LOVE

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- Types of Love

- Best love stories ?

“We accept the love we think we deserve.”

— Stephen Chbosky, The Perks of Being a Wallflower

“Your task is not to seek for love, but merely to seek and find all the barriers within yourself that you have built against it.”

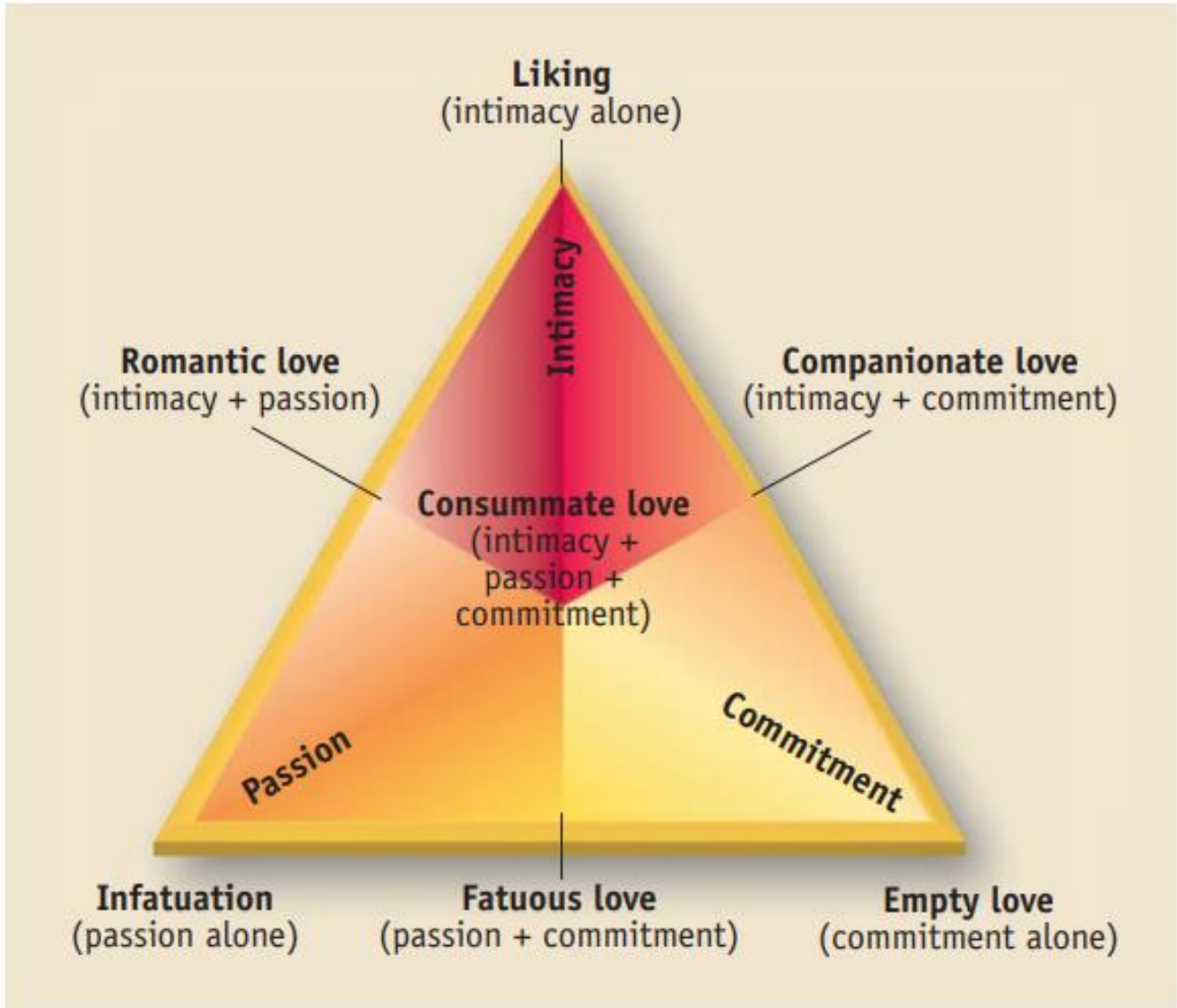
— Rumi

- Sexual Orientation and Love
- Sexual orientation refers to a person’s preference for emotional and sexual relationships with individuals of the same gender, the other gender, or either gender.
- Heterosexuals seek emotional-sexual relationships with members of the other gender. Homosexuals seek emotional-sexual relationships with members of the same gender. Bisexuals seek emotional-sexual relationships with members of both genders.

- In recent years, the terms gay and straight have become widely used to refer to homosexuals and heterosexuals, respectively. Gay can refer to homosexuals of either gender, but most homosexual women prefer to call themselves lesbians.
- Many studies of romantic love and relationships suffer from heterosexism, or the assumption that all individuals and relationships are heterosexual.

Triangular Theory of Love

- Robert Sternberg's (1986, 1988, 2006) triangular theory of love posits that all love experiences are made up of three components: intimacy, passion, and commitment.


Liking
(intimacy alone)
Intimacy
Romantic love
(intimacy + passion)
Companionate love
(intimacy + commitment)
Consummate love
(intimacy +
passion +
commitment)
Passion
Commitment
Infatuation
(passion alone)
Fatuous love
(passion + commitment)
Empty love
(commitment alone)

- Intimacy refers to warmth, closeness, and sharing in a relationship. Signs of intimacy include giving and receiving emotional support, valuing the loved one, wanting to promote the welfare of the loved one, and sharing one's self and one's possessions with another.
- Self-disclosure is necessary in order to achieve and maintain feelings of intimacy in a relationship, whether platonic or romantic.

- Passion refers to the intense feelings (both positive and negative) experienced in love relationships, including sexual desire. Passion is related to drives that lead to romance, physical attraction, and sexual consummation.
- Although sexual needs may be dominant in many close relationships, other needs also figure in the experience of passion, including the needs for nurturance, self-esteem, dominance, submission, and self-actualization. For example, self-esteem is threatened when someone experiences jealousy. Passion obviously figures most prominently in romantic relationships.

- Commitment involves the decision and intent to maintain a relationship in spite of the difficulties and costs that may arise. According to Sternberg, commitment has both short-term and long-term aspects.
- The short-term aspect concerns the conscious decision to love someone.
- The long-term aspect reflects the determination to make a relationship endure.
- Although the decision to love someone usually comes before commitment, that is not always the case (in arranged marriages, for instance).

- The triangular theory alone doesn’t fully capture the complexity of love (Hsia & Schweinle, 2012). It seems that how people bond with others plays a role.
- Madey and Rodgers (2009) found that the way one bonds with others (or one’s attachment style) predicts intimacy and commitment levels, which in turns predicts relationship satisfaction.

Activity

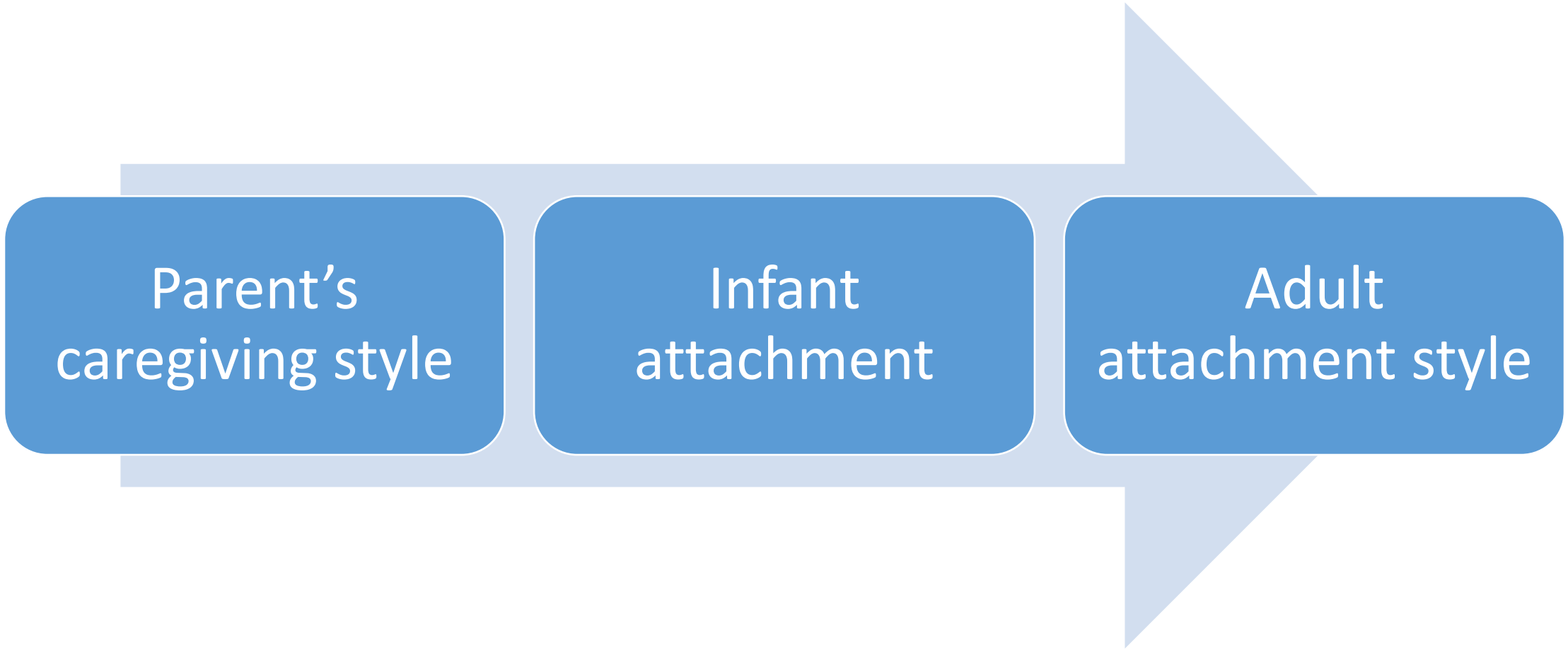
- ____ A. It is easy for me to become emotionally close to others. I am comfortable depending on them and having them depend on me. I don't worry about being alone or having others not accept me.
- ____ B. I am uncomfortable getting close to others. I want emotionally close relationships, but I find it difficult to trust others completely, or to depend on them. I worry that I will be hurt if I allow myself to become too close to others.
- ____ C. I want to be completely emotionally intimate with others, but I often find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like. I am uncomfortable being without close relationships, but I sometimes worry that others don't value me as much as I value them.
- ____ D. I am comfortable without close emotional relationships. It is very important to me to feel independent and self-sufficient, and I prefer not to depend on others or have others depend on me.

