

Sternberg's Triangular Theory of Love

Robert Sternberg's Triangular Theory of Love states that there are three basic components that make up love which are passion, intimacy, and commitment. Different combinations of the three basic yield the different kinds of love relationships, which are outlined in the chart below.

Three Basic Love Components (P.I.C.)

Passion The aspect of love that involves emotional arousal and physical attraction. Passion is often more dominant at the beginning of a relationship.

Intimacy The aspect of love that involves a warm, close, bonding between individuals. Intimacy involves communicating about significant matters, emotional support, mutual respect, support during difficult situations, and sharing.

Commitment The aspect of love that involves a decision to remain with another person in a relationship. Sternberg describes two types of commitment: a short-term commitment made at the beginning of a relationship expressed interest in the relationship and a long-term commitment which is the decision to pursue a stronger relationship that continues into the future.

Relationship Type	Components of Love Present		
	Passion	Intimacy	Commitment
Nonlove: the absence of any aspect of the three aspects of love in a relationship			
Infatuation: a relationship based purely on physical attraction and passion which can feel like love at first sight with no commitment	X		
Liking: a deep level of friendship with no passion or physical attraction and no long-term commitment		X	
Empty Love: a relationship in which individuals decide to remain committed despite the lack of both passion and intimacy			X
Compassionate or Fatuous Love: a committed relationship that involves physical passion but that lacks intimacy and emotional closeness	X		X
Romantic Love: a relationship between individuals who are both emotionally close and physically passionate but that lacks any level of commitment.	X	X	
Companionate Love: a relationship in which individuals are committed to staying together that involves emotional closeness but that lacks physical passion		X	X
Consummate Love: an ideal relationship with all three components of love which is rare	X	X	X

Sternberg's Love Theory (P.I.C.)

Part I - Directions: For the following scenarios, identify the type of love that is described.

1. _____ Ken and Barbie have been married for a very long time and have no intention of ending their commitment. They are extremely emotionally close and supportive of each other, but the passion or spark is gone. According to Sternberg, what type of love do Ken and Barbie have?
2. _____ Despite interference from family and time apart Allie and Noah find each other and marry. They seem to have it all passion, intimacy, and commitment. According to Sternberg what type of love do Allie and Noah have? _____
3. _____ High school sweethearts Tarah and Timmy are physically and emotionally attracted to each other, but they are going to different colleges in the fall and decide not to continue their relationship after they leave for college. According to Sternberg what type of love do Tarah and Timmy have?
4. _____ Barney is attracted to a new girl that he meets at work, but is not interested in a relationship. He does not share any accurate information about himself or listen to her when they spend time together. According to Sternberg, what type of love is this? _____
5. _____ Thor and Helga decide to marry. They have a long history together and are very good friends, but they are not physically attracted to each other. According to Sternberg what factor are they missing to have consummate love? _____

Part II - Directions: For each of the following types of love indicate the components that are involved and then describe an example of this type of love from a movie, television show, or book. Be specific and indicate the characters you are referring to and how each of the components can be demonstrated.

1. **Passionate (Romantic) Love is a combination of _____ + _____.**
Example:

2. **Companionate Love is a combination of = _____ + _____**
Example:

3. **Consummate Love is a combination of = _____ + _____ + _____**
Example: