Love Relationships

I don’t want to live—I want to love first and live incidentally.

—Zelda Fitzgerald
Love is a compelling emotion. Thirty-one percent of 12,785 undergraduates reported that if they were “really in love,” they would marry someone they had known for only a short time (Hall & Knox, 2019). Abundant research documents the positive effects of love promoting one’s mental (Stanton & Campbell, 2014), physical (Rauer et al., 2014) and marital well-being (Reis et al., 2014). In a survey of 2,000 U. S. adults, “finding love” was of the utmost importance—78% of respondents reported that it was more important than being wealthy (Smith & Loehrke, 2018).

In contrast to the benefits of love, when love goes awry, data confirm that one’s mental health is at risk in terms of severe depression, suicide ideation, and suicide attempts (Soller, 2014). Watkins and Beckmeyer (2018) noted that there is stress, anxiety, and depression associated with wanting a romantic relationship and being unable to achieve or sustain it. There are similar deteriorations in one’s physiological health, such as increased blood pressure and mortality. When partners have lived together for 50 plus years, and one dies, the other has a shortened life span.

In this chapter, we examine the various meanings of love, styles, and theories. Along the way we ask the basic question about how you fall in love. We begin by reviewing the various meanings we attribute to love.

THE MEANINGS OF LOVE TODAY

A common class exercise among professors who teach marriage and the family is to randomly ask class members to identify one word they most closely associate with love. Invariably, students identify different words—commitment, feeling, trust, altruism—suggesting great variability in the way we think about love. Lomas (2018) regarded love as polysemous, or something with multiple meanings, and examined its nature and presence across the world’s cultures reflected in published and Internet sources. He found 609 words associated with “love” which he grouped into fourteen categories representing fourteen “flavors” of love. Examples included familial love, passionate love, compassionate love, possessive love, and star-crossed love. Still other categories included experiential love, aesthetic love, playful love, and momentary love. Heshmati et al. (2019) surveyed 495 adults to identify common behavioral references to the experience of feeling loved. Results revealed both romantic and nonromantic contexts. Love can be shown when someone is compassionate toward you in a moment of crisis, when a child snuggles up next to you, or when your pet is happy to see you.

Two major meanings of love are those of it being romantic or realistic.

Romantic Love

Also referred to as passionate love, romantic love may be described as “A state of intense longing for the union with another” (Hatfield et al., 2012). This type of love is not unique to Western society but is a universal emotion (p. 154). Love is also viewed as critical for beginning a marriage but less important for maintaining it (Sprecher & Hatfield, 2017).

And when I talk about love, I’m talking about something that’s great, though, brother. I’m talking about something that will sustain you.

Cornel West, American philosopher
Conjugal or Realistic Love

Conjugal love, also known as realistic love, is the love between married people characterized by companionship, calmness, comfort, and security. Conjugal love is in contrast to romantic love, which is characterized by excitement and passion. Stanik et al. (2013) interviewed 146 couples who had been married from three to 25 years and confirmed a decrease in the intensity of love feelings across time. Hence, romantic love which may develop quickly from a love at first sight experience gradually becomes conjugal or realistic love.

Love may be described as existing on a continuum from romanticism to realism (refer to the Self-Assessment on Love Attitudes on page 372).

For some people, love is romantic; for others, it is realistic. Romantic love, said to have appeared in all human groups at all times in human history (Berscheid, 2010), is characterized in modern America by such beliefs as “love at first sight,” “one true love,” and “love conquers all.” Regarding love at first sight, 36% of 2,971 undergraduate males and 24% of 9,812 undergraduate females reported that they had experienced love at first sight (Hall & Knox, 2019). One explanation for men falling in love more quickly than women is that from a biological and evolutionary perspective, men must be visually attracted to young, healthy females to impregnate them. This biologically-based reproductive attraction is labeled and interpreted as a love attraction so that the male feels immediately drawn to the female. Zsok et al. (2017) found that “love at first sight” is not love but an attraction that is labeled as love. In regard to love at first sight, Barelds and Barelds-Dijkstra (2007) studied the relationships of 137 married couples or cohabitants and found that the relationship quality of those who fell in love at first sight was similar to that of those who came to know each other more gradually. Huston et al. (2001) found that, after two years of marriage, the couples who had fallen in love more slowly were just as happy as couples who fell in love at first sight.

An openness to falling in love and developing an intimate relationship is Erik Erikson’s sixth stage of psychosocial development. He noted that between the ages of 19 and 40, most individuals move from “isolation to intimacy,” wherein they seek to establish committed loving relationships. Failure to do so leaves one vulnerable to loneliness and depression.

CULTURE AND DIVERSITY

The expectation for feeling chemistry in a relationship is relatively high. One third of 5,509 Match.com (2017) respondents reported that they expected to feel romantic chemistry on the first date.

Lust and Infatuation

Lust is about sexual desire and is biologically driven. The word infatuation comes from the same root word as fatuous, meaning “silly” or “foolish,” and refers to a state of passion or attraction that is not based on reason. Infatuation is characterized by euphoria (Langeslag et al., 2013) and by the tendency to idealize the love partner. People who are infatuated magnify their lovers’ positive qualities by saying, for example, “My partner is always happy,” and overlook or minimize their negative

Conjugal love: the love between married people characterized by companionship, calmness, comfort, and security.
Using Your Heart or Your Head?

Lovers are frequently confronted with the need to make decisions about their relationships, but they are divided on whether to let their heart or their head rule in such decisions. We asked students in our classes to fill in the details about deciding with their heart or their head. Some of their answers follow:

**Heart**

Those who relied on their hearts for making decisions—women more than men—felt that emotions were more important than logic and that listening to their heart made them happier. One sophomore female said:

> In deciding on a partner, my heart knows what I want, what would make me most happy. My head tells me what is best for me. But I would rather have something that makes me happy than something that is good for me.

**Head**

Some undergraduates make relationship choices based on their head as some of the following comments show:

> In deciding on a mate, I feel my head should rule because you have to choose someone that you can get along with after the new wears off. If you follow your heart solely, you may not look deep enough into a person to see what it is that you really like. Is it just a pretty face or a nice body? Or is it deeper than that, such as common interests and values? The "heart" sometimes can fog up this picture of the true person and distort reality into a fairy tale.

Some individuals feel that both the head and the heart should rule when making relationship decisions.

> When you really love someone, your heart rules in most of the situations. But if you don't keep your head in some matters, then you risk losing the love that you feel in your heart. I think that we should find a way to let our heads and hearts work together.

