

# The Passionate Love Scale

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Hatfield & Walster (1978) define passionate love as, "a state of intense longing for union with another. Reciprocated love (union with the other) is associated with fulfillment and ecstasy. Unrequited love (separation) with emptiness, anxiety, or despair. A state of profound physiological arousal" (p. 9).

This emotion has sometimes been labeled "puppy love," "a crush," "lovesickness," "obsessive love," "infatuation," or "being in love." It includes a component of sexual desire.

The Passionate Love Scale (PLS) is designed to measure this emotion.

## Description

The PLS is a 15- or 30-item Likert-type scale (9 points) with response options ranging from *not at all true* to *definitely true*. It taps cognitive, emotional, and behavioral indicants of "longing for union."

*Cognitive components.* Cognitive components consist of the following:

1. Intrusive thinking or preoccupation with the partner: Items 5, 19, and 21.
2. Idealization of the other or of the relationship: Items 7, 9, and 15.
3. Desire to know the other and be known: Item 10 measures the desire to know; Item 22 measures the desire to be known.

*Emotional components.* Emotional components consist of the following:

1. Attraction to other, especially sexual attraction. Positive feelings when things go well: Items 16, 18, and 29.
2. Negative feelings when things go awry: Items 1, 2, 8, 20, 28, and 30.
3. Longing for reciprocity—passionate lovers not only love, but they want to be loved in return: Item 14.
4. Desire for complete and permanent union: Items 11, 12, 23, and 27.
5. Physiological arousal: Items 3, 13, 17, and 26.

*Behavioral components.* A passionate lover's desire for union may be reflected in a variety of behaviors:

1. Actions toward determining the other's feelings: Item 24.
2. Studying the other person: Item 4.
3. Service to the other: Items 6 and 25.
4. Maintaining physical closeness. (We had hoped to include some items designed to measure lovers' efforts to get *physically close* to the other, but lovers did not endorse such items, and they were dropped from the final version of the scale.)

## Response Mode and Timing

Respondents circle the number indicating how true each statement is for them. The PLC can be given either individually or in large groups. The short version takes approximately 15 minutes to complete; the long version takes approximately 30 minutes.

## Scoring

The individual items are simply summed to produce a total score.

## Reliability

A series of studies indicate that the PLS is highly reliable. For example, Hatfield & Sprecher (1986) gave the PLS to 120 men and women at the University of Wisconsin. They attempted to determine whether the PLS is (a) unidimensional, (b) reliable, as indicated by a measure of internal consistency, (c) uncontaminated by a social desirability bias, and (d) correlated with other indicants of love and intimacy. They found that the PLS is a highly reliable scale. Coefficient alpha was .94. The shorter version of the PLS had only a slightly lower coefficient alpha, .91.

The PLS appears to be unidimensional. The responses to the PLS were subjected to principal factoring, with multiple correlations used as communality estimates. After rotation, one major factor explained 70% of the variance (eigenvalue = 12.24). The results suggest that the scale is uncontaminated by a social desirability bias. The correlation between the PLS and Crowne & Marlowe's (1964) Social Desirability scale was nonsignificant ( $r = .09$ ).

## Validity

If the PLS is valid, it should be related to other variables in ways expected by past theoretical and empirical work. The PLC was highly correlated with other measures of love and intimacy. (See Easton, 1985; Hatfield, Schmitz, Cornelius, & Rapson, 1986; Hatfield & Sprecher, 1986; Sullivan, 1985; Sullivan & Landis, 1984 for additional information on the reliability and validity of the PLS.)

A number of studies suggest that almost everyone is *capable* of loving passionately. Men and women (Easton, 1985), of widely varying ages (Hatfield et al., 1986; Traupmann & Hatfield, 1981), of varying intellectual capacities, mentally ill or healthy, of varying ethnic groups (Easton, 1985) seem capable of falling in love. However, the question as to whether or not there are sex and ethnic group differences in the readiness to love has long intrigued scientists. Men and women may not fall in love with equal frequency or intensity. Society en-

courages men and women to have somewhat different attitudes toward love, sex, and the desire for intimacy. When sex differences are found to exist (and often they are not), it is generally women who seem to love more passionately (see DeLamater, 1982; Peplau, 1983).

Various ethnic groups may also differ in the emotions they feel/express in close relationships. Easton (1985) provides information on PLS scores typically secured by men and women of various ethnic groups.

#### *Other Information*

The PLS is available to researchers, free of charge.

#### References

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## Exhibit

### Passionate Love Scale

In this section of the questionnaire you will be asked to describe how you feel when you are passionately in love. Some common terms for this feeling are passionate love, infatuation, love sickness, or obsessive love.

Please think of the person whom you love most passionately *right now*. If you are not in love right now, please think of the last person you loved passionately. If you have never been in love, think of the person whom you came closest to caring for in that way. Keep this person in mind as you complete this section of the questionnaire. (The person you choose should be of the opposite sex if you are heterosexual or of the same sex if you are homosexual.) Try to tell us how you felt at the time when your feelings were the most intimate.

All of your answers will be strictly confidential.

1. Since I've been involved with \_\_\_\_\_, my emotions have been on a roller coaster.
- \*2. I would feel despair if \_\_\_\_\_ left me.
3. Sometimes my body trembles with excitement at the sight of \_\_\_\_\_.
4. I take delight in studying the movements and angles of \_\_\_\_\_'s body.
- \*5. Sometimes I feel I can't control my thoughts; they are obsessively on \_\_\_\_\_.
- \*6. I feel happy when I am doing something to make \_\_\_\_\_ happy.
- \*7. I would rather be with \_\_\_\_\_ than anyone else.
- \*8. I'd get jealous if I thought \_\_\_\_\_ were falling in love with someone else.
9. No one else could love \_\_\_\_\_ like I do.
- \*10. I yearn to know all about \_\_\_\_\_.
- \*11. I want \_\_\_\_\_—physically, emotionally, mentally.
12. I will love \_\_\_\_\_ forever.
13. I melt when looking deeply into \_\_\_\_\_'s eyes.
- \*14. I have an endless appetite for affection from \_\_\_\_\_.
- \*15. For me, \_\_\_\_\_ is the perfect romantic partner.
16. \_\_\_\_\_ is the person who can make me feel the happiest.
- \*17. I sense my body responding when \_\_\_\_\_ touches me.
18. I feel tender toward \_\_\_\_\_.
- \*19. \_\_\_\_\_ always seems to be on my mind.
20. If I were separated from \_\_\_\_\_ for a long time, I would feel intensely lonely.
21. I sometimes find it difficult to concentrate on work because thoughts of \_\_\_\_\_ occupy my mind.
- \*22. I want \_\_\_\_\_ to know me—my thoughts, my fears, and my hopes.
23. Knowing that \_\_\_\_\_ cares about me makes me feel complete.
- \*24. I eagerly look for signs indicating \_\_\_\_\_'s desire for me.
25. If \_\_\_\_\_ were going through a difficult time, I would put away my concerns to help him/her out.
26. \_\_\_\_\_ can make me feel effervescent and bubbly.
27. In the presence of \_\_\_\_\_, I yearn to touch and be touched.
28. An existence without \_\_\_\_\_ would be dark and dismal.
- \*29. I possess a powerful attraction for \_\_\_\_\_.
- \*30. I get extremely depressed when things don't go right in my relationship with \_\_\_\_\_.

Possible responses to each item ranged from:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Not at all true			Moderately true					Definitely true

Note The \* indicates items selected for the short version of the Passionate Love scale.