

Our English word “love” has many definitions: [Merriam-Webster](#) lists nine definitions for the noun love, plus four definitions for the verb love.

“Love” can mean the love God has for mankind, the love a person has for a best friend, the love a parent has for a child, or the physical act of making love. When we read the word “love”, we can only understand the type of “love” referenced through the context of surrounding words – and even then, it can be a guessing game.

Examples:

- I love mountain scenery.
- He and I played tennis and, after the first game, my score was love (zero).
- I love my old college roommate; we will be best friends forever.
- I would do anything for my wife because I love her so much.

## The ancient Greek language had nine different words for “love”.

[These Greek definitions were found at <https://www.greecehighdefinition.com/blog/9-different-types-of-love-according-to-the-ancient-greeks> and are reproduced herein.]

- ♥ Agapé
- ♥ Eros
- ♥ Ludus
- ♥ Mania
- ♥ Meraki
- ♥ Philautia
- ♥ Philia
- ♥ Pragma
- ♥ Storgé

## AGAPÉ: UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

Agapé (ἀγάπη) is an unconditional love that is not dependent on any external factors. Acts of charity and altruism are often born out of Agapé love... Agapé is the least selfish form of love and does not require anything in return. [The highest form of Agapé love was demonstrated by Christ Jesus as He surrendered His life on the cross to redeem us humans.]

## EROS: SEXUAL DESIRE

In Ancient Greek mythology, Eros (Ἔρως) was a mischievous god of passion and fertility, who was shooting arrows into the hearts of people and immortals and making them feel a sudden overwhelming desire for each other. Although this desire can be interpreted as love, it is primarily physical attraction. That’s where the terms “erotic” and “erotica” came from that nowadays describe human sexuality.

It is common to mistake lust – or sexual desire – for romantic love. Sexual attraction can be a potent and overwhelming sensation, and even fool the brain into questionable decision-making.

## LUDUS: PLAYFUL LOVE

Ludus (Παιχνίδια) is another Greek word for love that is perhaps the polar opposite of Pragma. While Pragma is long-term, cerebral, and based around responsibilities, Ludus is carefree and playful love.

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Greek “Love” Definitions: <https://www.greecehighdefinition.com/blog/9-different-types-of-love-according-to-the-ancient-greeks>

Imagine a hedonistic casual relationship that is focused on fun and living in the moment, and you'll have an excellent example of Ludus. It is often expressed through flirting and teasing, seduction, and casual sex. Although the thrill of sexual conquest is a form of Ludus, these relationships are not necessarily selfish or shallow – they may be fulfilling to both parties if mutual respect is shown, and come with less responsibility and commitment than other kinds of love.

Ludus shares many qualities with Eros, but it is not limited to physical or sexual relationships. Ludus love can also comprise non-sexual activities such as dancing, drinking, and other sensory pleasures that one can enjoy.

### MANIA: OBSESSIVE LOVE

Have you ever met anybody obsessed with a particular individual to the point where it seems unhealthy? And maybe you even called them a maniac? Greek philosophers labeled this type of love as Mania (μανία).

It can be combined with sexual and hedonistic Eros and Ludus but will hardly accompany Pragma or Philia. Mania often manifests through anxiety, emotional instability, jealousy, and possessiveness.

These days “mania,” and its derivation “manic” are used in the field of psychiatry to describe components of certain mental illnesses, as well as being used in less formal settings to define hyper obsession or fixation.

Even though a slight obsession can be fairly common during the early stages of a relationship, in the long term, excess of Mania that is unbalanced by other forms of love can lead to dependency and even stalking or violence.

### MERAKI (MODERN GREEK): CREATIVE ENDEAVORS

A modern Greek word, derived from the Turkish “Merak” (μεράκι) means to do something with love, creativity, and devotion when you wholeheartedly put yourself into what you are doing.

Meraki is often used to describe creative or artistic expressions such as painting, singing, or composing music. Also, it can manifest in cooking, decorating a room, or nicely setting up a table.

You do not have to paint a gorgeous portrait of your partner or compose a stunning piece of music for them to express your love. Making a nice dinner is a perfect manifestation of Meraki!

### PHILAUTIA: SELF-LOVE

Philautia (φιλαυτία) is a prerequisite to loving others [as the Greek philosopher Aristotle believed]. Healthy self-love is beneficial to every aspect of life, including relationships, and individuals who love themselves are usually more capable of both giving and receiving all kinds of love.

Many destructive behaviors in a relationship can often be rooted in a lack of self-love... self-love can quickly turn into an unhealthy form when a person loves themselves more than anyone else. Unhealthy self-love can be expressed through an inflated ego and usually dependent on social status, abilities, or accomplishments rather than genuine virtues.

Healthy self-love is defined by self-esteem that is not dependent on status or competition with others. Instead, it is based more on forgiveness and acceptance of the self.

People with a healthy level of self-love are not arrogant and do not hold themselves superior to others, but are resilient and accepting of their limitations without feeling ashamed of them. These people are less likely to seek

external validation through compulsive behaviors, and as a result, can devote themselves better to relationships.

### PHILIA: SOUL CONNECTION

Philia (φιλία) is a platonic feeling. This Greek word for love implies spiritual connection, trust, and sharing of the same values. Philia usually grows between friends or family members. While it is not as overwhelming, euphoric, or exciting as Eros, it is often more fulfilling and rewarding in the long term. [The platonic love a friend has for a best friend; BFF(best friends forever).]

Philia is not relegated to non-sexual and non-romantic relationships, however. It is a vital component of romantic love between couples, and any connection without it is not likely to last. A love that features Eros but not Philia is often a possessive, self-centered love.

Ancient Greek philosophers (as well as many psychologists today) believed that the two work best alongside each other, strengthening each other and the bond between two people. Adding Philia to Eros turns a possessive love into one built around shared goals and happiness. The Greek philosopher Plato believed that the combination of Philia and Eros led to the highest form of love – a “friendship between lovers.”

### PRAGMA: MATURE LOVE

Pragma (πράγμα) is an essential component of making relationships work in the long term. Pragma is love based on duty, reason, and shared goals. Like Philia, Pragma is not limited to romantic partnerships, although it is a vital part of romantic love. It is essential within families and even close friendships. Examples of Pragma manifestation are personal sacrifices for your partner’s benefit, making life and career choices that are best for your relationship rather than just yourself, and carrying out the daily chores and tasks needed to maintain a happy home.

Pragma love is perhaps the most difficult to develop and maintain, as it requires continual effort, dedication, and often selflessness. However, the results are often extremely worthwhile in the long-term. Even arranged marriages have been sustained and made satisfying through Pragma, and many failing relationships have been saved.

This type of love can be seen as the day-to-day “admin” of maintaining a relationship, but partnerships without Pragma are unlikely to withstand the challenges of time.

### STORGÉ: DEVOTED LOVE

Storge (στοργή) ... usually relates to love within a family. While the care and devotion of Storgé is an integral part of Philia’s connection, it may also be one-sided. An excellent example of Storgé is when a parent cares for a child, makes them feel secure, comfortable, and safe, and [does not] expect anything in return.

Although Storge may seem like an antidote of Eros, they both tend to be highly natural, biological, and instinctual. Storge usually occurs between married couples who are raising a family together. This form of love is valued in Western culture, particularly within the Christian faith.