

LOVING MORE OF ME WHEN THERE IS MORE THAN THREE...

- James C. Wadley, Ph.D.,
L.P.C. (PA & NJ), ACS,
NCC
- Lincoln University



SCOPE OF PRESENTATION

- I. Philosophical underpinnings
- II. Love is...Love ain't
- III. Assumptions of secondary and tertiary relationships
- IV. Explicit and Implicit Rules
- V. Courtship
- VI. Maintenance
- VII. Severance

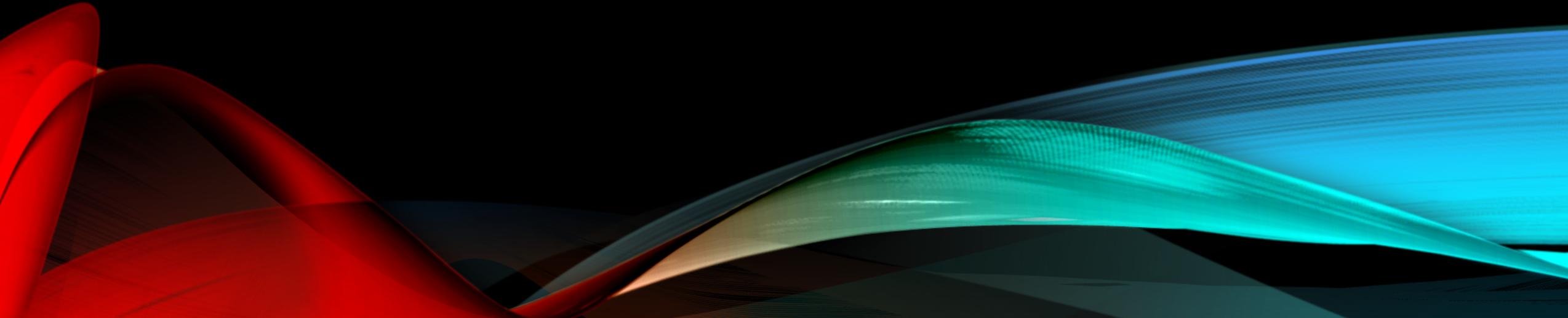
PHILOSOPHICAL LENS

- The interpretivist believes that to understand this world of meaning one must be able to interpret it. To prepare an interpretation is itself to construct a reading of these meanings; it is to offer the inquirer's construction of the constructions of the actors one studies (Hudson and Ozanne, 1988)

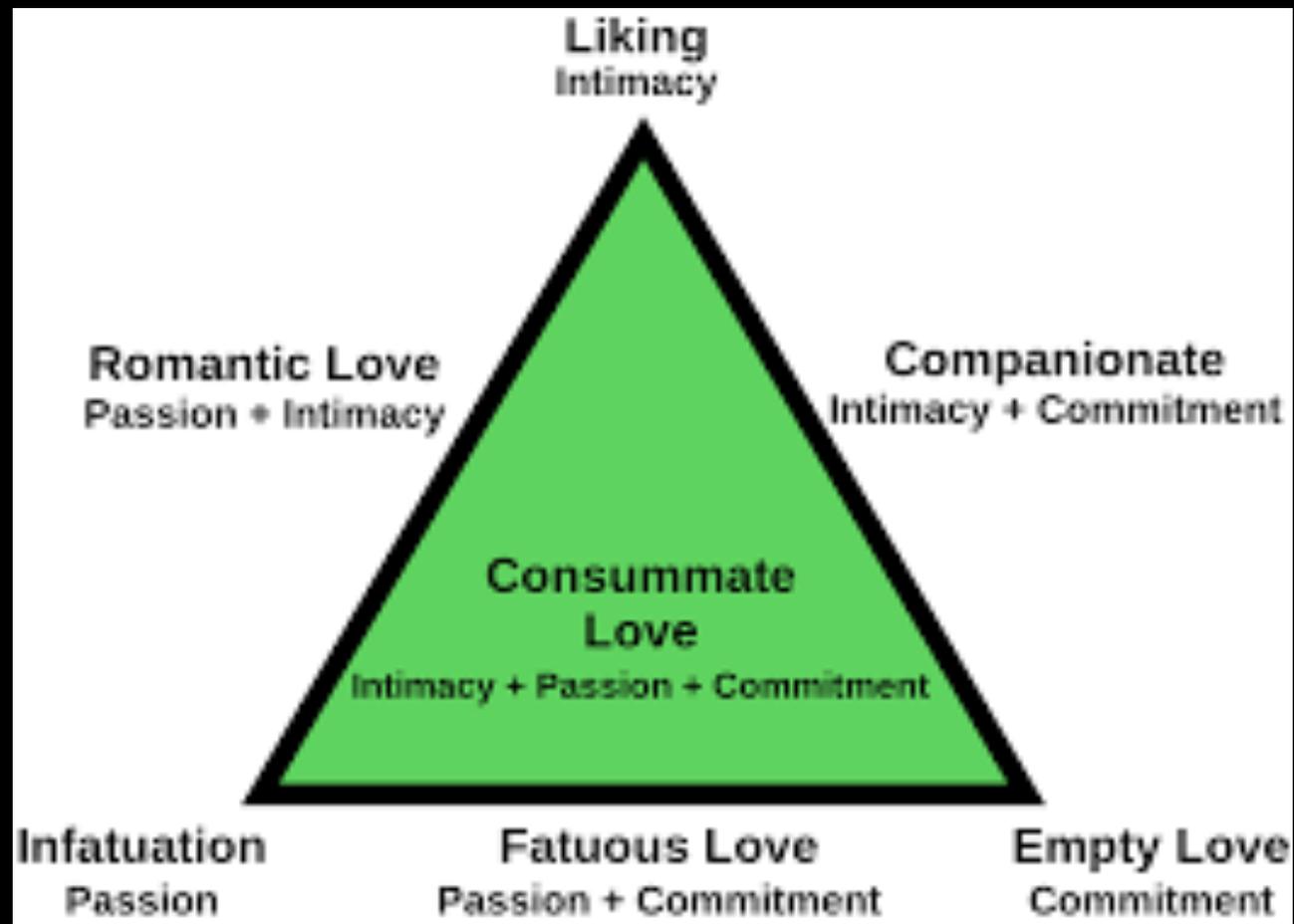


LOVE IS OR IT AIN'T. THIN LOVE AIN'T LOVE
AT ALL

Toni Morrison



STERNBERG'S TRIANGULAR THEORY OF LOVE (STERNBERG, 1997)



LOVING ME...

- Loving me means that, in and outside the context of our relationship, I can be whoever I want to be, whenever I want to be, however I want to be to the exclusion/inclusion of who you think I am or should become. The intimacy, passion, and commitment and patience that I have for me is consummate. #Free #Happy



ASSUMPTIONS OF PRIMARY, SECONDARY AND TERTIARY RELATIONSHIPS

- Assumption of access
- Assumption of visibility
- Assumption of honesty, disclosure, & transparency



ASSUMPTIONS OF SECONDARY AND TERTIARY RELATIONSHIPS

- Assumption of proficiency in communication & emotional intelligence
- Assumption that power shifts across time, context, circumstance, and motivation
- Assumption that courtship processes are invitations to someone else who is merely an escort or companion into the journey of finding the authentic 'me'.



EXPLICIT AND IMPLICIT RULES (SILLARS AND KALBFLESCHE, 1989)

- Explicit rules are those guidelines and expectations that are articulated between two or more people.
- Implicit rules are those guidelines and expectations that are *not* articulated but usually become problematic when they are broken.



COURTSHIP (PRIMARY PARTNER(S))

- *Love recognizes no barriers. It jumps hurdles, leaps fences, penetrates walls to arrive at its destination full of hope. Maya Angelou*
- Negotiate what I want/don't want (physically, emotionally, sexually/intimately, spiritually)
 - Assumption of readiness
 - Can you handle the authentic me? Can I handle the authentic me across time context and circumstance?
 - To whom will I confide in and how will I express vulnerability to you and/or our secondary and tertiary partner(s)

BOUNDARY FORMATION AND MAINTENANCE...

