things they can appreciate and say thank you for. They are building this culture of respect and appreciation very purposefully. Disasters are scanning the social environment for partners’ mistakes.”

“It’s not just scanning environment,” chimed in Julie Gottman. “It’s scanning the partner for what the partner is doing right or scanning him for what he’s doing wrong and criticizing versus respecting him and expressing appreciation.”

## **Masters Of Love: Contempt and Kindness**

Contempt, they have found, is the number one factor that tears couples apart. People who are focused on criticizing their partners miss a whopping 50 percent of positive things their partners are doing and they see negativity when it's not there. People who give their partner the cold shoulder—deliberately ignoring the partner or responding minimally—damage the relationship by making their partner feel worthless and invisible, as if they're not there, not valued. And people who treat their partners with contempt and criticize them not only kill the love in the relationship, but they also kill their partner's ability to fight off viruses and cancers. Being mean is the death knell of relationships.



Kindness, on the other hand, glues couples together. Research independent from theirs has shown that kindness (along with emotional stability) is the most important predictor of satisfaction and stability in a marriage. Kindness makes each partner feel cared for, understood, and validated—feel loved. “My bounty is as boundless as the sea,” says Shakespeare’s Juliet. “My love as deep; the more I give to thee, / The more I have, for both are infinite.” That’s how kindness works too: there’s a great deal of evidence showing the more someone receives or witnesses kindness, the more they will be kind themselves, which leads to upward spirals of love and generosity in a relationship.

## **Masters Of Love: Kindness**

There are two ways to think about kindness.

- You can think about it as a fixed trait: either you have it or you don't.
- Or you could think of kindness as a muscle. In some people, that muscle is naturally stronger than in others, but it can grow stronger in everyone with exercise.

Masters tend to think about kindness as a muscle. They know that they have to exercise it to keep it in shape. They know, in other words, that a good relationship requires sustained hard work.



## **Masters of Love: Disasters and Masters in an Argument**

The hardest time to practice kindness is, of course, during a fight—but this is also the most important time to be kind.

Letting contempt and aggression spiral out of control during a conflict can inflict irrevocable damage on a relationship. “Kindness doesn’t mean that we don’t express our anger,” Julie Gottman explained, “but the kindness informs how we choose to express the anger. You can throw spears at your partner. Or you can explain why you’re hurt and angry, and that’s the kinder path.”

John Gottman elaborated on those spears:

- “Disasters will say things differently in a fight. Disasters will say
  - ‘You’re late.
  - What’s wrong with you?
  - You’re just like your mom.’
- Masters will say
  - ‘I feel bad for picking on you about your lateness, and I know it’s not your fault, but it’s really annoying that you’re late again.’”

## **Masters of Love: Physiology**

The disasters looked calm during the interviews, but their physiology, measured by the electrodes, told a different story.

- Their heart rates were quick,
- their sweat glands were active, and
- their blood flow was fast.

Following thousands of couples longitudinally, Gottman found that the more physiologically active the couples were in the lab, the quicker their relationships deteriorated over time.

The masters, by contrast, showed low physiological arousal.

- They felt calm and connected together, which translated into warm and affectionate behavior, even when they fought.

It's not that the masters had, by default, a better physiological make-up than the disasters; it's that masters had created a climate of trust and intimacy that made both of them more emotionally and thus physically comfortable.

## **Masters of Love: Physiology**

But what does physiology have to do with anything?

The problem was that the disasters showed all the signs of arousal—of being in fight-or-flight mode—in their relationships. Having a conversation sitting next to their spouse was, to their bodies, like facing off with a saber-toothed tiger. Even when they were talking about pleasant or mundane facets of their relationships, they were prepared to attack and be attacked. This sent their heart rates soaring and made them more aggressive toward each other.

For example, each member of a couple could be talking about how their days had gone, and a highly aroused husband might say to his wife, “Why don’t you start talking about your day. It won’t take you very long.”

## **The 5-to-1 ratio**

Whether you face conflict or avoid it; communication style for maintaining a healthy relationship is more important than how well you solve problems and how compatible they are (socially, financially, or sexually).

Positive long-term relationships maintain about a 5-to-1 ratio of positive interactions to negative interactions in their relationship compared to those that are divorced.

## **Seven Principles that can Facilitate a Relationship**

- Know your partner's dreams, hopes and interests.
- Nurture your fondness and admiration
  - Express caring and respect. You use positive self-statements and avoid negative self-statements for yourself and your partner (this doesn't mean you should ignore problems). Couples should have a 5-to-1 ratio of positive to negative comments and interaction.
- Turn toward each other instead of away
  - Express your love every day—not just once or every now and then.  
Engage in activities together
- Let your partner influence you
- Solve your solvable problems
- Overcome gridlock
- Create shared meaning—share rituals, traditions and common activities

Couples that spent five hours or more per week on their relationship practicing these seven principles had continual improvements in their marriages. Time spent on these both before and after courtship lead to healthier relationships.

Answer these questions as honestly as you can. The more “yes” boxes you check, the stronger your relationship is likely to be.		
	Yes	No
1. Do you have realistic expectations about your relationship—realizing that passion and intimacy don’t magically last forever?		
2. Do you engage in activities that your partner feels as passionate about as you do?		
3. Does sacrificing your own needs to make your partner happy give you pleasure, and are you devoted to your mate’s emotional growth?		
4. Are you affectionate and positive with your partner?		
5. Do you solve differences of opinion in a constructive way—and not get personal when you fight?		
6. Do you give your partner space to make his or her own decisions and choices?		
7. Do you listen to your lover’s complaints without getting defensive?		

### **Coping with the Transition to Parenthood**

- Don't expect your romantic feelings about each other to stay the same—they won't.
- Try to agree on who is going to do what around the house, but understand that you may fall into more traditional roles.
- Work on your communication skills before the baby arrives.

### **For Mothers**

- Understand that you won't and can't be the perfect mother—in fact, sometimes you will be utterly terrible—and accept yourself for being human!
- Don't buy into the fantasy of producing a perfect child. Children cannot be micromanaged into being perfect. Focus on enjoying and loving your child as he or she is (see also Chapter 7 ).
- Don't listen to people who say that working full time automatically means that you can't be an involved mother. Remember the findings discussed in this section.

### **For Fathers**

- Understand that your role is full of contradictions—and that there is no “perfect” way to be a dad.
- Be aware of your attitudes toward hands-on child-care, and clearly communicate these feelings to your partner.
- On the other hand, be a sensitive, loving dad! A strong message from the research is that if your partner feels you are a great father, your relationship is more likely to thrive after the baby arrives.