

# Chapter 11: Interpersonal Relationships: Friendship and Romance

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- 11.1 Understand the nature of friendships across our lifespan, same-sex friendships, and cross-sex (opposite-sex) friendships.
- 11.2 Explain how love, commitment, and physical affection define romantic relationships, and describe how such relationships are developed through dating.
- 11.3 Describe the strategies used to initiate, escalate, and maintain relationships.

## CHAPTER OUTLINE

The chapter introduction defines **friendship-based intimacy** as a type of intimacy based on feelings of warmth, understanding, and emotional connection, while **passion-based intimacy** is a type of intimacy based on romantic and sexual feelings.

### I. Friendship

**Learning Objective 11.1: Understand the nature of friendships across our lifespan, same-sex friendships, and cross-sex (opposite-sex) friendships.**

A. **Friendship** is a relationship of choice that exists over time between people who share a common history; with someone we like and who likes us, someone we trust, and with whom we share good as well as bad times.

- 1. **Qualities** of friendship include: self-disclosure, openness and honesty, compatibility, self-concept support, acceptance, respect, helping behaviors, positive evaluations, trust, and concern.
- 2. **Values** of friendship include helping us cope with stress, contributing to our social support networks, providing material help when needed, helping shape our attitudes and beliefs, helping us cope with uncertainty having a profound influence on our behavior, helping us manage the mundane, and bolstering our self-esteem.
- 3. Common **principles** of friendship include that we usually form friendships with our equals, we tend to expect equality and equity in our friendships, and we are happiest when we are in the company of our friends.

B. Making Friends communicate

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- 1. The **first requirement to making friends is to interact with new people**—meeting people at school, work, in your neighborhood, and in your existing social networks.
  - 2. An important rule of making friends is to be yourself. Don't accommodate!
  - 3. One factor that helps in **making friends in college** is that **you already share similarities with the people you meet there.**

### C. Friendships at Different Stages in Life

- 1. We have different needs for intimacy at different times of our lives. Psychologist Howard Markman found that self-disclosure did not seem to change in either depth or amount from young adulthood through age ninety-one. As we age, we develop a more complex view of friendship. Relationship scholars examine the differences among friendships at five stages in life.

#### 2. Childhood Friendships

- From ages 3 to 7, we have momentary playmates, so we interact with those in our presence.
- From ages 4 to 9, our friendships involve one-way assistance; we still view friendships from a “take” perspective.
- Ages 6 to 12, constitute the fair-weather friend stage, during which there is more give and take but the reciprocity occurs when things are going well.
- The period from ages 9 to 14 is called the mutual intimacy stage, during which relationships become more possessive.
- The final stage of childhood friendships (ages 12-adulthood) allows for greater independence.

#### 3. Adolescent Friendships

- From about puberty on (age 12), we move away from relationships with parents and other adults and toward greater intimacy with our peers.
- During this time, peer relationships significantly influence our identity and social skills.
- We explore values, negotiate new relationships, discover romantic and sexual opportunities, become more other-oriented, and seek increased intimacy.
- Adolescents place more value on personality (character, trustworthiness, similarity) and interpersonal qualities (companionship, acceptance, intimacy) in both same-sex and cross-sex friendships.
- We develop cliques of friends and form friendship networks.

#### 4. Young Adult Friendships

- Young adult friendships (late teens through early thirties) are linked to a succession of changes in our lifestyles and goals.
- Those who go directly into the workforce after high school have different friendship experiences than those who continue formal education.
- Young adults and adolescents share some similar friendship values, such as loyalty, warmth, and having shared experiences.
- Young adults particularly value friends who reciprocate their caring, trust, commitment, self-disclosure, helpfulness, and support, while also having strong character.
- Friendships during this period of our lives hone our skills for successful romantic relationships.

## 5. Adult Friendships

- a. Adult friendships are those we have from our thirties through our sixties; the relationships during the prime of our work and family lives.
- b. Adult friendships are among our most valued relationships, providing emotional support, partners for activities, and socializing opportunities.
- c. Marriage can lead to an expansion of friendship networks.

## 6. Late Adulthood Friendships

- a. Older adults report greater relational satisfaction and less relational conflict, have a more positive perspective on conflicts that occur, express more positive messages to each other, and are more forgiving of each other.
- b. Although people make new friends during their late adulthood, they value their long-established friendships the most.
- c. Older adults are less likely to form new friendships; instead they tend to maintain a small, highly valued network of long-established friends.
- d. Friendships often provide richer interactions than those older adults experience with their own family members, although family relationships remain an important part of their lives.

