



# Love Is a Story: A New Theory of Relationships

By Robert J. Sternberg

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## Love Is a Story: A New Theory of Relationships By Robert J. Sternberg

In this groundbreaking work, Robert Sternberg opens the book of love and shows you how to discover your own story--and how to read your relationships in a whole new light.

What draws us so strongly to some people and repels us from others? What makes some relationships work so smoothly and others burst into flames? Sternberg gives us new answers to these questions by showing that the kind of relationship we create depends on the kind of love stories we carry inside us. Drawing on extensive research and fascinating examples of real couples, Sternberg identifies 26 types of love story--including the fantasy story, the business story, the collector story, the horror story, and many others--each with its distinctive advantages and pitfalls, and many of which are clashingly incompatible. These are the largely unconscious preconceptions that guide our romantic choices, and it is only by becoming aware of the kind of story we have about love that we gain the freedom to create more fulfilling and lasting relationships. As long as we remain oblivious to the role our stories play, we are likely to repeat the same mistakes again and again. But the enlivening good news this book brings us is that though our stories drive us, we can revise them and learn to choose partners whose stories are more compatible with our own. Quizzes in each chapter help you to see which stories you identify with most strongly and which apply to your partner. Are you a traveler, a gardener, a teacher, or something else entirely? *Love is a Story* shows you how to find out.

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### Editorial Review

#### Amazon.com Review

We've all seen them: that annoying couple that is always bickering, always arguing, always seeming to be on the verge of a breakup (think Ethel and Fred Mertz), yet somehow, keeps the relationship going, actually staying married till death do them part. And then there's the couple that's simply *perfect* for each other. Maybe he was the captain of the football team and she was the prom queen. They finish each other's sentences. They habitually exhibit public displays of affection. Somehow, though, they're unable to keep it together and end up splitting up, frequently not even sure themselves why it happened. How do these things happen? What is it that determines which relationships will work and which are destined to fail? Robert J. Sternberg, a professor of psychology at Yale University and author of *Successful Intelligence*, has developed the theory of a "love story" to help explain how relationships function, which he explores in his groundbreaking book, *Love Is a Story*.

Sternberg purports that each one of us creates a love story for ourselves. These stories are created unconsciously and usually at a fairly young age. When we get older, Sternberg tells us, our relationships are dictated by the kind of stories we have created, often causing difficulty when our partner's stories are incompatible with our own. In his illuminating work, Sternberg first briefly explains where our stories come from and how we formulate them. Then, in the bulk of the text, he identifies 26 different kinds of love stories, giving two case studies for each one. The types range from the war story to the house and home story to the science-fiction story. The positive and negative attributes for each are given, plus a small questionnaire to determine if you fall into a particular pattern. The last section of the book examines the implications of what you've learned.

Sternberg has some interesting points in his book--and certainly learning what kind of unconscious love patterns you hold onto is helpful--but at times the view seems rather bleak. All of the stories seem to have significant downsides to them, perhaps making the reader reluctant to identify with any particular group. Also, as you are sure to be more multidimensional than the rather flat characters in the case studies, you are likely to fall into more than one group, which, Sternberg permits, is a possibility, but it makes it more difficult to attack the problems at hand. His book, however, is a unique study presenting new ideas that make a lot of sense and could explain your relationship trends. *Love Is a Story* just may give you valuable insight into why your relationships may or may not be working and give you the knowledge you need to help you find the right person. --*Jenny Brown*

#### From Library Journal

Why are people romantically attracted to certain individuals and not to others? Why do some love relationships last and others fail? Fascinated with these and similar questions, Sternberg (psychology and education, Yale) conducted extensive research with couples and developed a novel interpretation of relationships. According to Sternberg, each person (usually unconsciously) sees him- or herself as the protagonist in a love story. Friction arises when partners hold differing stories. Sternberg has identified 25 romantic themes or stories applicable to short- and long-term relationships, ranging from the fantasy fairy tale ("happy ever after") to the business partnership. For each story, case studies are given, dynamics explained, and the benefits and disadvantages of the story discussed. Also included are statements from an inventory developed to identify story themes. Sternberg holds that relationships can be improved by becoming aware of our stories, understanding the role they play in our lives, and revising our stories to meet our needs. Recommended for popular psychology collections. ?Lucille M. Boone, San Jose P.L., Cal.

