



# **INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS & LOVE**

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# OUTLINE FOR THE LECTURE

- Intimate relationships
- Romantic love
- Conflict management





# **LOVE & INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS**



# INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

- Intimate relationships: In interpersonal relationship that involves physical or emotional intimacy. Although an intimate relationship is commonly a sexual relationship, it may also be a non-sexual relationship involving family and friends.

**INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS CANNOT  
SUBSTITUTE FOR A LIFE PLAN. BUT TO  
HAVE ANY MEANING OR VIABILITY AT ALL, A  
LIFE PLAN MUST INCLUDE INTIMATE  
RELATIONSHIPS.**

**- HARRIET LERNER -**

# INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

- Factors that help distinguish intimate relationships from casual relationships:
  - Knowledge: Mutual willingness to share personal information
  - Trust: A mutual confidence that each partner will not cause the other harm.
  - Interdependence: Each partner influences the other in a meaningful way.
  - Care: Mutual concerns for the other's well-being.




# INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

- Factors that help distinguish intimate relationships from casual relationships:
  - Responsiveness: Mutual responsiveness to each other's needs.
  - Mutuality: A mutual acknowledgement of a close connection and changes his/her view from "me" to "we."
  - Commitment: A mutual volition for wanting the relationship to continue indefinitely

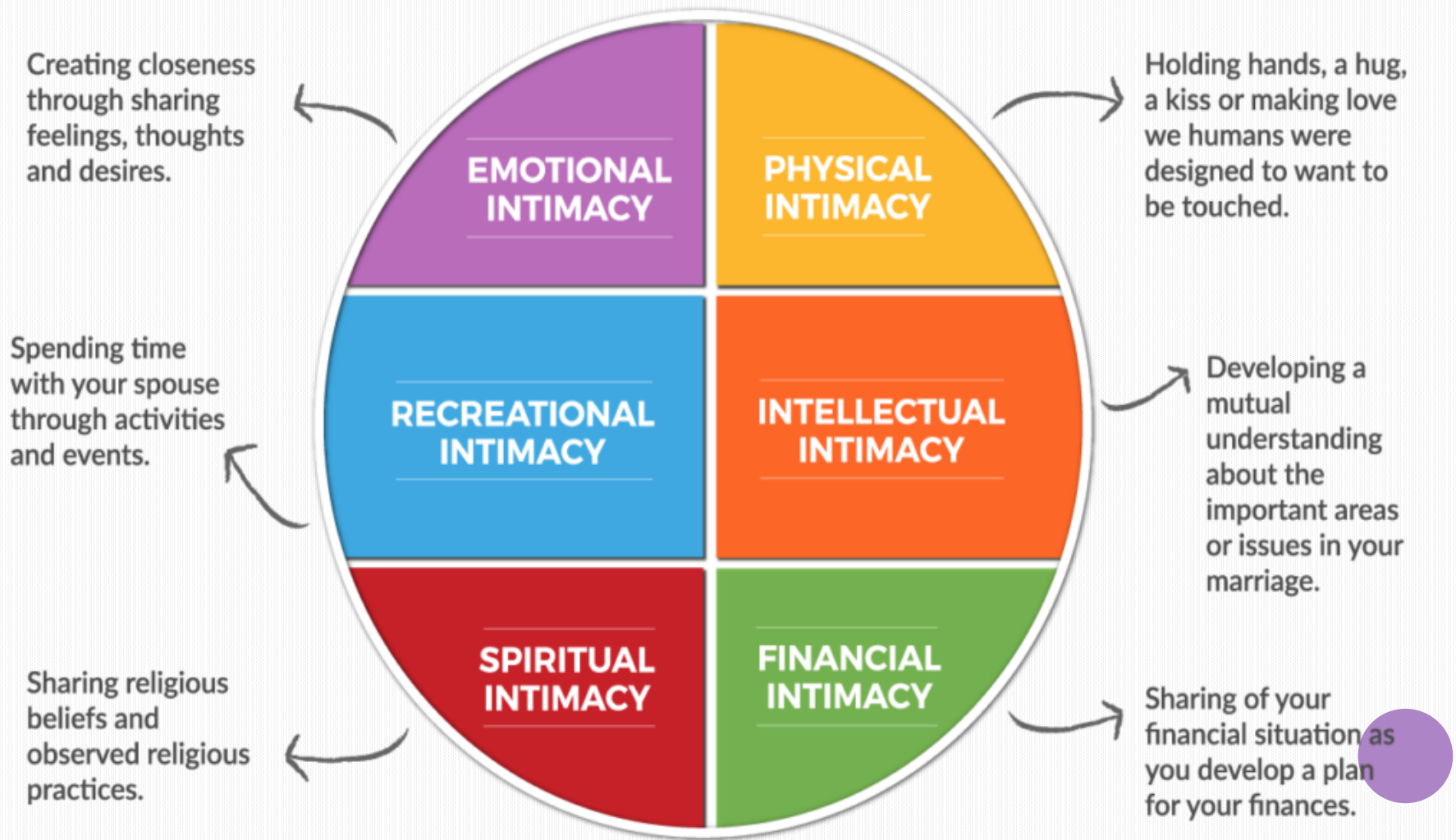


# INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS: SAMPLE TYPES

- Emotion intimacy: Sharing feelings
  - Physical intimacy: Physical contacts
  - Intellectual intimacy: Knowledge exchanges
  - Work: Work collaboration
  - Crisis: Overcoming a crisis together
  - Recreation: Activity sharing
  - Conflict: Working through a problem together
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# INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS: SAMPLE WITHIN THE MARITAL CONTEXT







