

The Psychology of Love

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CHAPTER NINE

Passionate and Companionate Love

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For most people, love is the sine qua non of an intimate relationship (Berscheid & Peplau, 1983). It comes, however, in a variety of forms. In the literature, a recurring distinction is made between two types of love—passionate love (sometimes termed “puppy love,” “a crush,” “lovesickness,” “obsessive love,” “infatuation,” or “being in love”) versus companionate love (sometimes termed “true love”) (see Cunningham & Antill, 1981; Kelley, 1979; Kelley et al., 1983). Researchers have labeled these two basic types of love in various ways—passionate versus companionate love (Hatfield & Walster, 1978), romantic versus conjugal love (Burgess, 1926), eros/mania versus storge/pragma (Lee, 1977), unreasonable versus reasonable love (Lilar, 1965), and deficiency love versus being love (Maslow, 1954).

In this chapter, we will use the terms *passionate love* and *companionate love* to designate the two basic types. Hatfield and Walster (1978) define passionate love this way: “A state of intense longing for union with another. Reciprocated love (union with the other) is associated with fulfillment and ecstasy. Unrequited love (separation) with emptiness, anxiety, or despair. A state of profound physiological arousal” (p. 9). Companionate love is defined as “the affection we feel for those with whom our lives are deeply entwined” (p. 9). Companionate love has been described as involving friendship, understanding, and a concern for the welfare of the other (Safilios-Rothschild, 1977).

THE GENESIS OF LOVE

What is the origin of passionate and companionate love? Love seems to be a primitive phenomenon. Rosenblum (1985), a primatologist, has observed

that even nonhuman primates seem to experience something very much like passionate/companionate love. The ability to love seems to be wired into all primates. In infancy, primates cling to their mothers, and as long as mother and child are in close proximity, all goes well. If a brief separation occurs, however, the young primate becomes desperate. He howls and rushes frantically about, searching for her. When the mother returns, the young primate is joyous; he clasps her and then bounds about in excitement. If the mother does not return and his frantic efforts to find her fail, the infant abandons all hope, and eventually dies (see Bowlby, 1973). The passionate experiences Rosenblum describes certainly sound much like passionate love's "desire for union"—and its accompanying lows and highs. The contentment infants feel in the secure company of their mothers sounds much like companionate love. Our primate wiring, I thought, provides the basis for passionate/companionate attachments.

Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, and Wall (1978) and Bowlby (1973) describe an identical process of attachment, separation, and loss in children. Here, for example, is Bowlby's description of the way the desire for security and the desire for freedom alternate in a toddler:

James Anderson describes watching two-year-olds whilst their mothers sit quietly on a seat in a London park. Slipping free from the mother, a two-year-old would typically move away from her in short bursts punctuated by halts. Then, after a more prolonged halt, he would return to her—usually in faster and longer bursts. Once returned, however, he would proceed again on another foray, only to return once more. It was as though he were tied to his mother by some invisible elastic that stretches so far and then brings him back to base. (pp. 44–45)

When a child's mother is around, he's usually not overly interested in her. He glances at her, sees that everything is all right, and sallies forth. Now and then he sneaks a quick glance to make sure she's still there or to check whether she still approves of what he's doing, but then he's off again. But should his mother disappear for a moment, it is a different story. The child becomes distressed and agitated. He devotes all his energy to searching for her. New adventures lose all allure. Of course, once she returns, he's off again. Should she disappear permanently, the child eventually despairs. Children, then, seem to be prewired to "long for union," to take pleasure at its attainment, and to worry or despair when love is absent. Shaver, Hazan, and Bradshaw (1984) attempt to spell out the way these childhood experiences may be reflected in adult love reactions. They observe that the child

who has grown up with a secure mother may be prone to experience companionate love, and the child who experiences "anxious attachment" may be especially susceptible to the drama of passionate love in adulthood. But children who have given up on love tend to be relatively immune to love in adulthood.

There is some evidence that all people—regardless of age (see Hatfield, Easton, Synodinos, & Schmitz, 1985; Traupmann & Hatfield, 1981), gender (see Hatfield & Rapson, 1985), ethnic group (see Easton, 1985), intelligence, mental health, or the historical era in which they live (see Hatfield & Rapson, 1985)—are *capable* of passionate/companionate love and are likely to experience such feelings intermittently throughout their lives. How frequently they experience such feelings is probably shaped by the extent to which society rewards or punishes such expressive displays.

In the first major section of this chapter, I will focus at length on what is known about passionate love (passionate emotions are the subject of the chapter). In the second section I will briefly sketch what is known about companionate love (other chapters in this book will focus on this form of love). In the last section, I will discuss the practical implications of recent research into passionate love.

WHAT IS PASSIONATE LOVE?

To repeat my definition of passionate love: it is "*a state of intense longing for union with another. Reciprocated love (union with the other) is associated with fulfillment and ecstasy. Unrequited love (separation) with emptiness, anxiety, or despair. A state of profound physiological arousal*" (p. 9).

The Passionate Love Scale (PLS) was recently developed to measure this emotion (see table 9.1). The PLS contains cognitive, emotional, and behavior indicants of "longing for union."

Cognitive components:

1. Intrusive thinking or preoccupation with the partner (in table 9.1, items 5, 19, and 21 tap this component).
2. Idealization of the other or of the relationship (items 7, 9, and 15 measure this component).
3. Desire to know the other and be known (item 10 measures the desire to know; item 22 measures the desire to be known).

Emotional components:

1. Attraction to other, especially sexual attraction; positive feelings when things go well (see items 16, 18, and 29).

2. Negative feelings when things go awry (see items 1, 2, 8, 20, 28, and 30).
3. Longing for reciprocity; passionate lovers not only love but want to be loved in return (item 14).
4. Desire for complete and permanent union (items 11, 12, 23, and 27).
5. Physiological arousal (items 3, 13, 17, and 26).