> There is an adage, "Don't wait until you find the person you can live with; wait and find the person that you can't live without!" In your own decisions you might consider the relative merits of listening to your heart or head and moving forward recognizing there is not one "right" answer for all individuals on all issues.

These strategies help to ensure that the relationship does not deepen into an all-consuming love. Don Juan represented the classic ludic lover, embodying the motto of “Love 'em and leave 'em.” Tseng et al. (2003) found that whereas men were more likely than women to be ludic lovers, ludic love characterized the love style of college students the least.

2. **Pragma.** The **pragma love style** is the love of the pragmatic—that which is logical and rational.Pragma lovers assess their partners on the basis of assets and liabilities. One undergraduate female hung out with a guy because he had a car and could drive her home on weekends to see her boyfriend. She would write his term papers and do his laundry.

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**Ludic**

The **ludic love style** views love as a game in which the player has no intention of getting seriously involved. The ludic lover refuses to become dependent on any one person and does not encourage another’s intimacy. Two essential skills of the ludic lover are to juggle several partners at the same time and to manage each relationship so that no one partner is seen too often.

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**Ludic love style:** views love as a game where the player has no intention of getting involved.

**Pragma love style:** love style that is logical and rational. The love partner is evaluated in terms of pluses and minuses and is regarded as a good or bad "deal."
3. **Eros.** Just the opposite of the pragmatic love style, the *eros love style*, also known as romantic love, is imbued with passion and sexual desire. Eros is the most common love style of college women and men (Tzeng et al., 2003) and has been associated with higher relationship satisfaction (Vedes et al., 2016).

4. **Mania.** The *mania love style* is the out-of-control love whereby the person "must have" the love object. Being jealous, possessive, dependent, and controlling are symptoms of manic love. One must be careful of becoming involved with a manic lover since these may turn into stalkers when the relationship ends.

5. **Storge.** The *storge love style*, also known as companionate love, is a calm, soothing, nonsexual love devoid of intense passion. Respect, friendship, commitment, and familiarity are characteristics that help to define the storge love relationship. The partners care deeply about each other but not in a romantic or lustful sense. Their love is also more likely to endure than a fleeting romance. One’s grandparents who have been married 50 years are likely to have a storge type of love. Neto (2012) compared love perceptions by age group and found that the older the individual, the more important love became and the less important sex became.

6. **Agape.** *Agape love style*, also known as *compassionate love*, is characterized by a focus on the well-being of the person who is loved, with little regard for reciprocation. The love parents have for their children is often described as compassionate love and is associated with positive parenting (Miller et al., 2015). Key qualities of agape love are not responding to a partner's negativity and not expecting an exchange for positives but believing that the other means well and will respond kindly in time.

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**Triangular View of Love**

Sternberg (1986) developed the “triangular” view of love, which consists of three basic elements: intimacy or emotional connectedness, passion or physical attraction, and commitment or the desire to maintain the relationship. The presence or absence of these three elements creates various types of love experienced between individuals, regardless of their sexual orientation. These various types include the following:

1. **Nonlove**—the absence of intimacy, passion, and commitment. Two strangers looking at each other from afar are experiencing nonlove.

2. **Liking**—intimacy without passion or commitment. A new friendship may be described in these terms of the partners liking each other.

3. **Infatuation**—passion without intimacy or commitment. Two people flirting with each other in a bar may be infatuated with each other.

4. **Romantic love**—intimacy and passion without commitment. Two individuals connect at the emotional level and also find each other sexually attractive.

5. **Conjugal love**, also known as realistic love—intimacy and commitment without passion. A couple married for 50 years illustrates this type of love.

6. **Fatuous love**—passion and commitment without intimacy. Couples who are passionately wild about each other and talk of the future but do not have an intimate connection with each other have a fatuous love.

7. **Empty love**—commitment without passion or intimacy. A couple who stay together...
for social—for example, children—and legal reasons but who have no spark or emotional sharing between them have an empty love.

8. **Consummate love**—combination of intimacy, passion, and commitment; Sternberg’s view of the ultimate, all-consuming love.

Individuals bring different combinations of the elements of intimacy, passion, and commitment—the triangle—to their relationship. One lover may bring a predominance of passion, with some intimacy but no commitment—romantic love—whereas the other person brings commitment but no passion or intimacy—empty love. The triangular theory of love allows lovers to see the degree to which they are matched in terms of passion, intimacy, and commitment in their relationship.

**Love Languages**

The **five love languages** have become part of American love culture (Chapman, 2010). These five languages are gifts, quality time, words of affirmation, acts of service, and physical touch.

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**Five love languages:** concept made popular by Gary Chapman, these languages are gifts, quality time, words of affirmation, acts of service, and physical touch.

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**The Digital Language of Love**

The first text message, “Merry Christmas,” was sent on December 3, 1992 (Kelly, 2012). Little did we know, it would eventually revolutionize how we communicate with each other. Text messaging, or texting, originally denoted brief electronic message exchanges between people using computers or portable devices. Current messaging not only involves texts, but also emoticons, photos, videos, websites, and audio content. With the advent of smartphones, texting has become pervasive. According to the Pew Research Center (2019), 96% of Americans own a cell phone. Sending text messages is the most frequent use and typically occurs throughout the day between partners in beginning or established relationships.

Research examining the effects of text messaging on relationships has yielded mixed results. Human communication is complicated, and texting can be easily misinterpreted in the absence of tone, facial expression, body language, and emotion. A large-scale study with participants from Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States revealed that text messaging was negatively associated with relationship satisfaction (Goodman-Deane et al., 2016). The use of emoticons was found to facilitate playfulness (Hsieh & Tseng, 2017). However, greater relationship satisfaction was reported when text messaging was used to convey affection or positive emotions (Brody & Peña, 2015). Equity in text messaging may be expected and even considered as a way to show commitment. Similarity in texting behavior, frequency, and initiation between partners can predict relationship satisfaction among young adults (Ohadi et al., 2017).

To maximize positive outcomes from texting, there are various choices to make. Not only might couples make clear how often they expect a text message from a partner but what content is appropriate—for example, no sex “pics” or content about former partners. Milne (2015) noted other suggestions including: (1) Text on noteworthy occasions, such as “I had a great time yesterday” and “good luck on your interview today.” (2) Call if talking would be better. (3) Flirt with caution. (4) Avoid texting at odd hours. And (5) drunk texting is a no-no. 

