always choose wisely. In a later section of this chapter we will consider the factors that influence whether a relationship endures or dissolves. For now, we will consider only people’s ideas about the role love plays in the matter.

Figure 11.12 presents data relevant to this issue. At various times over a 20-year period, researchers have asked college students the following question: “If a man (woman) had all the other qualities you desired, would you marry this person if you were not in love with him (her)?” Figure 11.12 shows the proportion of men and women who said they would not marry without love. As you can see, men have consistently said they wouldn’t marry unless they were in love, while more and more women have come to adopt this position. Undoubtedly, the increase in economic opportunities available to women accounts for the change. Now that most women are capable of supporting themselves, they no longer need to settle for a loveless marriage.

4. Cultural Differences in The Experience of Love

If most Americans marry only when they are in love, why do so many marriages fail? One possibility is that they marry for the wrong type of love. Passionate love is quicker to develop than is companionate love, so it dominates in the early stages of a relationship. Blinded by passion, lovers see only the good aspects of their relationship, believing that love conquers all. Alas, passionate love burns out more quickly than does companionate love, and its euphoria and optimism invariably give way to a steadier, more realistic view of the relationship and its problems and possibilities.

People in other parts of the world seem to appreciate this fact. Although passionate love is a common human experience (Jankowiak, 1995), cultures differ in regard to the importance they attach to it. When choosing a mate, people from collectivistic countries, such as India, Pakistan, and Thailand, generally place less importance on romantic love than do people in individualistic countries, such as Australia, England, and the United States (K. L. Dion & Dion, 1988, 1993a, 1993b; R. V. Levine, Sato, Hashimoto, & Verman, 1995). They also give greater weight to a potential mate’s character and background rather than his or her attractiveness and personality. Finally, they pay more attention to the wishes of their parents. Does this mean couples in