Behavioral components—a passionate lover's desire for union may be reflected in a variety of behaviors:

1. Actions toward determining the other's feelings (item 24).
2. Studying the other person (item 4).
3. Service to the other (items 6 and 25).
4. Maintaining physical closeness (the authors of the PLS had hoped to include some items designed to measure lovers' efforts to get physically close to the other, but lovers did not endorse such items, and they were dropped from the final version of the scale).

In sum, passionate love comprises cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components. (See Hatfield & Sprecher, 1985; Easton, 1985; Hatfield et al., 1985; and Sullivan, 1985; for information on the reliability and validity of the PLS.)

Scientists have long been aware that both mind and body shape emotional experience. The semiconscious assumptions people carry in their minds about what they *should* be feeling have a profound impact on what they *do* feel. People learn from society, parents, friends, and their own personal experiences who is appealing, what passion feels like, and how lovers behave. Thus cognitive factors influence how men and women interpret their feelings. But people can experience an emotion only if they experience the neurochemical and autonomic nervous system reactions appropriate to a given emotion. Thus, both mind and body make indispensable contributions to emotion. Cognitive factors determine how people will perceive, interpret, and encode emotional experiences. Physiological factors determine both what emotion they feel and how intensely they feel that emotion (see Hatfield & Walster, 1978).

The Nature of Passionate Love

For centuries, theorists have bitterly disagreed over the nature of love. Is it an intensely pleasurable experience, a painful one, or both? Early

TABLE 9.1 Passionate Love Scale

In this section of the questionnaire you will be asked to describe how you feel when you are passionately in love. Some common terms for this feeling are passionate love, infatuation, love sickness, or obsessive love.

Please think of the person whom you love most passionately *right now*. If you are not in love right now, please think of the last person you loved passionately. If you have never been in love, think of the person whom you came closest to caring for in that way. Keep this person in mind, as you complete this section of the questionnaire. (The person you choose should be of the opposite sex if you are heterosexual or of the same sex if you are homosexual.) Try to tell us how you felt at the time when your feelings were the most intense.

All of your answers will be strictly confidential.

1. Since I've been involved with _____, my emotions have been on a roller coaster.
- *2. I would feel deep despair if _____ left me.
3. Sometimes my body trembles with excitement at the sight of _____.
4. I take delight in studying the movements and angles of _____'s body.
- *5. Sometimes I feel I can't control my thoughts; they are obsessively on _____.
- *6. I feel happy when I am doing something to make _____ happy.
- *7. I would rather be with _____ than anyone else.
- *8. I'd get jealous if I thought _____ were falling in love with someone else.
9. No one else could love _____ like I do.
- *10. I yearn to know all about _____.
- *11. I want _____—physically, emotionally, mentally.
12. I will love _____ forever.
13. I melt when looking deeply into _____'s eyes.
- *14. I have an endless appetite for affection from _____.
- *15. For me, _____ is the perfect romantic partner.
16. _____ is the person who can make me feel the happiest.
- *17. I sense my body responding when _____ touches me.
18. I feel tender toward _____.
- *19. _____ always seems to be on my mind.
20. If I were separated from _____ for a long time, I would feel intensely lonely.
21. I sometimes find it difficult to concentrate on work because thoughts of _____ occupy my mind.
- *22. I want _____ to know me—my thoughts, my fears, and my hopes.
23. Knowing that _____ cares about me makes me feel complete.
- *24. I eagerly look for signs indicating _____'s desire for me.
25. If _____ were going through a difficult time, I would put away my own concerns to help him/her out.
26. _____ can make me feel effervescent and bubbly.
27. In the presence of _____, I yearn to touch and be touched.
28. An existence without _____ would be dark and dismal.
- *29. I possess a powerful attraction for _____.
- *30. I get extremely depressed when things don't go right in my relationship with _____.

Possible responses to each item range from:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Not at all true			Moderately true					Definitely true

* Indicates items selected for a short version of the PLS.

researchers took the position that passionate love was a thoroughly positive experience. Such a vision is often depicted in contemporary films. For example, in Diane Kurys's *Cocktail Molotov*, seventeen-year-old Anne falls head over heels in love with Frederic after he declares his love for her. Scenes of their wild, exuberant, coltish love remind us of the delights of passion.

Theorists such as Kendrick and Cialdini (1977) once argued that passionate love could easily be explained by reinforcement principles—passionate feelings were fueled by positive reinforcements and dampened by negative ones. Byrne (1971) reported a series of carefully crafted studies to demonstrate that people love/like those who reward them and hate/dislike those who punish them. (See Berscheid & Hatfield [1969] for a review of this research.)

By the 1960s, however, social psychologists had begun to develop a far more complicated concept of love. Sometimes passionate love *is* a joyously exciting experience, sparked by exciting fantasies and rewarding encounters with the loved one. But that is only part of the story. Passionate love is like any other form of excitement. By its very nature, excitement involves a continuous interplay between elation and despair, thrills and terror. Think, for example, of the mixed and rushed feelings that novice skiers experience. Their hearts begin to pound as they wait to catch the ski lift. When they realize they have made it, they are relieved. On the easy ride to the top, they are still a bit unnerved; their hands shake and their knees tremble, but they begin to relax. Moments later they look ahead and realize it is time to jump off the lift. The landing looks icy. Their rush quickly turns to panic. They can't turn back. They struggle to get their feelings under control. They jump off the lift, elated and panicky—it is hard to tell which emotion predominates. Then they start to ski downhill, experiencing as they go a wild jumble of powerful emotions. Eventually, they arrive at the bottom of the hill, elated, relieved. Perhaps they feel like crying. Sometimes they are so tired they are flooded with a wave of depression, but usually they get up, ready to try again. Passionate lovers experience the same roller coaster of feelings—euphoria, happiness, calm tranquillity, vulnerability, anxiety, panic, despair. The risks of love merely add fuel to the fire.

Sometimes men and women become entangled in love affairs in which the delight is brief, and pain, uncertainty, jealousy, misery, anxiety, and despair are abundant. Reviewer Blake Lucas (1984) describes just such a passionate relationship in his review of Rainer Werner Fassbinder's fifteen-and-a-half-hour film *Berlin Alexanderplatz*:

From his first low-angle close-up in a bar in the opening minute of the episode, Reinhold . . . the man who will become the key individual in Franz's destiny, is a mesmerizing figure. Lean and intense, with features that are a cross between the reptilian and the hawklike, [Reinhold] immediately becomes a figure who arouses contradictory emotions. Fassbinder suggests through camera placement and dramatic emphasis that there is something dangerous, perhaps evil, about him; but John's skillful projection of vulnerability by means of a subtly underplayed stutter . . . makes the character strangely pitiable, often in the moments that his behavior is most unpredictable and frightening. Franz and Reinhold are drawn to each other almost immediately. (pp. 61-62)

Often, passionate love seems to be fueled by a sprinkling of hope and a large dollop of loneliness, mourning, jealousy, and terror. In fact, in a few cases, it seems as if these men and women love others not *in spite of* the pain they experience, but *because of* it.

Recent social psychological research makes it clear why passionate love, which thrives on excitement, might be linked to a variety of strong related emotions—both positive and negative (see Hatfield & Walster, 1978).

Cognitive Factors

Society describes love in mixed ways.

Tennov (1979) interviewed more than five hundred passionate lovers. Almost all lovers took it for granted that passionate love (which Tennov labels "limerence") is a bittersweet experience. Liebowitz (1983) provides an almost lyrical description of the mixed nature of passionate love:

Love and romance seems [*sic*] to be one, if not the most powerful activator of our pleasure centers. . . . Both tend to be very exciting emotionally. Being with the person or even just thinking of him or her is highly stimulating. . . . Love is, by definition, the strongest positive feeling we can have. Other things—stimulant drugs, passionate causes, manic states—can induce powerful changes in our brains, but none so reliably, so enduringly, or so delightfully as that "right" other person. . . . If the relationship is not established or is uncertain, anxiety or other displeasure centers may be quite active as well, producing a situation of great emotional turmoil as the lover swings between hope and torment. (pp. 48-49)

It is clear, then, that people assume it is appropriate to use the term *passionate love* to label any "intense longing for union with another," regardless of whether that longing is reciprocated (and thus a source of fulfillment and ecstasy) or is thwarted (and thus a source of emptiness, anxiety, or despair).

The Physiological Component of Love

Recently, psychologists have assembled information from neuroanatomical and neurophysiological investigations, ablation experiments, pharmacologic explorations, clinical investigations, and behavioral research as to the nature of love. This research, too, documents the contention that passionate love is a far more complicated phenomenon than it had at first seemed. (See Kaplan's [1979] discussion of the neuroanatomy and neurophysiology of sexual desire and Liebowitz's [1983] discussion of the chemistry of passionate love, for lengthy reviews of this research.)

The Anatomy of Love

According to Kaplan (1979), the anatomy of passionate love/sexual desire is relatively well understood. The brain's sex center consists of a network of neural centers and circuits. These are centered within the limbic system—with nuclei in the hypothalamus and in the preoptic region. The limbic system is located in the limbus, or rim of the brain. In primitive vertebrates, this system controls emotion and motivation; it ensures that animals will act so as to secure their own survival and that of their species. In man, this archaic system remains essentially unchanged. It is here that men's and women's most powerful emotions are generated, their behavior most powerfully driven. In the sex centers, scientists have identified both activating and inhibitory centers.

The sexual system has extensive neural connections with other parts of the brain. For example, it has significant connections, both neural and chemical, with the brain's pleasure and pain centers. All behavior is shaped by the seeking of pleasure (seeking stimulation of the pleasure center) and the avoidance of pain (avoiding stimulation of the pain center).

Chemical receptor sites located on the neurons of the pleasure centers respond to a chemical that is produced by the brain cells. This has been tagged an "endorphin" because it resembles morphine chemically and physiologically—it causes euphoria and alleviates pain. Kaplan observes, "It may be speculated that eating and sex and being in love, *i.e.*, behaviors

which are experienced as pleasurable, produce this sensation by stimulation of the pleasure centers, electrically, or by causing the release of endorphins, or by both mechanisms" (p. 11).

Sexual desire is also anatomically and/or chemically connected with the pain centers. If sexual partners or experiences are associated with pain, they will cease to evoke sexual desire. A chemical mediator for pain, analogous to endorphin, may exist. Our brains are organized so that pain takes priority over pleasure. This, of course, makes sense from an evolutionary point of view.

Kaplan acknowledges that cognitive factors have a profound impact on sexual desire. Thus, the cortex—that part of the brain that analyzes complex perceptions and stores and retrieves memories—must have extensive neural connections with the sex center.

The Chemistry of Love

Psychologists are beginning to learn more about the chemistry of passionate love and a potpourri of related emotions. They are also learning more about the way that various emotions, positive and negative, interact.

Liebowitz (1983) has been the most willing to speculate about the chemistry of love. He argues that passionate love brings on a giddy feeling comparable to an amphetamine high. It is phenylethylamine (PEA), an amphetamine-related compound, that produces the mood-lifting and energizing effects of romantic love. He observes that "love addicts" and drug addicts have a lot in common: the craving for romance is merely the craving for a particular kind of high. The fact that most romances lose some of their intensity with time may well be due to normal biological processes.