## D. Same-sex Friendships

- 1. There are various ideas about how men and women approach friendships in same-sex friendships.
  - a. One claim is that women define their female friendships by intimacy, whereas men define their male friendships in terms of activities.
  - b. Men report having more “best friends” than women do.
  - c. Women spend more hours than men talking with their best friends.
- 2. Expectations
  - a. Both men and women report that self-disclosure, emotional support, loyalty, and trust most contribute to a sense of intimacy in their same-sex friendships.
  - b. Although men understand what contributes to intimacy, women appear to have a stronger need or desire for intimacy in same-sex friendships.
- 3. Functions
  - a. Close same-sex relationships serve similar functions for both men and women.
  - b. Both men and women value intimacy, trust, interpersonal sensitivity, emotional expressiveness, and authenticity in their same-sex friendships.
  - c. Both men and women also value engaging in activities, conversing, having fun, and relaxing with their same-sex friends.
  - d. Overall, men’s and women’s same-sex friendships appear to differ not in the qualities they possess, but in the degree to which they possess these qualities.
    - i. Compared to men, women see their same-sex friendships as more satisfying, more enjoyable, and more intimate or close.
    - ii. Women’s same-sex friendships also involve more talk about talking (metacommunication) and are more person-centered and expressive.
    - iii. Females in same-sex friendships have more physical affection for each other and compliment each other more, whereas men are more openly competitive.

- iv. Although very close male friends are not extremely interpersonally competitive, one study did find that same-sex male friends are more competitive than either same-sex female friends or cross-sex friends.
  - v. Men act less interpersonally competitive in their friendships with women, but women's competitiveness increased in their friendships with males.
  - vi. For all friendships, being more competitive related to less friendship satisfaction.
- e. Although we can make generalizations, individuals have their own friendship preferences and expectations that they use to judge the values of each of their female and male friendships.

#### E. Cross-sex Friendships

1. Adolescents often develop opposite-sex, or cross-sex, friendships that are not romantic.
2. Despite Harry's conclusions in the movie *When Harry Met Sally*, we can develop cross-sex adult friendships with minimal sexual attraction or redefine romantic relationships as friendships.
3. Adult cross-sex relationships are facilitated by opportunities for men and women to interact nonromantically—in college, at work, and in leisure activities.
4. Communication researcher Heidi Reeder found that romantic attraction and physical/sexual attraction diminished as cross-sex relationships progressed over time, while friendship attraction increased.
5. Not all cross-sex friendships are devoid of sex; people in relationships labeled *friends with benefits* (FWB) have both sexual and nonsexual interactions but value their friendship above all.
6. FWB friendships can include instances in which going out with a mixed-sex group leads to "hooking up" at the end of the night.
7. Reasons for engaging in FWB relationships include the avoidance of relational commitment, a desire to engage in sex with a friend, a perception that such relationships are simpler and less problematic than romantic ones, a desire to feel closer to the friend, and finally just a general desire to have a friends-with-benefits experience.
8. Cross-sex friendships can help us better understand the opposite sex.
9. In interacting with people of either sex, focus on working toward a mutual understanding and acceptance of what your expectations are for a friendship.

#### F. Diverse Friendships

1. Most of our friendships are with people who are fairly similar to us; similarity can make communication easier.
2. Intergenerational Friendships
  - a. The impact of a ten-year age difference between friends is minimal if you both have the same interests and values.

3. Intercultural and Interracial Friendships
  - a. The qualities and expectations associated with being a friend differ among cultures, ethnic groups, and racial groups.
  - b. Four factors specifically affect the development of intercultural friendships:
    - i. Cultural similarities
    - ii. Cultural differences
    - iii. Prior intercultural experiences
    - iv. Targeted socializing
  - c. Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians are more likely than whites to have an interracial friend.
  - d. Whites who live in communities with more diversity were more likely to have interracial friends.
  - e. Although there are similarities between forming intercultural friendships and forming interracial ones, a unique issue confronting interracial friendships is the fact that usually both people are from the same culture.
  - f. White people have difficulty seeing themselves from a racial perspective, whereas black people have both a racial identity and feelings of being marginalized and demeaned by whites.
  - g. Finally, friends of different races need to guard against either overaccommodating or overassimilating—each person needs to retain his or her own racial identity while appreciating that of the other.