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Social Media and a Couple’s Love Relationship

Facebook postings and readings are pervasive in the lives of many individuals and couples. Northrup and Smith (2016) studied how Facebook time is associated with a couple’s romantic relationship. They found that “couples who engage in more Facebook maintenance tend to experience less love towards each other, and couples who feel more love towards each other engage in less relationship maintenance via Facebook” (p. 249). The researchers suggested that “healthy couples who engage in face-to-face relationship maintenance find that relationship maintenance via Facebook is not needed” (p. 249). “Why would couples who engage in more Facebook maintenance seem to experience less love? The answer may be that couples who feel less love for each other may feel the need to present to friends and family online as if everything is fine, and therefore engage in more relationship maintenance via Facebook.” (p. 249). (See the insert of Technology and Love)

SOCIAL CONTROL OF LOVE

The ultimate social control of love is arranged marriage—mate selection pattern whereby parents select the spouse of their offspring. The practice of “arranged marriage” is still common in 40% of the world’s population in countries such as India and Pakistan. In most countries in Asia, marriage is regarded as the linking of two families; the love feelings of the respective partners are irrelevant. Love is expected to follow marriage, not precede it.

Arranged marriage: mate selection pattern whereby parents select the spouse of their offspring. A matchmaker may be used but the selection is someone of whom the parents approve.

Love in the Workplace

With increasing numbers of working women (approximately 47% of the workforce), delaying the age of first marriage until their late 20s, and spending eight or more hours with coworkers every day, the workplace has become a predictable context for romantic relationships to develop. More future spouses may meet at work than in academic, social, or religious settings. In a survey of over 700 adults in the workforce, 30% of respondents aged 18-21 and 72% of those over the age of 50 reported having been involved in an office romance (Vault Survey, 2019).

Although such relationships are most often between peers, sometimes a love relationship develops between individuals occupying different status positions. And it can get ugly. Such was the case of Harry Stonecipher, a 68-year-old married man and head of Boeing, and a 48-year-old divorcee employee, which resulted in Stonecipher being fired. His dismissal was not because of the affair but because of the negative publicity he brought to the company when his sexually explicit e-mails became public. These types of love relationships are sometimes problematic in the workplace. Four-star

(Continued)
general David Petraeus had an affair with a woman he met at work. He was later demoted.

Advantages of an Office Romance

The energy that both fuels and results from intense love feelings can also fuel productivity at work. If the coworkers eventually marry or enter a nonmarital but committed, long-term relationship, they may be more satisfied with and committed to their jobs than spouses whose partners work elsewhere. Working at the same location enables married couples to commute together, go to company-sponsored events together, and talk shop together. Workplaces such as academia often try to hire both spouses since they are likely to become more permanent employees.

Recognizing the potential benefits of increased job satisfaction, morale, productivity, creativity, and commitment, some companies encourage love relationships among employees. Aware that their single employees are interested in relationships, in Tokyo, Japan, Hitachi Insurance Service provides a dating service for its 400,000 employees, many of whom are unmarried, called Tie the Knot. Those interested in finding a partner complete an application, and a meeting or lunch is arranged with a suitable candidate through the Wedding Commander. In America, some companies hire two employees who are married, reflecting a focus on the value of each employee to the firm rather than on their love relationship outside work.

Disadvantages of an Office Romance

However, workplace romances can also be problematic for the individuals involved as well as for their employers. When a workplace romance involves a supervisor and subordinate relationship, other employees might make claims of favoritism or differential treatment. In a typical differential-treatment allegation, an employee, usually a woman, claims that the company denied her a job benefit because her supervisor favored another female coworker—who happens to be the supervisor’s girlfriend.

If a workplace relationship breaks up, it may be difficult to continue to work in the same environment and others at work may experience the fallout. A breakup that is less than amicable may result in efforts by partners to sabotage each other’s work relationships and performance, to instigate incidents of workplace violence and harassment, or make allegations of sexual harassment or do all of these actions.

Company Policies on Office Romances

Some companies such as Walt Disney, Universal, and Columbia have “anti-fraternization” clauses that impose rules on workers talking about private issues or sending personal e-mails. Some British firms have “love contracts” that require workers to tell their managers if they are involved with anyone in the office. Other companies have anti-nepotism policies prohibiting married couples working in the same department.

Most companies do not prohibit romantic relationships among employees. However, the company may have a policy prohibiting open displays of affection between employees in the workplace and romantic relationships between a supervisor and a subordinate. Most companies have no policy regarding relationships at work and generally regard romances between coworkers as “none of their business.” There are some exceptions to the general permissive policy regarding workplace romances. Many companies have written policies prohibiting intimate relationships when one member of the couple is in a direct supervisory position over the other. These policies may be enforced by transferring or dismissing employees who are discovered in romantic relationships.

THEORIES ON THE ORIGINS OF LOVE

Various theories have been suggested with regard to the origins of love.

Evolutionary Theory

Love has an evolutionary purpose by providing a bonding mechanism between adults who become parents during the time their offspring are dependent infants. Love’s strongest bonding lasts about four years after the birth of a child, the time during which children are most dependent and when two parents are most beneficial to the developing infant. “If a woman was carrying the equivalent of a twelve-pound bowling ball in one arm and a pile of sticks in the other, it was ecologically critical to pair up with a mate to rear the young,” observed anthropologist Helen Fisher (Toufexis, 1993). The “four-year itch” is Fisher’s term for the time at which parents with one child are most likely to divorce—the time when the woman can more easily survive without parenting help from the male. If the couple has a second child, doing so resets the clock, and “the seven-year itch” is the next most vulnerable time.

Learning Theory

Learning theory emphasizes that love feelings develop in response to behaviors of each partner toward the other. Individuals in a new relationship who smile at each other, compliment each other,
touch each other endearingly, and do things for each other are engaging in behaviors that encourage the development of love feelings. When these positive behaviors occur in a relationship context with no negative behavior toward each other and there is no competing love relationship, love feelings may flourish.

**Sociological Theories**

Rusu (2018) reviewed classic sociological views of love including that of Max Weber. Weber viewed love as a means of sensual salvation in an increasingly rationalized social world based on impersonal formal relationships. Another sociological theory of love is the wheel model which focuses on the social context in which love feelings develop; it has four stages—rapport, self-revelation, mutual dependency, and fulfillment of personality needs (Reiss, 1960). In the rapport stage, each partner has the feeling of having known the partner before, feels comfortable with the partner, and wants to deepen the relationship.

Such desire leads to self-revelation or self-disclosure, whereby each reveals intimate thoughts to the other about oneself, the partner, and the relationship. Such revelations deepen the relationship because it is assumed that the confidences are shared only with special people, and each partner feels special when listening to the revelations of the other. As the level of self-disclosure becomes more intimate, feelings of mutual dependency develop. Each partner is happiest in the presence of the other and begins to depend on the other for creating the context of these euphoric feelings. “I am happiest when I am with you” is the theme of this stage.