The crash that follows a breakup is much like amphetamine withdrawal. Liebowitz speculates that there may be a chemical counteractant to lovesickness: MAO (monoamine oxidase) inhibitors may inhibit the breakdown of PEA, thereby "stabilizing" the lovesick.

Liebowitz also offers some speculations about the chemistry of the emotions that crisscross lovers' consciousness as they plunge from the highs to the lows of love. The highs include euphoria, excitement, relaxation, spiritual feelings, and relief. The lows include anxiety, terrifying panic attacks, the pain of separation, and the fear of punishment. His speculations are based on the assumption that nondrug and drug highs and lows operate via similar changes in brain chemistry.

To account for lovers' feelings of *excitement*, Liebowitz proposes that naturally occurring brain chemicals, similar to such stimulants as amphet-

amine and cocaine, produce the rush they feel. Passionate love is surely most tightly tied to these chemical reactions. A variety of other emotions, and a variety of other chemical reactions, may contribute to the subtle shadings of passionate love, however. Liebowitz articulates some of the chemical reactions that may be threaded through the passionate experience. Inducing *relaxation* are chemicals related to the narcotics (such as heroin, opium, and morphine), tranquilizers (such as Librium and Valium), sedatives (such as barbiturates, Quaaludes, and other "downers"), alcohol (which acts chemically much like the sedatives), and marijuana and other cannabis derivatives. They produce a mellow state and wipe out anxiety, loneliness, panic attacks, and depression. Chemicals similar to the psychedelics (such as LSD, mescaline, and psilocybin) produce a sense of beauty, meaningfulness, and timelessness—all *spiritual peak experiences*.

Physiologists do not usually try to produce *separation anxiety, panic attacks, or depression*. Such painful feelings may arise from two sources, however: (1) withdrawal from the chemicals that produce the highs and (2) chemicals that in and of themselves produce anxiety, pain, or depression. Research has not yet established whether Liebowitz's speculations as to the chemistry of love are correct.

Kaplan (1978) provides some information as to the chemistry of *sexual desire*. In both men and women, testosterone (and perhaps LH-RF) are the libido hormones. Dopamine may act as a stimulant, serotonin or 5-HT as inhibitors, to the sexual centers of the brain. Kaplan observes:

When we are in love, libido is high. Every contact is sensuous, thoughts turn to Eros, and the sexual reflexes work rapidly and well. The presence of the beloved is an aphrodisiac; the smell, sight, sound, and touch of the lover—especially when he/she is excited—are powerful stimuli to sexual desire. In physiologic terms, this may exert a direct physical effect on the neurophysiologic system in the brain which regulates sexual desire. . . . But again, there is no sexual stimulant so powerful, even love, that it cannot be inhibited by fear and pain. (p. 14)

Kaplan ends by observing that a wide array of cognitive and physiological factors shape desire.

Finally, although passionate love and the related emotions we have described may be associated with specific chemical neurotransmitters (or with chemicals that increase/decrease the receptors' sensitivity), *most emotions have more similarities than differences*. Finck (1891) made an interesting observation. He observed that "love can only be excited by strong and vivid emotion, and it is almost immaterial whether these emotions are agreeable or disagreeable" (p. 240). Negative emotions, he thought, could

enhance, if not incite, the positive emotion of love. Chemically, intense emotions do have much in common. Kaplan reminds us that chemically, love, joy, sexual desire, and excitement, as well as anger, fear, jealousy, and hate, have much in common: they are all intensely arousing. They all produce a sympathetic response in the nervous system. This is evidenced by the symptoms associated with all these emotions—a flushed face, sweaty palms, weak knees, butterflies in the stomach, dizziness, a pounding heart, trembling hands, and accelerated breathing. (The exact *pattern* of reaction varies from person to person; see Lacey [1967].)

Recent neuroanatomical/neurophysiological research suggests that the various emotions probably have tighter links than psychologists once thought. This is consistent with the recognition that in a passionately exciting encounter, people can move from elation through terror to the depths of despair and back again in a matter of seconds. Excitement may be confusing, but at least it's arousing. Such observations led Hatfield and Walster (1978) to conclude that passion can be ignited by pleasure and/or by pain—by delight in the other's presence or pain at the other's loss.

Recently, other researchers have begun to examine the exact nature of these interlinkages (see, for example, Zillman, 1984).

Behavioral Evidence that Both Pleasure and Pain May Fuel Emotion

Passionate love is such a risky business. Success sparks delight; failure invites despair. We get some indication of the strength of our passion by the intensity of our delight/despair. Of course, trying to calibrate our emotions is an elusive business. Sometimes it is difficult to tell to what extent your lover is responsible for the delight you feel versus the extent to which the highs you are experiencing are due to the fact that, say, you are ready for romance, or that the day is a glorious one, or that you are simply feeling good. It is difficult to tell to what extent your lover's coolness is responsible for your misery. To what extent is it due to the fact that you are lonely, or that you are afraid to go off on your own, or that your period is about to begin, or that you're simply "low"? Often it is hard to tell. In any case, there is an abundance of evidence to support the contention that, under the right conditions, a variety of intensely positive experiences, intensely negative ones, or neutral but energizing experiences can add to the passion of passion. Hatfield and Walster (1978) have labeled this process the "cross-magnification" or "chemical spill-over" effect.

PASSION AND THE POSITIVE EMOTIONS. In our definition of love we stated, "*Reciprocated love (union with the other) is associated with fulfillment and ecstasy.*" No one has doubted that love is a delightful experience

in its own right—it is such a high that the joys of love generally spill over and add sparkle to everything else in life. What has been of interest to psychologists, however, is the converse of this proposition: that the central and peripheral activation associated with a wide variety of highs can spill over and make passion more passionate (a sort of “better loving through chemistry” phenomenon).

