Wow. Well, hi everybody. Lots of good faces out there and a big crowd. We didn't know what to expect but I guess with a title like Addicted to Love, come on, you know, it's gotta be great. I just wanted to say I'm Dave Hibbard and I'm in the psychology department and that's me. You wanna say who you are?

Oh, I'm Gail Walton in the child development program and we're married, been married for 10 years. We just celebrated our 10th wedding anniversary on Friday.

Dave: Yes.

Audience: Congratulations.

Dave: Yes.

Gail: Thank you.

[Applause from Audience]

Gail: And so Dave--Dave teaches the close relationships writing intensive course in psychology and so that's how, you know, this talk came to be. Wasn't KC your student?

Dave: Yes, yes, and KC is my student and yeah. And so the title promises a lot. And we looked at the flyer again just a little while ago and we're gonna try to get to some of those questions that were on the flyer. We may have over promised with that with this title. But we'll certainly gonna try that to go through some things and to address a lot of issues and questions that people have, okay. Alright. So let's just get started, okay. Alright.
Well, relationships are clearly everywhere. I mean, look around you they're everywhere. We have lots of relationships. In fact, you can even follow relationships as you well know with a click of a button and internet connection and you can see that Sarah here had a pretty interesting history. I believe you would read it this way, I guess to find the chronology of it. But you can kinda see some of the things, she's in a relationship. She is single. She is in a relationship. There're a couple of fellows involved apparently. And now she is single again with the classic broken heart symbol, right. So, you just got to look around. Relationships are everywhere.
Before we go any further though, we wanna make a little disclaimer about who we are and who we are not. Clearly, we're not Dr. Phil and Dr. Laura. And we're not clinicians. We're not counselors. We don't do therapy. But we are developmental psychologists and we, well, basically try to approach this as researchers and, you know, relationship researchers. I've done some research on friendships and some close relationships stuffs like that. But we're not really out to give a lot of advice usually. So kind of the caveat there is that this advice we give you may not work for everybody. We're not really a self-help kind of couple. I guess we could try and make more money if we were. But that we're basically coming from research kind of perspective. And we're gonna tell you a little bit about what the research does. Alright, so everybody is clear that we're not these people alright, okay.
We can start with little quote. This is a movie you've probably seen, Sleepless in Seattle. It's a little great quote from this movie. "Annie, when you're attracted to someone, it just means that your subconscious is attracted to their subconscious subconsciously." So what we think of is faith is just two neuroses knowing that they are a perfect match, okay. Anybody wanna take a guess at what that's getting at? Anybody interpret that for us? What does that mean to you? [Pause] Anyone? Audience: Psychology? [ Laughter ] Why don't you explain what it means?

Dave: I have no idea what it means? [ Laughter ] You go ahead.

Gail: Well, I mean--well, actually, I needed to be near the microphone. Actually, really what it's referring to is a psychological perspective that sometimes we look for in other people what we have been missing as we've been growing up. And so others would say that, you know, we recognize aspects or patterns of past relationships that we have and then when we select a partner, we tend to play those patterns out. And so that's really what he is referring to, okay.
Dave: Yeah. That's good. I like that. Okay. Well, the way we're gonna try to sort of structure this thing is to kinda go to, chronologically, at least in our culture, the way that we go through relationships. And we're gonna start, we'll talk a little bit about attraction. We'll talk a little bit about dating. Talk a little bit about living together or cohabitations as its known. And then we'll take a little bit about marriage and some of the things that make marriages work and some of the things that don't, little bit of stuffs like that, okay. Oh, go ahead.

Gail: So, if you have--feel free to ask questions as we go along, okay. And then we'll try to have a question and answer period at the end.

Dave: Alright. Okay. Well, we'll start at the beginning. Who are we attracted to? Take a second and think about what kinds of things you're attracted to and you can just shout them out if you like. What? What are you attracted to? Look around our campus. [Inaudible Remark from Audience] Personality, okay. [Inaudible Remark from Audience] Eye contact, sure. What else? Smiles. Intelligence, okay. Similar interest, sure. Anything else? That pretty much summarized it? Well, that's interesting because in the research on relationships, kind of a big research question that people ask is are we--you know, are we attracted to people that are like us or sort of birds of a feather kinda thing. Or are we attracted to opposites, okay. And you might think about yourself for a minute and, you know, see if that which is true for you. But most of the time, you'll probably find that people that are familiar to you, people that are similar to you, okay, and sometimes they say if you find--wanna find out who you're gonna end up with, just look around you, because these people are close to you. A lot of times you hang out with similar people. We actually like things that are familiar.

So, actually the more times you hang around with somebody, the more that you start to like them. So you may have noticed that in your classes or with your friends or something like that. Why do we do that?
You know, why do we like to be with people that are similar? Okay, there's a thing called consensual validation. And it's a principle that basically says we hang out with people that are like us because they make us sort of like ourselves. They validate who we are, okay. They have similar interests. They validate our interests and things like that. So that's really kind of most of the research suggests that we do. Have this kind of familiarity, similarity kind of connection. Now, you know, I've had people say, you know, some of my classes, well yeah, but I'm really attracted to the bad boy, you know, or something like that. And so there is something to it, opposites attract. But the problem with close relationships is that they don't usually last. They're kinda fun for a fling or something alright, but generally as far as long term relationships, opposites really don't work very well, okay. Alright.