# **FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS**



# INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

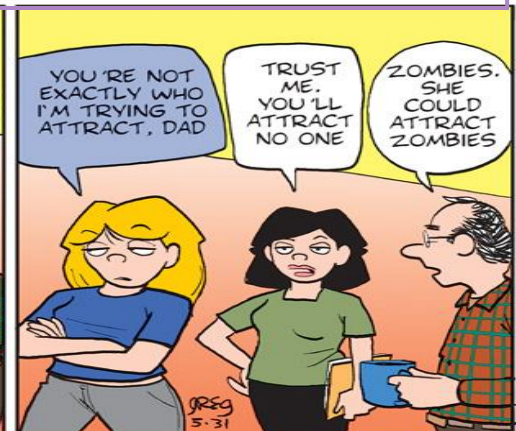
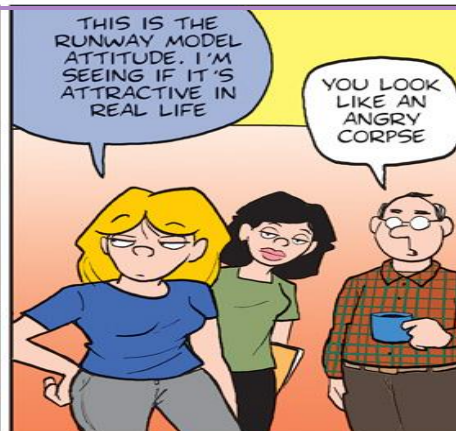
- Three phases of relationship development
  - Attraction and relationship formation
  - Relationship development
  - Relationship maintenance



# 1) ATTRACTION & RELATIONSHIP FORMATION

- Three factors underlie initial attraction between strangers:
  - Proximity: Geographical or spatial proximity helps increase opportunities for involvement.
  - Familiarity: Familiarity helps increase attraction only when an initial impression is neutral or positive.
  - Physical attractiveness

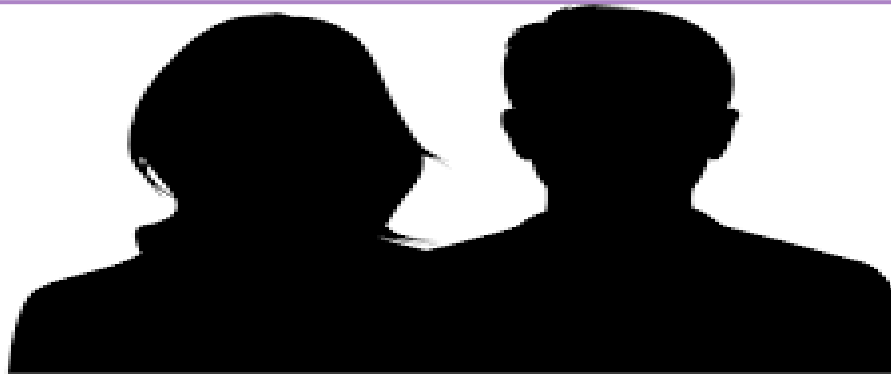
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BY GREG EVANS

# 1) ATTRACTION & RELATIONSHIP FORMATION

- Factors contributing to physical attractiveness
  - Facial features: “baby-faced” (women) vs. a strong jaw and broad forehead (men).
  - Physique: Average weight, an “hourglass” figure, and medium-sized breasts (women) vs. broad shoulders and a slim waist (men).
  - Expressive traits: Large smile & high set eyebrows.
  - Grooming qualities



# 1) ATTRACTION & RELATIONSHIP FORMATION

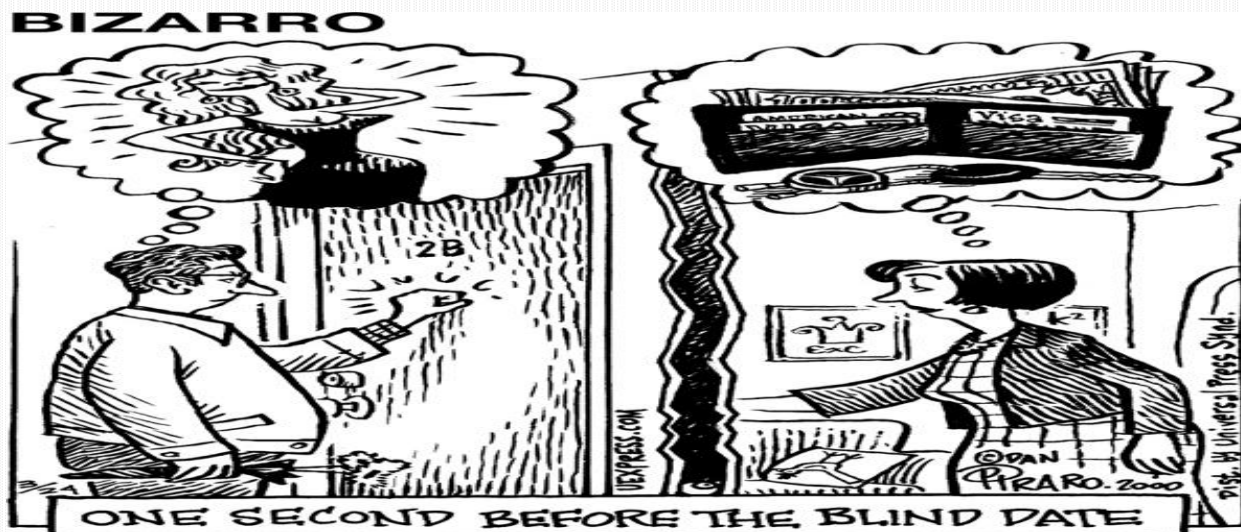
Important Traits in Romantic Partners		
Ranking	Men	Women
1	Intelligence	Humor
2	<i>Good looks</i>	Intelligence
3	Humor	Honesty
4	Honesty	Kindness
5	<i>Attractive face</i>	Values
6	Kindness	Communication skills
7	Values	Dependability
8	Communication skills	<i>Good looks</i>
9	Dependability	<i>Attractive face</i>
10	Age	Ambition