### **In-Text Opportunity for Classroom Discussion**

#### **Improving Your Communication Skills: Understanding Your Relational Expectations**

Researchers have found that people hold certain interaction expectations (prototypes) when determining the level of intimacy in a relationship. This feature asks students to think about four types of friendships and the experience they individually have within these different relationships. Have students independently complete the scale. Then, have each student pair up with another classmate to discuss their answers as well as compare similarities and differences between their expectations and another student's expectations.

## **II. Romantic Relationships**

### **Learning Objective 11.2: Explain how love, commitment, and physical affection define romantic relationships, and describe how such relationships are developed through dating.**

- A. The closest relationship you ever develop with a human being will probably be a romantic one, perhaps a marriage. At a rudimentary level, romantic relationships are about mating and creating a family; starting the complex process of seeking a mate begins with fairly innocuous interactions with the opposite sex. *Engaged* and *married* are labels assigned to signify particular types of romantic relationships. Both cross-sex and same-sex couples may have romantic relationships.

## B. Qualities of Romantic Relationships

### 1. Love

- a. Love differs from friendship in the identity of interest that the partners share.
  - i. Love exists to the extent that the outcomes enjoyed or suffered by each are enjoyed or suffered by both.
  - ii. People describe love relationships as more passionate and intimate than friendships.
  - iii. Interestingly, people like their romantic partners only slightly more than they do their friends.
  - iv. Women distinguish more between love and liking than do men.
- b. The **triangular theory of love**, developed by psychologist Robert Sternberg, identifies three dimensions that can be used to describe variations in loving relationships: *intimacy*, *commitment*, and *passion*.
  - i. Passionate love is romantic love that serves to establish attraction to, interest in, and focus on one person. This usually, but not always, declines in the early years of marriage.
  - ii. **Companionate love** exists in relationships that are strong in intimacy and commitment but weak in passion.
- c. Sociologist John Alan Lee created a scheme that defined six types of love found in both romantic and nonromantic relationships:
  - i. **Eros**: sexual love based on the pursuit of beauty and pleasure
  - ii. **Ludus**: love as a game; something to pass the time
  - iii. **Storge**: solid love found in friendships and family, based on trust and caring; selfishness is low
  - iv. **Mania**: a love relationship that swings wildly between extreme highs and lows
  - v. **Pragma**: practical love based on compatible and mutual benefits
  - vi. **Agape**: selfless love based on giving of yourself for others, expecting nothing in return

### 2. Commitment

- a. **Commitment** is our intention to remain in a relationship related to six sets of behaviors:
  - i. Being supportive and encouraging
  - ii. Reassuring our partner of our feelings
  - iii. Offering tangible reminders
  - iv. Creating a relationship future
  - v. Behaving with integrity
  - vi. Working on the relationship
- b. In a study of married and romantically involved couples, women, more than men, showed commitment by being supportive, creating a relationship future, and behaving with integrity.
- c. Men showed commitment by offering tangible reminders more than women.

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- d. Having divorced parents was found among college students to relate to having a less positive attitude about marriage, which in turn related to a weaker sense of commitment in dating relationships.

### 3. Physical Affection and Sex

- a. **Physical affection** is the use of touch to convey emotional feelings of love and caring for another person.
  - i. More affectionate touching occurs in the earlier parts of a relationship.
  - ii. Touch is one way we establish intimacy.
  - iii. In one study, the stronger a person's commitment, the more affection he or she expressed, and the more affection that was expressed, the more relationally satisfied the partner was.
- b. The ultimate goal of many romantic relationships is producing children and a family. Sex is obviously the way to accomplish this goal, but humans frequently engage in sexual intercourse with no intention of producing children.
  - i. Motivation to engage in sex has been linked to people's attachment styles, with attachment anxiety related to engaging in sex to please a partner and express love.
  - ii. Traditionally, sexual activity was reserved for marriage.
  - iii. Romantic relationships today most often involve and are even defined by sexual activity; sex occurs even outside the bounds of romantic relationships.
- c. Talking to your partner about sex, self-disclosure, and discussing previous sexual activity all affect both sexual and relational satisfaction. Talking about sex was found to increase sexual and relational satisfaction.
  - i. Explicit communication surrounding first sex creates a more accurate shared perception, reduces uncertainty about both sexual and relational expectations, and is considered a safe-sex practice.
  - ii. In exclusive romantic relationships, especially marriage, infidelity is a form of deception that puts a partner at risk.