Now, sometimes people ask--asks us, you know, what's going on with my selection of people, you know. I don't know if I was gonna tell you this but when I looked at some of Gail's dad's pictures when he was younger it freaks me out. It kind of freaks me out really. Because he looks very much like me and it kinda shocked me. And so I got started to talk about it, you know, do we look for people that are similar to our parents? Do you ever thought about that? You know, if you look for your dad figure or your mom figure? I don't know. Do you think that's true? [Inaudible Remark by Audience] So you've seen that, right. Why do we do that? Anybody know why we do that? It could be the familiarity thing. It's comfortable. Any other reason why we do that? Okay, yeah. [Inaudible Remark by Audience] That's really good. That's a good point, and yeah.

Audience: [Inaudible Remark] It's--they are the person that you have known from early childhood as your--as the ideal person and the person you want to be [inaudible].

Dave: Right, right, right. Yeah, I think that's--all that's really true, I think. And the research basically shows that what's probably going on is that you learn about how relationships work in your family, right, and you sort of see your folks in the way they interact and you see the way they interact with other adults.
They see how your siblings interact with them. It's a principle that's kind of based on attachment to your parents. And a lot of times, you know, there are some stability with what you look for and the way you think things work with from your parents and you kinda seek that out in your romantic relationships. Now, there's a good side to that and sort of a not so good side. If you have a fairly secure relationship with your folks, with your caregivers as a child, chances are you probably gonna have a secure attachment to your romantic partner, alright. On the other side of that, if you have an insecure attachment with your folks, it's possible that you may carry that over into relationships. Have you ever dated anyone who's really insecure? Yeah, there's a few of you. If you haven'tt, you will, right? And if you have, you know what I'm talking about, right. So that's something that's may, you know, a lot of times we wonder about person's childhood to see if that carries over, okay. Sort of lays the ground work for future relationships I guess, okay. Now, I don't know if how many psychology people are out there. If you know much about evolutionary psychology, anybody familiar with that a little bit? Oh, so intermissions coming up here. Well anyway, now we can't really get into all the ins and outs of evolutionary psychology so I'll try to kind of water it down just a little bit. But evolutionary psychology takes some of the principles of Darwin. Survival of the fittest, natural selection, and you're probably familiar with that, that we have traits. You know, you and I have traits that were somehow adoptive in our ancestral past, right. Why do we have two eyes and two ears and certain, you know, things, physical trait. Well, somehow, you know, our ancestors found those adoptive, right. So we were sort of the success stories of our ancestors, okay. Well, evolutionary psychology takes the same principles except in terms of social behaviors. So in other words we have certain social behaviors that we have now because our cave people ancestors found it adoptive somewhere in the past, okay. That's a very water down version of that. But that's essentially kind of what it is. So why do we have behaviors like jealousy. Do you ever wonder why we get jealous? Well, in evolutionary psychology we try to explain that in terms of our ancestors. Somehow, you know, jealousy serves some function, okay. So when we talk about that, you know, we're talking about attraction here. Evolutionary psychology does also have some theories about mate selection and what we find attractive, particularly gender differences in mate selection, okay. So think about what, you know, you look for in a mate, okay.
I'll give you a little help here. Kinda take a second to go down that list and, you know, rate these things as indispensable or, you know, irrelevant to your mate selection. So just take a second and kinda look at those.

Gail: And also keep in mind that the more you have as indispensable and important is gonna make it harder for you to find a mate, okay.

Dave: Good, good tip.

Gail: I'm the dark side.

Dave: So what kind of things or show up pretty high on you with? What's indispensable to you? Yes.

Audience: A good cook and a housekeeper.

Dave: Okay, okay. [Laughter] Indispensable. What else?


Dave: Intelligent, sure, okay, right. Are there any guys wanna tell us what their top list?

Audience: Chastity. [Inaudible Remark] Emotional stability-- Yeah. [Inaudible Remark]

Dave: And maturity, okay. Good, okay. Well, that's, you know, that's--that's essentially the way it usually comes out. Now, what the evolutionary psychologist has found that when you do this in cross cultures not just in our culture, when you give the sort of rating scale to people in different cultures, you find a pretty predictable gender difference, okay. And the gender difference usually comes out something like females tend to look for--not now, let me just back up a second. Males and females do rate things like intelligents pretty high, you know, emotional stability, you know, character.
Those kinds of things are pretty high on both males and females list but where the females and the males sort of diverge is essentially females tend to rate things like good financial prospects pretty high, what else is on here. Status, I think status is on here somewhere and ambition and industriousness, okay. Males tend to rate pretty high in things like good health, good looks, things like that, okay. So you got yourself a little bit of a gender difference, why would that--why is that? Think about your evolutionary past, why would males need to look for, you know, attractiveness and females--yeah?

Dave: Right, right, that makes sense. Anybody else have any ideas about that? Well, I mean it's basically that's essentially right. If you even look farther back, right, think about our cave people ancestors, right. The challenges that they went through were different for males and females, right. Females when it comes to pregnancy, what sort of their challenge, what do they have to get through?

Dave: Giving birth and what, pregnancy, right. Lactating, right, they have to feed the baby. So they're sort of tied down in a way, right. And for males, they don't necessarily have that challenge, right. And so the evolutionary psychologist would say that it could be, you know, that why do females to this day still prefer, you know, characteristics like financial prospect, job, money, status. Well, it could be traced back to our ancestors, you know. They were sort of tied down with having the baby. They needed someone to provide resources, okay, keep a cave over their heads so to speak, right. The male on the other hand didn't have that same kind of challenge. One of the challenges for males was whether they--to make sure that they--if they gave resources to somebody that it was their child, okay. They didn't wanna waste resources on a child that wasn't their own, okay. So you might find the other part about males is that they needed to make sure that they mated with fertile woman, okay. One sign of fertility is health, okay, and beauty and fairness and things like that, healthy skin, round, kind of signs of fertility, okay. And so again, I don't wanna get into this too much but that could be sort of one explanation as to why you see these gender differences and it's still there today. I guarantee you we could go on campus and do a study. You would still find some of those differences, okay. Even with more equal rows for males and females, okay. Does that make sense a little bit, okay. That's a very shortened version of that but just to kinda put some more.
This is the bar graph. It's pretty clear to understand. Trying to be as honest as you can, are you more attracted to people by their bodies or the brains and you could kinda see how that falls out.