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#### From Kirkus Reviews

A study of how the partners in a couple create, and work to sustain, a particular narrative motif that largely defines the nature of their romance and according to which they play certain roles. Sternberg (Psychology and Education/Yale; *Successful Intelligence*, 1996, etc.) notes how important internalized narratives are in providing guidelines for the way we live: "Once we have a story, we can interpret almost any events as confirming it, elaborating on the story as we see fit." At the same time, a particular narrative "keeps being written throughout each person's life" and "even after a relationship ends, we may rewrite the story several times." The heart of this book is an exploration of 26 narratives that shape couples' lives and that involve everything from power imbalances ("the teacher-student story") to fear ("the horror story"), from a certain amount of estrangement ("the science fiction story") to mutual tending and nurturing. ("the garden story"). For all 26, Sternberg methodically describes the nature of the story, provides some "diagnosis" ("lines" or worldviews that accompany it), offers two case studies, and probes each narrative's strengths and weaknesses in terms of the prospects for a relationship's survival. If his book has a weakness, it is that it's a little too schematic; there is not enough here about couples torn between multiple narratives or how couples do, and might, respond when once mutually satisfying stories turn dull or otherwise sour. Nor is there material on how race, ethnicity, and sexual preference influence couple stories. (Are there distinctive stories that gay and lesbian couples have? All of Sternberg's case stories come from heterosexual ones.) These omissions aside, this is a terrifically interesting and enjoyable book, one that will probably be read by married and unmarried couples, singles, and the counselors who work with them. -- *Copyright ©1997, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.*

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##### Stan Whitley:

This *Love Is a Story: A New Theory of Relationships* are reliable for you who want to be a successful person, why. The explanation of this *Love Is a Story: A New Theory of Relationships* can be among the great books you must have is giving you more than just simple studying food but feed anyone with information that possibly will shock your previous knowledge. This book is definitely handy, you can bring it just about everywhere and whenever your conditions at e-book and printed ones. Beside that this *Love Is a Story: A New Theory of Relationships* giving you an enormous of experience such as rich vocabulary, giving you demo of critical thinking that we all know it useful in your day action. So , let's have it appreciate reading.

##### Sonja Johnson:

People live in this new day of lifestyle always aim to and must have the time or they will get lots of stress from both lifestyle and work. So , when we ask do people have spare time, we will say absolutely sure. People is human not only a robot. Then we ask again, what kind of activity have you got when the spare time coming to you of course your answer will probably unlimited right. Then do you ever try this one, reading textbooks. It can be your alternative with spending your spare time, often the book you have read will be *Love Is a Story: A New Theory of Relationships*.

**Walter Cornwell:**

In this era globalization it is important to someone to obtain information. The information will make anyone to understand the condition of the world. The fitness of the world makes the information much easier to share. You can find a lot of references to get information example: internet, newspaper, book, and soon. You can see that now, a lot of publisher that print many kinds of book. The particular book that recommended to you personally is Love Is a Story: A New Theory of Relationships this publication consist a lot of the information from the condition of this world now. That book was represented how can the world has grown up. The terminology styles that writer make usage of to explain it is easy to understand. The particular writer made some study when he makes this book. This is why this book suited all of you.

**Jason Caldwell:**

Many people spending their time frame by playing outside with friends, fun activity together with family or just watching TV all day long. You can have new activity to shell out your whole day by reading through a book. Ugh, do you consider reading a book will surely hard because you have to use the book everywhere? It alright you can have the e-book, delivering everywhere you want in your Smart phone. Like Love Is a Story: A New Theory of Relationships which is getting the e-book version. So , why not try out this book? Let's observe.

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