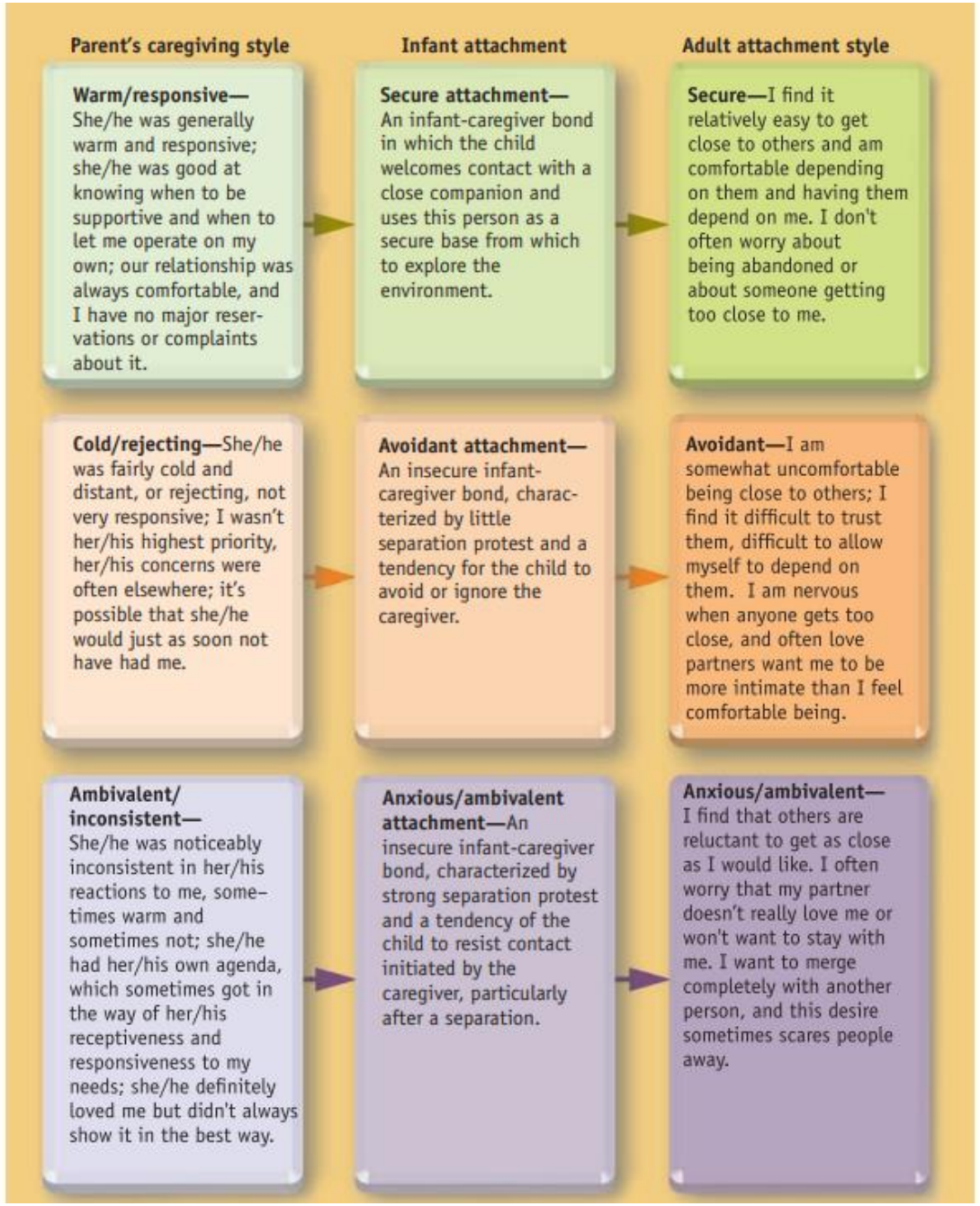
Romantic Love as Attachment

- In a groundbreaking theory of love, Cindy Hazan and Phillip Shaver (1987) asserted that romantic love can be conceptualized as an attachment process, with similarities to the bond between infants and their caregivers.
- According to these theorists, adult romantic love and infant attachment share a number of features: intense fascination with the other person, distress at separation, and efforts to stay close and spend time together.

- Of course, there are also differences: Infant-caregiver relationships are one-sided, whereas caregiving in romantic relationships works both ways. A second difference is that romantic relationships usually have a sexual component, whereas infant-caregiver relationships do not.

- Attachment styles, or typical ways of interacting in close relationships. Attachment styles develop during the first year of life and strongly influence individuals' interpersonal interactions from then on.