A number of carefully crafted studies makes it clear that a variety of positive activities or emotions—listening to a comedy routine, such as Steve Martin’s “a wild and crazy guy” (White, Fishbein, & Rutstein, 1982), sexual fantasizing (Stephan, Berscheid, & Hatfield, 1971), erotic excitement (Istvan & Griffitt, 1978), or general excitement (Zuckerman, 1979)—can intensify passion.

In one investigation, for example, Istvan, Griffitt, and Weider (1983) aroused some men by showing them pictures of men and women engaged in sexual activities. Other men were shown nonarousing neutral fare. Then they asked the men to evaluate the appeal of beautiful and unattractive women. When the woman was pretty, the aroused men rated her as more attractive than they normally would; when the woman was unattractive, the aroused men rated her as less attractive than they normally would. Apparently the men’s sexual arousal spilled over and intensified whatever they would normally have felt for the woman—for good or ill. Similar results have been secured with women. Sexually aroused women find handsome men more appealing, and homely men less appealing, than usual.

PASSION AND THE NEGATIVE EMOTIONS. In defining passionate love we also observed, “*Unrequited love (separation) is associated with emptiness, anxiety, or despair.*” Psychologists have long observed that the failure to acquire or sustain love is an extraordinarily painful experience. Theorists such as Bowlby (1973), Peplau and Perlman (1982), and Weiss (1973) describe the panic, despair, and eventual detachment that both children and adults feel at the loss of someone they love.

By now, psychologists have amassed considerable evidence that people are especially vulnerable to love when their lives are turbulent. Passion *can* be intensified by the spillover of feeling from one realm to another. A variety of negative experiences has been found to deepen desire. For example, Dutton and Aron (1974), in two studies, discovered a close link between fear and sexual attraction.

In one experiment, the researchers invited men and women to participate in a learning experiment. When the men showed up, they found that their “partner” was a strikingly beautiful woman. They also discovered

that, by signing up for the experiment, they had gotten more than they had bargained for. The experimenter was studying the effects of electric shock on learning. Sometimes the experimenter quickly went on to reassure the men that they'd been assigned to a control group and would be receiving only a barely perceptible tingle of a shock. At other times, the experimenter tried to terrify the men: he warned them that they'd be getting some pretty painful electric shocks.

Before the supposed experiment was to begin, the experimenter approached each man privately and asked how he felt about the beautiful coed who "happened" to be his partner. He asked the men to tell him, in confidence, how attracted he was to her ("How much would you like to ask her out for a date?" "How much would you like to kiss her?"). The investigators had predicted that fear would facilitate attraction, and it did. The terrified men found the women a lot sexier than did the calmer men.

In another study, the investigators compared reactions of young men crossing two bridges in North Vancouver. The first, the Capilano Canyon Suspension Bridge, is a 450-foot-long, 5-foot-wide span that tilts, sways, and wobbles over a 230-foot drop to rocks and shallow rapids below. The other bridge, a bit farther upstream, is a solid, safe structure. As each young man crossed the bridge, a good-looking college woman approached him. She explained that she was doing a class project and asked if he would fill out a questionnaire for her. When the man had finished, the woman offered to explain her project in greater detail. She wrote her telephone number on a piece of paper so the man could call her if he wanted more information. Which men called? Nine of the thirty-three men on the suspension bridge called her; only two of the men on the solid bridge called.

This study, of course, can be interpreted several ways. Perhaps the men who called really were interested in her project. Perhaps the adventurous men were more likely both to cross dangerous bridges and to call dangerous women. Perhaps it was not fear but relief at having survived the crossing that stimulated desire. It is always possible to find alternative explanations for any given study.

But by now there is a great deal of experimental and correlational evidence for the more intriguing contention that, under the right conditions, passion can be deepened by a variety of awkward and painful experiences—*anxiety and fear* (Aron, 1970; J. W. Brehm et al., 1978; Dienstbier, 1979; Dutton & Aron, 1974; Hoon, Wincze, & Hoon, 1977; Riordan & Tedeschi, 1983), *embarrassment* (Byrne, Przybyla, & Infantino, 1981), the discomfort of seeing others involved in conflict (Dutton, 1979), *jealousy* (Clanton & Smith, 1977), *loneliness* (Peplau & Perlman, 1982), *anger*

(Barclay, 1969), anger at parental attempts to break up an affair (Driscoll, Davis, & Lipetz, 1972), hearing grisly stories of a mob mutilating and killing a missionary while his family watched (White et al., 1981), or even grief.

PASSION AND EMOTIONALLY NEUTRAL AROUSAL. In fact, recent laboratory research indicates that passion can be stirred by excitation transfer from such emotionally neutral, but arousing experiences as riding an exercise bicycle (Cantor, Zillman, & Bryant, 1975) or jogging (White, Fishbein, & Rutstein, 1981).

White, Fishbein, and Rutstein (1981) conducted a series of elegant studies to demonstrate that passion can be intensified by any intense experience. In one experiment, some men (those in the high-arousal group) were required to engage in strenuous physical exercise (they ran in place for 120 seconds). Other men (those in the low-arousal group) ran in place for only 15 seconds. The men's mood was not effected by exertion. A variety of self-report questions and heart-rate measures established that these two groups varied greatly in arousal.

Men then watched a videotaped interview with a woman they expected soon to meet. Half of the time the woman was attractive, half of the time unattractive. After the interview, the men gave their first impression of the woman; they estimated her attractiveness and sexiness. They also indicated how attracted they felt to her, how much they wanted to kiss and date her.

