WHAT IS LOVE—really?

Consider Debbie and Chris, who have been a couple for 10 years. When Chris first laid eyes on Debbie, “I thought, my God, that’s the most beautiful woman I’ve ever seen,” he said later. Today they live in Massachusetts with their 4-year-old daughter.

An ordinary couple? Not quite. Debbie is a lesbian, with no interest in men. The woman she fell in love with, born Christina, is a transgendered person, who always felt she was a man trapped in a woman’s body. After a few years (following Debbie’s pregnancy by an anonymous sperm donor), Chris began exploring having surgical and hormonal gender reassignment—from female to male—a move Debbie at first resisted.

Debbie said her decision to stay with Chris “was a total leap of faith.” She added, “just realizing I had to be with her—with him, this person—was a big turning point. I needed to at least give it a try.”

Said Chris: “I challenge anyone to look at their partner and think about what it would be like if he were a she, or she was a he. It’s an enormous thing to even consider” (Corbett 2001).

This indeed raises an interesting question: Would you still love your lover if he or she changed gender?

But there’s more to this story than its unusual partners. Underlying it are some assumptions about love that are reinforced by the popular culture and the mass media for more conventional relationships: Love at first sight. One true love. Love is blind. Love conquers all. All these are expressions of what’s known as “romantic love.”

Romantic love is, of course, the premise of many movies, songs, books, and, of course, Valentine’s Day cards:

What is love, and what are its two principal forms?

What are the five principal theories on the origins of love?

What are three ways in which love can go awry?

What distinguishes immature love from mature love?

For modern Americans, says anthropologist Charles Lindholm, “romantic love is the highest attainment: We celebrate it in song, our poets and novelists chronicle its pains and pleasures, our movies present love stories that ordinary people attempt to emulate. . . . It ‘makes the world go ’round.’ It is seen as an essential human need” (Lindholm 2002).

Let us examine the workings of love.

- **Books:** Would you buy *A Relationship for a Lifetime: Everything You Need to Know to Create a Love That Lasts?* What about *Love Tune-Ups: 52 Fun Ways to Open Your Heart & Make Sparks Fly*? Or perhaps *The Seven Stories of Love: And How to Choose Your Happy Ending*. These are just three of a never-ending stream of books on the subject of love. An enduring bestseller is *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus*.

- **Popular songs:** Love and romance are frequent themes in contemporary music, from hip-hop to country and western: “I Do Cherish You” by Mark Wills, “I Melt” by Rascal Flatts, “I Swear” by John Michael Montgomery, “It’s Your Love” by Tim McGraw and Faith Hill, “It’s Your Song” by Garth Brooks, “Love You More” by Genuine, and “You’re Still the One” by Shania Twain, which express both the emotional highs and the emotional lows of love.

- **Television:** TV sitcoms wouldn’t be able to keep viewers interested for long in weekly portrayals of the dramatic and painful ups and downs of a real love relationship, but so-called reality shows do focus on the roller coaster of love and the drive to find a partner—for example, “Blind Date,” “Bachelorette,” “Who Wants to Marry My Dad?”, and “Love Cruise.” Romance also develops in such shows as “Dharma and Greg,” “Sex and the City,” and “Miss Match.”

**N THE WEB**

**How Romantic Are You?**

How are you at romance? The following “Romantic Experience Survey” by scholars at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, may offer you important insights: [www.people.umass.edu/mvernon/consent2.htm](http://www.people.umass.edu/mvernon/consent2.htm).

**WHAT’S AHEAD IN THIS CHAPTER**

In this chapter, we consider the concept of soul mate and different definitions of love—particularly romantic love and companionate love. We also describe five theories of love: biochemical, attachment, wheel, triangular, and love styles. We look at what happens when love goes awry—jealousy, unrequited love, and attempts to control.
4.1 Can We Define Love?

MAJOR QUESTION What is love, and what are its two principal forms?

Preview Love is intimacy with, caring for, and commitment to another person. Many people think love is about finding a soul mate—a best friend, confidant, and romantic partner. In other times, places, and cultures, marriages have been made not on the basis of romantic love—intense, passionate love—but according to other customs, such as arranged marriages. Romantic love, which may spring out of sexual desire, can later turn to companionate love, which emphasizes intimacy with, affection for, and commitment to another person.

The lengths to which people will go for love never cease to surprise.

Consider this multicultural case: Sean Blackwell, 27, was a sergeant in the Florida National Guard who had been serving in Iraq since April 2003. On August 17 of that year, with Corporal Brett Dagan, 37, another Florida guardsman, Blackwell participated in a double ceremony in Baghdad in which the soldiers married two Iraqi women (both physicians). Both men were Christians who converted to Islam before they married.

For this triumph of love over culture and religion, Blackwell was given a written reprimand and, narrowly avoiding a court martial, was discharged from the army for dereliction of duty and disobeying orders. The reason: he had taken a break from a foot patrol to marry the woman and had divulged the time and location of the patrol to his future bride and to the Iraqi judge who presided over the ceremony (Associated Press 2003).

Is Love All about Finding a Soul Mate?

When you think about love, what you may well think about—especially if you are in your twenties—is the idea of a soul mate, the companion of your dreams. A soul mate is a person who is temperamentally suited to another—one’s best friend, confidant, and romantic partner. Ninety-four percent of never-marrieds from ages 20 to 29 agree with the statement “When you marry, you want your spouse to be your soul mate first and foremost” (National Marriage Project, cited in Watters 2001: 25).

Is this what love is really all about—finding a soul mate?
Love Actually

Look up the word “love” in the glossary of a marriage and family textbook. The chances are that you won’t find it. Is this because love is so overarching as to defy definition? After all, love can be many things—or even “a many-splendored thing,” as an old song goes. For example, it can be passionate love—intense, exciting, and all-consuming. Or it can be companionate love—comfortable, calm, and reassuring. It can vary depending on whether it is directed toward, or shared with, lovers, family, or friends. We would try to define it as follows: **Love is intimacy with, caring for, and commitment to another person.** It arises from need satisfaction, sexual attraction, and/or personal or kinship ties.

