

Understanding Romantic Relationships

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For advice on love, you're probably better off going to Elaine Hatfield than Dr. Drew. In her more than 40 years of research, Hatfield has taken an empirical approach to understanding different facets of romantic relationships, including physical attraction, relationship satisfaction, sexuality, and emotional intimacy. She pioneered the theory that there exist two types of romantic love, passionate and companionate. Though intense, irrational passionate love differs greatly from deeply affectionate and stable companionate love, Hatfield has found that both have an impact on relationship satisfaction and longevity. She also designed the Passionate Love Scale to quantify components of passionate romance; today this scale is used everywhere from psychology labs to online dating sites. Her research extends beyond romantic relationships, however; she has also studied extensively the idea of equity, or fairness, in social contexts, as well as the influence of gender on sexual motivation and behavior. Hatfield is a recipient of the Association for Psychological Science (APS) [William James Fellow Award](#) for her lifetime of significant intellectual contributions to the basic science of psychology.

[Watch Hatfield's Award Address](#) at the [24th APS Annual Convention](#) (introduction by Ellen Berscheid).