Parent's caregiving style
Infant attachment
Adult attachment style


Parent's caregiving style
Infant attachment
Adult attachment style
Warm/responsive—She/he was generally warm and responsive; she/he was good at knowing when to be supportive and when to let me operate on my own; our relationship was always comfortable, and I have no major reservations or complaints about it.
Secure attachment—An infant-caregiver bond in which the child welcomes contact with a close companion and uses this person as a secure base from which to explore the environment.
Secure—I find it relatively easy to get close to others and am comfortable depending on them and having them depend on me. I don't often worry about being abandoned or about someone getting too close to me.
Cold/rejecting—She/he was fairly cold and distant, or rejecting, not very responsive; I wasn't her/his highest priority, her/his concerns were often elsewhere; it's possible that she/he would just as soon not have had me.
Avoidant attachment—An insecure infant-caregiver bond, characterized by little separation protest and a tendency for the child to avoid or ignore the caregiver.
Avoidant—I am somewhat uncomfortable being close to others; I find it difficult to trust them, difficult to allow myself to depend on them. I am nervous when anyone gets too close, and often love partners want me to be more intimate than I feel comfortable being.
Ambivalent/inconsistent—She/he was noticeably inconsistent in her/his reactions to me, sometimes warm and sometimes not; she/he had her/his own agenda, which sometimes got in the way of her/his receptiveness and responsiveness to my needs; she/he definitely loved me but didn't always show it in the best way.
Anxious/ambivalent attachment—An insecure infant-caregiver bond, characterized by strong separation protest and a tendency of the child to resist contact initiated by the caregiver, particularly after a separation.
Anxious/ambivalent—I find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like. I often worry that my partner doesn't really love me or won't want to stay with me. I want to merge completely with another person, and this desire sometimes scares people away.

Types of Attachment Styles

- Over half of infants develop a secure attachment style. However, other infants develop insecure attachments. Some infants are very anxious when separated from their caretaker and show resistance at reunion, a response characterized as an anxious-ambivalent attachment style. A third group of infants never connect very well with their caretaker and are classified in the avoidant attachment style.

Type of Parenting Styles

- A warm/responsive approach seems to promote secure attachments, whereas a cold/rejecting style is associated with avoidant attachments. An ambivalent/inconsistent style seems to result in anxious-ambivalent attachments.