The authors proposed that exertion-induced arousal would intensify men's reactions to the woman—for good or ill. Aroused subjects would be more attracted to the attractive confederate and more repulsed by the unattractive confederate than would subjects with lower levels of arousal. The authors found just that. If the woman was beautiful, the men who were aroused via exertion judged her to be unusually appealing. If the woman was unattractive, the men who were aroused via exertion judged her to be unusually unappealing. The effect of arousal, then, was to intensify a person's initial "intrinsic" attractiveness. Arousal enhanced the appeal of the pretty woman as much as it impaired the appeal of the homely one. (See Zillman [1984] for a review of this research on excitation transfer.)

The evidence suggests, then, that adrenalin makes the heart grow fonder. Delight is one stimulant of passionate love, yet anxiety and fear, or simply high arousal, can often play a part.

Each new discovery, of course, generates more questions. When do powerful emotions such as anxiety, anger, and fear stimulate passionate

attraction? When do they destroy it? Answers to this question are obviously critically important. In my University of Hawaii human sexuality class I often find myself explaining in my lecture in week 1 that excitement, fear, and anxiety are important stimulants to passionate love—and explaining in week 10 that anxiety causes disorders of sexual desire and sexual dysfunction. Obviously, what we need now is a theoretical framework to guide us in predicting when powerful emotions will stimulate passion and when they will destroy it. As yet, no one has begun to answer this important question.

WHAT IS COMPANIONATE LOVE? INTIMACY?

Although the focus of this chapter is passionate love, I would like to devote a few paragraphs outlining how passionate love is similar to and different from companionate love. Earlier, we defined companionate love this way: “*The affection we feel for those with whom our lives are deeply entwined.*”

What is intimacy? The word itself is derived from the Latin *intimus*, meaning “inner” or “inmost.” In a wide variety of languages, the word *intimate* refers to a person’s innermost qualities. For example, the French *intime* signifies “secret, deep, fervent, ardent.” The Italian *intimo* conveys “internal, close in friendship.” In Spanish, *intimo* means “private, close, innermost.” To be intimate, then, means to be close to another. Hatfield (1984) defined intimacy as: “*A process in which people attempt to get close to another; to explore similarities (and differences) in the way they think, feel, and behave.*”

Intimate relationships have a number of characteristics:

COGNITIVE. Intimates are willing to reveal themselves to one another. They disclose information about themselves and listen to their partners’ confidences. In deeply intimate relationships, friends and lovers feel free to reveal most facets of themselves in all their complexities and contradictions. As a result, intimates share profound information about one another’s histories, values, strengths, weaknesses, idiosyncrasies, hopes, and fears (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Huesmann & Levinger, 1976; Jourard, 1964).

EMOTIONAL. Intimates care deeply about one another. In passionate love, people usually long for intimacy; in companionate love people usually have it. It is in intimate relationships that people feel most intensely; they love their intimates more than anyone else. Yet, exactly because intimates care so much about one another, they have the power to elicit intense pain. The dark side of love is jealousy, loneliness, depression, and anger. It is this powerful interplay of conflicting emotions that gives vibrancy to the most

intimate of relationships (see Berscheid, 1979, 1983; Hatfield & Walster, 1978).

BEHAVIORAL. Intimates are comfortable in close physical proximity. They gaze at one another (Argyle, 1967), lean on one another (Galton, 1884; Hatfield, Roberts & Schmidt, 1980), stand close to one another (Allgeier & Byrne, 1973), and perhaps touch.

These are the definitions of companionate love and intimacy that I will use in the remainder of this chapter.

I began this chapter by discussing the genesis of love, speculating that in primates, passionate and companionate love might be complementary forms of attachment. Passionate love seems to be a state of ecstasy/misery. The infant primate appears to feel most passionately when he first realizes that his mother is gone or when his mother returns after a short, painful absence. Companionate love seems to be an appropriate description for the gentle feelings of affection and attachment that primates feel for others when things are going well. The experience of companionate love seems much the same in human adults and children (see Hatfield et al., 1985; Berscheid & Hatfield, 1978).

Rubin (1970) argues that this type of love (which he terms "romantic love") includes such elements as responsibility for the other, tenderness, self-disclosure, and exclusivity. He has developed an excellent scale to measure what I would consider to be predominantly companionate love. It includes such items as "I feel that I can confide in _____ about virtually everything"; "I would do almost anything for _____"; and "If I could never be with _____, I would feel miserable."

Reinforcement theorists are generally agreed upon the conditions that foster companionate love—they argue that men and women come to love those who reward them and dislike those who punish them. Byrne (1971) has fashioned a rather elegant reinforcement model of interpersonal attraction from this commonsense observation. Byrne's "law of attraction" looks like this:

$$Y = m \left[\frac{\Sigma PR}{(\Sigma PR + \Sigma NR)} \right] + k$$

In Byrne's formula, Y stands for attraction, PR for positive reinforcement, and NR for negative reinforcement; k is a constant.

Byrne points out that we come to companionately love/like people who are merely *associated* with pleasure and to dislike those who are

associated with pain. How much companionate love we feel for others, then, should be a direct function of how secure, pleasant, and reinforcing we find their company to be. Insecurity, unpleasantness, and punishment should only detract from this form of love. (For research in support of this contention, and a review of the wide array of things men and women generally find to be reinforcing, see Berscheid & Hatfield, 1978; Byrne, 1971; Hatfield et al., 1984; Duck & Gilmour, 1981-1984.)

Superficially, it would seem that a theoretical principle differentiates passionate love from companionate love: passionate love seems to be fueled by ecstasy or misery, whereas companionate love is intensified only by pleasure; any sprinkling of pain *decreases* companionate feelings. In the main this formulation holds. There is, however, one bit of untidiness in this neat formulation.

