

THE FLOW OF LOVE

AN OWNER'S MANUAL

How contact is built, the formula for an act of love, and the composition, intensity and purity of the flow — with a procedure for checking your own

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Scientific status of this work: a theoretical conceptual model of interpersonal interaction, with a formalised system of categories and a set of falsifiable empirical hypotheses.

What this book is. It explains what contact between two people is made of, how to check whether that contact is matched, and how individual matched actions add up to a flow of love. The material is built in sequence: each part rests on the one before it, and skipping ahead is a false economy.

Who it is for. For adults who are about to work this out, or are already having to, and for practitioners in the helping professions who need a working language for describing contact. No specialist education is required: technical concepts are introduced as they are needed and immediately translated into everyday terms. The one extra demand made of the reader appears in the chapter on finding a partner, and it is stated plainly there.

Why it was written. For thirty years I asked people what love is, and the answers I got were different in kind. One word, many definitions. One person says “kindness,” the second says “passion,” the third says “never betraying me” — and each is certain they are all talking about the same thing. And so they live: two people under one roof, both loving, both spending every day proving to the other that the other loves wrongly. Quarrels grow out of that, and out of quarrels comes coldness, and out of coldness come years spent beside a person you never managed to hear. The practical aim of this work is to reduce the number of such conflicts between people. Not to assemble a convenient formula, and not to out-argue the definitions already in circulation, but to give two people a way to see that what divides them is not the feeling but the vocabulary — and to keep the conversation going instead of ending it. Everything else in this book serves that aim. The caveat is obligatory and is made right here: this is the author's stated purpose, not a prediction of the model. The model does not predict how many conflicts there will be, and it cannot. What it does is make the divergence visible and point to a specific target — for therapy, for a conversation between two people, for your own decision.

How to use it. Parts I-IV hand you the instrument: what is happening between people, what they do with it, and how to check whether it is matched. Part V is the core of the book: the formula of the flow of love. Part VI tests that formula against two dozen existing definitions of love. Parts VII-IX are applications and practice, including the checking procedure and a table of common faults. The appendices are meant to be pulled out and kept beside you as loose sheets.

Status of this document. This is not an organisation's publication and not an agreed industry standard. The author is an independent researcher; the work was carried out outside any institution and has not been peer-reviewed. The document was prepared for presentation to a supervision panel. Until that assessment is in, what follows should be read as a reasoned but unverified private opinion: the argument is set out and the sources are named, but no empirical testing of the constructions proposed here has yet been done by the author. Apply the practical recommendations with that status in mind, and within the bounds of your own professional responsibility.

1. Where this work came from

1.1. The author's field, and the origin of the model

The author is an engineer. Field: radio-electronic systems, communications, biomedical engineering. Graduate of Bauman Moscow State Technical University, faculty of Radio Electronics and Laser Technology (RL1), grade average 4.75 out of 5, class of 2006.

This matters for understanding what the reader is holding, and for judging how far to trust it. The model was not derived from psychological theory and is not an extension of one. It was carried over from communications engineering — from a field where the questions “what exactly is travelling down this channel,” “why does some of the power never reach the load,” and “where do frequencies that were not at the input come from in the spectrum” have precise and testable answers.

A communications engineer is in the habit of asking three questions about any channel. What is going down it? Is it matched? Is this band allowed? The whole construction grew out of those three questions: three substances in circulation, a matching parameter, and a permission parameter. Part I shows the transfer in detail, because without it what follows looks like an arbitrary pile of tables, and with it, like a fairly natural adaptation of a well-tested apparatus.

The main limitation of the work follows from the same place. Carrying a model from one field into another is a hypothesis, not a proof. Matching structure does not guarantee matching content, and an analogy, however elegant, is no substitute for empirical testing. Everywhere an engineering parallel appears in this text, it is given as the source of the construction and as a way of explaining it — never as an argument in its favour.

1.2. On co-authorship and fact-checking

The author is not a specialist in psychology, sociology or neuroscience. The material in those fields — the literature review, the terminology, the comparison with existing theories, the finding and checking of sources — was prepared in

collaboration with the language model Claude (Anthropic), which acted here as scientific co-author on the psychological and sociological side.

