



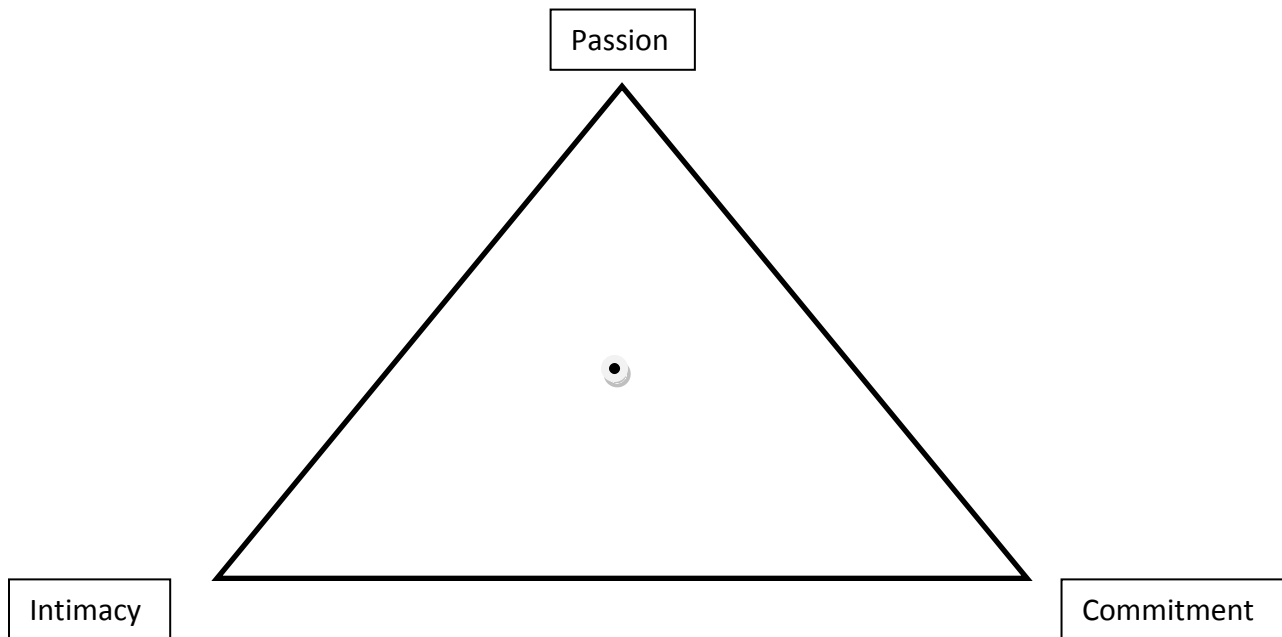
Building Intimacy – Love Changes Over time

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There is a famous theory of love that might be interesting to you. Robert Sternberg's triangular theory of love states that couples express love in 3 interconnected ways: passion, intimacy, and commitment.

- Passion – hot, passionate feelings that that come & go in any marriage. This tends to ebb and flow from day to day.
 - Intimacy – warmth of companionship and unity that comes from sharing similar experiences. Usually takes a long time to build and also a long time to erode.
 - Commitment – decision to love someone and maintain that love; these are the dedication & constraints that hold two people together. More like an “on-off” switch. It can be turned up or down, but tends to increase or decrease in jumps rather than smoothly.
- The theory holds that a couple's levels of each vary throughout the relationship. By increasing one, you tend to decrease another. To some couples, one aspect is more important while to others, another is prioritized.
 - For this exercise, discuss as a couple how these 3 ways of expressing love have changed over the course of your relationship. Use the next page to “map” your love on the triangle. If you had perfectly balanced all 3, your dot would be in the center of the triangle. Use the following symbols to chart the amount at:
 - E Engaged, Just before you got married.
 - H On your honeymoon.
 - 1 At the end of your first year of marriage.
 - C After having your 1st child.
 - You can add more events relevant to your own history
 - N Now
 - If you are early in your relationship then map where you think you'll be at future event times in your life together.
 - It is important to recognize that love can change throughout your relationship. It is very common to decrease passionate love as your relationship progresses into middle age and elderly years.

Expressions of Love



The primary ways love is expressed in your relationship change over time. As one area is prioritized, another area tends to decrease. To some couples, one aspect is more important while to others, another is prioritized.

Discuss how has expression of love in your relationship changed over the years?

- Just before you got married. _____
- On your honeymoon. _____
- At the end of your first year of marriage. _____
- After having your first child. _____
- Now. _____