The feeling of mutual dependency involves the fulfillment of personality needs. The desires to love and be loved, to trust and to be trusted, and to support and be supported are met in the developing love relationship.

**Psychosexual Theory**

According to psychosexual theory, love results from blocked biological sexual desires. In the sexually repressive mood of his time, Sigmund Freud (1905–1925) referred to love as “aim-inhibited sex.” Love was viewed as a function of the sexual desire a person was not allowed to express because of social restraints. In Freud’s era, people would meet, fall in love, get married, and have sex. Freud felt that the socially required delay from first meeting to having sex resulted in the development of “love feelings.”

By extrapolation, Freud’s theory of love suggests that love dies with marriage, which offers unlimited access to one’s sexual partner.

**Biochemical Theory**

“Love is deeply biological” wrote Carter and Porges (2013), who reviewed the biochemistry involved in the development and maintenance of love. Oxytocin is released from the pituitary gland during the expulsive stage of labor that has been associated with the onset of maternal behavior in lower animals, but oxytocin may be manufactured in both women and men when an infant or another person is present—hence it is not dependent on the birth process (Carter & Porges, 2013). Oxytocin has been referred to as the “cuddle chemical” because of its significance in bonding. Later in life, oxytocin seems operative in the development of love feelings between lovers during sexual arousal. Oxytocin may be responsible for the fact that more women than men prefer to continue cuddling after intercourse.

Phenylethylamine (PEA) is a natural, amphetamine-like substance that makes lovers feel euphoric and energized. The high that they report feeling just by being with each other is from PEA that the brain releases into their bloodstream. The natural chemical that is associated with love may explain why the intensity of passionate love decreases over time. As with any amphetamine, the body builds up a tolerance to PEA, and it takes more and more to produce the special kick. Hence, lovers develop a tolerance for each other. “Love junkies” are those who go from one love affair to the next to maintain the high. Alternatively, some lovers break up and get back together frequently as a way of making the relationship new again and keeping the high going.

The neurobiology of love emphasizes that romantic love and maternal love are linked to the perpetuation of the species. Romantic love bonds the male and female together to reproduce, take care of, and socialize new societal members, whereas maternal love ensures that the mother will prioritize the care of her baby over other needs. Because of the social functions of these love states, neurobiologists have learned via brain imaging techniques that both types of attachment activate regions of the brain that access the brain’s reward system, areas rich in oxytocin and vasopressin receptors. Both lovers and mothers are very happy and focused. They are on a biological mission, and the reward center of their brain keeps them on track.

**Attachment Theory**

The outcry in response to separating immigrant children from their parents in 2018 has solid empirical support that enforcing that policy has negative long-term consequences. The attachment theory of love emphasizes that a primary motivation in life is to be emotionally connected with other people. Children
CHOICES IN RELATIONSHIPS

abandoned by their parents and placed in foster care or separated due to immigration policies are vulnerable to having their early emotional attachment to their parents disrupted and developing “reactive attachment disorder” (Stinehart et al., 2012). This disorder involves a child who is anxious and insecure since he or she does not feel he or she is in a safe environment. As adults, these children are emotionally distant, insecure, and jealous (Knapp et al., 2014).

Each of the theories of love presented in this section can be criticized (see Table 2.1).

HOW WE FALL IN LOVE

Various social, physical, psychological, physiological, and cognitive conditions influence the development of love relationships.

Social Conditions for Love

Love is a social label given to an internal feeling. Our society promotes love through popular music, movies, and novels. These media convey the message that love is an experience to pursue, enjoy, and maintain. People who fall out of love are encouraged to try again: “Love is lovelier the second time you fall.” Unlike people reared in Eastern cultures, Americans grow up in a cultural context which encourages them to turn on their radar for love.

Physical Conditions for Love

The probability of being involved in a love relationship is influenced by approximating the cultural ideal of physical appearance. Halpern et al. (2005) analyzed data on a nationally representative sample of 5,487 African-American, Caucasian, and Hispanic adolescent females and found that for each one-point increase in body mass index (BMI), the probability of involvement in a romantic relationship dropped by 6%. Hence, to the degree that a woman fulfills our society’s unrealistic expectations of the “ideal” slender body type, she increases the chance of attracting a partner and becoming involved in a romantic love relationship. Body mass is also related to relationship problems among women. Skoyen et al. (2018) found that low relationship quality was associated with higher BMI in women. Similarly, high relationship quality was related to lower BMI in women.

Psychological Conditions for Love

Psychological conditions associated with falling in love include perception of reciprocal liking, personality, high self-esteem, and self-disclosure.

Perception of Reciprocal Liking

One of the most important psychological factors associated with falling in love is the perception of

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**TABLE 2.1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEORY</th>
<th>CRITICISM</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evolutionary—love is the social glue that bonds parents with dependent children and spouses with each other to care for offspring.</td>
<td>The assumption that women and children need men for economic and emotional survival is not true today. Women can have and rear children without male partners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning—positive experiences create love feelings.</td>
<td>The theory does not account for (1) why some people share positive experiences but do not fall in love, and (2) why some people stay in love despite negative behavior by their partner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychosexual—love results from blocked biological drive.</td>
<td>The theory does not account for love couples who report intense love feelings and have sex regularly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociological—the wheel theory whereby love develops from rapport, self-revelation, mutual dependency, and personality need fulfillment.</td>
<td>Not all people are capable of rapport, revealing oneself, and so on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biochemical—love is chemical. Oxytocin is an amphetamine-like chemical that bonds mother to child and produces a giddy high in young lovers.</td>
<td>The theory does not specify how much of what chemicals result in the feeling of love. Chemicals alone cannot create the state of love; cognitions are also important.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attachment—primary motivation in life is to be connected to others. Children bond with parents and spouses to each other.</td>
<td>Not all people feel the need to be emotionally attached to others. Some prefer to be detached.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Do not copy, post, or distribute.
reciprocal liking (Riela et al., 2010). When one perceives that he or she is desired by someone else, this perception has the effect of increasing the attraction toward that person. Having someone look at you and smile conveys the message that it is OK for you to approach the other person and say “hello.”

**Personality Qualities**

The personality qualities of the love object have an important effect on your falling in love (Riela et al., 2010). Viewing the partner as intelligent or having a sense of humor are examples of qualities that makes the lover want to be with the beloved. The person who falls in love must also be available to do so. Individuals, such as artists, musicians, or poets, who are immersed in creative, artistic endeavors describe less interest in being involved in a love relationship since they may derive their emotional satisfactions from their solitary work (Campbell & Kaufman, 2017).

**Self-Esteem**

High self-esteem is important for falling in love because it enables individuals to feel worthy of being loved, of being positively evaluated. Feeling good about yourself allows you to believe that others are capable of loving you. Individuals with low self-esteem doubt that someone else can love and accept them. Weisskirch (2017) noted that high self-esteem is associated with less fear of being negatively evaluated by a dating partner. Experiencing reciprocal love can also enhance one’s self-esteem. Feeling loved, desired, and accepted by another person may boost one’s confidence, since one feels that he or she is worthy of love.

People who have never felt loved and wanted may require constant affirmation from a partner as to their worth and may cling desperately to that person out of fear of being abandoned. Such dependence—the modern term is codependency—may also

A healthy self-concept is a prerequisite for falling in love. Feeling good about yourself translates into the belief that others can feel good about you too. Courtesy of Trevor Werb

### Applying Social Research

**Taking Chances in Romantic Relationships**

Making choices sometimes includes taking chances—moving in together after knowing each other for a short time, changing schools to be together, and forgoing condom usage thinking “this time won’t end in a pregnancy.” To assess the degree to which undergraduates take chances in their relationships, 381 students completed a 64-item questionnaire posted on the Internet. Over 80% of respondents were female and approximately 74% were White. About 53% of the respondents described their relationship status as emotionally involved with one person, with 4% engaged or married.

**Findings**

Of the various risk-taking behaviors identified on the questionnaire, eight were identified by 25% or more of the respondents as behaviors they had participated in. These eight are identified in Table 2.2.

Almost three fourths, about 72%, of the sample self-identified as being a “person willing to take chances in my love relationship.” However, only slightly over one-third of the respondents indicated

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RISK-TAKING BEHAVIOR</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unprotected sex</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being involved in a “friends with benefits” relationship</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broke up with a partner to explore alternatives</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had sex before feeling ready</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disconnected with friends because of partner</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintained long-distance relationship (1 year)</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheated on partner</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lied to partner about being in love</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Continued)
that they considered themselves as risk takers in general. This suggests that college students may be more likely to engage in risk-taking behavior in love relationships than in other areas of their lives. Both love and alcohol were identified as contexts for increasing one’s vulnerability for taking chances in romantic relationships—60% and 66%, respectively. Both being in love and drinking alcohol—both love and alcohol may be viewed as drugs—gives one a sense of immunity from danger or allows one to deny danger.

**Source:** Adapted and abridged from L. Elliott, Easterling, B., & Knox, D. (2016). Taking chances in romantic relationships. *College Student Journal, 50*(2), 241-245. The content was also presented as a poster at the annual meeting of the Southern Sociological Society in New Orleans, LA.

**Self-Disclosure**

Disclosing oneself is necessary if one is to fall in love—to feel invested in another. Ross (2006) identified eight dimensions of self-disclosure: (1) background and history, (2) feelings toward the partner, (3) feelings toward self, (4) feelings about one’s body, (5) attitudes toward social issues, (6) tastes and interests, (7) money and work, and (8) feelings about friends. Disclosed feelings about the partner included “how much I like the partner,” “my feelings about our sexual relationship,” “how much I trust my partner,” “things I dislike about my partner,” and “my thoughts about the future of our relationship.” Of interest in Ross’s findings is that disclosing one’s tastes and interests was negatively associated with relationship satisfaction. By telling a partner too much detail about what one liked or didn’t, partners discovered something that turned them off and lowered their relationship satisfaction.

Trust is the condition under which people are most willing to disclose themselves. When people trust someone, they tend to feel that whatever feelings or information they share will not be judged and will be kept safe with that person. If trust is betrayed, people may become bitterly resentful and vow never to disclose themselves again. One woman said, “After I told my partner that I had had an abortion, he told me that I was a murderer and he never wanted to see me again. I was devastated and felt I had made a mistake telling him about my past.”

It is not easy for some people to let others know who they are, what they feel, or what they think. Alexithymia is a personality trait which describes a person with little affect. The term means “lack of words for emotions,” which suggests that the person does not experience or convey emotion. Persons with alexithymia are not capable of psychological intimacy.

Frye-Cox (2012) studied 155 couples who had been married an average of 18.8 years and found that being an alexithymic spouse is associated with lower marital quality. Alexithymia also tends to repel individuals in mate selection in that persons who seek an emotional relationship are not reinforced by alexithymics. Alexithymic individuals may also be alcohol dependent. About 49% of the 274 alcohol dependent individuals in the study by Pombo et al. (2015) were also alexithymic. Another term for alexithymic is aromantic. Two alexithymic or aromantic individuals could enjoy each other’s companionship and relationship since neither expects emotional intimacy.

**Physiological Condition and Timing of Love**

Physical chemistry between partners is unpredictable—it does not happen between all people—but is powerful when it occurs. Partners who feel strong chemistry toward each other escalate their relationship; those who do not have less motivation to become or to stay involved. Timing of interest in love must also be right. There are only certain times in life—for example, when educational and career goals are met or within sight—when people are open to or seek a love relationship. When those times occur, a person is likely to fall in love with the person who is there and who is also seeking a love relationship. Hence, many love pairings exist because each of the individuals is available to the other at the same time—not because they are particularly suited for each other.

**Keeping Your Love Alive Across Time**

Ogolsky et al. (2016) analyzed how 232 couple relationships changed over a nine-month period. Twenty percent of the couples broke up by the ninth month of the study. Partners most likely to break up were “passionately in love”… suggesting great volatility of love. Partners interested in keeping their love alive across time might consider the following:
Select your partner carefully—one who has a similar background, similar interests, values, goals, education, religion, and a personality compatible with yours makes for a good beginning.

Drop your expectations—be aware of the principle of satiation (a stimulus loses its value with repeated exposure) and don’t be shocked to discover that your partner and your relationship does not stay at the high pitch level of fun, excitement, sex, adventure, and enjoyment later in your relationship compared to earlier.

Expect unpredictable life events to alter everything—death of a parent, infertility, or a serious car accident can change you, your partner, and your relationship. Allow for major life-changing events to come your way.

Keep yourself happy and healthy—take care of your own needs so that you bring to your partner a happy, engaged, and healthy—exercise daily—partner. Do not expect your partner to “fulfill” or “complete” you.

Support your partner’s interests—facilitate whatever your partner wants or needs to make his or her own life a fulfilling one.

Ensure emotion and physical engagement with each other—so that neither is vulnerable to looking outside the relationship to fulfill these needs.