### C. From Friendship to Romance

- 1. Many romantic relationships begin as friendships—friendships can be a testing ground for a more passion-based relationship.
- 2. The transition to a romantic relationship is accompanied by “turning points,” such as disclosure, shared interaction, or the occurrence of sex.
- 3. Expending extra effort at sustaining the relationship; increasing talk, interactions, and activities; offering support; engaging in positive behaviors; flirting; and talking about the relationship are ways we signal interest in moving to a romantic relationship.
- 4. A **secret test** is a behavior strategically chosen to indirectly determine a partner's feelings.
- 5. Other secret tests include making indirect suggestions, separation tests, endurance tests, and triangle tests.



#### D. Dating

1. Calling an interaction a “date” changes expectations, roles, and the relationship; when you label something a “date,” it signals openness to a romantic relationship with the other person.
2. Date Goals
  - a. College students see dates as more social, more public, and more about attraction.
  - b. Single adults see dates as being more about immediate enjoyment and a future relationship, initiated by one person, and involving someone’s paying for the activity involved.
  - c. Sociologist Kathleen Bogle writes that recent college graduates have abandoned “hooking up” for dating, which for many was the first time they had been on a date.
3. Requests for a Date
  - a. Moving from being friends to going on a date involves different issues and concerns than does requesting a date with an acquaintance, including feelings of anxiety, fear, and discomfort, but also excitement, a sense of pride in taking a risk, and a positive feeling for finally making the attempt.
  - b. To help reduce some of the uncertainty involved, secret tests about the other person’s interest in a date might include finding out what your mutual friends know about him or her, using affinity-seeking strategies, or simply getting better acquainted before seeking a date.
4. Dates and Nonverbal Confusion
  - a. The indirect manner in which we often communicate, particularly when dating, causes misperceptions and awkwardness.
  - b. When women confirm their attraction and affection toward their dates with smiles and other positive nonverbal affiliative cues, men may read these behaviors as cues of sexual interest.
5. Date Expectations
  - a. People bring to dates expectations about how the date will proceed; how the date will go depends on your relationship with the other person before the date, the event that is the focus of the date, the cost of the date, and who initiated the date.
  - b. One study found that respondents shared many of the same expectations for a first date and that culture provides a “dating script” regarding talking on a date, because both partners understand the need to begin self-disclosing and gaining information about each other to reduce uncertainty.
  - c. Expressions of interest by both parties can contribute to clarity and understanding.

#### **In-Text Opportunity for Classroom Discussion**

##### **Relating to Diverse Others: Female and Male Dating Roles**

This feature presents research from Paul Mongeau and colleagues about the growing trend of women asking men out on dates, despite previous customs of men initiating date requests. Divide the class based on their gender. Have the men discuss the reflection questions for males and the women discuss the reflection questions for females. Then, hold a class discussion to compare everyone’s answers.



6. Hooking Up as an Alternative to Dates
  - a. Bogle found that “hooking up” has essentially replaced dating on college campuses, and, although the term has a lot of meanings, generally students use it to describe a nonromantic, short-term physical encounter; hooking up is like being friends with benefits, but without the friendship requirement.
  - b. Bogle further found that most hookups were not one-night stands or “randoms” with strangers, but rather encounters between friends or classmates, often preceded by the consumption of alcohol.
- E. Unrequited Romantic Interest (URI)
  1. **Unrequited romantic interest** describes feelings created when one partner desires a more intimate, romantic relationship than the other partner does.
    - a. When this happens between friends, it can lead to feelings of awkwardness and embarrassment.
    - b. What you might do to preserve a friendship if your expression of romantic interest is not reciprocated:
      - i. Affirm the importance of the friendship.
      - ii. Tell your partner you accept their position and then drop the issue.
      - iii. Try to go back to old relational patterns.
      - iv. Avoid pressuring your partner.
      - v. Don’t complain about the difference in feelings.
      - vi. Don’t suggest that the relationship may become romantic in the future.
      - vii. Don’t tell other friends about what happened.
    - c. People use several strategies to handle someone’s overtures if they do not feel the same:
      - i. Indirect strategies, such as being rude or ambiguous or avoiding the other person
      - ii. Direct strategies, such as blaming themselves while stating a lack of mutual interest (“I’m not ready right now”) or blaming external factors while indicating lack of interest
    - d. The indirect strategy was found to be the least desirable.
    - e. People tend to accept rejection of their attempts to escalate friendships better than rejection of their attempts to escalate romantic relationships.