[ Pause ]

Right, any surprises there? It's probably those gee whiz graph I guess, you know, okay, okay, alright.
A “Logical” Next Step: Dating

- Why do people date???
- Gender Differences in Dating ("scripts")

Well anyway, we're moving along here, you know. So you know, we talked a little bit about attraction, what about dating? Okay, this is something that obviously you guys are probably pretty familiar with, at least maybe a little. And so it seems like the next logical step. Once you find somebody that you're attracted to, you might as well ask him out, go out on a date, right, okay. Why do you do this, why do we date?

Audience: To get to know each other.

Dave: Get to know each other, sure. Any other reasons? [inaudible Remark by Audience] Companionship, sure. Get to know, get to know him better, right, yeah. Any other reasons? Yeah.

Audience: They'd rather [inaudible] trust in the person.

Dave: Yeah, sure, absolutely. Get to know a little bit about their character, right, okay, yeah. And that's, you know, essentially the way it goes. Now, you know, a lot of people date for recreation. Sometimes it's for sexual kind of experimentation to kind of learn a little bit about intimacy, right, to practice kinda your intimacy skills and things like that, you know. Sometimes just for status, this is probably more like high school dating, right. But you remember kinda going out with somebody because it kinda gave you some status, right. So there're all kinds of things that we do. But you know, there're also gender differences in dating. And some of the research shows that males and females approach dating with a different kind of script, different idea of what they wanna get out of it, right. Do you wanna say a little something about that, some of the research you've seen on the males and females?

Gail: On dating?
Dave: Yeah. Okay, yeah, cool.

Gail: Well, basically as far as gender differences are concerned, you have differences in the way males are more likely to respond the way females are more likely to respond. And males are more likely than females to say that they date for fun, for recreational purposes and also to engage in sexual activity. So you can get that more for males. For females, more what you find is that they date more for companionship and to get to know the other person better. And they also say for fun too but they are less likely than males to say that they date to engage in sexual activity, so yeah.

Dave: Yes, that's--you articulated that better than I, yeah. So, and you know, we learn the scripts. And I say scripts up here but scripts are what you might think of as expectations for dating, right. And males have sort of a script and females have a script, okay. The male script involves things like, you know, I ask the girl out or ask the person out, you know, I'll pick the place that we go, okay. I'll open the door for her, I'll pay, okay. So all those things, you know, they're sort of in this script for the male's role. The female kind of, you know, a more of a passive role, a more reactive role. I will not pay. I will--sounded funny. But, you know, I will let them choose, right, you know. And where do we learn that? Well, we learn in our families. I think we learn it from TV, you know, frankly, the media. But really a lot of it is in our families and things like that. We learn sort of what's expected and what's, you know, what's expected for the genders, okay. And we learn that pretty early on, you know, if you think about, you know, kids. They learn that pretty early, okay.
I don't know if you guys remember the Seinfeld episode with George when he was--he has, I guess his fiancé at one point and he really started to have this problem, you know, with his keeping his life as an independent person, separate from his couple life. And the thing he always said was you're killing independent George. And I think there is a lot to that and I think that says a lot about when you start to find that you wanna be with somebody, right. You start to date them a little bit and you know what I'm talking about if this has happened to you. You sort of have--you wanna be with each other a lot, okay, and at the early stages, don't you? Is there anything greater than that? You just look forward to them. You long for them. And after a little while of course, you start to not wanna be with them all the time, right. And this is kind of the thing--a kind of a crossroads, I think, you have to deal with is sort of figuring out how independent you two are going to be and how much of a couple you're gonna be, how much togetherness versus how much independence, okay. Have you had this issue? How do you handle it? Do you have any tips?

Dave: Yeah, right, talking about it, being honest. Has it ever sort of blown up on you or maybe a one person? Yeah, where one person wanted to be together a little more than the other. That's yeah, and that's a big issue. But when you start to be serious obviously, this is something that needs to be talked about. I think that's a great--a great thing and the research does suggest that couples that talk about that stuff early on, I think even while you're still in that sort of, you know, everything is well stage and everything is peachy. You know you're in love and you can't get your hands off of each other. That's maybe the time to do it when you're still feeling very warm towards each other just to talk about that, you know. I think--I don't suggest doing it and I don't know if you have ideas about this. But I don't suggest sort of just testing the person, you know, and I think that's not such a good idea to just go away, you know, I'm going out with my friends. I don't really care what you think about it but I'm gonna go out. I wouldn't suggest that technique, you know. What would you think?

Gail: No.

