

FOUNDATIONS FOR A LOVING MARRIAGE

Apostolic Christian Counseling & Family Services
877-370-9988 www.accounseling.org info@accounseling.org

UNDERSTANDING LOVE

Apostolic Christian Counseling & Family Services
877-370-9988 www.accounseling.org info@accounseling.org

Why talk about Love?

- Being loved is a deep human need.
 - Makes us feel connected.
 - Tied to our love for Christ.
"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." John 13:35
- Love is easily misunderstood.
 - Different people define love differently.
 - There can be a lack of modeling, knowledge, and/or skills.
 - Hurt can prevent healthy development of loving feelings.

ACCES

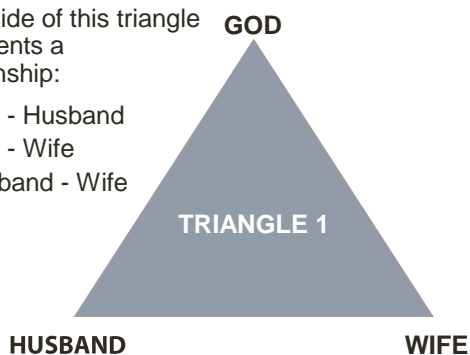
TRIANGLE 1

SPIRITUAL CONNECTION

ACCES

Each side of this triangle represents a relationship:

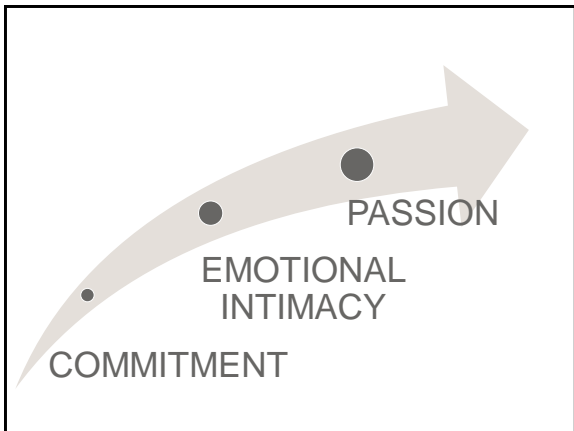
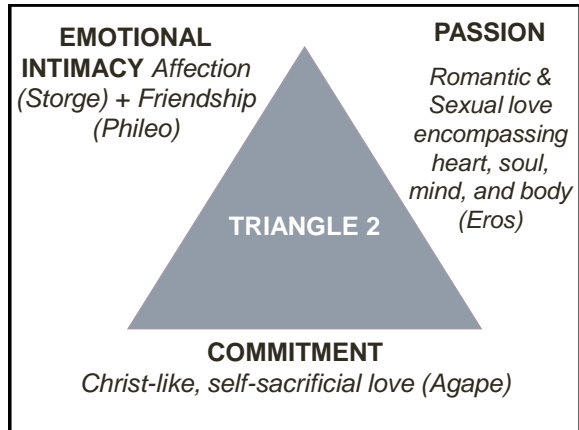
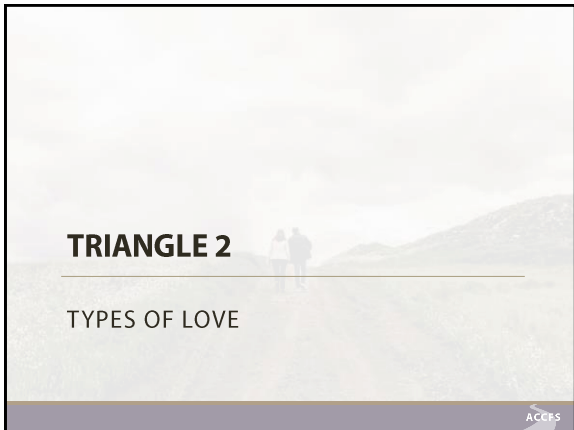
- God - Husband
- God - Wife
- Husband - Wife



Triangle 1: Explanation

- Unbalanced triangles: one or both spouses are unbelievers.
- Spiritual Intimacy: all other areas flow from the spiritual dimension.
- Spiritual stagnation and/or backsliding: leads to deterioration of relationships.