The working order was this. The author formulated the construction and its consequences. The model searched for relevant work, checked whether the sources cited exist and whether their conclusions had been reported correctly, pointed out inconsistencies, and objected on the merits wherever the construction looked wrong to it. A number of claims in the first version were withdrawn or reformulated precisely as a result of such objections; several of the model's objections were in turn rejected by the author as mistaken, and those passages were rewritten.

This is stated up front rather than in a footnote, for two reasons. First, the reader ought to know how the part of the work was assembled in which the author is not an expert. Second, that method has known and substantial limitations: a language model can be wrong in the details, can attribute to sources conclusions they do not contain, and can reproduce widely held errors. Every reference in the bibliography was checked for existence and for whether the content matches, but that check is not equivalent to peer review. Reviewers and readers working with primary sources are advised to go back to the originals. The review on which this version was reworked also came from a language model and is likewise not peer review: its points were accepted on their merits, but they do not stand in for assessment by specialists.

1.3. How to use this manual

This manual describes two instruments, both applicable at the same moment of interpersonal contact (a conversation). The first answers the question “what is happening here.” The second answers “is this all right.” They are independent, and confusing them accounts for a noticeable share of mistakes in therapy.

Part I is the engineering foundation; it can be skipped without losing the practical sense of the book, but with it the rest holds together better. Parts II and III are the working instruments. Part IV is dynamics over time, without which the first two instruments give an incomplete picture. Part V is the definition of the flow of love — the most contested and the most substantial passage in the work. Parts VI–VIII are applications and practice. Appendices A and B are meant to be kept beside you as loose sheets; Appendix C is an audit of the claims by evidential status.

The material is set out so that a non-specialist can follow it. Terms are introduced as needed and translated into everyday language. The examples are taken from ordinary life, from engineering practice, and from practices familiar to those who work in this field.

H. The working hypothesis on which everything that follows depends: what people are talking about and what they are talking for are very often not

the same thing. The topic frequently serves as packaging. Inside, as a rule, one of twelve actions is taking place, and that is the thing worth recognising.

PART I. THE ENGINEERING FOUNDATION

1.4. How claims are marked

On the reviewer's recommendation, a marking of evidential status has been introduced into this manual. It answers a question that otherwise gets lost in continuous prose: where does what I am now reading come from?

Mark	Meaning	What it means
E	Established empirical fact	There is published research behind it. The fact belongs to the field in which it was obtained and does not transfer to contact automatically
T	Theoretical interpretation	A consequence of the definitions adopted, or a way of describing something. Not subject to testing: judged by coherence and usefulness
H	Hypothesis of the model	A claim about the world that the model predicts and that can be refuted. This is where all of its empirical content sits
P	Practical recommendation	An instruction on what to do. It rests on E, T or H and inherits the status of whatever it rests on

Table 1. The four marks of evidential status.

A rule that follows from mark P: a practical recommendation cannot hold a status higher than the claim it stands on. A recommendation resting on a hypothesis stays hypothetical, however convincing it sounds.

The mark is placed at the start of the highlighted claims. The full audit of the main positions is collected in Appendix C; its result is given there too, and it is useful to know in advance: every established fact in this manual is borrowed from an adjacent field, and not one of them concerns DCL or the matrix of actions in contact.

2. What travels down the channel

A communications engineer looking at a wire or a radio path distinguishes two fundamentally different things going down it.

- Information — that which removes uncertainty at the receiver. Modulation, message, data. The value of information is not directly tied to the power spent: a short command can be worth more than an hour of transmitted noise.
- Energy — that which does work. Transmitter power, current in the load. Here value is directly proportional to quantity, and a conservation law applies: what leaves the source arrives, minus losses.

Engineering draws this distinction very sharply: a power line and a communications line are designed to different criteria, even though both are

physically just wires. In the first case you optimise efficiency, in the second, signal-to-noise ratio and channel capacity.

2.1. The third thing: the receiver's operating point

There is, however, a third thing that happens in a channel and reduces neither to information nor to energy: a change in the state of the receiver itself.

A strong signal close by in frequency can drive a receiver's input stage into compression. Sensitivity drops and weak signals stop being detected. In radio engineering this is called blocking, or receiver desensitisation. No information has been transferred — on the contrary, the receiver has got worse at receiving it. Energy has been transferred, but not for that purpose. What changed was the operating point.