**Figure 9.1. Rank order of traits chosen by men and women as one of their most important traits in a partner.** In a 2005 international Internet survey of over 200,000 participants (including heterosexuals and homosexuals, men and women),

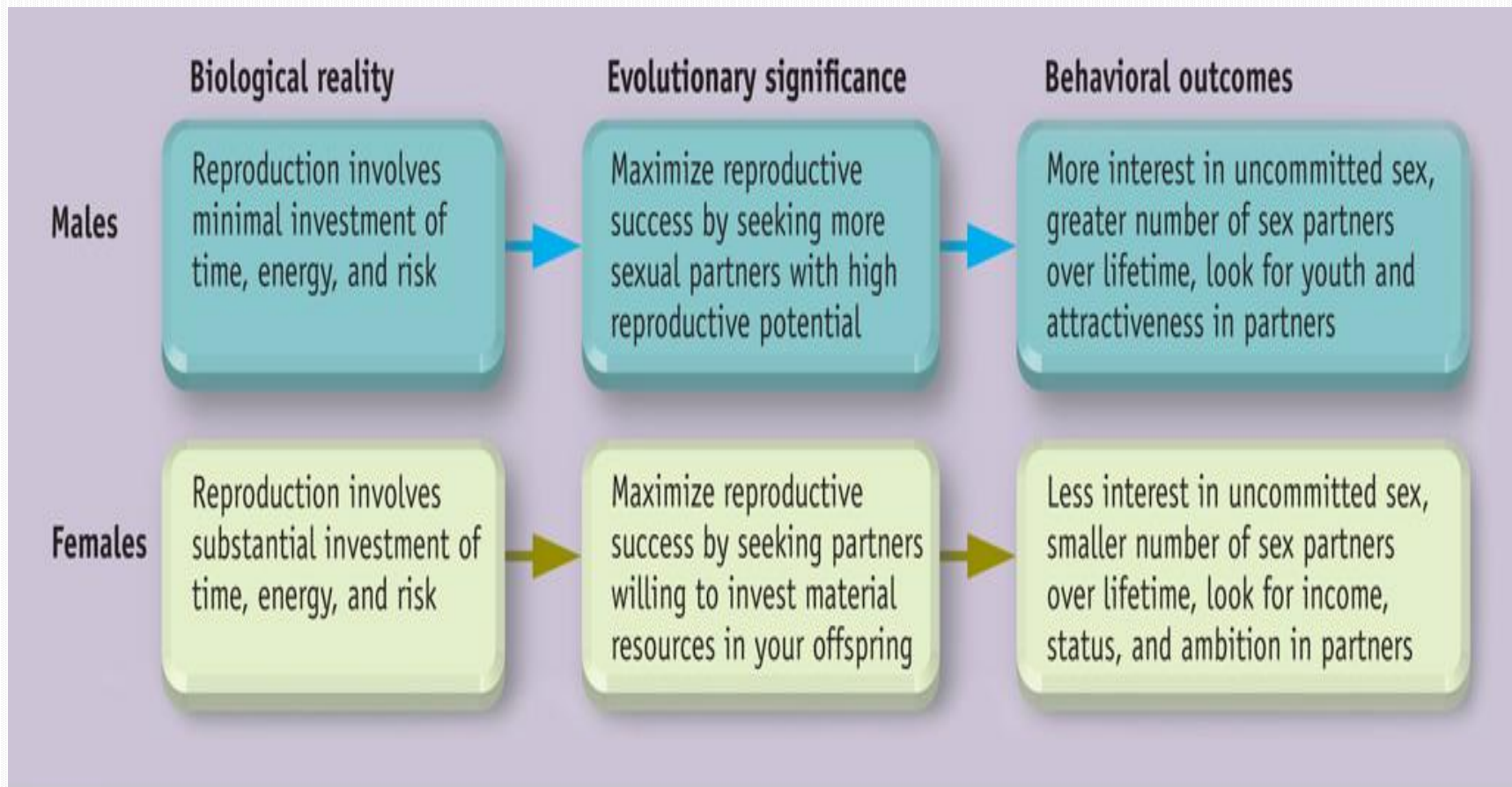


# 1) ATTRACTION & RELATIONSHIP FORMATION

- Gender differences can be observed in importance placed on attractiveness.
- The Parental Investment/Mating Preference Theory: In heterosexual dating, males ‘trade’ occupational status for physical attractiveness in females”.



# 1) ATTRACTION & RELATIONSHIP FORMATION



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**Figure 9.3. Parental investment theory and mating preferences.** Parental investment theory suggests that basic differences between males and females in parental investment have great adaptive significance and lead to gender differences in mating propensities and preferences, as outlined here.



## 2) RELATIONSHIP DEVELOPMENT

- Factors affecting viability of relationships:
  - Reciprocal liking
  - Similarity
  - Desirable personality characteristics
    - For life partners, personal qualities precede physical attractiveness.
    - Warmth, good sense of humor, and social assertiveness are ranked as important.



### 3) RELATIONSHIP MAINTENANCE

- Factors determining whether you will maintain the relationships
  - Interdependence or social exchange theory: A “cost-benefit” analysis of the relationship’s outcome.
  - If the benefits outweigh the costs, we stay.

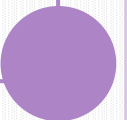


### 3) RELATIONSHIP MAINTENANCE

- The benefit analysis is based on our comparison of the benefits offered by the current relationship with:

- What we experienced in previous relationships and on the benefits seen in other people's relationships.

What we estimate to be the outcomes from alternative relationships.



### 3) RELATIONSHIP MAINTENANCE



- The investment (i.e., what we contribute to a relationship that we can't get back if the relationship ends) plays a role in the relationship maintenance.
- Putting investments into a relationship strengthens our commitment to it.