In one study of 184 college students (Knox et al. 1999a), 94% said they had been in love, and over one-third (36%) reported three or more love relationships. Younger students (those 19 and under) were apt to believe in “love at first sight,” with over half subscribing to this belief as opposed to a third of older students. Nearly two-thirds of younger students were also apt to agree that “love conquers all,” compared with 43% of older students. The study found that men and women were more similar than different in their beliefs about love.

We explore this present-day concept further later in the chapter, but first let’s take a look at how other cultures consider love.

Love in Other Times & Places

Love has had, and still has, various meanings and forms of expression in other times, places, and cultures. And passionate love has not always been considered a sound basis for marriage. Consider the following.
Ancient Greece and Rome: The ancient Greeks, and the Romans who followed them, viewed passionate love “as a kind of dangerous illness,” says anthropologist Lindholm (2002). “It could tear respectable young people away from their families and draw them into disadvantageous affairs with inappropriate mates; it could make adults act like fools. Such passions had to be rigorously guarded against.”

Passionate love was sexual love, or eros. More important to the Greeks were altruistic love (agape) and friendship love (phileo). Because Greek social organization was based on patriarchal (patrilineal) descent—a system by which men could make claims to property or assert leadership and by which women could rely on protection and honor—marriage based on passion was viewed as being too unreliable. Therefore, marriages were arranged marriages, with partners determined not by the bride and the groom themselves but by their families. “Marriage arrangements,” says Lindholm, “were negotiated by elders, with an eye to advancing the interests of the clan.”

If passion was removed from the marriage bed, men directed it elsewhere—to women who were slaves or courtesans in the business of providing pleasure and often to young men, both slaves and free men. Sex outside marriage preserved the stability of the family, although it could be disastrous when lust turned to love—for example, when a man sacrificed his honor for the sake of a pursuing a prostitute. (Wives of the propertied classes generally channeled their passions by lavishing attention on their sons.)

Europe in the Middle Ages and Renaissance: The Greek and Roman attitudes about love—and about marriage as a business and social arrangement—influenced Europe in the Middle Ages. Because land and wealth were controlled by kings—occasionally by queens or by other aristocrats—great care was taken to make sure marriages would produce strong alliances of wealth and power. Therefore, kings and princes took their marriage partners from the prominent royal families of other European countries, and merchants and other propertied men “sold” their daughters in arranged marriages to men who paid a bride price.

Between the 7th and the 12th centuries, however, the Roman Catholic church promoted marriage as “a sacrament, administered by the prospective spouses through individual consent” (Goody 1983: 7, in Edlund and Lagerlöf 2002). Then, during the 12th century, there emerged the notion of “courtly love”—a preoccupation with and longing for union with a beloved. This idea of passionate love led to a great deal of art and literature that celebrated the adoration of physical and spiritual beauty, as between a knight or a shepherd and his beloved. Courtly love is what we now call romantic love, an emotionally intense, passionate love in which a person believes that there is love at first sight, that there is only one true love, and that love conquers all. Later, as the revolutions of the 17th and 18th centuries reduced the power of the European aristocracy and the consequent importance of marriage as a political arrangement, romantic love became the preferred basis for binding men and women together for marriage.

Other countries today—India, China, and Japan: India, China, Japan, and parts of Africa have histories of arranged marriage, which continues to be practiced to some degree today. In India, being in love is often still not a necessary condition for marriage, although women in the middle and upper classes are free to marry whomever they choose. Yet many have their marriages arranged by their parents (while reserving the right to reject unsuit-
able potential partners) because they believe that arranged marriages are more stable than love-based marriages. In addition, most Indians avoid public displays of affection, even hand-holding, and some view kissing as obscene. Movies made in India show couples embracing and dancing seductively but not kissing (Sharma 2002).

For centuries, China had a history of arranged marriages. After the communist revolution in 1949, however, people were encouraged to choose their own marriage partners—but with the permission of their bosses. In October 2003, the Chinese government loosened marriage requirements (although same-sex unions remain illegal). In some parts of the country, arranged marriages are still the norm.

In Japan, arranged marriages were common until recently. Partly as a result, ostentatious shows of love have been considered distasteful, and older married men are reluctant to display affection for their wives even in private. “In fact,” says one writer, “etiquette called on a man to jocularly put down his wife to his friends” (Ono 2002). Young lovers, however, are more expressive, and that is influencing the older generation, some of whom are finding ways to tell their spouses that they love them. (Japanese women tend to be less inhibited about expressing their emotions.)

### Romantic Love & Companionate Love

Arranged marriages have not been a prominent feature of marital unions in America, although in the 18th and 19th centuries, parents had much more involvement in decisions about their children’s future spouses. This kind of control may still exist to some extent among American upper-class families, in which wealth and social status are at stake and parents are in a position to deny a child a considerable inheritance (Goode 1982). However, with the expansion in individual economic opportunity, middle-class children became less dependent on their parents, and choosing a marriage partner shifted from having an economic basis to having an emotional one (Murstein 1986; Mintz and Kellogg 1988).
But emotional or romantic love is not confined to the United States and Western culture. Two anthropologists found evidence of passionate love in 147 of 166 societies they studied. They concluded that romantic love is “a human, universal, or at the least a near-universal phenomenon” (Jankowiak and Fisher 1992: 154).

Romantic Love: More Than Lust?

Romantic or passionate love is represented by the frenzied, head-over-heels state of attraction portrayed in Hollywood movies and known as “falling in love”—or is it really “falling in lust”? Lust is sexual arousal, the physical state of getting “turned on.” Lust is distinguished from sexual desire, which is a psychological state. Sexual desire is defined as wanting to obtain a sexual object turned off by overpowering kisses, she advises, “The first thing to remember: When in Doubt Go Slowly. Make that first kiss slow and gentle and easy . . . . The second thing to remember while kissing is to make sure she can still breathe through her nose.”

Snowden also suggests that men need to avoid dry, repeated kisses accompanied by loud smacky sounds. As for French kisses, which involve the tongue, men should avoid the tongue-rapidly-inserted-in-and-out kiss and the thorough tongue exploration of a woman’s mouth. “Any tongue action should involve a give-and-take,” she writes, “with both parties allowed the opportunity for interaction.” French kisses should not be done on the first date.

Many of these same suggestions, of course, apply to women. A turnoff for both sexes is bad breath, as from smoking. Men are also turned off by too much lipstick. People who wear glasses should take them off before kissing. If one person wears braces, the other should avoid pressing too hard against the lips.

