

Emotionally Connecting



Understanding and Working with Couples

Presented by Dr. Todd Frye

Schedule

~ **Friday Night**

~ Sessions 1

~ Emotions Role in Relationships

~ Break

~ Session 2

~ Love and Emotion

~ Empathy

Schedule

~ Saturday

~ Sessions 3

~ Intro To Emotion Focused Couples Therapy (EFT)

~ Break

~ Session 4

~ Essentials and Interventions of EFT

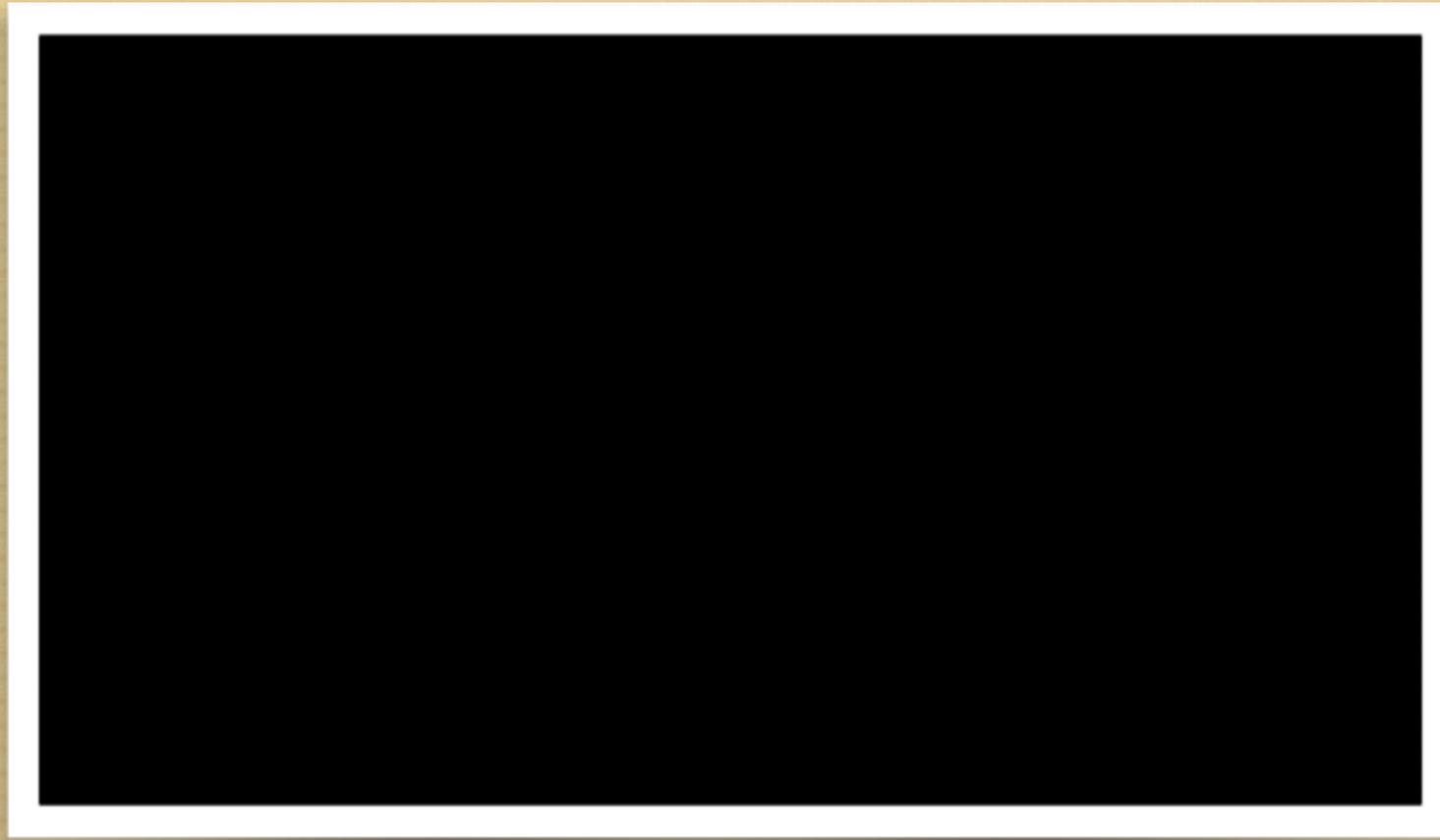
~ Lunch

~ Session 5

~ Repairing Broken Bonds

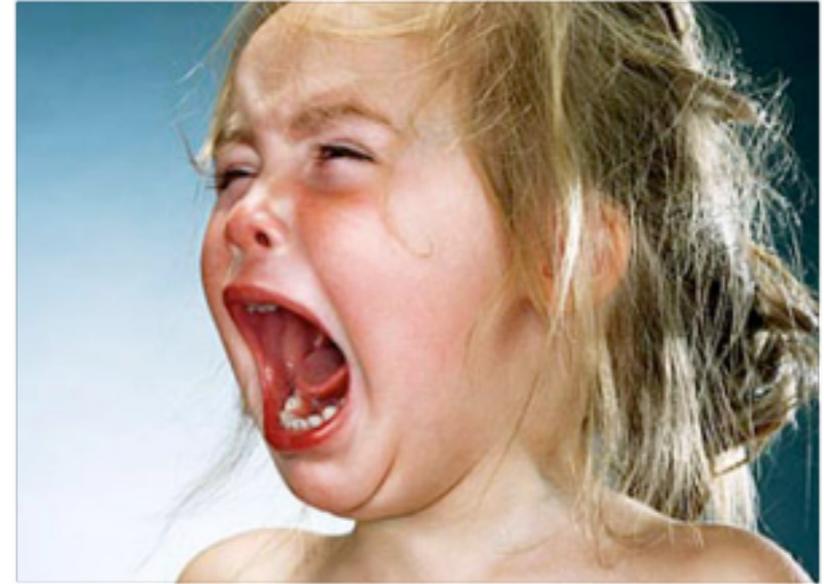
~ Session 6

~ Interview with Couple



- ~ What does it mean to **emotionally** connect?
- ~ What role does **emotion** serve in couple connection?

Societies View of Emotion