- Are there any boundaries with regards to how I/we court or be courted by someone?
- Spatial/contextual boundaries--Do I have to be around when you court someone and how might our courtship processes overlap or remain different?
- Time boundaries---How much time do each of us have apart or together to court others? Are there any time limits/constraints to my courtship so long as you know what I'm doing?



BOUNDARY MAINTENANCE AND FORMATION

- Relational boundaries---Can I/you court previous partners?
- Emotional boundaries----Can I fall in love with someone? Can I fall in love with my authentic self again after spending so much time courting you and other partners?
- Sexual boundaries----What did I use to be into? What am I currently into? What do I want to be into? Do I have to be into anything sexually in order to build or maintain the relationship that you want with someone else?

SECONDARY AND TERTIARY RELATIONSHIPS

- Assumption that I am okay with being me when I/we don't have someone because a secondary or tertiary relationship may be a deflection from me figuring out who I really am.
- To what extent do I hold you, our partner(s), or me accountable/responsible for my journey into finding me?
- Are the people who we spend time with also companions in my/our journey into finding our authentic selves?



MAINTENANCE

- The ability to service, seek support, or keep the relationship.
- Maintenance can be functional/dysfunctional/toxic
- In some poly relationships, maintaining the relationship with primary, secondary, and tertiary partners can and should be done even if doing so renders me invisible.



ASSUMPTIONS

- Assumption is that I/we are able to establish times, contexts, and circumstances that we are able to honor the other in the relationship.
- Assumption that I may need **less time and space** to honor the commitment to myself to be with myself to the exclusion of the primary, secondary, and tertiary partners.
- Assumption that I know how to engage in good self-care and can communicate effectively about it.

YOU HAVE TO LEARN TO GET UP FROM THE TABLE
WHEN LOVE IS NO LONGER BEING SERVED
--NINA SIMONE



“IT’S NOT YOU, IT’S ME...” RELATIONSHIP SEVERANCE

- When I am unable to experience the best of me because the relationship that I have with you is not conducive for my individual self-expression/satisfaction, I may want to separate.
- When one or two partners grows quietly dissatisfied (keeping secrets) (Duck, 1982).
- Breakups are typically emotionally painful because few happen with mutual consent (Tashiro and Frazier, 2003).



BREAKING UP IS HARD TO DO...

- Assumption that if I break up with you that you have the emotional, cognitive, and behavioral skill set to honor my request to reframe the relationship and/or go away...
- ...and stay away
- Assumption that if I tell you that I have compromised or lost my capacity to experience my authentic self that I am being honest...



DYADIC PHASE (DUCK, 1982)

- Where the dissatisfied partner decides to fix the problem by confronting the other partner for the first time. This may not fix what is wrong and just continue to draw out the relationship until the unhappy partner becomes determined to depart, which will move the relationship into the next phase.
- Assumption that I have an understanding of why and how I'm breaking up with you.
- Assumption that if I have the emotional, cognitive, and behavioral skill set to accept the fact that I am breaking up with one or both of you.



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- Usually the initiator has a better adjustment in the post-separation period than the former partner because he/she has typically already planned for it.
 - Assumption that I know what I'm doing to fix the relationship with myself within the context of the relationship.
 - Assumption that I am motivated to remain in a relationship with you based on the notion of "hope".

LANGSTON HUGHES

Out of Love,
No regrets—
Though the goodness
Be wasted forever.

Out of Love,
No regrets—
Though the return
Be never



DEATH

- Are you open to talking about the relational expectations that you have of me if our relationship should expire due to your or our partner(s) death?
- Are you okay with our secondary or tertiary partners living in our house after you've died? Secondary partner's children? Who will be responsible for our debts and assets if you, I, or both of us die?
- Do our families know that we are in a polyamorous relationship and how might those relationships redefine our family system in the event that you or I die?
- How would I love me now that there is less than three?

QUESTIONS?



INFO?

- www.drjameswadley.com
- www.theabsc.com
- www.thejbsr.com
- @phdjamesw