WHAT DO YOU THINK? Did you learn anything you didn’t know? Is it possible to have a romantic relationship without much kissing?
to engage in sexual activity not previously available (Regan and Berscheid 1999: 17). Sexual desire, it is hypothesized, is the essential ingredient of romantic or passionate love.

**Companionate Love: Intimacy, Affection, & Commitment**

The white-hot feelings of romantic or passionate love cannot last. Between 6 and 30 months into a relationship, companionate love begins to become the more dominant emotion (Hyde 1986). *Companionate love, calmer than romantic love, emphasizes intimacy with, affection for, and commitment to another person.* Of course, companionate love also is present during the romantic/passionate stage. And some passionate love, although reduced in intensity, can still be present during the later stages of a relationship (Tucker and Aron 1993).

With companionate love, lovers notice each other’s imperfections. They also experience annoyances, boredom, and disappointment (“Is this all there is?”). They may even consider ending the relationship (“I might still find my real soul mate”). But they are also building the reality-based stability and friendship necessary for meaningful, lasting love.

**Friendship & Love**

Can you distinguish between liking and loving somebody? Is it necessary to be friends before you become lovers with someone? *Friendship is defined as an attachment between people. It is the basis for a strong love relationship.* Still, there are differences between friends and lovers.

Among other characteristics, friends enjoy each other’s company, are willing to support and help each other, share feelings and experiences, and feel free to be themselves rather than something they are not (Davis and Todd 1985). Although love relationships are based on friendship, there is more: love involves emotional highs and lows, instability, passion, exclusiveness, and sexual desire—all qualities that are unstable.

**Same-Sex Love**

Although same-sex couples experience love with the same intimacy and intensity as any heterosexual couple, gays and lesbians often feel compelled to hide their true feelings because of perceptions of public disapproval of homosexual relationships. Basically, however, the ways men and women express love as genders are more different than are relationships between heterosexual and homosexual couples. One difference is that lesbian relationships tend to be more enduring and stable than gay relationships (Loewenstein 1985).
The Internet has been a godsend to many people as a way of keeping up family relationships. "E-mail allows my son in New York City and my daughter in Los Angeles to tell me what they consider significant," says Judy Feldman of Omaha. "It makes missing them a little easier" ("Readers love the Net effect" 2000). Online tools such as instant messaging, videoconferencing software, webcams, and Internet phone connections also make it possible to keep long-distance love relationships alive, such as that between Simon Wong, an engineer in California, and Chiunwei Shu, a student in Arizona (McGrane 2000).

In addition, as people move around the country, they are using the Net as a way to find new friends. "I am a 30-year-old straight, Asian male who moved to the San Francisco area three weeks ago," goes one posting under the "activity partner sought" category of the online community Craigslist, "and I am looking for people (straight, gay, male, female, whatever) to hang out with. Love outdoor activities, especially water sports" (Curiel 2001).

But how effective is the Internet as a means of finding the perfect mate? "When it comes to the search for lasting love," says one report, "psychologists are finding that chat rooms, message boards, and especially online dating services may have built-in mechanisms that make any offscreen romance very likely to fail" (Cohen 2001).

Some reasons:

- **Online life and real life aren’t the same:** Psychologists say there is little similarity between “disembodied e-mail consciousness” and a real-life encounter. Therefore, it’s impossible to say whether two people who get along well online will get along in the real world.
- **Online connections can be emotionally intense:** "Most people you encounter, online or off, are those you will not be [emotionally] interested in," says Joseph Walter (quoted in Cohen 2001: D1), a professor at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute who studies online relationships. "What’s different about the Internet is surprise” at how quickly feelings bloom. "The medium sucks you in."
- **Online text communication doesn’t allow nonverbal communication:** Motion and activity—gestures, smiles, eye contact, and other nonverbal communication—are not available with email. Yet it is these nuances that transcend words and that, of course, are missing from online text-based relationships. One Hawaiian man developed an email romance with a woman in Michigan whom he met through an online bulletin board. When they finally met, he discovered that she wore heavy eye mascara—a turnoff to a man who considered himself a hippie.
- **People meeting online showcase their good points:** With a burgeoning online romance, “you get the sensitivity and thoughtfulness,” says Walther. "If you meet [offline] spontaneously, you build your impression from real data, not from an idealized basis. It is nearly impossible for people to live up to such an artificially high, idealized range of expectations” as can be built up by online correspondence.

Still, the Internet does allow the possibility that a couple may develop real rather than false intimacy. "In real life," says psychologist Storm King (quoted in Cohen 2001: D9), "you don’t talk to strangers. Online, you are encouraged to talk to strangers. The Internet lets people have relationships they could not have any other way.”

We return to a discussion of online connections in Chapter 5, “Involvement.”
4.2 The Origins of Love: Some Theories

MAJOR QUESTION What are the five principal theories on the origins of love?

Preview Five theories to explain the origins of love are (1) biochemical theory, (2) attachment theory, (3) wheel theory, (4) triangular theory, and (5) styles of love. We also describe the importance of intimacy.

Does love have a reason, a purpose? Why do we like or love some people more than others? Here we consider five theories of love.

1. Biochemical Theory: “Love Is a Natural High”

When you think about “the chemistry of love,” the following is probably not what you had in mind.

In a recent study, T-shirts worn by men for two consecutive days were placed in boxes. Forty-nine unmarried women were then asked to sniff the boxes and tell which T-shirt they preferred “if they had to smell it all the time.” The results: Women were found to be attracted to the smell of a man who was genetically similar—but not too similar—to their fathers (Jacob et al. 2002). The study’s authors believe that there’s an evolutionary explanation for this. “Mating with someone too similar might lead to inbreeding,” said Martha McClintock (quoted in Gupta 2002). Mating with someone too different “leads to the loss of desirable gene combinations.”

The biochemical theory of love suggests that love results from our biological, chemical, and hormonal origins. Romantic attachments, biologists suggest, are nature’s or evolution’s way of bringing males and females together for the purpose of reproduction and child rearing.