Dave: Yeah. So but it is--No. But anyway, so you see kind of what we're saying here is that this is a balance. And I think it's a balance that if you decide to be a couple you're gonna have to kinda work that out, okay, so easier said than done probably but, okay [inaudible]. Okay, we do, okay.
Okay, now at a certain point, you like to find squirrel. Is there anything funnier than a flying squirrel? Now, leap of faith, that's kind of why we put the flying squirrel in there. Are you looking for your soulmate or have you found them? What is a soulmate anyway? Does anybody know, what is it? You know, how do you find out whether it's really true and love. This idea—I wanted to say just a couple of things about culture. Our culture is very, you know, we put a lot of eggs in our love basket essentially. Love is very important to us and I think this idea of soulmate kinda reflects that, you know. And it's always funny to me. It's like well, I'm looking for my soulmate. And this whole idea is that there's one person out there just for you and for you and for you. There is one person. Now then that put a lot of pressure on you to find that person, right. You gotta find that one person in the whole universe that's you soulmate. Ah, God that sounds like a hard thing to do. But you know what I mean? And I don't know. I mean I think it's a culture, that's more or less our culture—western culture kind of has this idea of a soulmate. Now, maybe there is more than one soulmate, you know, for you, okay. But you gotta kind of think about these things and kind of figure out what. Well, maybe there're lots of people that are right for me, you know. Maybe it's just it has to do with my journey through life, whatever. But you know, this whole idea of just one person and if I don't get it right, oh, I'm doomed, you know. So I think that's something that we gotta kind of clear our pallets with a little bit and back up a little bit. Now love probably is what we're kind of after, right, you know. But how do you know if it's love? Is anybody like freshly in love that wants to share it?

[Inaudible Remark by Audience]

Dave: Okay, how do you know it's love, if we can ask you?

[Inaudible Remark by Audience]

Dave: Okay, that's a good definition, that's great.
Dave: How else do you know? Is it a physical feeling? Yeah.

Dave: Yeah, yeah, good. That, yeah--anybody else have any other one? Yeah.

Dave: Mental? Like how? How so? Sure. Sometimes they say you should give yourself the longing test--or no, I'm sorry, the absence test, okay. And the absence test is you think about when that person is gone, is it do you long for them, okay. And if you do, you probably got yourself love, okay. If you don't then you probably got yourself a friend, okay, that you don't really actively miss them, okay. But when you're in love supposedly, that's a nice kind of way to think about it. You actively miss them, right. So, but what is love? What is love? You know, I mean we talked about it. Poets write about it. Songwriters write about it. You know, there're million songs with lower love in it. Do we really know, right? And if we, you know, even subjective, is it even really something we can objectively study, okay. So I don't know how you feel about that right now.

Audience: Are you talking about romantic love or you know [inaudible].

Dave: Right, different types of love. Yeah, absolutely. That's good 'cause that's exactly what I was leading up to here. Psychologists, a lot of times people kinda, "oh, psychologist shouldn't study love because it's too abstract. It's too subjective. You know, it's in the eye of the beholder whatever that means, you now.
But it doesn't stop psychologists from studying it because they study a lot of things that are sort of abstract, right. And there's a fellow named Robert Sternberg, we may have heard of him in psych classes before. But Sternberg has several, you know, he is a famous psychologist. He has done a lot of things. But one of the things that he's famous for is his triangular theory of love. And I think it's kind of useful to kind of conceptualize love in general. But essentially this is kind of a busy little graph here. But essentially what he is saying is that love is not just one thing. It's made up of three things. The first one is passion, okay, it's a little--it's kinda written small down here. That's at one end of the triangle, passion, okay. And passion is just what it sounds like. It's that physical, you know, wanting someone on sexual desire, hot--if it was a color it would be red, right. Intimacy is another aspect of love. And that's almost more of a warm glowing kind of feeling. Intimacy is not in terms of sexuality really or sex really. We're talking about knowing someone, being close to them, you know, telling personal things about yourself. They tell you personal things about them. You now, it's intimacy, okay. So that's another aspect. And the third component is commitment and that basically is this idea that we've decided to that we wanna be a couple and we want to be--or at least we committed to being together, you know, for a while, okay. So that you got your passion, you got your intimacy, you got your commitment. And when you kinda put those together, you know, you get different types of love. And that's maybe kind of what you're getting at. But--So you got these combinations. If you have passion and intimacy in your relationship, you have what's called romantic love, okay. That's romance as we kind of think about it, you know. That's the stuff of songs and poems and things like that. If you have intimacy and commitment, but you don't necessarily have the passion, you have what's called companionate love, okay.
And that's kind of the kind of love that may, you know, after a while the passion does wear down a little bit, right. And so you kinda lose that really, passionate, hot part but you still have, you know, the closeness and the commitment to be together. And there're different combinations here. This is kind of an interesting one down here. When you got passion and commitment without the intimacy, he calls it fatuous love, okay. I call it stalker love. [Laughter] Because you're really passionate about this person and you really are committed to wanting to be with them but you don't know them very well, right. Now, what we're all--[laughter] now what we're all after, of course, is consummate love which is all three. And if you got love that's made up of all three then that's what he calls consummate love, right, which is really what we're all after. Now, this is a dynamic, right, it's different times in relationship you may have different sort of combinations of this, right. Maybe your folks, maybe your parents might have started out with all three but maybe, you know, the passion is way--way is a little bit, maybe you see kind of a more companionate love in your folks or something like that, you know. If you just got intimacy in a friendship without the other parts, you got yourself a friendship, you know. And if it's just passion you probably infatuated with somebody, right. So you see how that kinda works now. I mean that's a quick version of this. And it's not the only conceptualization of love but it kinda gives you sort of--I like it 'cause it gives you kind of an idea of, you know, there're these difference components that kinda moves around during the course of the relationship and things like that, okay. So any questions about that? Okay, Sternberg, if you're interested, you know, just look at Sternberg stuff and he's pretty good, okay.