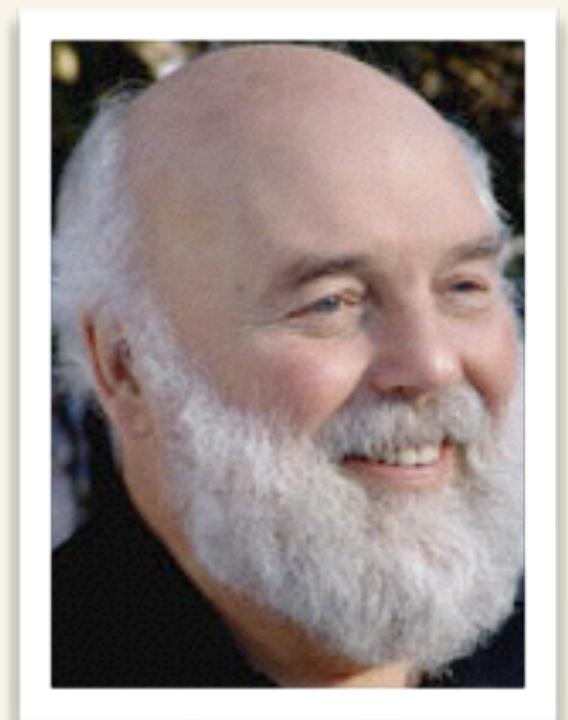
Making a Case for Emotion in Relationships

- **Les Greenberg (affect argument)**
 - People are motivated toward relationships primarily by the affect they seek.
 - Relationships serve as a primary means in which to regulate the emotions we desire to experience.



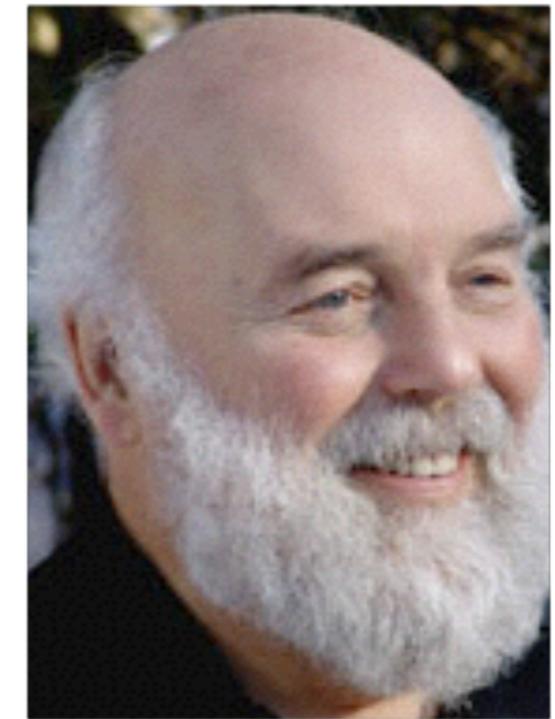
Les Greenberg's Argument

- ~ People relate to others in order to help regulate affect (emotional regulation)
- ~ Coupling is one of the major sources of affect regulation. We are wired to emotionally regulate through interpersonal connection.
- ~ In most cases parents and partners are 600 watt bulbs when it come to emotional stimulation and regulation.