### **In-Text Opportunity for Classroom Discussion**

#### **#communicationandtechnology: Friendship, Romance, and the Internet**

This feature presents statistics about the growing popularity of social networking sites and the types of information that people disclose. Hold a class discussion about how students use social networking sites to foster friendships and romantic relationships.

### III. Interpersonal Relationship Strategies

#### **Learning Objective 11.3: Describe the strategies used to initiate, escalate, and maintain relationships.**

##### **A. Strategies Used Primarily to Initiate a Relationship**

###### **1. Observe and Act on Approachability Cues**

- a. Ways we can signal approachability include sustaining eye contact, turning toward another person, smiling, being animated, taking an open body posture, winking, and waving.
- b. Conversely, the absence of these cues generally conveys a desire to be left alone.

###### **2. Identify and Use Conversation Starters**

- a. We all give off a certain amount of “free” information that others can easily observe.
- b. You can use that information as a starting point for a conversation, and being direct is probably your best bet.

###### **3. Follow Initiation Norms**

- a. Many early interactions in a relationship are almost ritualistic, or at least scripted.
- b. Following the script provides some comfort and security.

###### **4. Ask Questions**

- a. Asking questions shows your interest in the other person and promotes reciprocity of liking, allowing you to gain information, reduce uncertainty, and improve your ability to adapt to your partner.
- b. Starting with impersonal, specific questions, ask open questions that invite elaboration and discussion, and learn to ask meaningful follow-up or probing questions without appearing to interrogate the other person.
- c. Short responses without any reciprocal questions may be a signal that the person you are talking to is not particularly interested in interacting.
- d. Recognize that the same question might evoke different thoughts and feelings in different people.
- e. Be sensitive to how the other person responds to your questions, and be prepared to use your other-oriented communication skills to help you adapt to any unusual response or nonverbal cues.

##### **B. Strategies Used to Initiate and/or Escalate Relationships**

###### **1. Communicate and Cultivate Attraction**

- a. Communicating your attraction to someone increases the likelihood that your partner will reciprocate, thus cultivating his or her attraction to you.
- b. When we are attracted to people, we use both indirect and direct strategies to communicate our liking through nonverbal and verbal cues.
- c. Nonverbal immediacy represents those nonverbal cues we display when we are attracted to someone.
  - i. We also indirectly communicate our attraction verbally.
  - ii. We may use first names and informal and personal language.
  - iii. We may ask questions to show interest, probe for details, and listen attentively.

nonverbal



verbal

- d. We can also directly communicate our attraction verbally.
    - i. We might tell someone we like a particular trait, ability, or attribute.
    - ii. We may compliment someone's outfit, hairstyle, or jewelry.
  - e. We may use **affinity-seeking strategies** to get people to like us.
  - f. Displaying nonverbal immediacy cues and verbally confirming the other person not only communicates your attraction but also increases the probability that he or she will like you.
2. Be Open and Self-Disclose Appropriately
- a. Your self-disclosure helps your partner make informed decisions about initiating or escalating a relationship with you.
  - b. The depth of self-disclosure needs to be appropriate to the intimacy level of relationship.
  - c. Restricting self-disclosure is one way to control the development of a relationship.
3. Gather Information to Reduce Uncertainty
- a. **Uncertainty reduction theory** is based on the assumption that we like to have control and predictability in our lives; therefore, when we are faced with uncertainty, we are driven to gain information to reduce that uncertainty.
  - b. We reduce uncertainty by gathering either cognitive or behavioral information about others.
  - c. Technology can play a role in reducing our uncertainties—for example, we use Facebook to learn about people.
  - d. We also are likely to seek out information when others behave in unexpected ways, such as asking other people or conducting secret tests.
  - e. Uncertainty about the very nature and definition of our relationships and our partners' regard for us can hamper the development, escalation, and maintenance of those relationships.
  - f. In general, the less relational uncertainty you have, the greater the relationship satisfaction.
4. Listen Actively and Respond Effectively
- a. Listening clues helps us to know people's needs, wants, and values.
  - b. Stop, look and listen: Your confirming responses increase your partner's sense of self-worth and communicate the value you place on him or her and the relationship.
5. Socially Decenter and Adopt an Other-Oriented Perspective
- a. Social decentering helps you better understand your partner, and that understanding allows you to choose effective strategies for accomplishing your communication goals, adapting to your partner's current behavior, and anticipating his or her responses.
  - b. Even individuals weak in general social decentering can develop **relationship-specific social decentering**—decentering skills based on the knowledge and understanding they have gained in a specific intimate relationship.
  - c. Underlying intimate relationships is the expectation that our partner understands us and treats us in a manner that reflects that understanding.