The detail that matters most for us: the operating point does not recover instantly, and it does not recover in response to the demand being lifted. It recovers on its own time constant. There are automatic gain control circuits that hold that operating point, and they have their own inertia too.

The transfer. The model's three substances — information, resource and state — are exactly these three entities of the channel. Information stays information. Resource corresponds to energy and work. State corresponds to the receiver's operating point. From the third of these follows a non-trivial prediction we will return to in chapter 9: contact in the substance of state must terminate differently from contact in the other two substances, because an operating point is not “satisfied” — it recovers on its own time constant.

3. Matching: where wear comes from

The engineer's second question about a channel is matching. In radio engineering, matching a load means making its impedance equal to the characteristic impedance of the line — and the everyday English phrase for two people who understand each other, “on the same wavelength,” comes from exactly this part of the trade.

3.1. The matched and the mismatched line

If the load (the receiver) is matched, all the power delivered to it is absorbed. If it is not, part of that power is reflected back from the load towards the source. A standing wave appears in the line, characterised by the standing wave ratio (SWR). The reflected power returns into the transmitter's output stage and is dissipated there as heat. If the mismatch is bad enough, the transmitter fails.

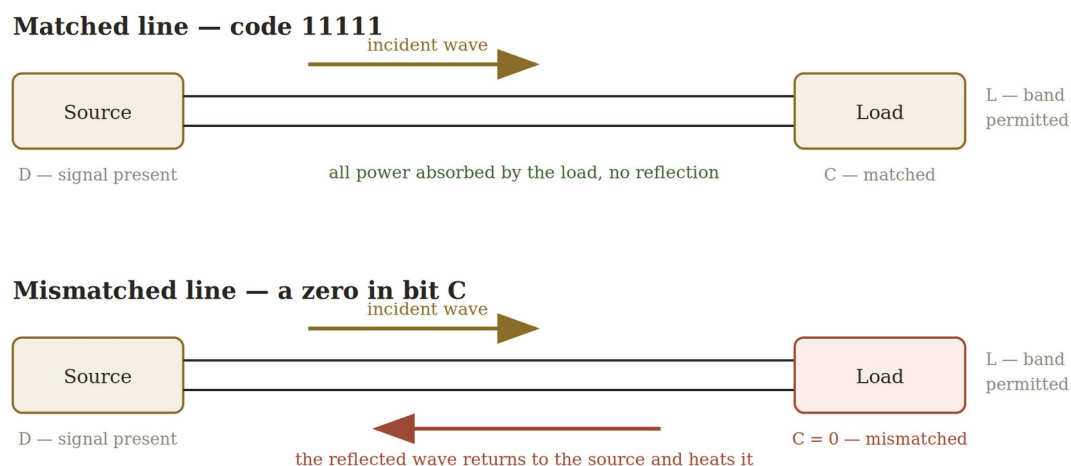


Fig. 1. The matched and the mismatched line. In the upper case all the power reaches the load. In the lower case some of it comes back and heats the source — and that is the engineering prototype of what this model calls wear.

Note the structure of the situation. The source is in working order and delivering power. The band is permitted, the channel is legal. There is no error in the signal and none in the regulations. And yet the system runs at a loss and gradually destroys itself — purely because the two ends of the line are not matched to each other.

3.2. Carrying this over to contact

It is from this picture that the three parameters of the DCL marking come, to which Part III is devoted.

- D (Desire) — is there a signal at all? Is the source even working?
- C (Consent) — is the load matched? Does the other party take in what is being sent, or reflect it back?
- L (Legality) — is the band permitted? In radio, the allocation of frequencies is regulated by law in the literal sense: there are assigned bands and forbidden ones, and operating outside the regulations is punishable regardless of how good your equipment is.

The correspondence here is fairly exact, and two conclusions follow from it at once that in a psychological frame would have to be argued for separately. First: desire and consent are independent parameters, because the presence of a signal and the matching of a load are measured in engineering with different instruments and neither is derivable from the other. Second: wear does not arise from “bad” content in what is being sent, it arises from mismatch — and it falls first of all on the source.