Today the “natural high” of being newly in love—the feeling of being swept away—is as powerful a stimulant as drugs such as amphetamines and cocaine, researchers assert (Walsh 1991; Fisher 1992). This is because the brains of passionate lovers release a substance into the bloodstream called PEA (phenylethylamine), a natural amphetamine, or stimulant. This is why being engaged in passionate love is to feel such tremendous exhilaration and energy: our bodies are awash in chemicals.
As with any stimulant, however, the feelings of euphoria resulting from these chemicals do not last, and as tolerance builds up, more and more PEA is needed to produce the same effect. Thus, some “love-addicted” people may well go from one passionate relationship to another to repeat the exhilaration (Peele and Brodsky 1976).

Critics say that biochemistry alone cannot produce feelings of love, that a sociological-psychological component is also important. This brings us to the other four theories.

2. Attachment Theory: “Closeness Is a Survival Need”

The attachment theory of love suggests that our primary motivation in life “is to be connected with other people—because it is the only security we ever have. Maintaining closeness is a [genuine] survival need” (Johnson and Marano 1994: 34).

Attachment theory grows out of observations about infants’ emotional attachments to their caretakers. “All important love relationships—especially the first ones with parents and later ones with lovers and spouses—are attachments,” say one set of writers (Shaver and Hazan 1988). Studies by Mary Ainsworth and colleagues (1978) suggested that infants have three styles of attachment: secure, avoidant, and anxious/ambivalent. Other researchers (Hazan and Shaver 1987; Shaver and Hazan 1988; Brennan and Shaver 1995) found that these styles are reflected in adult love, as follows:

Secure

Secure adults find it not difficult to become friendly or intimate with others. They don’t resist being dependent on others or having others depend on them, and they often don’t worry about being either neglected (or abandoned) or being emotionally crowded by another person.

Avoidant

Avoidant adults are uneasy with being close to other people and with trusting and being dependent on them. They are nervous when others become too friendly or intimate, and their lovers often want more intimacy than they do.

Anxious/Ambivalent

These adults feel that others aren’t as intimate as they would like. They are anxious that their partners don’t really love them or that they won’t stay. They want more close connection with their lovers, which sometimes has the opposite effect and scares them away.

For secure adults, relationships lasted an average of 10 years; for avoidant adults, 6 years; and for anxious/ambivalent adults, 5 years.

Critics say that the studies on which attachment theory is based suffered from flaws in methodology, using samples that were too small, were not random enough, and involved dysfunctional families.
3. Wheel Theory: The Four Stages of Love

The wheel theory of love suggests that love develops and is maintained through four stages: (1) rapport, (2) self-revelation, (3) mutual dependency, and (4) intimacy need fulfillment. The wheel theory, which was proposed by sociologist Ira Reiss (1960; Reiss and Lee 1988), is represented in the illustration at right. (See Panel 4.1.) Like a rolling wheel, these stages may be repeated many times, producing a deepening relationship, or the wheel may stop, as in a short relationship.

Let us consider the four stages.

Stage 1: Rapport

When you first meet someone, you may quickly establish rapport, the feeling of ease that makes you comfortable with each other. Feelings of rapport are enhanced by similarities in social, cultural, and educational background and upbringing. Generally, we are able to communicate better and are more at ease with people of similar background and experience, who share our ideas about what constitutes appropriate social roles for men and women.

What about the notion that opposites attract? It’s suggested that some people with different—but complementary—personalities are attracted to each other (Winch et al. 1954). Also, as with the Florida National Guardsmen marrying Iraqi women, described at the beginning of this chapter, people from all kinds of ethnic, racial, religious, age, and socioeconomic groups fall in love with each other. Even so, some researchers believe that for such basic differences to be overcome, a couple must share similar social values (Murstein 1971).

Stage 2: Self-Revelation

Rapport leads to self-revelation, the disclosure of personal feelings—the discussion of your hopes, fears, and ambitions. Obviously, people who communicate easily and feel comfortable with each other will want to know about each other. Personal disclosures may also lead to sexual activities.

Here again, similarities in social, ethnic, racial, and age background may affect our willingness to disclose personal information, since we tend to distrust people different from ourselves. In fact, people often make quick assessments of another person’s possibility as a lover on the basis of such differences (Newman 1995).

Stage 3: Mutual Dependency

Self-revelation leads to mutual dependency, the sharing of pleasures, ideas, humor, and sexual desires. That is, you and your partner become a couple. The two of you begin to do together activities that you don’t want to do alone, such as taking walks, going to the movies, going to sleep, and taking a weekend trip. Your social and cultural backgrounds, age, values, and the like are important here, since they affect the kind of mutual behaviors you agree are acceptable.
Stage 4: Intimacy Need Fulfillment

In this final stage, you and your partner make mutual decisions, reinforce each other’s goals, offer sympathy and support, and help each other satisfy deeper needs. That is, the relationship now has developed into a consistent pattern of mutual dependence and exchange of needs. As rapport increases, self-revelation and mutual dependence deepen.

As long as the wheel rolls forward, Reiss suggests, love continues to develop. However, if one or more of the processes diminish, the wheel may roll backward—love no longer develops, or it is reduced.

4. Triangular Theory: Toward Consummate Love

The triangular theory of love emphasizes three important elements of love that interact with one another: intimacy, passion, and decision/commitment. This theory was developed by Robert Sternberg et al. (1986, 1988).

The Three Components of the Triangle

The three components can be thought of as the corners of a triangle. (See Panel 4.2.)

- **Intimacy:** This includes feelings that create the experience of warmth and bonding in a loving relationship, such as sharing one’s self, giving emotional support, and being able to communicate with one’s partner.

- **Passion:** This includes romance, physical attraction, and sexuality. Passion may be driven by the desire to be sexually fulfilled, but it may also stem from the wish to increase one’s self-esteem and to dominate or be subordinate to one’s partner.

- **Decision/commitment:** In the short term, this component embodies one’s decision (perhaps unconsciously) to love someone. In the long term, it embodies the commitment to love that person over time.

The Different Combinations of Love

A love relationship can vary in its combinations of intimacy, passion, and decision/commitment, Sternberg suggests. At one end is *nonlove*, when all elements are missing from a relationship between two people. The combination everyone dreams about, of course, is the perfect relationship known as *consummate love*, when you and your partner’s intimacy, passion, and decision/commitment are of the same intensity. Although it’s possible to achieve a state of consummate love in the short term, this state is difficult to sustain in the long run, since the components change over time, and each element must be nourished separately.

