(S. S. Brehm, 1992; Fehr & Russell, 1991). You will appreciate the problem if you think about the people you love. Chances are, you love them all in different ways. The love you feel for your parents is undoubtedly different from the love you feel for your siblings, and the love you feel for your best friend is different from the love you feel for your romantic partner. This complexity increases greatly if we consider that some people also profess to love not only their jobs, pets, possessions, and activities but also abstract entities such as beauty, God, or freedom.

1. Liking and Loving

Despite these obstacles, there is widespread agreement that “loving” and “liking” are qualitatively different phenomena. While it is true that loving involves more affection than liking, love is not simply “a lot of liking” (Rubin, 1973). As shown in Figure 11.11, one way to think about the relation between these two constructs is to treat them as overlapping sets (Sternberg, 1987). The area on the far left represents people we like but don’t love, the hatched area in the middle represents people we like and love, and the area on the far right represents people we love but don’t like. The fact that we can love people without liking them provides strong evidence that love is not merely “more liking.”

2. Different Kinds of Love

Love can also take many forms (Berscheid & Walster, 1978). Companionate love is a deep, abiding attachment, characterized by feelings of caring, affection, and respect. Companionate love develops slowly, as people gradually share more and more of themselves with each other. Although it is commonly found among same-sex friends and relatives, people also feel companionate love for their romantic partners. Indeed, in the most successful marriages, people regard their spouse as their best friend.

In contrast, passionate love is a more intense emotional state, involving sexual desire, feelings of ecstasy, and perhaps anguish. Passionate love develops rather quickly and may seem to be largely out of one’s control. The word passionate has its roots in a Latin word that means “capable of suffering,” and people commonly speak of being lovesick or swept off their feet. Although passionate love is not necessarily a deeper form of love than companionate love, it is more varied. It is accompanied by physiological sensations (butterflies in stomach, increased heart rate) and is manifested cognitively (preoccupation with the other person); emotionally (feelings of euphoria, contentment, and sometimes despair); and behaviorally (a strong desire to remain near the beloved).