Dave: Okay. I'm gonna turn it over to Gail to talk a little bit about cohabitation. Gail.
Gail: Okay, so you can kind of call me Debbie Downer here as far as cohabitation is concerned. But I wanna talk to you about this from a research perspective. This is not a moral issue for me. I don't have any problem with people cohabitating. And what I want to tell you about living together, cohabitation is that there are some characteristics about people that they bring into relationship. So we can't think of cohabitation as being like a causal kind of thing like if we cohabitate we will be successful. Because it isn't the cohabitation aspects. It's the two people that are together that create a relationship, okay, alright. So I found a quote from Erich Fromm that I thought was actually a pretty good lead in to cohabitation. There's hardly any activity. Any enterprise which has started out with such tremendous hopes and expectations and yet which fail so regularly as love, okay. I don't know who can get through their life without having their heart broken basically, right. I mean it's probably going to happen over the course of time. And I think that, you know, we just kind of have to expect that as part of our life course and part of what's gonna happen. And when something like that happens, you know, we go to our friends, we go to our family, we get the support that we need, you know. It takes some time, we got over it and we continue on, right. Now, I didn't meet Dave until I was 33, 33 years old. I waited a really long time. We got married when I was 36. And so I was very earnest that when I finally did meet, you know, someone that I was compatible with that it was really best for me not to rush to wait. It took me awhile to do that. In my 20s I did wanna rush. But once I finally got to my 30s I had a better head on my shoulders and I made better decisions about who I dated.
So, as far as cohabitation is concerned, there is what we call the cohabitation effect. It's been documented in many studies and I have--let me get down here to the bottom, okay. Actually, there's a nice summary of cohabitation findings in this article and you can--this is in the library database so you can look it up and you can see, you know, what these researchers have found. So the cohabitation effect is really the idea that when the people who cohabit have a higher risk for divorce than those that don't, okay. And I wanted to just go back and say again, that this is not a causal relationship. Cohabitation doesn't cause this higher risk factor. What causes it is the selection. It's the people that decide to cohabitate. What characteristics are there about them that would lead them to be at greater risk for divorce than people that don't, okay. So that's why I'm saying it's not, you know, I'm not saying that, you know, cohabitation is something that people can't do. But it just gonna create a risk factor for particular reasons. Okay, so we're encouraged by famous people who cohabit apparently successfully although we're not really sure, right.
So what really happens in the literature and this has been studied a lot is that young people tend to think that cohabitation is a natural stepping point for going into a marriage. It's a way that they test whether they test whether or not that they can actually live together, okay. So what happens however is that that's not really what happens for them. Cohabitation really and the next slide that I show you is gonna be associated with a lot of negative things, okay. There's--In the literature, they call, you know, an effective inertia. So what happens is a lot of people who cohabitate, it wasn't their original intention but they started dating, you know. Eventually, you know, somebody spend a couple of nights over at the other person's house and then they start collecting items at each other's apartments and then finally before, you know it, they're cohabitating, okay. And it's not really something they decided. It wasn't something that they really talked about intimately. It was just seemed like a natural next step for them, okay. And so, you know, a lot of people report that it wasn't their intention originally to cohabitate but they ended up doing it anyway. And it's not really something they decided. In the literature, they call, you know, an effective inertia. So what happens is a lot of people who cohabitate, it wasn't their original intention but they started dating, you know. Eventually, you know, somebody spend a couple of nights over at the other person's house and then they start collecting items at each other's apartments and then finally before, you know it, they're cohabitating, okay. And it's not really something they decided. It wasn't something that they really talked about intimately. It was just seemed like a natural next step for them, okay. And so, you know, a lot of people report that it wasn't their intention originally to cohabitate but they ended up doing it anyway. And then the inertia of being together, living with someone, sharing everything creates an inertia for not breaking up for people that really aren't compatible to be married, okay. Does this make any sense? Okay, alright. So they do find though, and this is the bright spot in cohabitation, is that for people who already are engaged or already who have plans to marry, the cohabitation effect doesn't exist, okay. So now what happens usually is that for women, women think that, "oh, well this cohabitation is going to lead into marriage and their male partners don't often have the same feeling, okay. They don't have the same level of commitment. This has been one, you know, suggestion or hypothesis for why the cohabitation effect occurs. It's because people come into a cohabitating relation--situation with different expectations, different expectations about commitment. Whereas people that have already made the commitment and decided to get married had set a date, that for them cohabitating, you know, isn't--is not the issue because they are very committed and very dedicated to each other. And it's really the dedication and commitment that people have toward each other that's gonna carry them through those really rough times. And life can be very stressful and you can get, you know, a lot of rotten eggs thrown at you in quick succession in your relationships. And you have to find a way of not taking that out in your partner, okay. You have to find a way of using the support that you give to each other to help hold each other up, okay, alright. So we find that cohabitation with more partners or for longer periods is associated with the reduction and esteem for marriage and child rearing, okay. So it just kind of erodes away at the ideals that we have that are associated with marriage, okay.
Okay, so here is my laundry list for all the things that we find are associated with cohabitation. Increased risk for divorce, more negative communication. For couples that do stay together and then eventually get married, there are lower levels of marital satisfaction for them, higher perceived marital instability, greater likelihood of marital domestic aggression particularly verbal aggression, depression, low self esteem, and lower life satisfaction, okay. And again, I wanna say that it's not cohabitation that creates this. These are selection characteristics of people that decide to cohabitate, okay. Alright, do you have any questions? That article that I showed you had a nice long list of cohabitating findings from these studies, okay. So I encourage you to go take a look at that and the other literature. Yes.