In the past, reinforcement theorists could justly be criticized for being simplistic about the things that couples would find reinforcing/nonreinforcing/punishing in their most intimate affairs. Somehow the "maximally rewarding relationship" scientists described always sounded rather boring. Ideally, couples would be locked in total agreement, smiling and nodding at one another, avoiding all stress. Of course, in real relationships, the rewards men and women long for are diverse. Some like partners who will agree with them, but others long for a little spirited debate. Some of us prefer saintly partners, but many of us like others who are no better than ourselves. It is rather a relief when both partners know in their bones that they will be able to make a thousand mistakes and the relationship will still hold together. For most couples, in the long run, an intimate encounter is the ultimate reward, and intimate relationships are a mixed bag of rewards and frustrations.

In sum, it seems that passionate love is fueled by passionate experiences, good and bad, whereas companionate love is fueled by positive experiences and dampened by painful ones. In general, this statement seems to be true. But companionate love and intimacy exist in the real world, and real-world relationships involve both rewards and punishments. The difference, then, between passionate love and companionate love seems to be one of emphasis rather than absolute differences. Passionate love involves ecstasy/misery. Companionate love flourishes in a mixture of pleasure sprinkled occasionally with real-life frustrations.

Most people, of course, hope to combine the delights of passionate love with the security of companionate love in their intimate relationships—and this, of course, takes some doing. Recently, no end of clinicians have come forward to tell them how to do the impossible.

IMPLICATIONS FOR INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

In the first section I traced the history of social psychological research on passionate love, and in the second section I reviewed what psychologists know about companionate love. At the same time this basic research was being conducted, clinical psychologists, too, were conducting studies on love and intimate relationships. Their research, however, leaned heavily on clinical observation. They, too, by a very different route, have come to recognize that passionate, intimate love relationships are far more complicated than they had originally believed. Clinicians started out thinking of family relationships as relatively straightforward, capable of rigorous control. They ended up recognizing that relationships are as muddy and mixed as life itself. This recognition has caused marital and family therapists to devise somewhat different strategies for dealing with intimate encounters.

Thus, in the 1940s to the 1960s, clinicians, especially those with a behaviorist bent, tended to think of passionate love and intimate relationships in fairly simple ways. Love and intimacy would thrive best on a steady diet of pleasant interactions; unpleasantness was to be avoided at all costs. This vision shaped the advice early behaviorists gave couples.

In social situations, men and women have a choice as to which of two very different strategies they will adopt—they can act as performers or as intimates.

THE PERFORMING MODE. In some situations—when one is acting in a theater company, interviewing for a job as a salesman, or dealing with people whom one has little reason to trust—one must give a performance. The individual tries to look one's best (or worst), act confidently (or shyly), be rewarding (or punishing). Scales such as Christie's Mach II (Christie & Geis, 1970) or Snyder's Self-Monitoring Scale (Snyder, 1974; Lennox & Wolfe, 1984; Gangestad & Snyder, 1985) measure such manipulative abilities.

THE INTIMATE MODE. In some situations, such as dealing with intimate lovers, family members, and friends, one wants to be as relaxed and honest as possible. Scales such as Schaefer & Olson's Intimacy Scale (1984) or Miller's Intimacy Measure (Miller & Lefocurt, 1982) measure such intimacy skills. In most real-life encounters, men and women engage in a balancing act between performing and intimacy.

In the 1950s, behavioristically oriented clinicians concentrated on teaching men and women how to reward their mates for acting as they wished them to (see Patterson, 1971, Jacobson & Margolin, 1949, or

Berscheid & Hatfield, 1969). Popular authors such as Andelin (1971) advised women to be at the door with a cold martini when their husbands came home. They should have the house spotlessly clean and the children snugly tucked in. Such advice was fine, but it had two shortcomings: (1) the husband might be delighted with all the positive reinforcements he was receiving, but women were getting madder and madder at the inequity, and (2) such relationships were singularly lacking in intimacy—couples were giving a performance. (It is interesting in this regard that the reward Andelin promised wives in return for all their work was not intimacy, but a new stove and refrigerator.)

Sometimes putting on a show is necessary. It can be useful to be able to hold your tongue, to slow things down when that's what's called for. But a relationship that is all acting is no relationship at all.

Recently, the pendulum has begun to shift. Cognitive psychologists (Tavris, 1982; Paolino & McCrady, 1978), family therapists (Guerin, 1976; Napier & Whitaker, 1978), existential humanists (Yalom, 1980), gestalt therapists (Polster & Polster, 1973), eclectic therapists (Offit, 1977; Pope & Associates, 1980), and social psychologists (Brehm, 1985; Duck & Gilmour, 1981–1984) have begun to shape the way people think about relationships. Clinicians now take it for granted that love and intimate relationships are extraordinarily complex phenomena. One person, the performer, just cannot manipulate a relationship into perfection. It takes two, and even then the matter is difficult. In relationships, there are rarely blacks and whites; real existence inhabits the area between, in many shades of gray. One simply has to recognize that life is muddy and to try to enjoy, as best as possible, sloshing around in it. Increasingly, clinicians are involved in teaching their clients intimacy skills, which are fundamental to a relationship. Manipulation is a more limited talent, to be used when a special intractable problem arises.

In sum, in a few situations in life, the only thing one can do is to play out a stereotyped role. In most situations, one has to be at least tactful; in a few situations, downright manipulation may be called for if one is to survive. But on those occasions when real intimacy is possible, independent men and women can recognize its promise, seize the opportunities, and take chances.

A Prescription for Intimacy

Nearly everyone needs a warm intimate relationship. At the same time, one must recognize that in every social encounter there are some risks.

What, then, is the solution? Social psychological research and clinical experience gives us some hints.