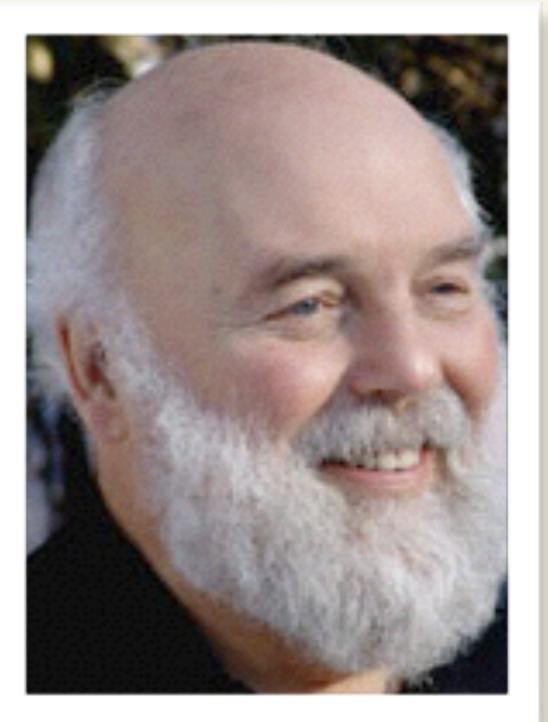
Les Greenberg's Argument

- ~ People are motivated primarily by the affect they seek
- ~ **Seek**
 - ~ Feel calm, joy, pleasure, pride, excitement
- ~ **Avoid**
 - ~ Pain, shame, fear



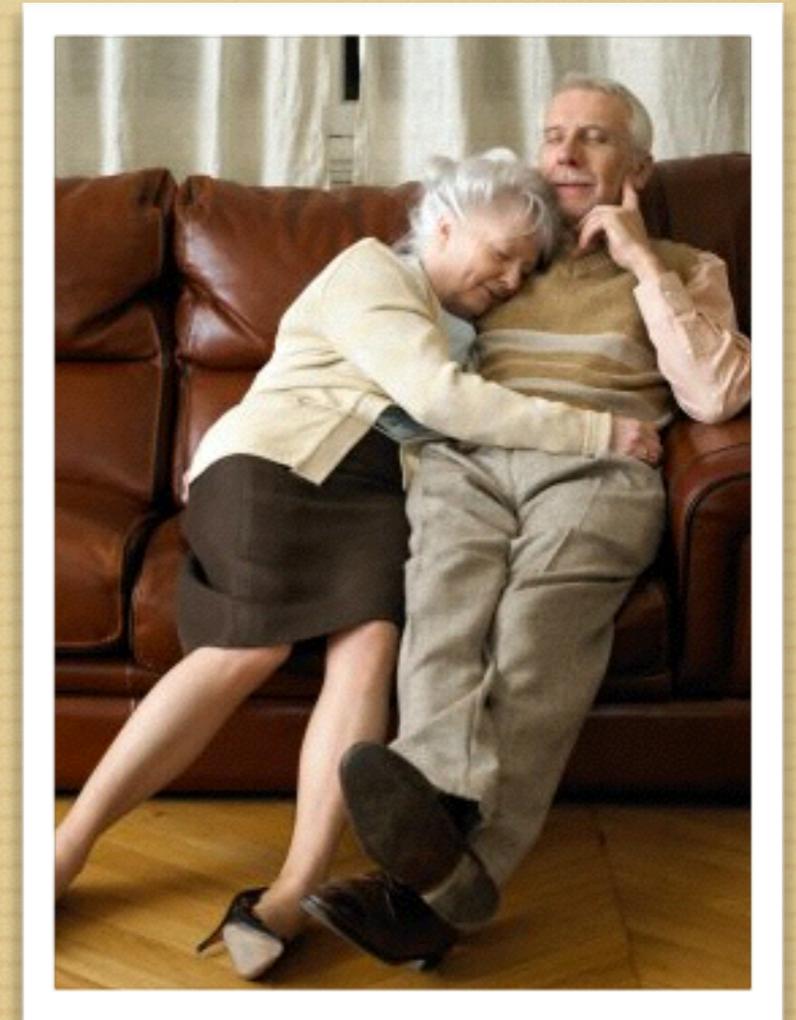
Les Greenberg on **Why Couples Seek Therapy**

- ~ Most couples seek therapy when affect regulation and communication in the relationship are failing.
- ~ Difficulties in intimate relationship then are most centrally about problems in the regulation and communication of affect.
- ~ Being in a loving relationship helps partners to feel good, calm, safe, and secure. Being in troubled relationship leaves partners feeling bad, anxious, and insecure.



