

The psychology of love



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Love is vague, and subjective, if I were to ask a few people what the definition of love is, they would most likely all have a different definition. Psychology is the study of the mind and behavior, in this case, we will be looking at how the mind works and how bodies behave when people are in love. In many cases, when people are in love they tend to act caring, in other cases people become abusive. Love can make people feel different feelings and everyone can react to love in a different way. It leads us to the question, what exactly is love? There are two major theories that explain what love is psychologically. In this essay I will explain American psychologist Robert Sternberg's theory of the Triangle of love, and Canadian psychologist John Alan Lee's Color Wheel Theory of Love.

In the Triangular Theory of Love adapted by psychologist Robert Sternberg, who graduated from Stanford University, Sternberg's theory explains that there are three components to love that all correspond to each side of a triangle. On one side is intimacy. Which basically is the feeling of being connected to or being close to an individual. The second component is passion, which refers to the more stereotypical examples of love, which are romance, physical attraction, and sexual consummation. Lastly, the final component in this triangle is decision or commitment. An example for that would be the decision to love someone, and the commitment to stay long-term with someone (University, 2018).

This theory explains that when loving, all three components work together symbiotically. For example, when one component increases, the other two

components may increase with it. In other cases, if one component decreases it can also decrease other components. For many people, when they do experience this, but it is different for everyone. For instance, for many relationships, each component is more important in some relationship but not for others (University, 2018).

According to the Triangular Theory of Love, there are six different types of loves or manifestations. The six are, nonlove, friendship, infatuated love, empty love, romantic love, companionate love, fatuous love, and consummate love.

In nonlove, this typically is just people you are not attached with, also all three components of love are nonexistent. Intimacy is present in friendship, where there is also commitment but not in a romantic sense (Staff, 2016). Infatuated love is when liking is absent, as well as commitment, but passion is very high. In empty love, all components were all once present but slowly went away, in this case failed marriages are examples. In romantic love, it is a mix of passion and intimacy, but commitment is lacking. Companionate love on the other hand, is a combination of commitment and intimacy, but no passion. Fatuous love is quick, and is only commitment and passion with no intimacy, an example would be a short-lived marriage. Lastly, in consummate love, it's a balance of all three components of love (University, 2018). According to psychologist Robert Sternberg, maintaining love is much more difficult than achieving love, as you can see.

In the second theory, the Color Wheel Theory of Love by psychologist John Alan Lee. This theory explains that there are seven different types of love.

Psychologist John Alan Lee explains this in his book *The Colors of Love* (1973). The seven different types of love are Eros, Philia, Storge, Agape, Ludus, Pragma, and Philautia. Each type of love refers to a type of color in the color wheel (Lee, 1973). All are based on works of the Greek philosophers Aristotle, and Plato. Thus, the Greek names for the types of love.

The first type of love is Eros. This type of love focuses on sexual and passionate love. This type of love involves a lot of hormones. One famous example of Eros would be the tale of Helen and Paris (M. D, 2016).

The second type of love is Philia, the most common type of love. Friendship would be an example. Philia although is a premature Eros, which means that Philia may transform into Eros in some cases, for example friendship blossoming into romance, which is common.

The third type of love is Storge, which is a familial type of love between parents and their kids and siblings. Storge is feelings of familiarity and dependency. It is different from Philia because it does not rely on personal qualities.

The fourth type of love is Agape, which is universal love. In other words, unconditional love for everything. One example for Agape would be love for nature, or religion. This type of love is different from Storge because it does not depend on filiation and familiarity.

The fifth type of love is Ludus. Which is love with no commitment whatsoever. Actions relating to this type of love is flirting, seducing, conjugation and just basic lust. Ludus love in other words, is playful love.

The sixth type of love is Pragma. It is practical love based on a long-term relationship, sexual love can adapt from Pragma. It is also the most popular and common type of love that is expressed in many popular novels and movies.

Lastly, the last seventh type of love is Philautia. This type takes form in self-love. Some components to this type of love is self-esteem and self-confidence. Although they are similar, there is a fine line between self-esteem, and self-confidence (Rishaquiem, 2014).

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