In between nonlove and consummate love are six other possible combinations, as follows. As you might guess, the more mismatched a couple is on the three elements previously listed, the more dissatisfied both will be with their relationship.
Liking—intimacy only: This is the love of good friends. There is no passion or commitment.

Romantic love—intimacy with passion: This is love without commitment, although the commitment can develop over time.

Infatuation—passion only: This is “love at first sight,” with overwhelming emotional involvement. Rarely are both people infatuated at the same time.

Fatuous love—passion and commitment: This is foolish love, which may go from meeting to marriage, say, with blinding speed but without intimate involvement.

Empty love—commitment only: This is love in which passion may have faded so that only commitment remains, though usually not for long if there is no intimacy.

Companionate love—intimacy and commitment: This is love in which passion has diminished. Dissatisfied partners may seek passion in an affair with a third person.

The triangular theory of love has been criticized for its methodology and on the grounds that passion, intimacy, and commitment often overlap. One study, for example, found that the triangular theory classification “is meaningfully related to individuals’ similarity judgments” but that data did not provide strong support for the triangular theory (Hassebrauck and Buhl 1996).

5. Styles of Love: Lee’s Six Kinds of Relationships

Though not really considered a theory, Lee’s six styles of love suggests there are six basic styles of loving: (1) love of beauty and the physical, or eros; (2) obsessive love, or mania; (3) playful love, or ludus; (4) companionate love, or storge; (5) altruistic love, or agape; and (6) practical love, or pragma. This approach was formed by Canadian sociologist John Alan Lee (1973, 1988), who compiled 4,000 statements about love from several hundred works of fiction and nonfiction, then used them to create a questionnaire that he administered to people in Canada and Great Britain. From their responses, he constructed his six styles of love. Let’s consider these.

Love of Beauty & the Physical: Eros

Pronounced “air-ros,” eros is the love of beauty; this love style is characterized by intense emotional attachment and powerful sexual feelings. Lovers of this type are attracted to beauty or to powerful physical attraction and so are inclined to feel “love at first sight.” Examples of this white-hot kind of love abound in romance novels and in other literature (as in Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet).
Obsessive Love: Mania

Pronounced “may-nee-u,” the Greek word for “madness,” *mania* is obsessive love; this love style consists of strong sexual attraction and emotional intensity, extreme jealousy, and mood swings alternating between ecstasy and despair. Roller-coaster manic love may stem from low self-esteem. When such a relationship ends, it sometimes leads to crimes of passion or suicide.

Playful Love: Ludus

Pronounced “lewd-us,” *ludus* is casual and carefree. This love style focuses on sex as recreation, the enjoyment of many sexual partners rather than concentrating on one serious relationship. This is perhaps the kind of love endorsed by such magazines as *Playboy*.

Companionate Love: Storge

Pronounced “stor-gay,” *storge* is an affectionate, peaceful, and companionate kind of love. It is sometimes called *conjugal love*. This kind of love often frequently begins with shared activities and friendship and then gradually, over time, develops into love. Because of mutual trust, lovers of this type usually don’t go through great swings of euphoria and depression, and they enjoy regular domestic activity.

Altruistic Love: Agape

Pronounced “ah-gah-pay,” *agape* is altruistic love—unselfish, self-sacrificing love. This love style describes those who attempt to fulfill others’ needs even at the expense of their own. Taken to extremes, this love style
can be masochistic, as when one is a long-suffering partner of someone who is addicted or is a criminal.

**Practical Love: Pragma**

Pronounced “prag-ma,” *pragma* is practical love, the type of love that makes a rational assessment of a potential partner’s positives and negatives. A practical lover looks for compatibility in such things as educational and religious backgrounds. Practical partners look out for each other, but they are also practical about separating, remaining friendly, for example, for the sake of children.

**Trying to Quantify Love: Is Intimacy the Foundation of Loving Relationships?**

How realistic are theoretical constructs such as Lee’s unidimensional six styles and Sternberg’s multidimensional triangle? Many such theories represent attempts to clarify and measure love, in part to aid in relationship therapy.

In one study (Hook et al. 2003), researchers focused on one aspect—the concept of intimacy—as representing the crux, or essence, of loving relationships and as something that might be quantified. In defining intimacy (from a Western, heterosexual love viewpoint), the researchers identified it as consisting of (1) the presence of love and affection, (2) the knowledge that someone loves and approves of us (that is, personal validation), (3) being secure in the belief that one can disclose personal secrets (that is, trust), and (4) willingness to reveal one’s self (self-disclosure).

Using three popular scales (Miller Social Intimacy Scale, Personal Assessment of Intimacy in Relationships Scale, and the Fear of Intimacy Scale) in a study of 360 undergraduate students, the scholars found that women scored higher than men did on intimacy factors (2) and (3) (Hook et al. 2003). In other words, compared with men, women “place more emphasis on love, affection, the expression of warm feelings, . . . and emotional sharing” in relationships. This does not mean that men do not experience or value intimacy, only, perhaps, that “researchers may not be accurately hearing or measuring the male voice of intimacy.” Clearly, more investigation is required.
4.3 The Dark Face of Love: Jealousy, Unrequited Love, & Attempts to Control

MAJOR QUESTION What are three ways in which love can go awry?

Preview Love, particularly passionate love, can take negative forms. One threat is jealousy, which may be either suspicious or reactive. Another is unrequited love—love that is not returned. A third threat is when one person tries to control the behavior of another, as through manipulation, stalking, or violence.

You go to a party with your lover, who then spends a lot of time talking to someone else. Afterward, you have a big fight about it. What’s going on here? Basically, you feel that something is threatening your relationship—that is, you’re jealous. But jealousy is not the only way in which love can go awry; others are unrequited love and various attempts to control the partner’s behavior.

Jealousy: The Green-Eyed Monster

Jealousy may be defined as a usually intolerant or even hostile emotional response to a real or imagined threat to a love relationship. The feeling of jealousy (what Shakespeare called the “green-eyed monster”) can range from uncertainty, sadness, and resentment all the way up to great emotional pain and murderous rage—the stuff behind newspaper headlines, movies, and great literature. According to one nationwide study, marriage therapists identified jealousy as a problem in one-third of the couples they met with in the course of therapy (Pines 1992).

