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The Art of Loving in the 21st Century - Project Abstract

Project Overview and Rationale

In contemporary culture, the word *love* is often used to encompass an all-inclusive emotional descriptor, however philosophers and psychologists recognize that the word is multifaceted. For instance, the Greeks have established eight distinct types of love that exist, those being *Eros*, *Philia*, *Storge*, *Agape*, *Ludus*, *Pragma*, *Philautia*, and *Mania*, each representing a unique emotional and relational dynamic (Cleveland Clinic, 2025). Understanding these categories allows people to relate to one another beyond the idealized romantic ideal that has been popularized in Western media. From this, *The Art of Loving in the 21st Century* is an interactive web project that aims to utilize web and interactive design to explore the spectrum of love through the lens of the 21st century.

This project seeks to shift the cultural narrative surrounding the idea and feeling of love by creating a digital space where users can learn about and reflect on how love manifests itself in every aspect of one's life. For example, *Philia* highlights deep friendship and mutual respect, whereas *Agape* embodies unconditional compassion for others regardless of status or relation (Love Button Global Movement, 2018). *The Art of Loving in the 21st Century* connects these ideas together utilizing interactive design elements, encouraging users to reflect on the love they have and share. The root idea behind this concept originated from the how narrowly minded the idea of love is presented in popular culture and media. By shining a light on the various forms of love, this website encourages emotional literacy, therefore strengthening both new and already existing relationships.

Project Structure and Content

The Art of Loving in the 21st Century is structured as a narrative journey through the eight types of love. Each type of love has its own dedicated page that is paired with brief explanatory text, with respective interactive elements designed to encourage user reflection and interaction.

For example, the first type of love, *Eros*, refers to the romantic, passionate, and physical love one feels towards another. Derived from the Greek god of desire, *Eros* is characterized by a feeling of intense longing and emotional excitement that can attract individuals to one another, crafting a deeply physical relationship (Gulla, 2020). However, this love can also bring about volatility when it overtakes, or is overtaken, by the other forms of love. Therefore, it is very crucial to balance *Eros* in a relationship, as it can quickly taint a relationship (Gulla, 2020). An idea for the interactive element for this section would be to have a pulsing heart that, upon clicking, will spew out various words relating to *Eros*, such as consuming, breathless, or unsteady, reflecting the intensity that comes with this love.

Agape, as mentioned before, is the love that extends beyond personal relationships and demands a deep level of compassion for anyone. Drawn from both Greek philosophy and modern interpretations, *Agape* invites users to reflect on various small, or large, acts of kindness that can impact another individual, or large group of individuals, without expecting any reward in return (Jones, 2015). From this, an interactive element for this type of love would be to have multiple hearts that need to be given to characters scattered on the page. This encourages the user to revisit the page and search for these individuals and share some love in order to brighten their day, which can easily be reflected in real life.

Creative and Technical Design

The visual and interactive components of this project are crucial to the overall delivery of the website, as they constantly reinforce the emotional nuance present through the use of color, typography, and composition. Each love type will have its own distinct color palette, acting as an extension of what that love may feel like. *Philia* for example can be represented through various shades of blue, as blue is often associated with calmness, reliability, and credibility. These associations parallel the core attributes of *Philia*, being respect, loyalty, and enduring companionship (Love Button Global Movement, 2018).

The interactivity element is structured around engagement rather than distraction or gamification, relying on simple actions associated with each love type. For instance, *Philautia* may invite users to write out positive affirmations or positive qualities about themselves, reinforcing active self-love, rather than taking it in passively through reading text that describes the act. *Mania* on the other hand, representing obsessive love, may be associated with a pendulum, demonstrating how the intensity can sway between joy and fear. In attaching these simple actions with each love type, it encourages active interaction that aligns with the digital space. This, in turn, facilitates both learning and introspection.

Bibliography

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