[Inaudible Remark by audience]

Gail: Well, I think, okay--Oh, yes, yes. So the question is, so what do you do if you find yourself in that habit where you're staying in each others houses and you're slowly drifting into perhaps the cohabitating situation. So really, if you find yourselves doing that, I think the best thing is a very honest discussion about where is the relationship going, okay. And you may find that's the point in which you break up, okay, honestly. But you know, think about the long run. Is that really better for you in the long run, what are you really looking for? If you're really looking for someone who is gonna be dedicated for you and you're in a relationship with somebody who's not, it's better for you not to be with them unless you can put up with it. And I don't think that that's, you know, a really satisfying place to live because you could be spending your time by yourself or with your friends, developing your own interest or you know, being open then to someone who actually can fulfill the needs that you have. And you know, people say, you know, what is love and why did you pick Dave, why did you decide to marry Dave, and what are the reasons I married him. And probably the biggest reason is because he accepted me for who I was. And I can't over emphasize that. He never tries to change me. I try not to change him, and that was so refreshing. Yeah, I can be a little [inaudible] but yeah. I try very hard. But yeah, we have a lot of dedication for each other and it comes from commitment, okay. And that's not really what you have when you're cohabitating, okay. It's not that level of It's a level of commitment but it's not, you know, if you're considering what it might be like to be in a really long term committed relationship with someone, that's just usually not the case. That's not what's there.
So, now here is the gender difference that we see here. And like I said, when you do interviews with young people who are cohabitating, a lot of times it's the female who thinks that the cohabitating arrangement is going to lead into a more serious relationship where it's the males who tend to think not so, okay. Okay. And as I said before, those that live together with plans to marry, they already have solidified their commitment to each other, okay. This happens for some people where they decide to get married and they get engaged and they don't cohabitate until then, okay. It's not really the cohabitating situation that has led them to decide to get married because it's who those two people are that really matters, okay. Any other questions? Okay, yes.

Gail: So okay. Well, I can take a step out. He is saying he knows people that live together for seven years and they ended up breaking up because the female said it just got a little too comfortable. Well, I'll tell you what, you know. There is a lot of dailyness to living. There is a lot of habitual patterns that get established and it's that way in marriage, too, right? Uh-huh, yeah. I mean, yes. [Laughter] You gotta do the laundry, you cook, you know, and it does. It does get very comfortable. But I think sometimes for us, we ideal--maybe this is true, I don't know. But for us sometimes we idealize our relationship so much that we find out all the passion is gone, the love is gone. And that's really not--It's really not the case for couples that are in long term relationships. Sure, you know, passion is way up here when you first started it gradually declines, right. And you have to be comfortable--comfortable with that. Just because the passion starts declining doesn't mean you should throw away that relationship. You may have just the best friend in the entire world, okay. But it is going to happen and passion waxes and wanes. Did we know something that John Gottman said about that? Okay, so Dave will revisit that but that would be my--my guess is that, you know, a lot of times we think we should--the passion should stay up here unless we're not in love anymore and that's not the case, okay. Back to you? Okay, Back to Dave.
Dave: Alright. Okay. So we're gonna speed up a little bit here. Well, you guys know The Princess Bride, right. It's on--It's on, on a channel all the time. So it's always on. So if you ever wanna watch The Princess Bride, you can find it. And we always have to watch it when we run across it though, yes. Anyway, are you gonna get married, are you? Anybody know? Who is--raise your hand who's gonna get married? Sometime in your lifetime do you think? Not like today or anything. [Laughter] What are you doing here [inaudible]. [Laughter] Okay, so most people do report that they will plan on getting married, right. Most people say they wanna get married. Now, when are you gonna get married. Do you have any idea? No, no idea. A decade, what? [ Inaudible Remark by Audience ]