ACCES



Triangle 2: Explanation

Three aspects of love in a healthy marriage:

- o Commitment
- o Emotional intimacy
- o Passion

All three aspects are interrelated in marriage:

- o Deepening your love requires all areas as they build off each other.

Marriage can be in danger if a couple's decision to marry (or stay married) is based on a shallow 'feeling' of love.

ACCES

Commitment

1. AGAPE LOVE
2. EXPLANATION

ACCES

Commitment: Agape Love

- Agape love focuses on the well-being of the other person *without* requiring the other person to respond in-kind.
 - o **It is an act of grace.**
 - o Representative of Christ

"But God commendeth his love [agape] toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Romans 5:8

ACCES

Commitment: Explanation

- Evident in the covenant.
- It is a decision or choice.
- It is not based on feelings or perceived worthiness.
- It is the foundation of trust in marriage and allows for other aspects to build.

ACCES

Emotional Intimacy

1. FRIENDSHIP
2. AFFECTION

ACCES

EMOTIONAL INTIMACY

*Affection (Storge) +
Friendship (Phileo)*

PASSION

*Romantic &
sexual love
encompassing
heart, soul, mind,
and body (Eros)*

TRIANGLE 2

COMMITMENT

Christ-like, self-sacrificial love (Agape)

Emotional Intimacy

Result of blending two important
aspects of love:

1. Friendship (Phileo)
2. Affection (Storge)

ACCES

Emotional Intimacy: Friendship (Phileo)

- Regular communication of thoughts, feelings, hopes, and disappointments, etc.
- Grows as couples spend time together and develop special memories.
- “Knowing and being known”.
- Allows couples to share their hearts and feel they are “best friends”.

ACCES

Emotional Intimacy: Affection (Storge)

- Refers to familial affection and care.
- Grows when one spouse **intentionally** focuses on expressions of love *that are helpful and meaningful to the other spouse*.
- Grows through regular, purposeful, and meaningful expressions of love.

ACCES

Emotional Intimacy: Five Love Languages

- **Words of Affirmation** - Receives love through encouraging words and compliments.
- **Quality Time** – Receives love when his/her spouse spends time being with or doing an activity with him/her.
- **Gifts** – This individual sees gifts as visual symbols of thoughtfulness and expressions of love.
- **Acts of Service** – Receives love when their spouse displays a servant attitude by their actions.
- **Physical Touch** – For this individual drawing close physically parallels drawing close emotionally.

More information available in the Appendix

ACCES

Passion

1. ROMANTIC LOVE
2. EXPLANATION

ACCES

EMOTIONAL INTIMACY

*Affection (Storge) +
Friendship (Phileo)*

PASSION

*Romantic & Sexual
love encompassing
heart, soul, mind,
and body (Eros)*

TRIANGLE 2

COMMITMENT

Christ-like, self-sacrificial love (Agape)

Passion: Explanation

- Exciting and exhilarating; creates the feeling of “being in love”.
- Connects you deeply with the heart, mind, body, and soul of your spouse.
- Oneness feelings are intensified and God’s design for sexual union is experienced.

“For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.” Ephesians 5:31-32

ACCES

Passion: Explanation

- Romance allows couples to experience the rekindling of passionate love.
- Only experienced periodically. Often the expression of focused Emotional Intimacy.
- Dependent on the health of Commitment and Emotional Intimacy.

ACCES

Putting it Together

HOW THE DIFFERENT FACETS OF LOVE
WORK TOGETHER

ACCES

Triangles in Motion

- Ongoing change of triangles.
- Damage to any side will affect the other sides.
- Busy-ness and lack of attention to the facets of love probably lead to the majority of issues for couples.

ACCES

Example 1: "Commitment Pulls us Through"

- Commitment side must be strong when spouse is sick with the stomach flu.
 - Emotional Intimacy is gently nurtured while the Passionate side is put "on hold."
- As Passionate side is waning, the Commitment and Emotional Intimacy sides must make up the balance.
 - Under the circumstances, this "imbalance" is necessary and will hopefully change as the spouse's health returns.