Plan and.execute new activities together—change the context of the mundane to the new adventure. One couple went to 50 bed and breakfast experiences.

Be responsible and keep your relationship on track—“If you see something, say something” means if you feel that you and your partner are drifting apart, address the issue and change your respective behaviors to put your relationship back on course. If you don’t take time to nurture your relationship, you will be taking time to write out checks to your lawyer over your divorce settlement.

Letting Love Die and Moving On
Humans are serial monogamists who typically mate with the same partner for years or even decades but often mate with more than one partner over the life course (Boutwell et al. 2015). Given this trajectory, the researchers suggested that individuals have the innate capacity—evolutionary, cognitive, neurobiological, and genetic—which allows them to eject a mate and to move on. Primary mate ejection can be explained as a functional device designed to transfer and focus resources from one mate to another. For males in need of making adjustments regarding where their resources are flowing, primary mate ejection could have evolved as an unconscious retraction of the affection felt between partners allowing for a redistribution of resources (p. 33).

Thank God I found the GOOD in goodbye.
Beyoncé Knowles

LOVE AS A CONTEXT FOR PROBLEMS

For all of its joy, love is associated with problems. In this section we review seven such problems.

Unrequited or Unreciprocated Love
Unrequited love is a one-sided love where one’s love is not returned. An example is from the short story “Winter Dreams” by F. Scott Fitzgerald. Dexter Green is in love with Judy Jones. “He loved her, and he would love her until the day he was too old for loving—but he could not have her.” Blomquist and Giuliano (2012) assessed the reactions of a sample of adults and college students to a partner who said “I love you.” The predominant response by both men and women was “I’m just not there yet.” Both genders acknowledged that while this response was honest, it hurt the individual who was in love.

Making Risky, Dangerous Choices
Plato said that “love is a grave mental illness,” and some research suggests that individuals in love make risky, dangerous, or questionable decisions. Non-smokers who become romantically involved with a smoker are more likely to begin smoking (Kennedy et al., 2011). Similarly, couples in love and in a stable relationship are less likely to use a condom (Milhausen et al., 2018).

Ending the Relationship With One’s Parents
Some parents disapprove of the partner their son or daughter is involved with to the point that they will end the relationship with their child. “They told

Primary mate ejection: evolutionary device which allows one to transfer and focus resources from one mate to another.
Unrequited love: love that is not returned.

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me I couldn’t come home if I kept dating this guy, so I stopped going home,” said one college student who was involved with a partner of a different race. Choosing to end a relationship with one’s parents is a definite downside of love.

Simultaneous Loves

While most individuals in a dating relationship expect fidelity in their partners (Watkins & Boon, 2016), sometimes an individual is in love with two or more people at the same time. While this is acceptable in polyamorous relationships where the partners agree on multiple relationships (discussed later in the chapter), simultaneous loves may become a serious problem with a partner who expects monogamy.

One answer to the dilemma of simultaneous love is to let the clock run. Most love relationships do not have a steady course. Time has a way of changing them. If you maintain both relationships, one is likely to emerge as more powerful, and you will have your answer. Alternatively, if you feel guilty for having two loves, you may make the conscious choice to spend your time and attention with one partner and let the other relationship go in terms of actual time spent with the partner. Although you can have emotions for two people at the same time, you cannot physically be with more than one person at a time. The person with whom you choose to take to significant events is likely to be the person you love “a little bit more” and with whom your love feelings are likely to increase.

Abusive or Stalking Relationships

Twenty-four percent of 3,061 undergraduate males and 39% of 10,002 undergraduate females reported that they had been involved in an emotionally abusive relationship with a partner. As for physical abuse, 4% of the males and 11% of the females reported such previous involvement (Hall & Knox, 2019). Rejected lovers, most of whom are men, may stalk—repeated pursuit of a target victim that threatens the victim’s safety—a partner because of anger and jealousy and try to win the partner back. Nineteen percent of the males and 28% of the females in the above sample reported that they had been stalked. Abusive relationships and stalking will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 13.

Gaslighting

Gaslighting refers to being manipulated by a person who uses the context of love and hope to completely control the person and their perceptions. For example, if a person feels unloved or disrespected, the “gaslighter” will react with dismay that the interpretation is completely wrong and talk the person into discounting their own perceptions or suspicions. In reality, the person is correct but loses confidence in being able to see reality in a relationship and loses complete trust in others out of fear of being misled or emotionally abused again.

Profound Sadness and Depression

When a Relationship Ends

Just as love is associated with relationship happiness (Harris et al., 2016), its end is the cause of profound sadness and depression. Fisher et al. (2010) noted that “romantic rejection causes a profound sense of loss and negative affect. It can induce clinical depression and in extreme cases lead to suicide and/or homicide.” The researchers studied brain changes via magnetic resonance imaging of ten women and five men who had recently been rejected by a partner but reported they were still intensely “in love.” Participants alternately viewed a photograph of the partner who rejected them and a photograph of a familiar individual interspersed with a distraction-attention task. Their responses while looking at the photo of the person who rejected them included feelings of love, despair, good, and bad memories, and wondering about why this happened. Brain image reactions to being rejected by a lover were similar to withdrawal from cocaine.

While there is no clinically recognized definition or diagnostic criteria for “love addiction,” some similarities to substance dependence include euphoria and unrestrained desire in the presence of the love object or associated stimuli, a state resembling drug intoxication; negative mood and sleep disturbance when separated from the love object, which is similar to drug withdrawal; intrusive thoughts about the love object; and problems associated with love which may lead to clinically significant impairment or distress (Reynaud et al., 2011).
Jealousy in Relationships

Jealousy is an emotional response to a perceived or real threat to an important or valued relationship. People experiencing jealousy fear being abandoned and feel anger toward the partner or the perceived competition. Jealousy may be innate in that, in most traditional contexts, it reflects one’s psychological survival and well-being since one’s source of interpersonal reinforcement is threatened. Jealousy may also be about one’s social survival since the termination of a relationship will impact one’s relationships with others (e.g., friends the couple share in common).

Jealousy is a learned emotion and varies with social context. Polygynous Mormons reflect the context where wives are socialized to “share” the husband. Not only is the principle of multiple wives “God’s will,” but also the wives embrace the presence of other wives who help out with child care and housework. While her research findings have been questioned, Margaret Mead noted that the Samoans were absent in reporting feelings of jealousy (Freeman, 1999).

Some individuals in polyamorous or open relationships report zero feelings of jealousy for their partner’s emotional and sexual relationship with others. The absence of jealousy is unusual among undergraduates. Of 12,893 undergraduates, 53% agreed with the statement, “I am a jealous person”; women were slightly more likely to report feeling jealous than men (Hall & Knox, 2019).