### 3) RELATIONSHIP MAINTENANCE



Based on the social exchange theory, relationship *outcome* is determined by its rewards minuses its costs. Relationship *satisfaction* is based on the outcome matched against comparison level. Commitment is determined by one's satisfaction minus one's comparison level for alternatives plus one's investments in the relationship.



### 3) RELATIONSHIP MAINTENANCE

#### Relationship Maintenance Strategies

Strategy	Behavioral example
Positivity	Try to act nice and cheerful
Openness	Encourage him/her to disclose thoughts and feelings to me
Assurances	Stress my commitment to him/her
Social networking	Show that I am willing to do things with his/her friends and family
Task sharing	Help equally with tasks that need to be done
Joint activities	Spend time hanging out
Mediated communication	Use e-mail to keep in touch
Avoidance	Respect each other's privacy and need to be alone
Antisocial behaviors	Act rude to him/her
Humor	Call him/her by a funny nickname
No flirting	Do not encourage overly familiar behavior (relevant in cross-gender friendships)



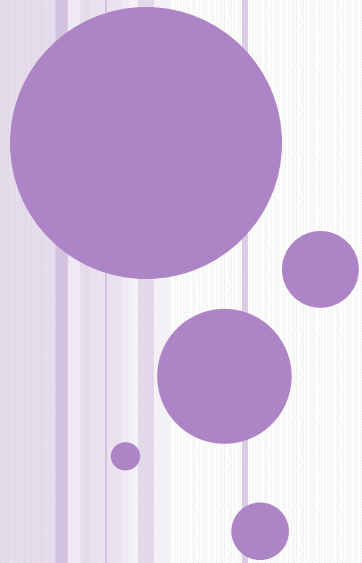
- Sample strategies undergraduates reportedly use to sustain their relationships.

### 3) RELATIONSHIP MAINTENANCE

- Relationship maintenance involves various factors
  - Using good listening skills.
  - Knowing your partner.
  - Recognizing your partner's support and efforts.
  - Making positive attributions about your partner's behavior.
  - Expressing feelings of trust and commitment.
  - Being optimistic about the future of the relationships.







# ROMANTIC LOVE



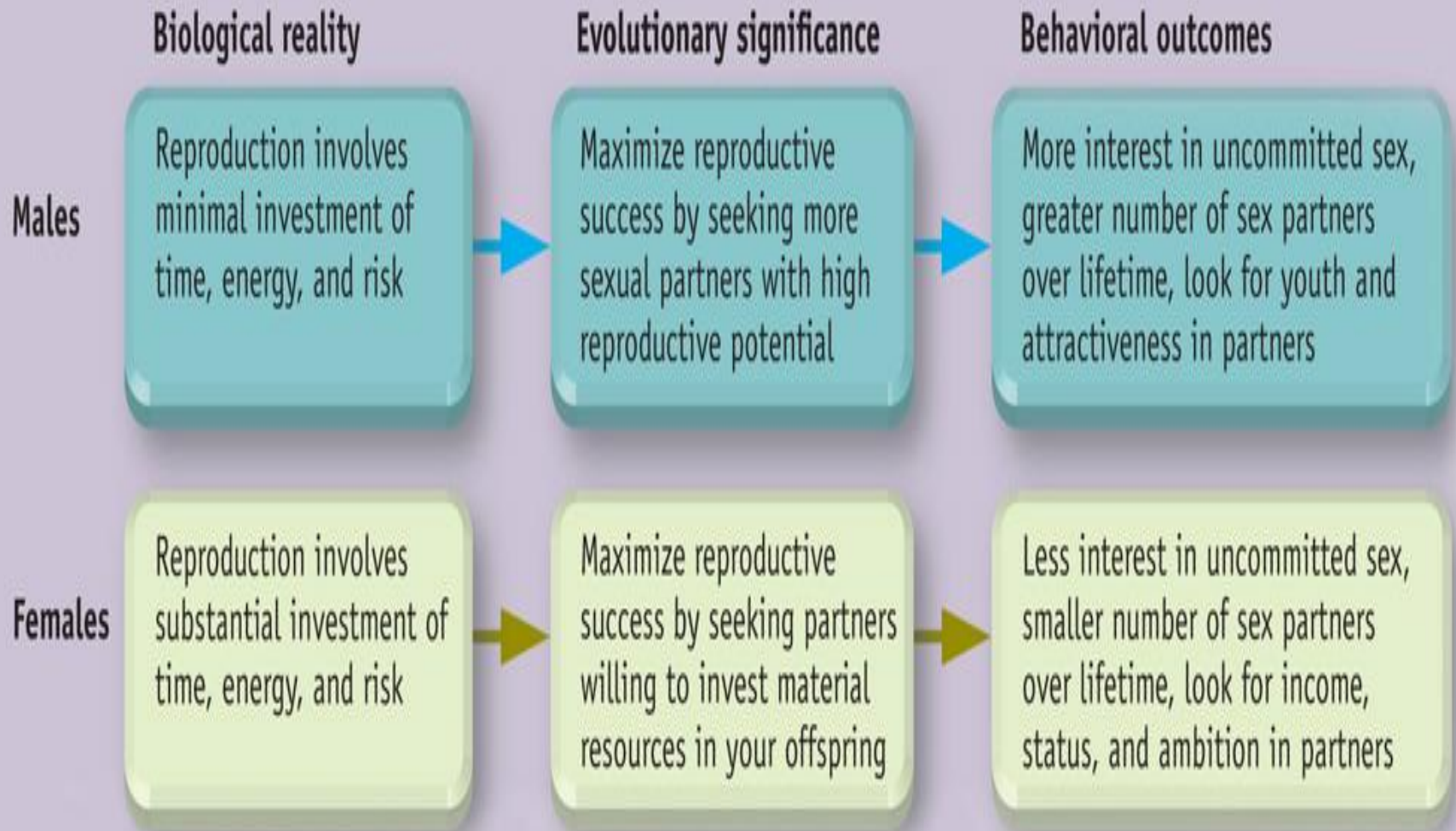
# ROMANTIC LOVE

## ○ Gender differences

- Counter to stereotype, men are actually more romantic than women and fall in love more easily than do women.
- Women are also more selective when choosing a partner, a tendency that supports the Parental Investment/Mating Preference Theory.
- Homosexual romance and relationships seem to be basically the same as those of heterosexuals.