ACCES

Example 2: "Counterfeit Love"

PSEUDO-EMOTIONAL
INTIMACY

PSEUDO-PASSION

LOW COMMITMENT

ACCES

Example 2: "Counterfeit Love"

- High "Pseudo-Intimacy" and "Pseudo-Passion" with low Commitment shows "counterfeit love."
- Individuals will report feeling "true love" even though it is far from God's design.
 - When the commitment side is weak, the foundation of the marriage is threatened.
 - When the spouse tries to get his/her needs met in unhealthy ways, s/he may "seek fulfillment" elsewhere through fantasy or extramarital affairs.

ACCES

Example #3: "Crack in Foundation"

- If Commitment and trust has been damaged by hurtful choices, both Emotional Intimacy and Passion will suffer greatly.
- Remember the importance for trust, safety (Commitment), affection, and friendship (Emotional Intimacy) to be built first before the openness of the Passionate side of the relationship can be experienced as God designed it.



ACCES

Example #4: "Dry Marriages"

LOW EMOTIONAL
INTIMACY

LOW
PASSION

COMMITMENT

ACCES

Example #4: "Dry Marriages"

- Unfortunately, a common triangle arrangement.
- Married out of "duty" and remain married because of Commitment:
 - Barely know how to have a conversation together about their relationship.
 - Missing much of what God designed their marriage to be.

ACCES

A Christian Model Of Love

ACCES

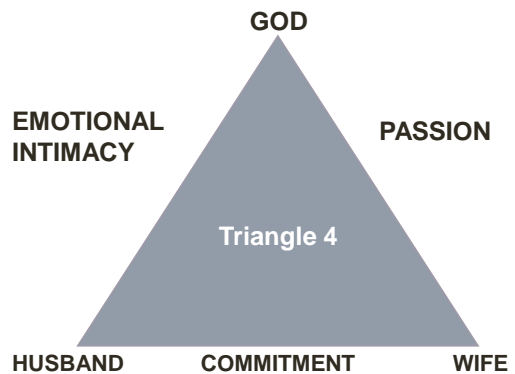
Overview of Triangle 4

Shows a couple who share Commitment for each other and grow towards God enabling them to experience Emotional Intimacy and Passion for each other and in their relationships with God.

• **In a spiritual sense**, they have deepening **commitment** and maturity of their faith, they have a growing **relationship** with Christ, and they have a feeling of **excitement** and **worship** about what God has done for them.

• **In a relational sense**, they have deepening **commitment** and trust with each other, they have a growing **friendship** and show affection to each other, they experience **excitement** and **desire** for each other.

ACCES



Summary

- Monitor and be aware of the triangle shape.
 - Individual circumstances and life transitions will cause unique variations in the shape of the triangle over time.
- Couples who notice a side of their triangle needs attention can seek to bolster it.
- Maintaining your individual relationship with Christ is an important way to make sure your marriage stays strong.

www.accounseling.org/lovelanguages

ACCES

Personal / Couple Reflection Questions

- What things am I aware of that help me feel close and emotionally intimate with my spouse? Consider both the phileo and storge type of emotional intimacy.
- Think of a time when your marriage was strong. Share why and when you think that was and take into consideration the three aspects of the triangle model (commitment, passion, emotional intimacy). What have you learned about love and marriage?

ACCES

This Presentation Contains Information Adapted From:

- Chapman, G. The Five Love Languages.
- Lewis, C. S. The Four Loves.
- Sternberg, R. J. (1986). A Triangular Model of Love. Psychological Review, 93 (2), 119-135.