Making a Case for Emotion in Relationships

- Sue Johnson (Attachment Argument)
- People are motivated toward to meet our innate adaptive needs for security and protection and connectedness.
 - Maintaining closeness to others is considered to be an innate survival mechanism (attachment)
 - Since attachment needs are an essential part of being human, emotions help regulate whether these needs are being met.



Sue Johnson's Argument

- ~ Closeness to others meets our innate adaptive needs for security, protection, comfort, and caring. (Attachment needs)
- ~ Isolation is traumatizing
- ~ Emotions are our “proximity regulators” and identify our needs and longings.
- ~ Emotions organize interactions.
- ~ “Emotions become the music of



Sue Johnson on **Why Couples Seek Therapy**

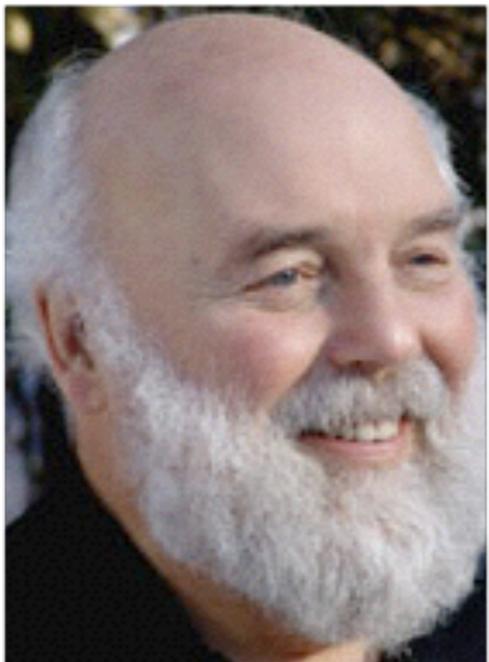
- ~ Couples seek therapy when partners become inaccessible or unresponsive to attachment needs.
- ~ Difficulties in intimate relationships then are most centrally about proximity.
- ~ Relationship cycles are formed in response to or in an attempt to deal with proximity.





Johnson

*We are motivated by our attachment goals.
Relationships=meeting our needs for security, protection, comfort,
care. Emotion is the proximity regulator toward meeting these
needs.*