A basic theoretical assumption provides the framework we use in teaching people how to be intimate with others. To acquire this ability, people must be capable of independence. Independence and intimacy are not opposing personality traits, but interrelated skills. People who lack the ability to be independent can never really be intimate. Lovers who are dependent on their mates, who cannot get along in life without the other, are precisely those least likely to reveal their fears, irritations, and anxieties to the other lest the partner leave the relationship. They are walking on eggshells, anxious not to upset or anger their mate with their darker interior concerns. They dare not risk intimacy. Independent persons, on the other hand, who know they can make it on their own are in a position to be brave about insisting on intimacy. They're not willing to settle for mates who don't care and can't listen. They can afford to be unusually brave about sharing their innermost lives with their mates.

Dr. Richard Rapson and I have worked as marital and family therapists at King Kalakaua Center for Psychotherapy in Honolulu. Most of the couples who come to see us have trouble initiating, maintaining, and terminating relationships. During the course of therapy, we often set out to teach these people intimacy skills. We try to make couples comfortable with the notion that they are separate people, with separate ideas and feelings, who can nevertheless sometimes come profoundly close to others.

According to theorists, one of the most difficult tasks people face is to learn how to maintain their own identity and integrity while yet engaging in deeply intimate relationships with others (for a fuller discussion of this point, see Hatfield, 1984).

Argyle (1967) and Hatfield (1985) have attempted to provide detailed information on teaching people to be more intimate in their love relationships. The advice they and we give is as follows:

Developing Intimacy Skills

1. *Encouraging people to accept themselves as they are:* It is a great temptation to dwell in the realm of absolutes. One is either a saint or a sinner. Many people are determined to be perfect (at least); they can't settle for less.

Yet saintliness/evil are the least interesting of human conditions. Real life is lived in the middle zone. Real people inevitably have strengths, yet

everybody possesses small quirks that make them what they are. One trick to enjoying life is not just to accept diversity but to learn to take pleasure in it.

The first step in learning to be independent/intimate, then, is for people to come to accept the fact that they are entitled to be what they are, that their ideas and their feelings are legitimate. Doing the best they can do is good enough.

In therapy, we try to move people from the notion that one should come into the world perfect and continue that way to a realization that one can gain wisdom only in small steps. People must pick one small goal and work to accomplish it. When that is accomplished, they can move on to another. That way change is manageable, possible (Watson & Tharp, 1981). One can never attain perfection; one can only work toward it.

2. *Encouraging people to recognize their intimates for what they are:* People may be hard on themselves, but they can be even harder on their partners. Most people have the idea that everyone is entitled to a perfect partner, or at least one a little bit better than the one available (see Hatfield et al., 1981). If people are going to have an intimate relationship, they have to learn to enjoy others as they are without hoping to “fix them.”

It is extraordinarily difficult for people to accept that their friends are entitled to be the people they are. From our own point of view, it seems so clear that things would be far better if our mates were only the people we wanted them to be. It would take so little for them to change their whole character structure. Why are they so stubborn?

When men and women come to the realization that their lovers or friends are the people who exist right now—not the mates they wish them to be, not the mates they could be—intimacy becomes possible.

3. *Encouraging people to express themselves:* Next, intimates have to learn to be more comfortable about expressing their ideas and feelings. This is harder than one might think.

People's intimate relationships are usually their most important ones. When passions are so intense, consequences so momentous, people are often hesitant to speak the truth. From moment to moment, they are tempted to present a consistent picture. If they're in love, they are hesitant to admit to any niggling doubts. (What if the person they love is hurt? What if their revelations destroy the relationship?) When they are angry, they don't want to speak about their love or their self-doubts; they want to lash out.

To be intimate, people have to push toward a more honest, graceful,

complete, and patient communication; to understand that a person's ideas and feelings are necessarily complex, with many nuances, shadings, and inconsistencies. In love there is time to clear things up.

One interesting thing that people often discover is that their affection increases when they begin to admit their irritations. People are often surprised to discover that sometimes, when they think they have fallen out of love and are bored with their affair, if they begin to express their anger and ambivalence, they feel their love come back in a rush.

In *The Family Crucible* Napier and Whitaker (1978) describe just such a confrontation:

What followed was a classic confrontation. If John's affair was a kind of reawakening, so now was this marital encounter, though of a very different sort. Eleanor was enraged, hurt, confused, and racked with a sense of failure. John was guilty, also confused, but not apologetic. The two partners fought and cried, talked and searched for an entire night. The next evening, more exhausting encounters. Feelings that had been hidden for years emerged; doubts and accusations that they had never expected to admit articulated.

Eleanor had to find out everything, and the more she discovered, the more insatiable her curiosity became. The more she heard, the guiltier her husband became and the angrier she grew, until he finally cried for a halt. It was his cry for mercy that finally led to a temporary reconciliation of the couple. They cried together for the first time either of them could remember.

For a while they were elated; they had achieved a breakthrough in their silent and dreary marriage. They felt alive together for the first time in years. Somewhat mysteriously, they found themselves going to bed together in the midst of a great tangle of emotions—continuing anger, and hurt, and guilt, and this new quality: abandon. The love-making was, they were to admit to each other, "the best it had ever been." How could they have moved through hatred into caring so quickly? (p. 153)

Love and hate tend to flow together (Hatfield & Walster, 1978; Kaplan, 1979).

4. *Teaching people to deal with their intimate's reactions:* To say that people *should* communicate their ideas and feelings, that they *must* communicate if they are to have an intimate affair, does not mean their partners are going to like it. People must expect that it will hurt when they try to express their deepest feelings. Lovers and friends may tell them frankly how deeply they have hurt them and that will make them feel extremely guilty. Or they may react with intense anger.

Intimates have to learn to stop responding in automatic fashion to such emotional outbursts—to quit backing up, apologizing for what they have said, measuring their words. They have to learn to stay calm, remind themselves that they are entitled to say what they think, feel what they feel, listen to what their partners think and feel, and to keep on trying.

Only then is there a chance of an intimate encounter.

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