ACCES

Appendix A

FIVE LOVE LANGUAGES:
PRACTICAL WAYS TO BUILD EMOTIONAL INTIMACY

Adapted from The Five Love Languages by Gary Chapman

ACCES

1. Words of Affirmation

- Receives love through encouraging words and compliments.
- He/she needs to hear the words that affirm his/her worth and abilities in order to believe you truly love and honor him/her.
 - This person resonates with the truth in the verse: *"Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop: but a good word maketh it glad"* **Proverbs 12:25**
 - Kind words that build up, show appreciation, and communicate loving feelings are an essential part of feeling loved.

ACCES

Ways to Give Words of Affirmation

Verbalizing your appreciation:

- "Thanks for helping me out today; it really meant a lot to me that you were there."

Giving Compliments:

- "You did a really nice job painting."

Noticing:

- Thanking your spouse for something routinely done but rarely recognized:
 - "Thanks for being a great father/mother to our children."
 - "I really appreciate your doing my laundry."

Writing:

- A positive note of encouragement can be kept and reread.

ACCES

2. Quality Time

- God loves time spent with Him in prayer and in meditation on the Word.
- An individual with this love language will feel most loved when his/her spouse spends time being with or doing an activity with him/her.
 - Conveyed by giving undivided, focused attention to your spouse.
 - This may include spending time together, having meaningful conversations or just being in the same place.

ACCES

Ways to Give Quality Time

- Finding** time daily to connect and share highlights of the day, thoughts, and concerns.
- Planning** a special outing, doing an activity that your spouse enjoys.
- Taking** a walk together.
- Going** for a long drive together, with or without a specific destination.
- Making** household tasks more meaningful by doing them together.

ACCES

3. Gifts

- From the beginning of time, our heavenly Father has revealed himself as a generous giver of good things: *“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above” James 1:17*
- An individual with this primary love language sees gifts as visual symbols of thoughtfulness and expressions of love.
 - Gifts can be purchased, found, or made and the price of the gift is usually of little regard.
 - Small or large, gifts are appreciated when they are given as genuine tokens of love and give evidence of consideration.

ACCES

Ways to Show Love through Gifts

- Putting thought into anniversary, birthday, and Christmas gifts.
- Finding opportunities for spontaneous, unexpected gifts
 - i.e. Flowers or favorite treat.
- Hiding a small gift or note for your spouse to find
- **NOTE:** Buying things for your spouse without showing interest in or spending time with him/her, will seem like you are trying to buy love.
 - Spouses with a Gifts love language feel loved because of the thoughtfulness the gifts reflect.

ACCES

4. Acts of Service

- Jesus was a servant (*Matthew 20:26-28*). He provided us with clear illustrations of Acts of Service.
 - He humbly took the role of a servant and washed his disciples' dirty, calloused feet (*John 13:1-10*) out of love.
 - People with this love language feel loved when their spouse displays a servant attitude by their actions.
 - This includes acts done “on the spur of the moment” as well as planned time to help out.
 - Require various degrees of time and effort; the key is performing them out of love.

ACCES

Expressing Love Through Acts of Service

- When your spouse requests a chore to be done, try to get it done before he or she has to repeat the request.
- Get up earlier to do one of your spouse's duties he/she normally does in the morning.
- Wash your spouse's car and fill it up with gas.
- Offer to run errands for your spouse.
- Take initiative to clean up a room or do some yard work.
- Work with your spouse on one of his/her regular tasks such as scrapbooking or working on the car.

ACCES

5. Physical Touch

- Jesus understood the power of touch. He took time to hold the young children that were brought to him. Jesus *“put his hands upon them, and blessed them” Mark 10:16*
- Hugs, kisses, and other loving touches are appreciated by nearly everyone.
 - For someone with this love language, physical reminders are the most important messages of love.
 - Learn from your spouse what ways s/he appreciates Physical Touch.
 - For people who speak the Physical Touch love language, drawing close physically parallels drawing close emotionally.

ACCES

Ways to show love through Physical Touch

- Making touch a part of your daily routine.
- Learning how to give back rubs or massages in a way your spouse enjoys.
- Putting your arm around your spouse.
- Holding hands often
 - while praying, walking together, or sitting by each other.
- Don't confuse with being sexual.
 - Most touches are simple reminders of love that do not lead to sexual intimacy.

ACCES