## C. Strategies Used to Escalate and/or Maintain Relationships

### 1. Express Emotions

- a. Expressing emotions is a particular form of self-disclosure
- b. Many of the emotions you share are not related to your partner.
- c. Other feelings do relate to your partner.
- d. Most of us feel comfortable about expressing positive emotions, but not negative emotions.
- e. Happy couples tend to display their positive emotional state in their smiles, laughs, and affectionate behavior, while distressed couples display agitation, anger, and coldness.

### 2. Provide Comfort and Social Support

- a. Offering social support and comfort not only provides direct benefit for our partners but also confirms the value of the relationship and the partner.
- b. Research has found three outcomes of comforting messages:
  - i. They put the distressed person in a more positive mood.
  - ii. They empower the person to better manage the issues.
  - iii. They help reduce brooding (rumination) about the problems.
- c. Sometimes our attempts to provide social and emotional support can even make the situation worse and/or negatively affect the other person's self-esteem.
- d. When people are distressed, they want to be the ones to decide whether to bring up the issue.
- e. Three comforting behaviors have been found that also help maintain a distressed person's face.
  - i. Encouraging the partner to express and discuss feelings
  - ii. Recognizing and praising the efforts already being made by the partner to cope with the problem
  - iii. Being pleasant and respecting the partner's autonomy to make decisions—not taking over control
- f. Sensitivity and vigilance are needed to monitor chronically insecure individuals and provide timely support.
- g. Providing support and comfort to others requires skill and is a testament to your commitment to them.

### 3. Communicate and Engage in Relationship Talk

- a. **Relationship talk** is talk about the nature, quality, direction, or definition of a relationship.
- b. Relationship talk is generally considered inappropriate at the early stages of a relationship.
- c. Willingness to talk about the relationship is one way to implicitly signal your partner about your level of interest and commitment to the relationship.
- d. As the relationship moves toward greater intimacy, the amount of direct relationship talk increases
- e. Unwillingness to engage in relationship talk in an intimate relationship can ultimately drive a partner away.
- f. Relational talk also appears to be viewed differently by men and women, in that men tend to view talk as instrumental and as a way to fix problems while women also see relationship talk as part of the routine for maintaining the relationship.

#### 4. Be Tolerant and Tactful

- a. The most satisfying relationships are those in which both partners refrain from continually disagreeing, criticizing, and making negative comments to the other.
- b. Well-adjusted couples focus their complaints on specific behaviors, whereas maladjusted couples complain about each other's personal characteristics.
- c. When people want a specific change in their partner, being forthright and direct produces the change over time, particularly when the partner responds in a positive and tactful manner.
- d. Well-adjusted couples are kinder and more positive and have more humor in their interactions.
- e. You must learn to accept your partner for who he or she is, put up with some things you dislike, and tactfully manage necessary changes.
- f. Be selective about disclosing your negative feelings about your partner.

#### 5. Manage Conflict Cooperatively

- a. Conflicts are inevitable in interpersonal relationships.
- b. As relationships develop, the individuals share more personal information and spend more time together, so the likelihood for conflict increases.
- c. The key to successful relational development and maintenance is not to avoid conflict but to manage it effectively.
- d. A collaborative conflict management style can actually transform conflict into an experience that strengthens a relationship.
- e. Constructive conflicts in good-quality relationships can produce benefits; destructive conflicts in poor-quality relationships can be detrimental.

### **In-Text Opportunity for Classroom Discussion**

#### **Applying an Other-Orientation to Friends and Romantic Partners**

As friends and romantic partners become more intimate and disclose more information to one another, each person's responsibility to their relational partner also increases. This feature presents challenges and barriers to being other-oriented toward friends and romantic partners. Have students work in pairs to create a list of instances when they have found it difficult to be other-oriented toward their friends and/or romantic partners. Then, have the pairs identify ways that they can become more other-oriented to overcome these barriers and challenges.