Jealousy: How It Works

It’s important to understand jealousy not only because its pain can make us feel out of control and even lead to violence (Burcky et al. 1988; Laner 1990; Riggs 1993). We also need to understand it so that we learn how it can either solidify or destroy a relationship. Consider two aspects:

► Jealousy sets boundaries for a relationship: If jealousy has a purpose, it’s been suggested, that purpose is to set boundaries to what one feels is an important relationship (Reiss 1980). It determines the extent to which outsiders are permitted to enter the relationship. If a line is crossed, this can evoke the painful feelings of jealousy, such as anxiety and anger. Each couple determines its own boundaries. Jealousy is most intense in committed, sexually exclusive relationships, such as marriages.
Jealousy may be either suspicious or reactive: Jealousy may be **suspicious jealousy**, occurring when there is no evidence or only ambiguous evidence for suspecting a partner is involved with someone else (Bringle and Buunk 1991). This tends to occur when a relationship is in its early phase. (“Just dropping by to see if you’re okay” might actually be an excuse for spying.) Or it might be **reactive jealousy**, when evidence is revealed of a past, present, or anticipated relationship with another person. This kind usually causes the most intense kind of jealousy because it reveals the breach of trust. (It can cause one to endlessly question the partner about the circumstances of past errands or trips.)

**Characteristics of Jealousy**

Research has turned up some interesting characteristics of jealousy:

- **Men are jealous about sex, women about intimacy**: Men are more apt to be jealous when they fear their partner is sexually involved with someone else. Women are more apt to be jealous when their partners become involved in an emotional relationship (Buss et al. 1992; Harris and Christenfeld 1996). Women are most jealous when they think their man is involved both emotionally and physically with someone else (White 1981).

- **Men and women generally have different reactions**: Both genders respond to jealousy with anger, but men are more apt to express it. Indeed, men may act out violently by injuring or even killing their partners. Women are more apt to suppress anger and be depressed. This may have to do with women having less power than men, with cultural prohibitions on women expressing anger, and with men’s being allowed greater sexual freedom (Reiss 1980). Instead of acting violently by trying to hurt their lovers, women are more likely to do damage to property, such as vandalizing their partner’s car (Tuller 1994).

- **Jealous people are more apt to be insecure people**: People who are insecure in their love relationship—who depend on the partner for self-esteem and feel they have few alternatives—are more likely to feel jealous (Hansel 1985; Radecki Bush et al. 1988). People with low self-esteem are also more apt to have a problem with jealousy (Salovey and Rodin 1985; Buunk 1991; Cano and O’Leary 1997). Even if they aren’t happy, jealous people feel strongly bound to their mates. Relationships of short duration (under a year) are more vulnerable to jealousy than those of long duration (over a year), according to a study of 185 college students (Knox et al. 1999b). The study also found that talking to or about a previous partner were the conditions most likely to elicit jealousy.

- **Jealousy isn’t always just about sex, but it often is**: Some jealous people are upset when their partners spend time not just with suspected lovers but also with family or when they devote time to special interests (Brehm 1992). Interestingly, however, people who are very jealous often themselves have been unfaithful (Salovey and Rodin 1985; White and Mullen 1989).

- **Jealousy is more prevalent in some cultures than others**: Cultures that value individual property rights, such as the United States, tend to engender more jealousy (Hupka et al. 1985). Sexually liberal countries such as Germany and the Netherlands foster less jealousy (Buunk et al. 1996).
Unrequited Love: When Love Is Not Returned

Unrequited love, love that is not returned, is a common experience, and it can be as upsetting for the person doing the rejecting as it is for the one rejected (Baumeister et al. 1993). One survey found that about 75% of the respondents had experienced unrequited love and about 20% were then currently experiencing it (Aron et al. 1998). Two reasons for unrequited love are the following (Baumeister and Wotman 1992).

More Attractive Rejects Less Attractive

Because people who date and marry tend to be of similar attractiveness (Kipnis 2003), the unrequited lover may be rejected because of physical appearance. This can be especially painful to the rejected person because it is something that cannot be changed. People in this situation might try to insist that they have much more to offer than just good looks, but to no avail.

Less Serious Rejects More Serious

One person might want to “take the relationship to the next level,” a more serious one, when the other person is not ready. This can be distressful not only for the rejected but also for the rejecter, who is faced with somehow ending the relationship tactfully.

Controlling: Trying to Control the Love Object

A third way in which love goes awry is when one person tries to control the behavior of the other, using tactics ranging from the manipulative to the violent.

Manipulation: From Charm to Threats

Controllers have a whole bag of tricks, ranging from charm, flattery, coaxing, and cajoling to sulking, guilt-tripping, humiliating, insulting, and threatening (Clarke 1990). Using love with guilt is a very common technique, as in “If you really loved me, you would . . .” (have sex now, stop seeing friends, quit school to take care of the kids, and so on).

Stalking: Unwanted Following

Stalking is repeatedly pursuing and frequently harassing another person. Most objects of stalking are women—one in 12 has been stalked at some point—and most stalkers are men (Tjaden and Thoennes 1998). Nevertheless, one out of 45 men has been stalked at some time as well. Half the states have enacted antistalking laws, although their effectiveness is debatable.

Violence: Emotional or Physical Abuse

We devote another chapter (Chapter 13, “Crises”) to the subject of violence. Here, let us simply say that the worst kind of misguided love is that which uses love to rationalize emotional and physical abuse. This may range from sarcasm, sexual jokes, insults, and withholding of affection to shoving, hitting, and outright beatings (often said to be “for your own good”).
4.4 How Can You Tell Whether It’s Meaningful Love?

MAJOR QUESTION What distinguishes immature love from mature love?

Preview Love may be immature, characterized by passionate thinking, feeling, and behavior. Or it may be mature, consisting of energy, self-esteem, kindness, and the like.

In considering whether you are an ideal candidate for another person’s love, you might fret about how you look. That is certainly something to consider. What most adults between ages 30 and 54, for example, say they look for in a mate, beyond first impressions, are good grooming, good health, and similar age.

But Sol Gordon, who is a North Carolina psychologist and sex educator and the author of 22 books, suggests that there are other qualities you need to consider about yourself to determine whether you’re a good candidate for love (Gordon, reported in Ganahl 2002a, 2002b):

► **Energy:** You’re not tired. You have energy for the things you want to do. (Passionate love is exhausting.)