Types of Jealousy

Barelds-Dijkstra and Barelds (2007) identified three types of jealousy as reactive jealousy, anxious jealousy, and possessive jealousy. Reactive jealousy consists of feelings that are a reaction to something the partner is doing, such as texting a former lover. Anxious jealousy is obsessive ruminations about the partner’s alleged infidelity that make one’s life a miserable emotional torment. Possessive jealousy involves an attack on the partner or the alleged person to whom the partner is showing attention. Jealousy is a frequent motive when one romantic partner kills another.

Causes of Jealousy

Jealousy can be triggered by a number of external or internal factors.

External Causes

External factors refer to behaviors a partner engages in that are interpreted as (1) an emotional or sexual interest or both in someone or something else, or (2) a lack of emotional or sexual interest or both in the primary partner.

Internal Causes

Internal causes of jealousy refer to characteristics of individuals that predispose them to jealous feelings, independent of their partner’s behavior. Examples include being mistrustful, having low self-esteem, being highly involved in and dependent on the partner, and having no perceived alternative partners available (Pines, 1992). The following are explanations of these internal causes of jealousy:

1. **Mistrust.** If an individual has been cheated on in a previous relationship, that individual may have learned to be mistrustful in subsequent relationships. Such mistrust may manifest itself in jealousy. Mistrust and jealousy may be intertwined. Indeed, one must be careful if cheated on in a previous relationship not to transfer those feelings to a new partner. Disregarding the past is not easy but constantly reminding oneself of reality—“My new partner has given me zero reason to be distrustful”—is important. Otherwise, the person may feel unjustly accused and want to end the relationship.

2. **Low self-esteem.** Individuals who have low self-esteem tend to be jealous because they don’t believe anyone will love them.
It is devastating to a person with low self-esteem to discover that a partner has, indeed, selected someone else.

3. **Lack of perceived alternatives.** Individuals who have no alternative person or who feel inadequate in attracting others may be particularly vulnerable to jealousy. They feel that if they do not keep the person they have, they will be alone since no one else will want them.

4. **Insecurity.** Individuals who feel insecure—for example, no commitment from the partner—in a relationship may experience higher levels of jealousy. They feel at any moment their partner could find someone more attractive and desirable and end the relationship.

**Consequences of Jealousy**

Jealousy can have both desirable and undesirable consequences.

**Desirable Outcomes**

Reactive jealousy may have a positive outcome on one’s relationship. Not only may reactive jealousy signify that the partner is cared for, but also the partner may learn that the development of other romantic and sexual relationships is unacceptable (Barelds-Dijkstra & Barelds, 2007).

One wife said:

> When I started spending extra time with this guy at the office, my husband got jealous and told me he thought I was getting in over my head and asked me to cut back on the relationship because it was “tearing him up.” I felt he really loved me when he told me this, and I stopped having lunch with the guy at work. I’m sure his jealousy kept me out of trouble.

The researchers noted that making the partner jealous may also have the positive function of assessing the partner’s commitment and of alerting the partner that one could leave for greener mating pastures. Hence, one partner may deliberately evoke jealousy to solidify commitment and ward off being taken for granted. In addition, sexual passion may be reignited if one partner perceives that another might take one’s partner away. That people want what others want is an adage that may underlie jealousy.

**Undesirable Outcomes**

Shakespeare referred to jealousy as the “green-eyed monster,” suggesting that it sometimes leads to undesirable outcomes for relationships. Anxious jealousy with its obsessive ruminations about the partner’s alleged infidelity can make individuals miserable. They are constantly thinking about the partner being with the new person, which they interpret as confirmation of their own inadequacy. And, if the anxious jealousy results in repeated unwarranted accusations, a partner can tire of such attacks and end the relationship with the accusing partner.

In its extreme form, jealousy may have fatal consequences. Possessive jealousy involves an attack on a partner or an alleged person to whom the partner is showing attention. In the name of love, people have stalked or killed the beloved and then killed themselves in reaction to being rejected.

**Gender Differences in Coping With Jealousy**

Zengel et al. (2013) studied a national sample of women and men and found that women reported higher levels of jealousy than men. The researchers also noted that heterosexual men were more jealous when their partner engaged in sexual intercourse with another man than when their partner was emotionally involved with someone else. Evolutionary theorists point out that men are wired to care about the paternity of their offspring, which is the basis of their focus on physical fidelity.

**Strategies Used to Cope With Jealousy**

Women tend to turn to food and men to alcohol as strategies to cope with feelings of jealousy (Knox et al., 1999). Both might consider exercise as a way of relieving their stress.

**POLYAMORY**

**Compersion:** sometimes thought of as the opposite of jealousy, is the approval, indeed embracing, of a partner’s emotional and sexual involvement with another person. Polyamory means multiple loves. Poly = many; amor = love. **Polyamory** is a lifestyle in which two lovers embrace the idea of having multiple lovers. By agreement, each partner may have numerous emotional and sexual relationships. Seguin (2019) confirmed wide ranging attitudes toward polyamory including 1) valid and beneficial; 2) unsustainable; 3) perverse, amoral, and unappealing; 4) acceptable; and 5) deficient. Persons more likely to identify as polyamorous are those with sexual

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**Compersion:** the opposite of jealousy; the approval of a partner’s emotional and sexual involvement with someone else.

**Polyamory:** a lifestyle in which two lovers embrace the idea of having multiple lovers. By agreement, each partner may have numerous emotional and sexual relationships.
Advantages and Disadvantages of Polyamory

Polyamory has both advantages and disadvantages. Advantages of polyamory include greater variety in one's emotional and sexual life; the avoidance of hidden affairs and the attendant feelings of deception, mistrust, betrayal, or guilt; the avoidance of the pressure of one person meeting all the needs of the other person and the opportunity to have different needs met by different people. The disadvantages of polyamory involve having to manage one's feelings of jealousy and emotions in multiple relationships and having limited time with each partner. Of the latter, one polyamorous partner said, "With three relationships and a full-time job, I don't have much time to spend with each partner so I'm frustrated about who I'll be with next." There is also stigma and prejudice associated with polyamory—parents may want nothing to do with their children who live this lifestyle. Finding partners to be polyamorous is also a challenge. While not specific to polyamory, Size- more and Olmstead (2016) studied willingness to engage in consensual non-monogamy. In a sample of 549 undergraduates only 12.9% were willing to do so. Over three fourths, about 78.7%, were clear about their unwillingness to participate.