### **KEY TERMS**

friendship-based intimacy,  
LO 11.1  
passion-based intimacy,  
LO 11.1  
friendship, LO 11.1  
triangular theory of love,  
LO 11.2  
compassionate love,  
LO 11.2

eros, LO 11.2  
ludus, LO 11.2  
storge, LO 11.2  
mania, LO 11.2  
pragma, LO 11.2  
agape, LO 11.2  
commitment, LO 11.2  
physical affection, LO 11.2  
secret test, LO 11.2

unrequited romantic  
interest, LO 11.2  
affinity-seeking strategies,  
LO 11.3  
uncertainty reduction  
theory, LO 11.3  
relationship-specific social  
decentering, LO 11.3  
relationship talk, LO 11.3

## LECTURE TOPICS

1. How many of you believe in love at first sight? Is there a difference between love and lust? When we see someone we like, why don't we initially tell the other person exactly how we feel?
2. Discuss Sternberg's triangular theory of love. How do the three "corners" of the triangle differ? How are they similar? Explain.
3. Do you use affinity-seeking strategies in fostering relationships with other people? If so, why and what strategies do you use? If not, why not?

## GROUP IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES FOR SKILL DEVELOPMENT

1. **Preferences for Sharing Emotions.** How comfortable are you expressing your emotions to others? Ask students to think of specific people for each of the following categories: an acquaintance of the same sex, an acquaintance of the opposite sex, a friend of the same sex, a friend of the opposite sex, a close friend of the same sex, a close friend of the opposite sex, a parent or relative of the same sex, and a parent or relative of the opposite sex. Using a scale from 1 (most comfortable) to 10 (least comfortable), for each person, indicate how comfortable you would be about sharing the following feelings:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Liking for the other person
- \_\_\_\_\_ Love for the other person
- \_\_\_\_\_ Anger with the other person
- \_\_\_\_\_ Disappointment with the other person
- \_\_\_\_\_ Liking for a third person
- \_\_\_\_\_ Love for a third person
- \_\_\_\_\_ Anger toward a third person
- \_\_\_\_\_ Disappointment with a third person
- \_\_\_\_\_ Anger toward yourself
- \_\_\_\_\_ Disappointment in yourself
- \_\_\_\_\_ Embarrassment
- \_\_\_\_\_ Your fears
- \_\_\_\_\_ Happiness
- \_\_\_\_\_ Enthusiasm
- \_\_\_\_\_ Pride
- \_\_\_\_\_ Uncertainty

After completing the scale, have students independently compare the scores for each specific person for which they answered. Then, hold a class discussion, using the following questions:

- With whom are you most comfortable sharing your emotions?
- Compare the emotions you are most open about with the emotions you are most closed about.
- What makes you uncomfortable about sharing certain emotions?

2. **Discovering Your Own Love Profile.** The purpose of this assignment is for each student to become aware of his or her attitude toward “love.” Project the following questions and ask students to rate each statement on a Likert scale from 1 to 5:

1 = Strongly disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Neutral

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly agree

1. \_\_\_ You cannot love unless you have first had a caring relationship for a while.
2. \_\_\_ The best kind of love grows out of a long friendship.
3. \_\_\_ Kissing, cuddling, and sex should not be rushed into; they will happen naturally when intimacy has grown.
4. \_\_\_ Love is really deep friendship, not a mysterious, mystical emotion.
5. \_\_\_ I believe that “love at first sight” is possible.
6. \_\_\_ We kissed each other soon after we met because we both wanted to.
7. \_\_\_ Usually the first thing that attracts my attention to a person is a pleasing appearance.
8. \_\_\_ Strong physical attraction is one of the best things about being in love.
9. \_\_\_ When things are not going right with us, my stomach gets upset.
10. \_\_\_ Once when I thought a love affair was over, I saw him or her again and the old feelings came surging back.
11. \_\_\_ If my partner ignores me for a while, I sometimes do really stupid things to try to get his or her attention.
12. \_\_\_ When my partner does not pay attention to me, I feel sick all over.
13. \_\_\_ I try to use my own strength to help my partner through difficult times, even when he or she is behaving foolishly.
14. \_\_\_ I am usually willing to sacrifice my own wishes in favor of my partner’s.
15. \_\_\_ If my partner had a baby by someone else, I would want to raise it and care for it as if it were my own.
16. \_\_\_ I would rather break up with my partner than stand in his or her way.
17. \_\_\_ For practical reasons, I would consider what he or she is going to become before I commit myself.
18. \_\_\_ You should plan your life before choosing a partner.
19. \_\_\_ A main consideration in choosing a partner is how he or she reflects on my family.
20. \_\_\_ I would not date anyone that I would not want to fall in love with.
21. \_\_\_ At least once I had to plan carefully to keep two of my lovers from finding out about each other.
22. \_\_\_ I can get over love affairs pretty easily and quickly.
23. \_\_\_ My partner would get upset if he or she knew some of the things I have done with other people.
24. \_\_\_ What he or she does not know about me will not hurt my partner.