Greenberg

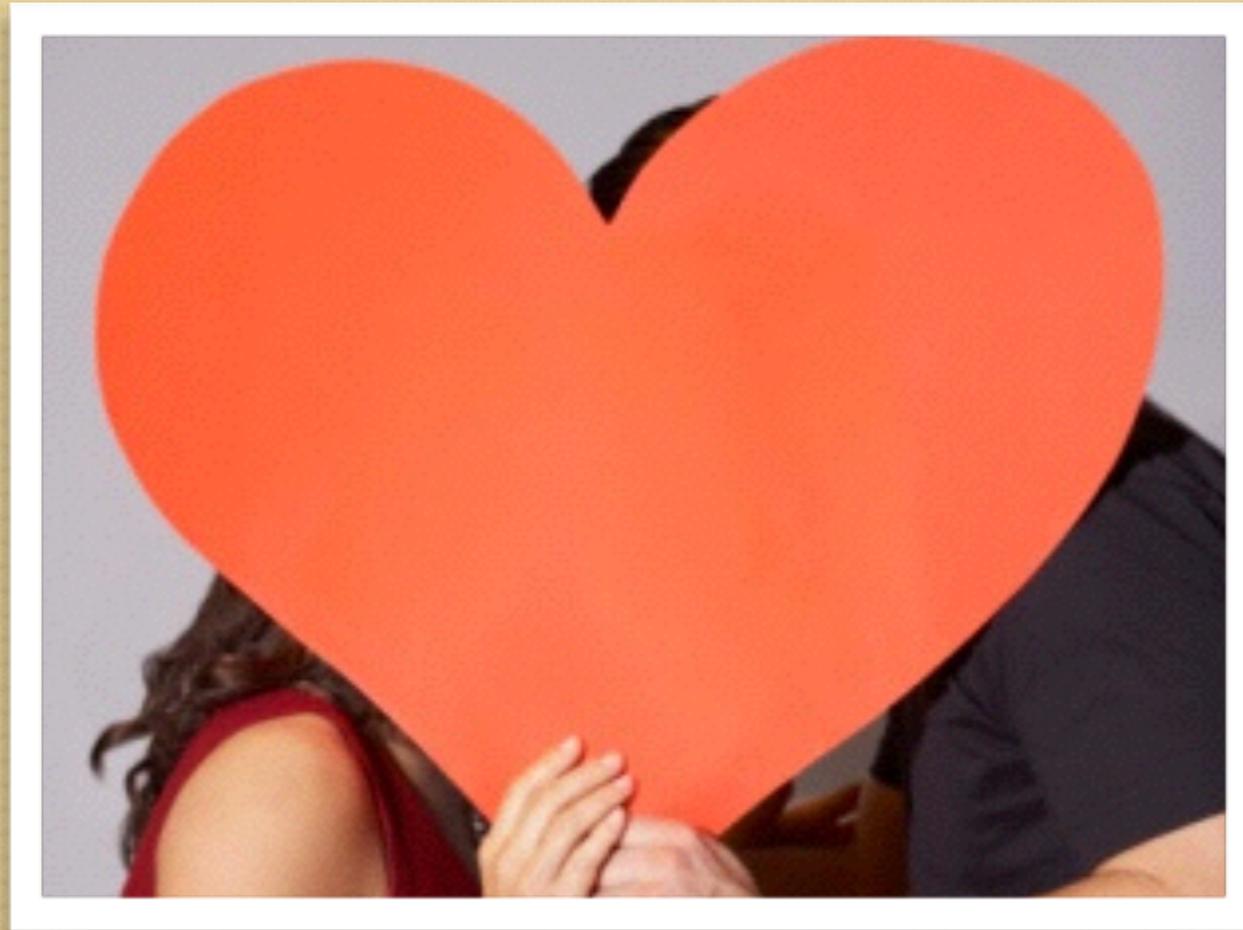
*We are motivated by affective goals
Relationships=meeting our need for emotional stimulation and
regulation.*

What do you believe?

Comfort Break



00 : 20 : 17



Emotions Role in Love

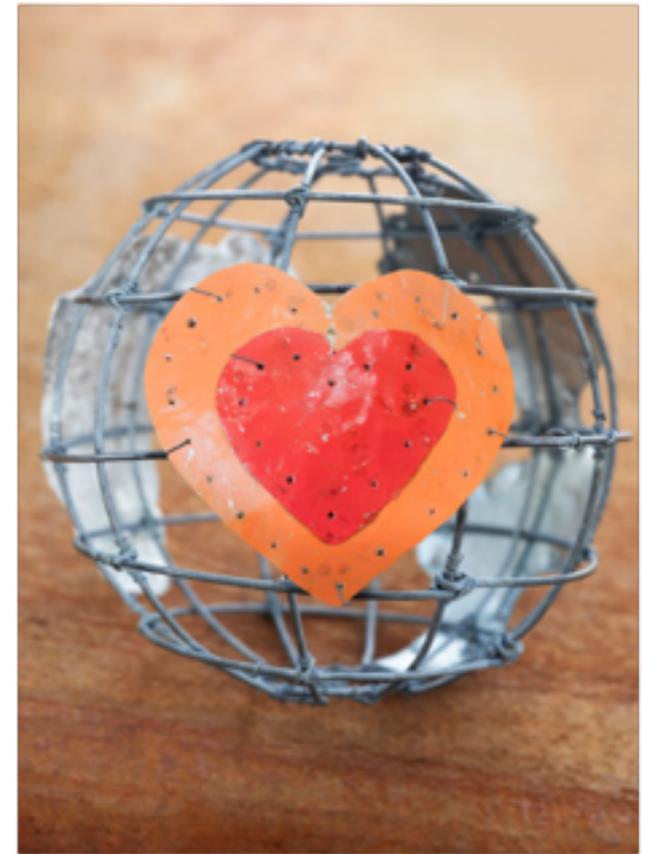
Is **Love** a Feeling or an Ability?



