

Triangle love intimacy



**ASSIGN
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Triangle of Love

Robert J. Sternberg, psychologist and dean of the Tufts School of Arts and Sciences proposed a triangular theory of love that suggests that there are three components of love: intimacy, passion, and commitment. Different combinations of these three components result in different types of love. For example, a mixture of intimacy and commitment results in compassionate love, while a mixture of passion and intimacy leads to passionate love. Sternberg often said, “relationships built on two or more elements are more enduring than those based upon a single component” [Tufts p 19]. Sternberg uses the term consummate love to describe a combination of intimacy, passion, and commitment. While this type of love is the strongest and most enduring, Sternberg suggests that this type of love is rare. He wrote that even as a teenager he was intrigued by the mystery of why some relationships succeed while others fail. This is why early in his academic career he developed an explanation, which he calls the “triangular theory of love.” His theory is based on the observation “that love consists of three components . . . intimacy, passion, and commitment. Different combinations and strengths of those three ingredients,” Sternberg says, “produce different kinds of love.” [Tufts p. 20]

Intimacy is the feelings in a relationship that promote closeness, bonding, and connecting with one another. Passion is what drives the romance, physical attraction, and sexual consummation in a loving relationship. Commitment consists of two parts. The first is a short-term aspect in which you make the decision that you love another person and the second part is the long-term aspect in which you decide to commit to a long-term

relationship and maintaining the love for that person over a long period of time [Everything2]. Sternberg also gives a detailed explanation of the types of love. “ Infatuated love”, for example, is all passion, without intimacy or commitment. Romantic love has passion and intimacy but lacks commitment. “ Companionate love,” he says, “ results when we have only intimacy and commitment, as in a long-term deep friendship.” The kind of love that embodies all three components he calls “ consummate love” [Tufts p. 21]. Sternberg uses the triangle to describe different way we evolve to being in love. Each side of the triangle represents the proportion of each component with respect to the other two. The shape of the triangle that Sternberg uses is supposed to symbolize the balance between intimacy, passion and commitment, because it is equal on all sides. This is the kind of love we all hope for at one point and time. It is also the kind of love we tend to associate with living a life full of love and happiness. Sternberg acknowledges that few human relationships can maintain this perfect balance indefinitely, yet many relationships succeed in the face of enormous obstacles because both parties highly value consummate love, seek it out and work hard to maintain it. [Tufts p. 21]

Sternberg wanted his theory of love to show us true love should develop, but it also meant to be used as to show us how we can develop loving and caring relationships with everyone that is apart of our life. In his study of human relationships, Sternberg discovered that “ couples tended to be happier when they had more of the three components of love. And it helped if their love triangles matched in size and shape—that is, if the amount and kind of love each partner felt for the other was about the same.” [Tufts p. 21]

I think that the love triangle is great. When the intensity of love shared by two people is great, so is the area of the love triangle and vice versa. However, the greater a specific component of love, like passion, the further the point from the center of the triangle will be to that component. This is why the shape of the love triangle is reliant on the strength of the different workings of love. The shape of the triangle will and should evolve over time. We may achieve such perfect forms of love as consummate love, but we all know that perfect of love is hard to maintain over time because to sustain it, we must nourish all of its components. The more a couple works on keeping the three components of consummate love in balance and nourished, the more likely such a love will be maintained for a long period of time. Love it's self is so strong. I have been "in love" a few times. When I did this writing assignment I realize that I was not really in love until I met my husband. I took the triangle and compared the components to my past relationships and there is no comparison to what I have now. In society today, when someone mentions the word "Love" it is guaranteed that at least half the people surrounding you will shudder. Whether it is through observation or experience, people have come to learn that love is far from being the ideal state in which one should live in and, for that matter; many choose to stay away from it. It is known to break hearts, to hurt feelings and, believe it or not, it truly is not always happily ever after. Yes, Love does have its positive points. It is thrilling and exciting when you're in love, it is sometimes even euphoric but the argument here is not whether Love is good or bad for you. You and only you can make that decision.

Works Cited

- Sternberg, Robert J. 2007. Happily ever after, Tufts Magazine 14: 3) 19-23.
- <http://www.everything2.com/index.pl?node=emotion>