Dave: Late 20s, okay, right. A lot of times people sort of have an idea, right. Don't you have kind of an idea? Some people are well 25, it will be 25 or whatever. [Laughter]
And it's funny because the age of marriage is actually going up and here is the median age of marriage over the past few decades here and you can kinda see that sure enough, you know, 1960, average age for men was 22, almost 23, women 20. And just a few years ago it's about 27 for males, 25 for females. Maybe a tiny bit higher than that actually would be this, you know, now, okay. So definitely that trend has been starting to go up and that's probably a good thing. Most people seem to agree that that's probably a good thing.
The purpose of marriage really has changed over the years. I mean, you know, we really, you know, think about love and marriage going together. I could probably ask you, would you marry someone you didn't love, would you? For most people in this culture say no. That's kind of a western kind of culture. In other cultures, there are such thing as arranged marriages and things like that where love doesn't really play--play a role. Traditionally, love didn't have anything to do with marriage. It was about property or getting families connected or whatever. It was getting tribes, you know, coalitions between tribes and things like that. So you might think about why you're getting married and a lot of times people especially early on think that love is all you need for your marriage, right. It's like, well, we've got love. We don't need anything else, okay. Well, I think the research and practical experience I tell you, that actually there are other things that you gotta worry about besides the love. And I think having more realistic expectations for marriage, those couples tend to do better, you know. And I don't know, you can think about how you think about marriage. But I mean, I know when I was, you know, undergrad, I thought really I have very idealistic kinds of thoughts about it. It was almost like a fairy tale to me, you know, and it was just all good stuff. And you know, I don't know if that was the best way to be. Having more realistic expectations, think about, you know, what you're gonna experience, talk about it as a couple. You know, I'd say even talk to married people. You know what I mean? I don't know if you do that very much but I mean, I think you can learn a lot about sort of what to expect, right. And that's better, now it may sort of bring you down a little bit but I think it also sort of be good for you because you kind of have more realistic things going--I don't know, okay, alright, okay.
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I just wanna finish up with some--a researcher named John Gottman who is a very famous relationship researcher. He is not a counselor either. He's not a clinician. But he has a place in Seattle, University of Washington called the "Love Lab" which is what he--it's called an official name that everybody kinda calls it the “Love Lab”. But essentially what this is, is an apartment up in Seattle that has, you know, it's kinda like a bed and breakfast, and people go up there, couples go up to this place and they stay for a weekend. And it's just like any other kind of bed in breakfast except that it's got four cameras mounted on the walls and it's also people that are there get hooked up to--through all these monitors, heart monitors, blood pressure monitors, skin response, EKGs, EEG, you get the idea? And there's also people watching them interact. Okay. And there's people sort of researches that go end and they look at interactions. They actually set up stuff for the couple to do like talk about a conflict that they've had. Anyway, this is a part of what we call relationship science. And it's a way of measuring kind of how what works in relationships and what doesn't. It's kind of really interesting. I mean, he gets a lot of data on the stuff. I'm not gonna be able to play but--'cause we're running all that time. But if you go on Youtube and kind of just, you know, look up Love Lab, you might get a lot of things but what you might get is this--it's sort of a tour of his facility there where he has these people come. And it's kinda interesting. It shows this couple getting hooked up to the stuff and--But anyway, Gottman found out a lot and he has studied this for, you know, 30 years probably, 25, 30 years and he's followed couples along. He studied them and he's followed them longitudinally to see which couples make it and which couples don't. He's done all kinds of couples, heterosexual couples, lesbian-gay couples. You know, so he's kind of done it all. And he divides the people up into what he calls masters, which are people that stay together; and disasters, which are people that are bound to break up, okay. And what he found is that there are some characteristics of masters that sort of seem to work in relationships. In fact, he's very proud of his predictability, his ability to predict, you know, after watching the video tape of a couple interacting. He can predict whether they're gonna be together in 10 years or whatever. So it's kind of interesting stuff. And one thing he says to do is with your partners establish love maps. He calls them love maps which really just knowing your partners psychologically, okay. Know what your partners' dreams are, what your partners' interests are to really kind of be psychologically connected to them, okay. Oh, yeah.
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John Gottman: Relationship Researcher

- The “Love Lab”
  [Video Link]

- Masters vs Disasters: Seven Principles
  - Establish “love maps”
  - Nurture fondness and admiration
  - Turn toward each other
  - Let partner influence you
  - Solve solvable conflicts
  - Overcome gridlock
  - Create shared meaning

[ Inaudible Remark by Audience]

Dave: Right. No, he does this. I don't think he shared that. But--and actually the point is to actually help the couples, too. So, he's got some counselors and clinicians, too. A lot of the people that come in are just normal, you know, healthy couples. Some of them do have problems, right? And so he tries to help them, too. Yeah, and he shows them what he finds out. I don't think he's like dooming them. Yeah.

[ Inaudible Remark by Audience]

Dave: Absolutely. Right. Could be, could be.

[ Inaudible Remark by Audience]

Dave: Yeah, yeah, it could be. Now, I don't know a lot about his research but I think he is a pretty solid researcher. So he probably has ways to kinda control for that kind of stuff but yeah. Yeah, it's always--that's a good scary thought. Anyway, so that's one thing that he finds fondest admiration. You wanna kinda nurture that in a relationship. You know, sing each other's praises. You know, praise each other for things that you don't even have to praise him for. Even when your partner does something like picks up the dishes, you know, even if it's was their turn to pick up the dishes, you know. Tell them, you know, things, I really appreciate you doing that, you know, stuff like that, right?