► **Meaning:** You’re not searching for the meaning of life. You’re finding meaning in everyday occurrences.

► **Self-esteem:** You appreciate your own worth. You don’t need affirmation from others to feel valued.

► **No ghosts:** Bad thoughts don’t trouble you unduly. You don’t allow “ghosts” of the past to haunt you.

► **Kindness:** You’re kind to everyone, not just to your partner. (In Buddhism, kindness is the most important part of marriage.)

All these qualities can be summarized in a single word: *maturity*. With maturity, one becomes a candidate for the kind of love—mature love—that, Gordon suggests, is what one should strive for.
Immature versus Mature Love

“If people think they’re in love, they probably are,” says Gordon (quoted in Ganahl 2002a). “But there’s love suitable for a long-term relationship, and love that isn’t.” Since many people mistake one for the other, that can lead to disaster (as measured by the sky-high divorce rate in the United States—two-thirds of all first marriages). Immature love is passionate or romantic love. Mature love resembles companionate love. Let’s consider these.

Immature Love

“People should not decide to get married based only on love or sex,” Gordon emphasizes. Love and sex are what immature love is mainly about, the kind of passionate or romantic love seen in teenage relationships, although many adults also fall into this trap. It is love characterized by passionate ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving, as follows (Hatfield and Sprecher 1986):

► **Passionate thinking:** You persistently think about the beloved, have trouble concentrating on other matters, and idealize the other’s qualities, such as looks. As the cliché goes, “I can’t get you out of my mind!”

► **Passionate feeling:** You are physically aroused by the beloved, always want to be with him or her, and are upset when your relationship is not going smoothly. In another cliché, “I can’t live without you!”

► **Passionate behavior:** You become obsessed, studying your beloved’s behavior, trying to be a servant to him or her; striving to learn what your beloved thinks of you. Clichés include “I would do anything for you” and “Are you thinking about me?”

Immature lovers have unrealistic expectations about a new relationship. They don’t allow a friendship to develop first. They are attracted to their
partner’s energy or personality without determining whether he or she is a caring and responsible person. They may equate jealousy and torment with love, even allow physical abuse (“I know he beats me up, but I love him!”). If they break up, they may feel unworthy.

Mature Love

With mature love, people no longer believe the clichés that tell us “love is blind” and “love conquers all.” You have determined how important romantic images of love or torrid images of sex are to you. You possess the qualities mentioned above—energy, self-esteem, kindness, and the like. You have learned much about who you are and have traveled far on your voyage of self-discovery and the search for the meaning of life. You have found your own voice and your own values, even perhaps discovered that you prefer to remain single or to have nonsexual companionship. You realize that there are many ways to perceive love.

And if you are seeking a permanent union with someone else, you should also have taken a realistic look at your partner. You have asked whether he or she is . . .

► Trustworthy and stable: Is your partner loyal, able to handle conflicts maturely, not violently angry or frequently moody, and good parent material (if having children is important to you)?

► Caring and kind: Does your lover show love and respect for you? Do you like yourself more—that is, have more self-esteem—when you’re with this person?

► Someone you actually LIKE: Do you enjoy your partner? Can you be friends and work through inevitable disappointments and unmet expectations about love and sex?

The Concept of Soul Mate Revisited

Much about love is irrational. But it need not be totally irrational. Once the emotional high of the initial passion is past, the greatest rewards of love come from approaching it rationally—that is, from taking the steps we described to achieve mature love.

Does this mean, then, that you could have a soul mate—a best friend, confidant, and romantic partner? Provided that the two of you have committed to a relationship based on reality, it seems so. Indeed, it’s possible that it could be life-long.

And once mature love is realized, says Gordon (in Ganahl 2002b), “amazing things can happen”:

• Both of you will experience high levels of energy for everything you want to do.
• Your work and important tasks will not be neglected.
• You will feel kindly toward each other and almost everyone else in your sphere.
• You will discover your life’s priorities.
• You will be committed to working out your differences.
### Self-Assessment: How Capable Are You of Being Intimate?

Determine how closely each statement describes your feelings. Circle the number in the appropriate column.

#### Agree and Disagree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Mildly Disagree</th>
<th>Equally</th>
<th>Mildly Agree</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. I like to share my feelings with others.  
2. I like to feel close to other people.  
3. I like to listen to other people talk about their feelings.  
4. I am concerned with rejection in my expression of feelings to others.  
5. I’m concerned with being dominated in a close relationship with another.  
6. I’m often anxious about my own acceptance in a close relationship.  
7. I’m concerned that I trust other people too much.  
8. Expression of emotion makes me feel close to another person.  
9. I do not want to express feelings that would hurt another person.  
10. I am overly critical of people in a close relationship.  
11. I want to feel close to people to whom I am attracted.  
12. I tend to reveal my deepest feelings to other people.  
13. I’m afraid to talk about my sexual feelings with a person in whom I’m very interested.  
14. I want to be close to a person who is attracted to me.  
15. I would not become too close because it involves conflict.  
16. I seek out close relationships with people to whom I am attracted.  
17. When people become close, they tend not to listen to each other.  
18. Intimate relationships bring me great satisfaction.  
19. I search for close intimate relationships.  
20. It is important to me to form close relationships.  
21. I do not need to share my feelings and thoughts with others.  
22. When I become very close to another person, I am likely to see things that are hard for me to accept.  
23. I tend to accept most things about people with whom I share a close relationship.  
24. I defend my personal space so others do not come too close.  
25. I tend to distrust people who are concerned with closeness and intimacy.  
26. I have concerns about losing my individuality in close relationships.  
27. I have concerns about giving up control if I enter into a really intimate relationship.  
28. Being honest and open with another person makes me feel closer to that person.  
29. If I were another person, I would be interested in getting to know me.  
30. I become close only to people with whom I share common interests.  
31. Revealing secrets about my sex life makes me feel close to others.  
32. Generally, I can feel just as close to someone of the same sex as to someone of the other sex.
33. When another person is physically attracted to me, I usually want to become more intimate.  
34. I have difficulty being intimate with more than one person.  
35. Being open and intimate with another person usually makes me feel good.  
36. I usually can see another person’s point of view.  
37. I want to be sure that I am in good control of myself before I attempt to become intimate with another person.  
38. I resist intimacy.  
39. Stories of interpersonal relationships tend to affect me.  
40. Undressing with members of a group increases my feelings of intimacy.  
41. I try to trust and be close to others.  
42. I think that people who want to become intimate have hidden reasons for wanting closeness.  
43. When I become intimate with another person, the possibility of my being manipulated is increased.  
44. I am generally a secretive person.  
45. I feel that sex and intimacy are the same, and one cannot exist without the other.  
46. I can be intimate only in a physical relationship.  
47. The demands placed on me by those with whom I have intimate relationships often inhibit my own satisfaction.  
48. I would compromise to maintain an intimate relationship.  
49. When I am physically attracted to another, I usually want to become intimate with the person.  
50. I understand and accept that intimacy leads to bad feelings as well as good feelings.