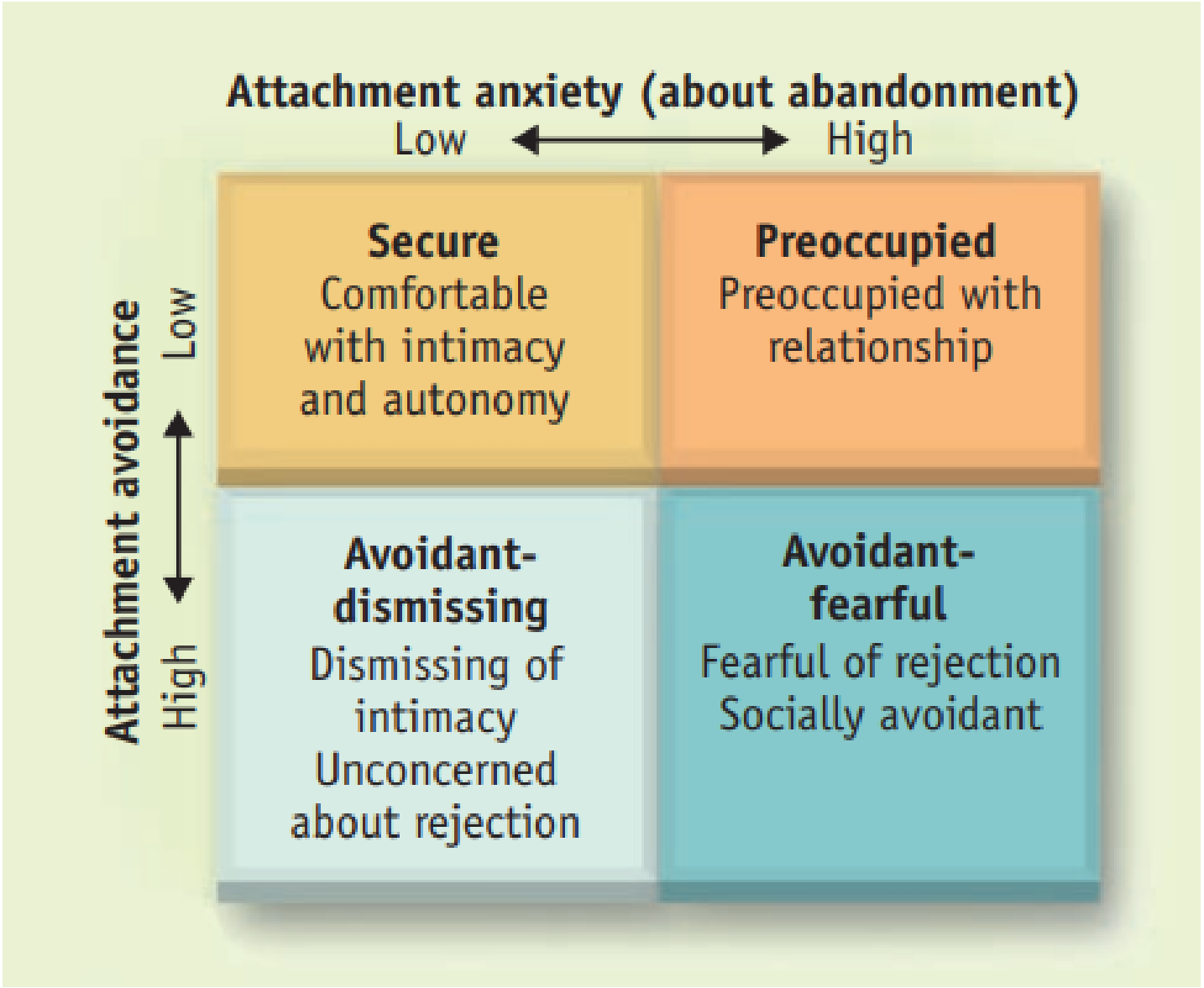
Adult attachment

- Secure adults (about 55% of participants). These people trust others, find it easy to get close to them, and are comfortable with mutual dependence. They rarely worry about being abandoned by their partner. Secure adults have the longest-lasting relationships and the fewest divorces. They describe their parents as behaving warmly toward them and toward each other.

- Avoidant adults (about 25% of participants). These individuals both fear and feel uncomfortable about getting close to others. They are reluctant to trust others and prefer to maintain emotional distance from others. They have the lowest incidence of positive relationship experiences of the three groups. Avoidant adults describe their parents as less warm than secure adults do and see their mothers as cold and rejecting

- Anxious-ambivalent adults (about 20% of participants). These adults are obsessive and preoccupied with their relationships. They want more relationship closeness than their partners do and suffer extreme feelings of jealousy, based on fears of abandonment. Their relationships have the shortest duration of the three groups. Ambivalent adults describe their relationship with their parents as less warm than secure adults do and feel that their parents had unhappy marriages

- The current thinking assumes that attachment style is determined by where people fall on two continuous dimensions (Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998). Attachment anxiety reflects how much a person worries that a partner will not be available when needed. This fear of abandonment stems, in part, from a person's doubts about his or her lovability. Attachment avoidance reflects the degree to which a person distrusts a partner's goodwill and has tendencies to maintain emotional and behavioral distance from a partner.


Attachment anxiety (about abandonment)
Low
High
Attachment avoidance
Low
High
Secure
Comfortable with intimacy and autonomy
Preoccupied
Preoccupied with relationship
Avoidant-dismissing
Dismissing of intimacy
Unconcerned about rejection
Avoidant-fearful
Fearful of rejection
Socially avoidant

- People’s scores on these two dimensions as measured by self-report data yield four attachment styles: secure, preoccupied (anxious-ambivalent), avoidant-dismissing, and avoidant-fearful.
- Secure style,
- “preoccupied” is just a different label for the anxious-ambivalent style.
- The dismissing and fearful styles are two variations of the avoidant style.