**Scoring:**

Add your scores for statements 1–4. Divide by 4. This is your score for the friendship factor (storge).

Add your scores for statements 5–8. Divide by 4. This is your score for the passionate factor (eros).

Add your scores for statements 9–12. Divide by 4. This is your score for the possessive factor (mania).

Add your scores for statements 13–16. Divide by 4. This is your score for the selflessness factor (agape).

Add your scores for statements 17–20. Divide by 4. This is your score for the practical factor (pragma).

Add your scores for statements 21–24. Divide by 4. This is your score for the game-playing factor (ludus).

*Note: You could have students chart these in a hand-drawn column graph to visually display each factor relative to the others.*

3. **The Qualities of Friendship.** Have students think about their close friends. Which friends were selected because of the qualities of friendship?

- Self-disclosure/feeling free to express intimate information
- Openness/honesty/authenticity
- Compatibility/similarity
- Ego-reinforcement/self-concept support
- Acceptance of one's individuality
- Respect
- Helping behavior
- Positive evaluation
- Trust
- Concern and empathy

Ask students whether these friends were selected because of the qualities or whether the friends were selected and THEN the qualities were discovered. Are there other qualities that students use as a basis for friendships? Have students independently compile a list of these responses and discuss all of their responses in pairs.

**HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS**

1. **Reflecting on Ongoing Relationships.** Ask students to think about three specific relationships they have that are relatively stable, vary in their level of intimacy, and with which they feel satisfied. As they reflect on each relationship, ask them to answer the following questions:
- What behaviors do you engage in to keep the level of intimacy stabilized?
  - How do you think the other person responds to your efforts to maintain the current level of intimacy?
  - Have you or the other person ever tried to increase or decrease the level of intimacy?
  - How did the other person respond?

2. **Culture and Physical Intimacy.** According to the chapter, physical affection is the use of touch to convey love and caring for another person. Have students independently research one other culture, outside of the United States, and answer the following questions:
  - How does this culture differentiate between physical affection and sex?
  - Do other cultures use these same types of physical affection as in the United States, or do some not allow as much touching as may occur in the United States?
  - What about sex? At what point in a relationship is sex permissible? Does sex have to wait until marriage or is that just old thinking?
3. **Choosing Friends for Specific Situations.** Have students independently complete the friendship inventory below, identifying the friends he or she turns to for support or to celebrate a major event.
  1. You have an extra ticket to a concert or major sports event. List the three people you would call, in order of preference.
    1. \_\_\_\_\_
    2. \_\_\_\_\_
    3. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. You have just learned of the unexpected death of a family member. Who would you call first? Second? Third?
    1. \_\_\_\_\_
    2. \_\_\_\_\_
    3. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. You are going on a cruise and have learned that you can bring a friend along for free. List in order of preference the first three people you would invite to go.
    1. \_\_\_\_\_
    2. \_\_\_\_\_
    3. \_\_\_\_\_
  4. As you are driving through a small town, you get a traffic ticket and you do not have your car registration or driver's license with you. You are taken to jail. List in order the first three people you would call.
    1. \_\_\_\_\_
    2. \_\_\_\_\_
    3. \_\_\_\_\_

After students write a name for each response, have them provide a brief explanation for why they selected a particular person for each scenario.

## **REVEL WRITING EXERCISES**

### **Journal Writing**

**11.1 Journal: Friendship Differences.** How do your friendships with same-age friends differ from friendships you have with anyone substantially older or younger than you? What about friendships with those who practice a different religion? Or friends of a different race or ethnicity?

**11.2 Journal: Secret Tests.** Which types of secret tests to determine another person's feelings toward you are most effective? Which types of tests would you consider unethical?

**11.3 Journal: Relationship Strategies.** Identify the two interpersonal relationship strategies in which you are strongest. How do these strategies help you manage your relationships? What two strategies are your weakest? How does not mastering these strategies impact your relationships?

### **Shared Writing: Just Friends?**

Working in groups, discuss the possible courses of action you could take if you found yourself becoming romantically interested in a friend with whom you have an agreement to just be friends? Which course of action would be the best? Why? Which one would be the worst? Why?