Gail: Right. We're working on that, too.
Dave: Turn towards each other. When times get tough and when someone has--they're stressed, turn towards each other rather than trying to turn away from each other. You know, a lot of times you find that your partner will make a bid for different reasons, a bid for attention, a bid 'cause they need you. He's suggesting a really, you know, turning towards them, taking time, quit what you're doing and turn towards them. Counter that with somebody who, you know, somebody has a bid of a problem and the person just keeps, you know, watching TV or looking out the window or something. That kind of negativity doesn't do any bad, any good, okay. Let your partner influence you. I think one thing particularly males tend to not wanna be influenced and I think that's one thing that he suggest. You know, a lot of males are like, well, I'm not gonna be controlled, you know, or I'm not gonna let her change me, you know, whatever. He says that the couples that do better particularly with the males are open to influence. They're open to the suggestions and influence from their partner, okay. Solve some of the conflicts. He also finds that there are some things that will never be solved. In a couple, there's always gonna--you bring all these baggage from your past and there's gonna be some things that just aren't solvable. You know, I think one example he gives us, if one person is a really neat freak, you know, and they really have to have the house neat and the other one is cool and sloppy, you know, but everything else is pretty good. They're never gonna really have that--you know, if they're both coming to either personalities or like that, they probably not be able to solve it. So he says focus on those things that you can solve, okay. And overcoming gridlock a lot of times when couples fight or whatever they get sort of like traffic on the road, it's all--nothing is moving, right. And so he really suggests, you know, try to get it moving with dialogue, with talking about it and things like that. And finally, create shared meaning. And this is something that, you know, trying to do rituals with each other. I know one thing that we've done is Thanksgiving. We used to always kinda go through this conflict of whose parents are we gonna go to this year? You know what? Well, you did Christmas last year. And finally, just a few years ago, we said we're just gonna stay put, you know, and we're gonna have our own Thanksgiving. And that's gotten really special. You know, and I really look forward to it and something that our families aren't crazy about but it's really kinda been nice for us, you know. So anyway--so is there any questions about that? Again, that's a quick version if you look up some of Gottman stuff, he'll tell you a lot more. [Inaudible] on time, I just wanna finish up really quickly.
One more thing, that's what supposed to work. There are several things that are--what you might call recipes for disaster. He calls them the four horsemen of the apocalypse. These are things that don't work in relationships. Couples that do this don't tend to make it, okay.
One of them is criticism, okay. This is basically, criticism is--it's not complaining but it's getting at the character of your partner, okay. Example would be like, you always think about yourself, okay. That's criticism. You know, you always do this or you always do that. These generalizations are part of criticism. You know, you never take me anywhere, of course they do. So you're throwing all these other things like kitchen sinking. He calls it kitchen sinking where you're fighting about one thing but you bring in everything else that you're mad about. That's not good. That's part of criticism and not so good. Oh, sorry. I'll get to that in a minute. Defensiveness, this is when you deny responsibility when you're so defensive and it's natural to be defensive. But when you deny responsibility for your part of the problem, he calls that defensiveness and that's not good. You make excuses or else you answer their complaint with another complaint like, you know, you left the dishes out. Well, you left your clothes on the--you know. And it's just kinda goes back and forth, that's not good, okay. Contempt is another one that's not good. That is really insulting. This is what it sounds like insulting your partner, really getting at their--calling them names, mocking them, okay. You gonna get the idea, nonverbal expressions that show that you just don't respect them, okay. That's in fact, he says that's the biggest predictor of divorce that there is, is contempt.
And people actually have a facial expression that goes with it. It looks like that. It's sort of a curl--lip curl with the eye roll thing. So think about somebody you really despise, that's the face you would make. So, if you see that, you know, you should work on it or whatever.
And then finally, stonewalling. Again, it's just what it sounds like. Couples that don't make it usually one person, usually it's the male will stonewall and that basically means when they're trying to--partners trying to talk them they just sit there like a stonewall, right. And so they even kinda, you know, don't look at the person, yeah. Like that. If the person is trying to bid, you know, to get their attention and they just walk off or they just shut down, okay. That's really bad, okay. So you wanna be aware of those things. Unfortunately, I do that sometimes and this one will--she won't let me do it. She actually gets in my face and it really works 'cause it pulls me out of that kind of thing.

Gail: Sometimes I crack a joke, sometimes I try to lighten it, sometimes I just, you know, and actually Gary Sigler [phonetic], this is his suggestion, too. When someone is angry, you know, I just try to be affectionate and be really calm and it just really--it's melting.

Dave: Yeah, 'cause what happens you've been in fights, right? And it accelerates and, you know--that gets more aggressive and more, you know, it accelerates, and anything that can turn the thing. And usually sense of humor kinda works to do that. What you're talking about does that turns it around and it stops the downward progression, you know. And so you might wanna try to find those things in your relationship that kind make that happen, okay. So, is that kinda makes sense, the four horsemen?
Just some last things here. Immature love says, I love you because I need you. Mature love says, I need you because I love you. That's so sweet. I like that. I like that. And of course, Einstein, you know, had something to say about everything. He says gravitation is not responsible for people falling in love, right? So, which is true, right.
Just some last things here. Immature love says, I love you because I need you. Mature love says, I need you because I love you. That's so sweet. I like that. I like that. And of course, Einstein, you know, had something to say about everything. He says gravitation is not responsible for people falling in love, right? So, which is true, right.
So anyway, that sort of the end. You guys got any questions? We're kinda running a little bit out of time but we have a couple of minutes. Questions? Questions anybody? There's one.

[ Inaudible Remark by Audience]

Dave: Oh, good. She asked about, what do we think about long distance relationships? That's--There's kind of research going on on that. I don't know a lot about it particularly but that's a big question for college students, I think, a lot of times, is what to do about that. As--I don't know. I know there's a research on it.

Gail: I know a little bit. I know a little bit. This is actually from a course that I--I took a marriage course, and my professor was a marriage counselor who said that what long distance relationships do is they--they draw out the honeymoon period, right. The period at the beginning of the relationship where everything is wonderful and everything is lovely and you can't wait to see each other and you think about each other all the time. So what it does is it draws it out. So what happens for a lot of couples though is they don't have the physical proximity that encourages like a lot of intimate talk and sharing in closeness. And so, a lot of times for couples that are in long distance relationships once they finally are together they end up being incompatible because they're still in this honeymoon period. And I'm not saying that happens for everybody. And certainly there are exceptions. My parents who just celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary dated for four months. They got married in six. So, I mean, there are--you know, there are people that tend to, you know, defy what we call the odds and it's always nice to know those kinds of people, too. But for long distance relationships that's generally what we find, okay.

Dave: Yeah, I know one thing. I wanted to get you, what we did was online dating and that's a whole area of new research, is online relationships, online dating, match.com. You guys know the deal. The whole issue of social networking has changed the way people do research because now, you know, the whole thing with--you unfriend somebody and--I mean, you know, you find out you've broken up but she didn't know until, you know, on chat, somebody broke up with you online. This is also new. There's some research on it but it's getting to be--there needs to be a lot more before we understand that. So, it's like whole new range on that stuff. So anyway, any other last questions?

Dave: No? Well if you guys have any questions, I'm on the psych department. She's in child development. Email us or come by and we're in [inaudible]. So, thank you very much. [Applause] See you.

Audience: Thank you.