# ROMANTIC LOVE



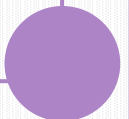
# ROMANTIC LOVE

- Test yourself:
  - What kind of love is yours?
  - [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdSlN7WIXVvVtBhLjfFJQt1Rb6Prt34q\\_v8FZMZBZOKqkAr5w/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdSlN7WIXVvVtBhLjfFJQt1Rb6Prt34q_v8FZMZBZOKqkAr5w/viewform)
- Sternberg's Triangular Theory of Love states that all loving relationships are comprised of some combination of three components



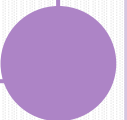
# ROMANTIC LOVE

- Three key components of Love:
  - Intimacy: Friendships, bondedness, liking, and warmth.
  - Passion: Infatuation and love at first sight.
  - Commitment: Engagements/obligations resulted.



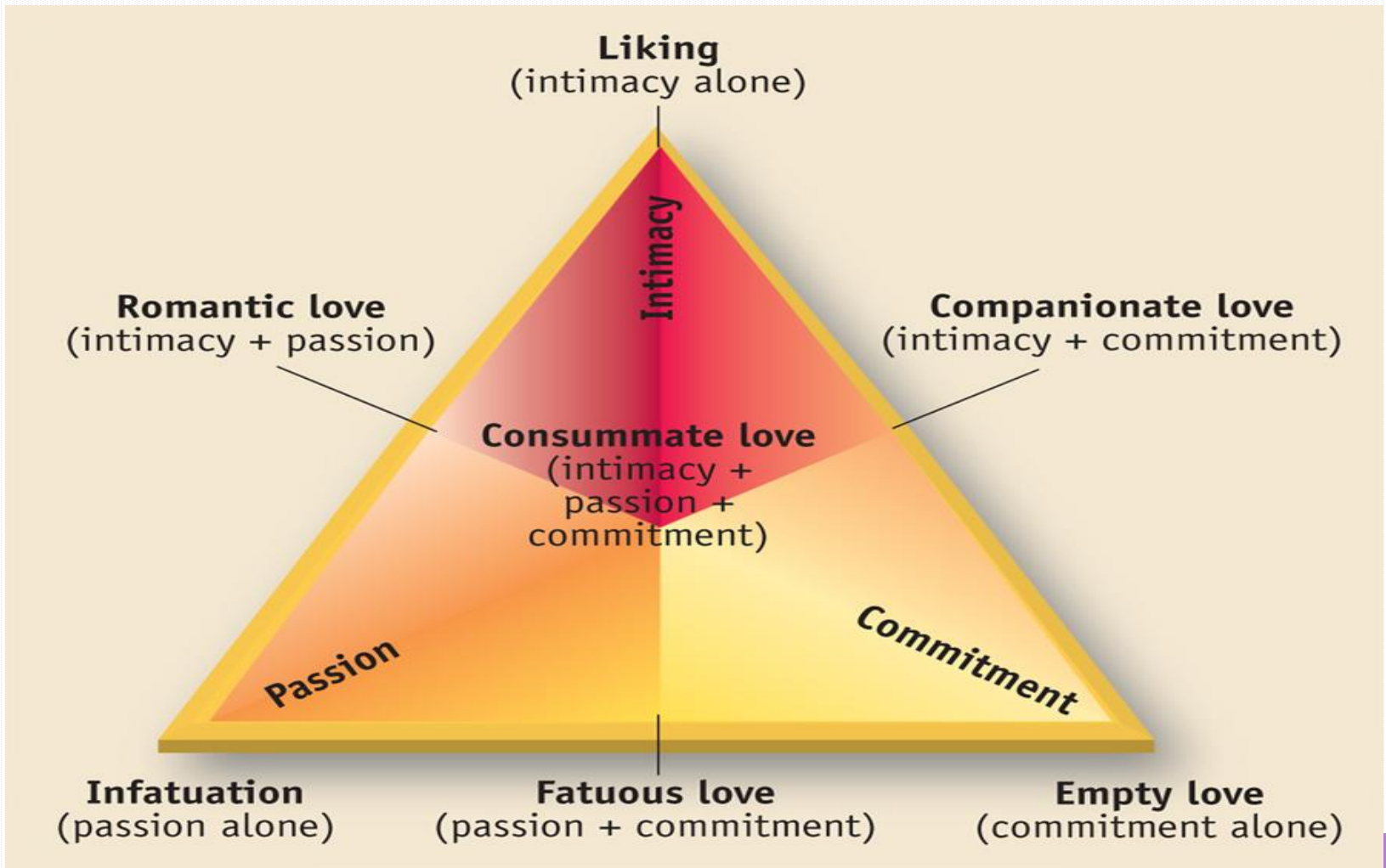
# ROMANTIC LOVE

- Subsequent love combinations:
  - Romantic love: Relationships filled with intimacy and passion.
  - Companionate love: Friendly, asexual, and intimate relationships with commitment.
  - Fatuous love: Whirlwind committed relationships motivated largely by passion.
  - Consummate love: An ideal combination of intimacy, passion, and commitment.