- Securely attached individuals (low on both anxiety and avoidance) enjoy close relationships and are not worried that others will leave them.
- Those in the preoccupied category (high on anxiety, low on avoidance) desire closeness with others but fear rejection.
- Those with an avoidant-dismissing style (high on avoidance, low on anxiety) prefer to maintain their distance from others and are not concerned about rejection
- Those with an avoidant-fearful style (high on both avoidance and anxiety) are uncomfortable being close to others but still worry about rejection. There is evidence that this type of anxiety is at its highest in the early stages of a relationship, before it becomes established

Stability of attachment styles

- It appears that early bonding experiences do influence relationship styles later in life. A meta-analysis of longitudinal studies concluded that attachment styles are moderately stable over the first 19 year of life (Fraley, 2002). However, despite the relative stability of attachment styles, they are not set in stone.
- In childhood, changes from secure to insecure attachment are typically related to negative life events (divorce or death of parents, parental substance abuse, maltreatment) (Waters et al., 2000).
- Experiences later in life, such as consistent support (or lack thereof) from one's partner, can either increase or decrease one's attachment anxiety (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2008).
- One study reported that a significant number of individuals (ages 26–64) in short-term psychotherapy shifted from an insecure to a secure attachment style (Travis et al., 2001). Thus, therapy may be a helpful option for those with attachment difficulties.

The Course of Romantic Love

- Most people find being in love exhilarating and wish the experience could last forever. Must passion fade? Regrettably, the answer to this question seems to be “yes.”
- Consistent with this view, Sternberg’s (1986) triangular theory holds that passion peaks early in a relationship and then declines in intensity.
- In contrast, both intimacy and commitment increase as time progresses, although they develop at different rates. Research supports the idea that the intense attraction and arousal one feels for a lover does tend to subside over time—for both gays and straights (Aron, Fisher, & Strong, 2006; Kurdek, 2005).

- Why does passion fade? It seems that three factors kick into high gear early, then begin to dissipate: fantasy, novelty, and arousal (Miller et al., 2007).
- At first, love is “blind,” so individuals usually develop a fantasy picture of their lover (often a projection of their own needs). However, as time passes, the intrusion of reality undermines this idealized view.
- Also, the novelty of a new partner fades with increased interactions and knowledge.
- Finally, people can’t exist in a state of heightened physical arousal forever.

- Does the decline of passion mean the demise of a relationship?
- Not necessarily. Some relationships do dissolve when early passion fades. However, many others evolve into different, but deeply satisfying, mixtures of passionate- companionate love. And while passion does fade over time, researchers note that passion is typically defined based on the type experienced in new relationships—the type that includes a high obsession component.

- Acevedo and Aron (2009) found that when you factor out obsession, romantic love (which is both engaging and sexual) does indeed exist in long-term marriages, and it is associated with relationship satisfaction.
- In fact, in a random sample of American adults married for more that 10 years, over 50% said they were intensely or very intensely in love with their spouse (O'Leary et al., 2012).

Why Relationships End?

- The chief causes of relationship failure are the tendency to
- make premature commitments, ineffective communication and conflict management skills, boredom with the relationship, and the availability of a more attractive relationship. All of these factors can contribute to low levels of relationship satisfaction.

Rank	Dating	Married
1	Doing same things	Doing same things
2	Fighting/arguments	Not going out, staying in
3	Watching movies together all the time	Not seeing partner
4	Spend too much time together	No communication
5	Routine	Work spillover
6	Not going out, staying in	Partner does things without spouse
7	Talk about the same things	Routine
8	Doing something partner likes, but you do not	Not socializing with others
9	Nothing to talk about	Watching movies together all the time
10	No communication	Talk about the same things

How Relationships End?

- Steve Duck and colleagues proposed a model describing six processes that partners go through in relationship dissolution (Duck, 1982; Rollie & Duck, 2006).

- This model appears to apply to both romantic relationships and friendships (Norwood & Duck, 2009)


Breakdown processes
Intrapsychic processes
Dyadic processes
Social processes
Grave-dressing processes
Resurrection processes

- First, the relationship experiences breakdown processes, in which one or both partners become dissatisfied.

- If this breakdown becomes extreme, either partner might engage in intrapsychic processes—ruminating about his or her dissatisfaction, the cost of the relationship, and attractive alternatives.

- If commitment wavers, the couple will engage in dyadic processes by discussing and negotiating the conflict. At this point the relationship can be repaired.

