

Three Pillars of Love

Love is defined differently by everyone, even those in a committed relationship. Robert Sternberg has defined love in an interpersonal relationship as having three components: Intimacy - feelings of closeness, connectedness and being bonded; Passion - the energy which powers and drives romance, physical attraction and generally sexual consummation; and Commitment - either a short or long term decision to maintain love in the relationship.

The amount and kind of love the partners have depends on the strength of each of these components. The strength of these components is likely to change over time which creates a dynamic relationship. The endurance of a relationship is strengthened when the relationship is based on more than one of the components. Sternberg refers to the relationships with a strong balance of each of the three elements as 'consummate love'.

The Triangle model works well for discussion and understanding of love in interpersonal relationships. I have used this model to assist many individuals to have a starting point to communicate effectively ways to increase the quality of their relationship. If you find this concept interesting, I would love to visit with you about your questions or comments.

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