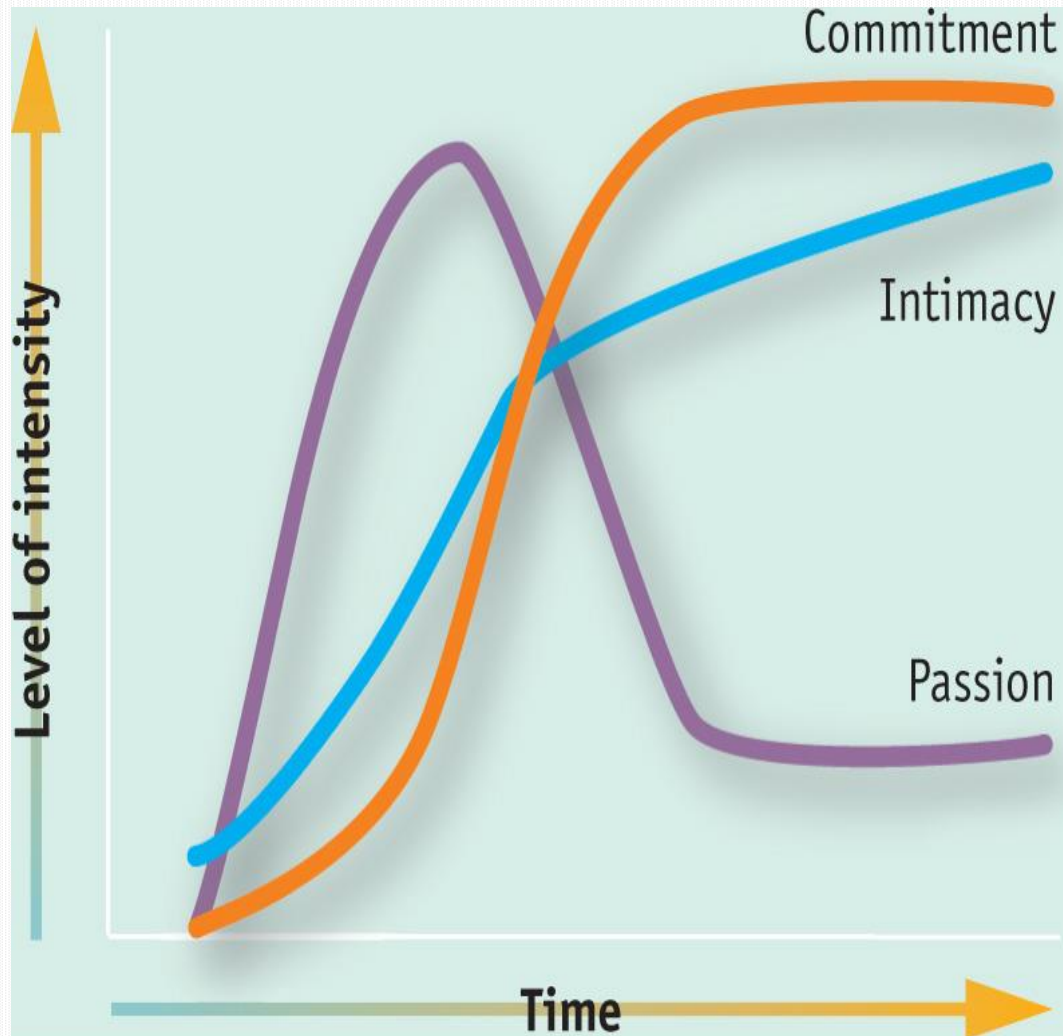


# ROMANTIC LOVE





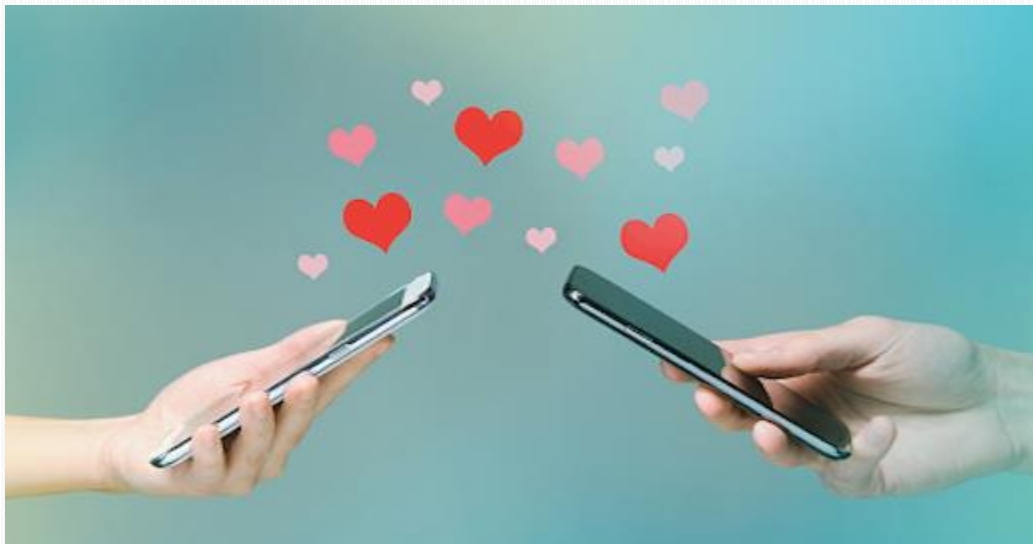
# ROMANTIC LOVE



- **The course of romantic love**
  - The strength of each of the three components of love varies across time.

# INTERNET & ROMANTIC LOVE

- The Internet and Romantic Love
  - Although critics are concerned about Internet relationships, research suggests they are just as intimate as the face-to-face ones.
  - Romances that begin online seem to be just as stable over two years as traditional relationships!