Scheff (2014) conducted extensive interviews with poly couples and parents and identified the benefits and difficulties of poly families, multi-partner relationships that raise children and function as families. Benefits included shared resources, honesty and emotional intimacy among family members and multiple role models for children. "Many parents say that their children's lives, experiences, and self-concepts are richer for the multiple loving adults in their families" (p. 201). The difficulties of poly families include social stigma and teenage leverage against poly parents where a disgruntled teen can blackmail their parents, threatening to reveal their unconventional lifestyle to authorities, employers, or teachers.

Scheff's investigation of poly families highlights that the nonsexual emotional ties that bind people in poly families together are far more important than the sexual connections between the adults (Scheff, 2014):

While the sexual relationships polys establish with each other get the most attention from the media...they are not the...most important aspect of poly relationships... Much like heterosexual families, poly families spend far more time hanging out together, doing homework, making dinner, carpooling, folding laundry, and having family meetings or relationship talks than they do having sex (pp. 206-207).
Seguin et al. (2017) examined relationship quality of 3,463 individuals in monogamous, open, and polyamorous relationships and found no significant differences in reported relationship quality and equity. The researchers concluded that “these results strongly suggest that these types of relationship agreements are equally healthy viable options.”

Conley et al. (2018) compared the sexual satisfaction of individuals in monogamous and consensually non-monogamous (CNM) relationships and found slightly lower sexual satisfaction and orgasm rates among monogamous individuals. Swingers reported higher sexual satisfaction than monogamous individuals; those in open relationships had equal sexual satisfaction rates with those in monogamous relationships. In addition, relationship satisfaction did not differ between monogamous and CNM groups.

FUTURE OF LOVE RELATIONSHIPS

Love will continue to be one of the most treasured experiences in life. Love will be sought, treasured, and when lost or ended, will be met with despair and sadness. After a period of recovery, a new search will begin. Love will also continue to be associated with positive outcomes such as a sense of well-being, a buffer against stress, and the release of endorphins which are referred to as the “happy hormones” (Deepak, 2019).

As our society becomes more diverse, the range of potential love partners will widen to include those with demographic characteristics different from oneself. Hiroshi Ishiguro of Japan builds androids—“beautiful, realistic, uncannily convincing human replicas.” He has suggested that developing love feelings for an android is now a possibility (Mar, 2017).

Some individuals report falling in love with robots and holograms. Researcher Neil McArthur, director of the Center for Professional and Applied Ethics at the University of Manitoba, noted that these individuals are the second-wave digisexuals, people who regard technology as integral to their sexual identity. The first wave was people who used technology such as dating apps to help them find and connect with others. The second wave does not see humans as essential to a romantic experience—they can fall in love with and enjoy a relationship with a humanoid or hologram (Sato et al., 2018).

Finally, while alternatives to monogamy are realized by a small percentage of committed couples, there has been an increased interest in consensual non-monogamy as evidenced by data searchers on Google (Moore, 2017). As diversity in relationships, individualism and relationship norms expand, such an increase may continue.

SUMMARY

What are the meanings of love?
Love remains an elusive and variable phenomenon. Researchers have conceptualized love as a continuum from romanticism—for example, belief in love at first sight, one true love, and love conquers all—to realism, as a style, such as ludic, eros, storge, and mania, and as a triangle consisting of three basic elements—intimacy, passion, and commitment.

How is love under social control?
All parents attempt to influence and control the person their children fall in love with. Love may be blind, but offspring are socialized to know what color a person’s skin is—about 90% of Americans fall in love with and marry someone of their same racial background. Because romantic love is such a powerful emotion and marriage such an important relationship, mate selection is not left to chance when connecting an outsider with an existing family and peer network. Unlike Eastern parents who arrange the marriage of their children—in 40% of the world’s population, marriages are arranged by the parents—American parents move to certain neighborhoods, join certain churches, and enroll their children in certain schools. Doing so increases the chance that their offspring will “hang out” with, fall in love with, and marry people who are similar in race, education, and social class.

What are the various theories of love?
Theories of love include evolutionary, love that provides the social glue needed to bond parents with their dependent children and spouses with each other to care for their dependent offspring; learning, love that is a feeling based on the positive behavior of the partner; sociological, Reiss’s ‘wheel’ theory; psychosexual, love that results from a blocked biological drive; and biochemical, love that involves feelings produced by biochemical events. For example, the neurobiology of love emphasizes that because romantic love and maternal love are linked to the perpetuation of the species, biological wiring ensures the bonding of the male and female to rear offspring and of the mother to the infant. Finally, attachment theory focuses on the fact that a primary motivation in life is to be connected with other people.

What is the process of “falling in love?”
Love occurs under certain conditions. Social conditions include a society that promotes the pursuit of love, peers who enjoy it, and a set of norms that link love and marriage. Body type is related to falling in love in that the closer one’s body type or physical condition matches the cultural ideal, the more likely the person is to fall in love. Psychological conditions involve high
self-esteem, a willingness to disclose oneself to others, a perception that the other person has a reciprocal interest, and gratitude. Physiological and cognitive conditions imply that the individual experiences a stirred-up state and labels it “love.” People stay in a relationship because it meets important emotional needs, such as satisfaction, they have few alternatives—for example, no place to go—and they have already invested resources like time, money, and friendship networks.

How is love a context for problems?
For all of its joy, love is associated with problems, which include unrequited or nonreciprocated love, making dangerous or destructive choices, ending the relationship with one’s parents, simultaneous loves, involvement in an abusive relationship, and profound sadness and depression when a love relationship ends.

What is jealousy—the various types and consequences (positive and negative)?
Jealousy is an emotional response to a perceived or real threat to a valued relationship. Types of jealousy are reactive, where a partner shows interest in another; anxious, which involves ruminations about a partner’s unfaithfulness; and possessive which means striking back at a partner or another. Jealous feelings may have both internal and external causes and may have both positive and negative consequences for a couple’s relationship.

What is polyamory?
Compersion is the opposite of jealousy and involves feeling positive about a partner’s emotional and physical relationship with another person. Polyamory (“many loves”) is an arrangement whereby lovers agree to have numerous emotional relationships, which may include sex, with others at the same time. Persons in polyamorous relationships report similar levels of marital satisfaction to those in monogamous relationships.

What is the future of love relationships?
Love will continue to be the most important experience in life. While rates of consensual nonmonogamy will continue to be low, there will be more individuals who develop these agreements with their partners.

KEY TERMS
Agape love style, 35
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WEB LINKS
Polyamory Society
http://www.polyamorysociety.org/
Twin Oaks
https://www.twinoaks.org/
Third Age
http://www.thirdage.com/romance/

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