- However, if partners reach the decision to end their relationship, social processes occur as friends and family are alerted to the problem.
- As the couple move toward breaking up, grave-dressing processes occur in which each partner develops a separate accounts of the break-up for his or her social network.
- Finally, each partner engages in resurrection processes to prepare for his or her new life.

The Internet and Relationships

- Internet has dramatically expanded opportunities for people to meet and develop relationships through social networking services (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram), online dating services (eHarmony, Match.com), interactive virtual worlds, online multiple player games, chat rooms, and blogs.

- The differences between Internet and face-to-face communication require psychologists to reexamine the established theories and principles of relationship development.
- For example, good looks and close physical proximity are powerful factors in initial attraction in the real world.
- On the Internet, where people often form relationships sight unseen, these factors are less relevant.
- In the absence of physical appearance, similarity of interests and values kicks in earlier and assumes more power than it does in face-to-face relationships (McKenna, 2009).

Building Online Intimacy

- Although critics are concerned that Internet relationships are superficial, research suggests that virtual relationships can be just as intimate as face-to-face ones and are sometimes even closer (Bargh, McKenna, & Fitzsimons, 2002).
- Because the Internet is shrouded in the cloak of anonymity, people can take greater risks in online self-disclosure. Thus, feelings of intimacy can develop more quickly (McKenna & Bargh, 2000).
- Sometimes this experience can set up a false sense of intimacy, which can create uncomfortable feelings if a face-to-face meeting ensues—that is, meeting with a stranger who knows "too much" about you (Hamilton, 1999).

- In addition to facilitating self-disclosure, anonymity also allows people to construct a virtual identity. Obviously, this can be a problem if one person adopts a fictional persona and another assumes that it is authentic and begins to take the relationship seriously.
- A related concern is truthfulness. In one survey, only 25% of online daters admitted to using deception (Byrm & Lenton, 2001), yet a whopping 86% of participants in an online dating site felt that others misrepresented their physical appearance (Gibbs, Ellison, & Heino, 2006).

- The most common factors that online daters misrepresent are age, appearance, and marital status (Byrm & Lenton, 2001). In fact, one study found that the lower the online daters' attractiveness, the more likely they were to lie about their physical descriptors such as height, weight, and age (Toma & Hancock, 2010).

- Some people rationalize lying online because it has practical advantages: Men on dating sites who claim to earn high salaries receive more replies than those who say they earn less money (Epstein, 2007).
- In addition, there are semantic misunderstandings: One person's "average" may be another person's "plump."
- Another reason some people "stretch the truth" is to work around frustrating constraints imposed by the technological design of dating websites (such as age cutoffs).

- Finally, creating an accurate online representation of oneself is a complex process: Individuals need to put their best self forward to attract potential dates, but they also need to present themselves authentically—especially if they expect to meet a person face to face (Gibbs et al., 2006). One study found that online daters dealt with this tension by constructing profiles that reflected their "ideal self" rather than their "actual self" (Ellison, Heino, & Gibbs, 2006).
- Sprecher (2011) notes that such misrepresentations are typical in any early courtship; however, they are more common online because people are forced to provide comprehensive self-descriptions that ordinarily would come up gradually over time.

Moving Beyond Online Relationships

- The Internet has also assumed importance in maintaining established relationships. In a poll of 1,000 Internet users, 94% reported that the Internet made it easier for them to communicate with friends and family who live far away, and 87% said that they use it regularly for that purpose.

- Experts caution that excessive reliance on the Internet for social relationships has drawbacks and can lead to the "illusion of companionship" (Turkle, 2011) while actually fostering loneliness.

- Our inability to tolerate being alone, always grabbing for a device even in small moments of isolation, is decreasing our capacity to find ourselves. It is creating a new way of “being.” In solitude, we find ourselves. Inability to tolerate solitude, leads us instead to look to others to find ourselves.
- Sherry Turkle: *“If we’re not able to be alone, we are going to be more lonely. And if we don’t teach our children to be alone, they’re only going to know how to be lonely.”*