# INTERNET & ROMANTIC LOVE



***“Your online profile stated that you were tall, dark and handsome. Have you ever considered a career in fiction writing?”***



# ROMANTIC LOVE: CONFLICTS

- Why relationships end:
  - Premature commitment.
  - Ineffective communication and conflict management skills.
  - Becoming bored with the relationship.
  - Low levels of satisfaction.
  - Availability of a more attractive relationship.



# ROMANTIC LOVE: CONFLICTS

- Helping relationships last:
  - Take plenty of time to get to know the other person before making a long-term commitment.
  - Emphasize the positive qualities in your partner and relationship.
  - Find ways to bring novelty to long-term relationships.
  - Develop effective conflict management skills.





# ROMANTIC LOVE: CONFLICT MANAGEMENT



- Assertiveness: Acting in your own best interests by expressing your thoughts and feelings directly and honestly.
  - Assertiveness is more adaptive than either submissiveness, giving in to others, or aggression, getting what you want *at the expense of others*.

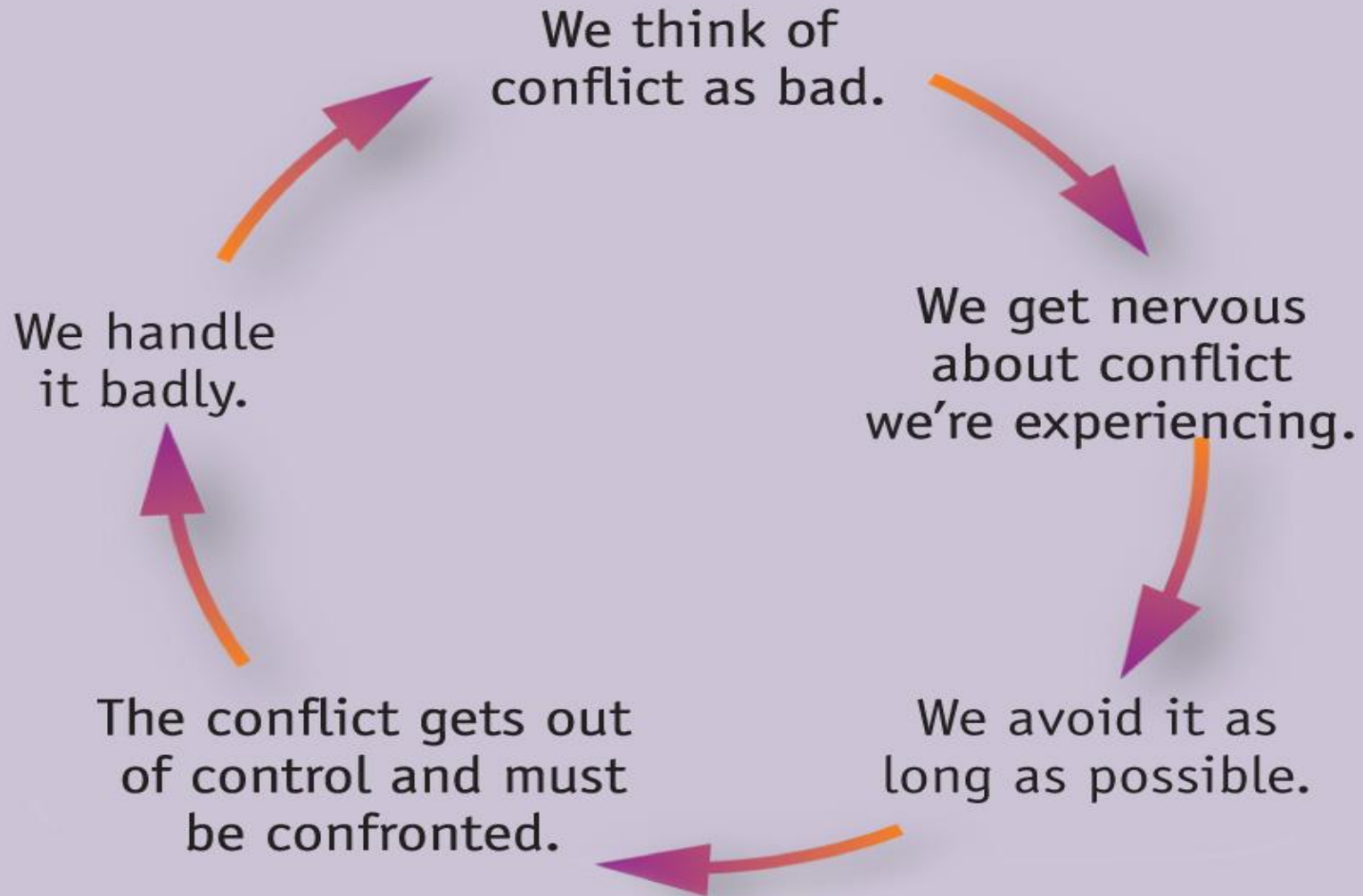
# ROMANTIC LOVE: CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

- Assertiveness helps with relationship conflicts.
- However, people sometimes refrain from being assertive due to their unhelpful beliefs about conflicts
  - People often view conflicts as bad.
  - However, being passive or conflict avoidance is counterproductive and leads to more conflicts.
  - It is better to confront conflicts constructively so that issues can be aired and resolved.