A Current Definition of Love

Thomas Oord, PhD

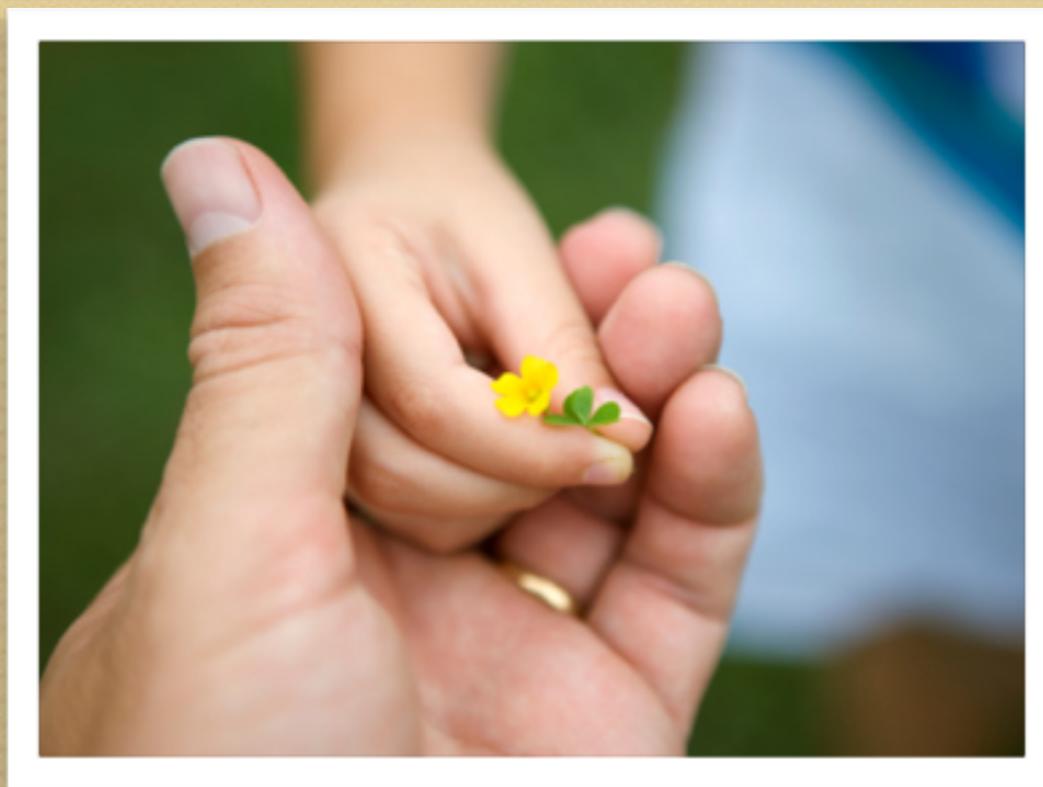
- “an intentional act, in sympathetic response to another, that promotes overall well-being.”



Questions

- Are intentional acts that promote a partners overall well being primed by an emotion (sympathy)?
- Do our emotions hard wire us for war or **love**?





Two Hard Wired Systems that Promote **Love** in Couple Relationships

Attachment (**seeking emotions** that meet our core needs)

Caregiving (**responding emotions** that promote loving acts)

The Attachment System



Primes us to Seek **Love**

The Caregiving System

Empathy Primes us to Give **Love**



Empathy in the Couple Relationship

 What is Empathy?

 “An **emotional** state triggered by a partner's negative emotional state or situation, in which one **feels** what the other **feels** or would normally be expected to feel in his situation.”

 Empathy generates personal “**Empathic Distress**” (Hoffman, 200).

 Empathic Distress primes movement toward relieving the distress (works of mercy) thus promoting loving actions.

Empathic Distress

- 📌 Overwhelming evidence points to the fact that people are hardwired toward feeling **empathic distress** (Hoffman, 1978, 2000; Eisenberg and Miller, 1987).
- 📌 To feel pleasure over someone's misfortune are only present under certain conditions (anger, dislike, competition).



Development of Empathy in Relationships

📌 1. **Mimicry**-An innate involuntary response to another's expression of emotion that mimics another's facial expression, voice, and posture .

📌 Muscle movements trigger feedback to the brain that produce feelings of another.



Developing Empathy in Relationships

- 📌 2. **Conditioning**-a response that is created when one's actual distress is paired with another's expression of distress. (mother & baby)
- 📌 3. **Direct Association**-Relating through having the experience of another.

Developing Empathy in Relationships

-  **Perspective Taking**-Imagining oneself in another's experience converts the others situation into mental images that evoke the same feeling in oneself.
-  Self Focused-Attending to another's trauma occurring to oneself.
-  Other-Focused-Attending to

Questions & Break
for the Night