**Scoring**

To calculate your total score, add up the items you circled. Find the score on the table below that is closest to your total score.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>150</td>
<td>Significantly below average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>161</td>
<td>Somewhat below average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>172</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>183</td>
<td>Somewhat above average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>194</td>
<td>Significantly above average</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Key Terms Used in This Chapter**

- agape, p. 118
- arranged marriage, p. 108
- attachment theory, p. 114
- biochemical theory, p. 113
- companionate love, p. 111
- eros, p. 117
- friendship, p. 111
- immature love, p. 124
- jealousy, p. 120
- Lee’s six styles of love, p. 117
- love, p. 107
- ludus, p. 118
- mania, p. 118
- mature love, p. 124
- pragma, p. 119
- reactive jealousy, p. 121
- romantic love, p. 108
- soul mate, p. 106
- stalking, p. 122
- storge, p. 118
- suspicious jealousy, p. 121
- triangular theory, p. 116
- unrequited love, p. 122
- wheel theory, p. 115
The meaning of love is subjective and can vary according to time, place, and culture. In ancient Greece and Rome, love was believed to have a negative impact on people's behavior. This passionate or sexual love had to be controlled and guarded against.

More important to the Greeks were altruistic love (agape) and friendship love (phileo). Passionate love was seen as unreliable; and as a result, marriages were arranged marriages with partners determined not by the bride and groom themselves but by their families.

These views on arranged marriage influenced Europe in the Middle Ages, where great care was taken to make sure marriages would produce strong alliances of wealth and power.

Between the 7th and 12th centuries, the Roman Catholic Church promoted marriage as a sacrament. The notion of courtly love became more and more accepted in society. By the end of the 18th century, romantic love became the preferred basis for binding men and women together in marriage.

Arranged marriages still exist in many parts of the world. Cultures vary greatly in their views on affection and how it should or should not be shown.

As the United States became further industrialized, jobs were created outside of the home, and children became less economically dependent and controlled by their parents' wishes. Choosing a marriage partner shifted from having an economic basis to an emotional one.

Love can have both a physical state, referred to as lust or sexual arousal, and a psychological state, or sexual desire. Romantic or passionate love may evolve into companionate love, which is seen as calmer than romantic love, with a greater emphasis on intimacy, affection, and commitment to another person.

Friendship, an attachment between people, is the foundation for a strong love relationship. Still, there are differences between friends and lovers. Friends enjoy each other's company, are willing to support and help each other, share feelings and experiences, and feel free to be themselves rather than something they are not. Love involves emotional highs and lows, instability, passion, exclusiveness, and sexual desire—all qualities that are unstable.

Although same-sex couples experience love with the same intimacy and intensity as any heterosexual couple, the ways men and women express love as genders are more different than relationships between heterosexual and homosexual couples. One difference is that lesbian relationships tend to be more enduring and stable than those in gay relationships.

4.2 The Origins of Love: Some Theories

Theories on the origin of love include the following: The biochemical theory suggests that love results from our biological, chemical, and hormonal makeup. The attachment theory suggests our primary motivation in life is to be connected with other people for security. The wheel theory of love suggests that love develops and is maintained through four stages: (1) rapport, (2) self-revelation, (3) mutual dependency, and (4) intimacy need fulfillment. The triangular theory of love emphasizes three important elements of love that interact with one another: intimacy, passion, and decision/commitment. Another approach by Lee suggests that there are six styles of loving: eros, or love of beauty and the physical; mania, or obsessive love; ludus, or playful love; storge, or companionate love; agape, or altruistic love; and pragma, or practical love.

4.3 The Dark Face of Love: Jealousy, Unrequited Love, & Attempts to Control

Although love is normally seen as a positive thing, it can take negative forms. Jealousy occurs when you feel that something is threatening your relationship; it is a negative response to a real or imagined threat to a love relationship. It also serves to establish boundaries for the relationship. Men tend to be jealous about sex, women about intimacy. Men may react in a violent way; women are more apt to suppress their anger and become depressed. Jealousy people tend to be insecure people. Jealousy may frequently be about sex. Jealously tends to be more common in cultures that value individual property rights.
Unrequited love, love that is not returned, is also a common negative aspect of love. It may occur because the more attractive person rejects the less attractive person or because the less serious person rejects the more serious person.

Love can also go awry as a result of one person trying to control the behavior of the other. The attempts to control can include manipulation, stalking, and emotional and physical abuse.

### 4.4 How Can You Tell Whether It’s Meaningful Love?

- Maturity in a love relationship is characterized by energy, meaning, self-esteem, no ghosts, and kindness. Mature love resembles companionate love, whereas immature love is passionate or romantic love. Immature lovers tend to have unrealistic expectations about a new relationship and frequently don’t allow a friendship to develop first.

- In meaningful love, partners tend to be trustworthy and stable, caring and kind, and likeable.

### Take It to the Net

Among the Internet resources on love are the following:

- **Heartchoice.com.** Website run by sociologists David Knox and Carolyn Schacht; offers the “Rightmate Relationship Checkup” survey.
  
  http://heartchoice.com

- **Love Shack.** An “interpersonal relationship assistance center.” Click on “Friends and Lovers” and categories under romantic.
  
  www.loveshack.org

- **The Loving Center.** Information on tantric and conscious loving. Click on “Conscious Loving.”
  
  www.consciouslovingtlc.com

- **Trinity University’s Family Page.** Various categories of information on love, marriage, and family.
  
  www.trinity.edu/~mkearl/family.html