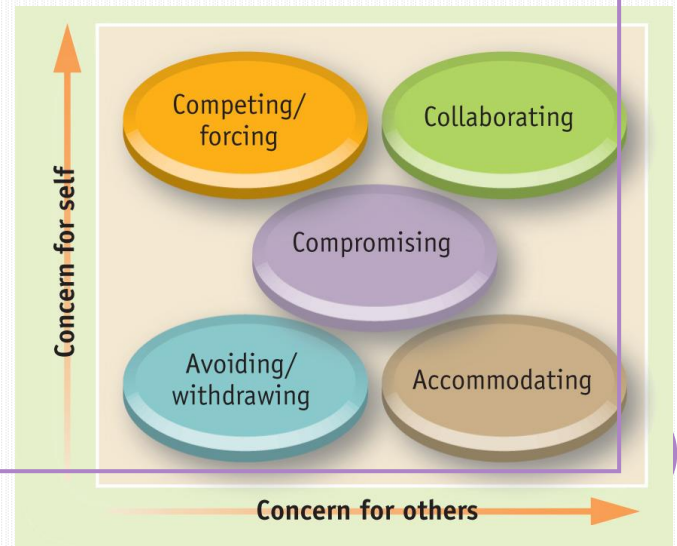


# ROMANTIC LOVE: CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

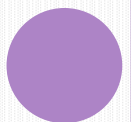
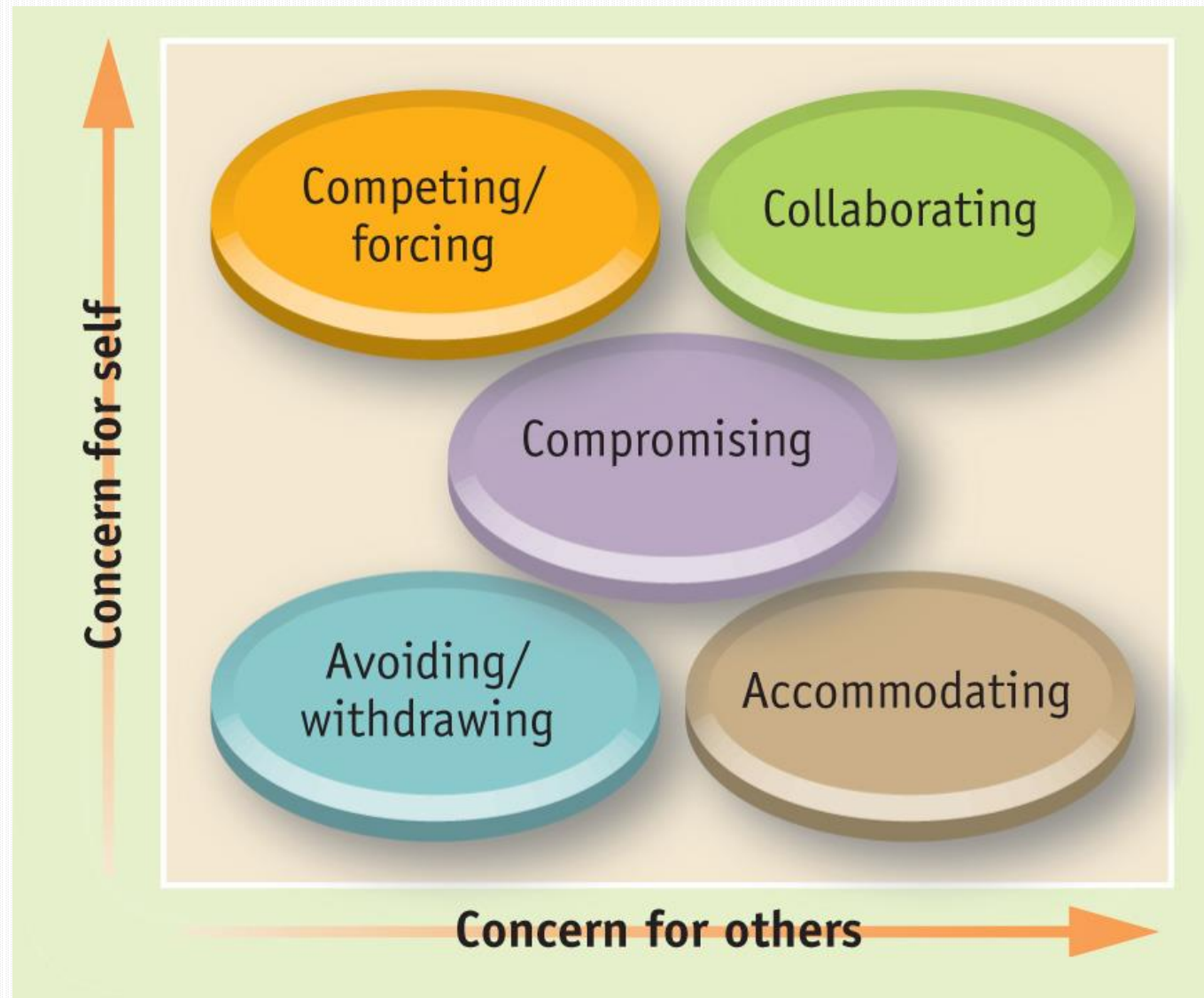


# ROMANTIC LOVE: CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

- Styles of managing conflict
  - Two dimensions (i.e., concern for self and concern for others) underlie five distinct patterns of managing conflict
- Avoiding/withdrawing
- Accommodating
- Competing/forcing
- Compromising
- Collaborating

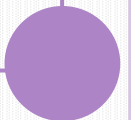


# ROMANTIC LOVE: CONFLICT MANAGEMENT



# ROMANTIC LOVE: CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

- Styles of managing conflict
  - Different communication styles involve in different conflict management styles.
  - While compromising involves communication for “splitting the expenses” between the two parties, collaborating involves communication that facilitate the finding of a solution for “maximizing the benefits” of the two parties.





# ROMANTIC LOVE: CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

- Dealing constructively with conflict
  - Make communication honest and open.
  - Use specific behavior to describe another person's annoying habits rather than general statements about their personality.
  - Avoid “loaded/labelling” words.





# ROMANTIC LOVE: CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

- Dealing constructively with conflict
  - Use a positive approach and help the other person “save face”.
  - Limit complaints to recent behavior and to the current situation.
  - Assume responsibility for your own feelings and preferences.
  - Try to use an assertive communication style.

