

Attachment style and relationships



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Robert Sternberg's (1988) triangular theory of love recognizes these three dimensions as the major components of love.

Passion is the motivational component of love and reflects attraction, romance, and sexual desire. Intimacy involves feelings of closeness, trust, and the sharing of one's innermost thoughts. Intimacy as well is an essential element of a loving relationship and typically, it grows gradually as partners reveal more and more of themselves to each other. Commitment is the decision to maintain a long-term caring relationship and it leads partners to think of themselves as " us", instead of " me", and " him" of " her."

According to Sternberg's model of love (1988), the three components, passion, intimacy, and commitment, form the vertices of a triangle. Their various combinations create seven basic subtypes of love - Liking love, infatuated love, romantic love, empty love, companionate love, fatuous love and consummate love. They may not all be weighted equally but do carry some weight. You can have any one without the other one or two. Other aspects of love such as nurturing and caring are a little harder to define from each other but they fit under one of these components that Sternberg's uses.

Robert Sternberg's triangular theory identifies these three dimensions as key components of love and various combinations of these dimensions may yield different types of love. For example, companionate love combines intimacy with commitment, or romantic love combines passion with intimacy and commitment.

This part of the triangle recognizes different types of love that exist. The first one is Romantic love, which is a combination of intimacy and passion. The second is fatuous love. This combines passion and commitment. Last is companionate love involving intimacy and commitment.

Romantic love is a combination of intimacy and passion. It tends not to last because there is not commitment. As soon as the passion dies and the intimacy fades, the individuals no longer feel in love and they go their separate ways. Romantic lovers are not only drawn to one another physically they are also bonded emotionally. Commitment is not a necessary part of romantic love though

Fatuous love is love with passion and commitment but it lacks intimacy. The couple meets one day and becomes engaged and shortly after that they get married. The commitment is made on a basis of passion without any intimate relations. Intimate relations take a longer time to develop and cannot be established in that short amount of time that they have known each other.

Companionate love comes from a combination of intimacy and decision/commitment. It is a long term, committed friendship. This type of love usually occurs when the physical attraction, a large role in passion, in a relationship has gone. This type of love, or it can be called just plain liking, is what helps couple stay together and bring children into the world. Most romantic relationships that do survive eventually turn into companionate love. The passion melts and the intimacy stays put.

The intimacy and passion and commitment make-up the element of consummate love. All three of the components must be present in the

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relationship. Everyone strives in a romantic relationship for this love. However, it can be very difficult to obtain. Not every relationship seeks consummate love, most are saved for the relationship that you feel you are the most connected to. Attaining this love is very difficult and to keep it is even more challenging. People do not seek this love with every relationship. It is meant for the loved ones that mean the most to the person and for the people that will complete that particular person.

When there is an absence of all three components, it is considered to be non-love. The interpersonal relationships with close friends and casual interactions, which do not expect much more than the role of acquaintances with no physical attraction. Examples of non-love are co-workers, friends of friends, some teachers and professors, the lunch women whom you interact with but are not personal or any personal interest to start a love relationship.

Part II

As children, we believe that if the attention that we desire is met, along with the love, care, dedication, and the commitment that we receive from our parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles; our trust in people, especially towards the ones in which whom we are close to will allow us a sense of stability and encouragement. This stability and encouragement will help shape our lives as children, for the relationships to come. We will be able to handle the different challenges, which we will encounter throughout life; with a high sense or level of autonomy from the nurture, we received within our proximities as children. This demonstrates how nature, our inherent

tendency to bond and nurture, the responsiveness of our caregivers, help to shape social ties

From within our first attachments as children, we will know if our parents are warm and responsive, cold and rejecting, or ambivalent and inconsistent by the way that parents interact with their children. To relate back to the triangular theory of love, for a secure attachment style to take place, children will need to experience a warm and responsive feeling of attachment from their parents and caregivers. Parents whom are cold and rejecting towards their children, and parents whom are inconsistent, their children will experience little or no sense of security from their parents or caregivers. Therefore, children who experience cold and rejecting parenting styles display avoidant attachment, and children who experience inconsistent parenting styles display anxious attachment.

As children because of the nature and nurture, we received because of the types of attachment styles we inherit; our adult love relationships are affected. Nature, being the child inherent needs to bond and belong; and nurture the parental responsiveness to the child, both contributes to the attachment styles children develop as adults within their love relationships.

Secure adults find it easy to get close to others and are unconcerned about becoming too dependent or being, abandoned. Their relationships are, characterized by happiness, trust, and friendship. They seem able to accept and support their partner in spite of faults, and their relationships endure longer. Avoidant adults tend to be less invested in relationships and more likely to leave them. Some seem to be fearful, while others are dismissing.

These types of relationships are, marked by emotional highs and lows. They are also more likely to have brief sexual encounters without love, according to our weeks reading materials. For anxious adults, love is obsession; these adults are less trusting, demand reciprocation, and are generally more possessive and jealous. They may break up repeatedly with the same person. When discussing differences, they often get emotional and angry.

There are three components, which contribute to attachment; they are closeness, care, and commitment. Close physical proximity is the context in which children and adult attachments unfold. The motives are slightly different; however, nevertheless equal in affection. For children there are proximity and security, and for adults there are interest of sexual attraction; therefore affection. In both types of relationships, close physical contact fosters an emotional bond. Proximity brings us together, and the degree to which attachment provides care, including both comfort and emotional support, grows over time.

Over time, commitment makes the safe haven a base of security. With a consistently available, supportive, and reassuring caregiver, one can confidently confront life's everyday challenges.

Most parents are naturally committed to their children. On the other hand, adult relationships are, chosen, and we must develop commitment to our life partners. Closeness, care, and commitment make up the stuff of which attachment and love is made.

Social attachments are important to our personal happiness and have enabled our survival as a species. Childhood attachments and adult romantic

attachments are marked by physical closeness, caring, and long-term commitment. Both nature and nurture are crucial factors in shaping attachment style, and our patterns of relating can change. (Bolt, 2004).

References

1. Sternberg, Robert. Triangle of Love. 1988
2. Sternberg, Robert J. and Barnes, Michael L. The Psychology of Love. 1988.