How this sounds in the consulting room. “You did nothing wrong and you meant well. The problem is not what you were sending, it is that it kept coming back to you — because in that form it did not suit the other person. And it is you who gets hot, not them.”

4. Resonance and mixing: where the new comes from

The third engineering theme answers a question that usually goes unanswered in a psychological frame: how does something neither person had arise out of the interaction of two?

4.1. Resonance

A resonant circuit has a natural frequency. If the driving frequency coincides with it, the system's response rises sharply: the amplitude across the reactive elements exceeds the amplitude of the drive by a factor of Q , where Q is the quality factor of the circuit, and the higher the lower the losses. For a good quartz resonator Q reaches tens of thousands.

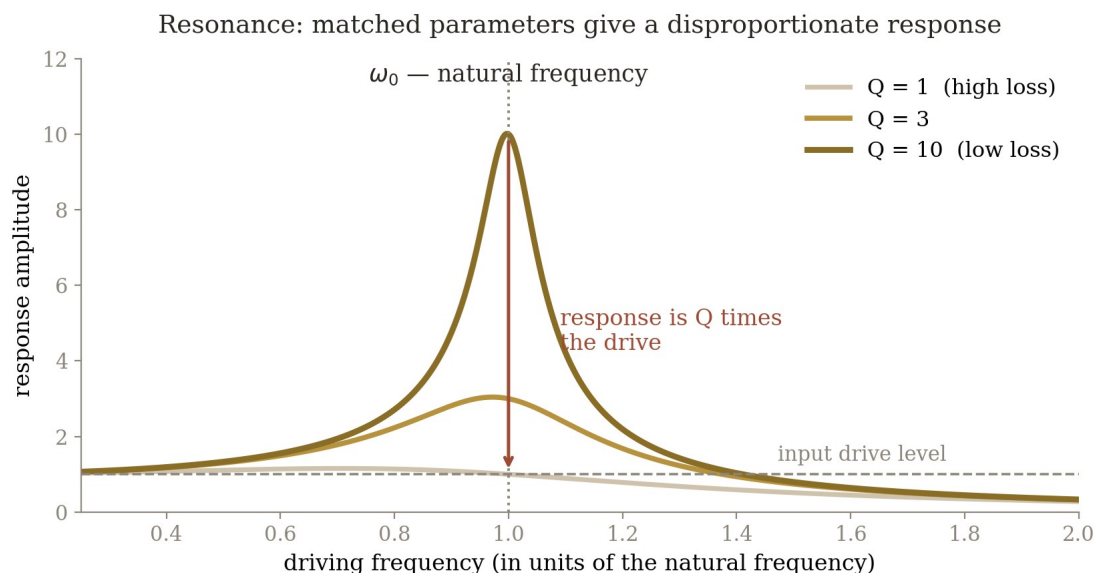


Fig. 2. Resonance curves at different Q . When the frequencies coincide, the response exceeds the drive by a factor of Q ; away from resonance the same input produces an incomparably smaller response.

What matters is that resonance requires the parameters of two sides to coincide — the source and the circuit. A powerful source on its own achieves nothing: off-tune, even a large drive produces a small response. And conversely, a weak drive at the resonant frequency will swing the system up to amplitudes unreachable at the same level away from resonance.

4.2. What here is “more than the sum,” and what is not

Precision is needed here, or the metaphor starts to deceive. In resonance no energy appears out of nothing: conservation holds, and all the energy comes from

the source, accumulating in the circuit over many cycles. The claim “resonance generates energy” would be false.

The true claim is weaker and more useful: when the parameters coincide, the system's response is not proportional to the drive. What you see at the output cannot be derived from the size of the input — it is set by the coincidence, not by the quantity. That, and not any breach of conservation, is what carries over to contact.

4.3. Nonlinear mixing

A closer analogue of generation comes from a different effect. In a linear system superposition holds: only the frequencies that were at the input are present at the output. Add signals together all you like and nothing new appears in the spectrum.

In a nonlinear element — a mixer, an overdriven amplifier, any device with a curved characteristic — feeding in two signals at frequencies f_1 and f_2 produces at the output the sum and difference frequencies, their harmonics, and intermodulation products. None of these frequencies was in either input signal, and none of them would have appeared from either signal on its own.

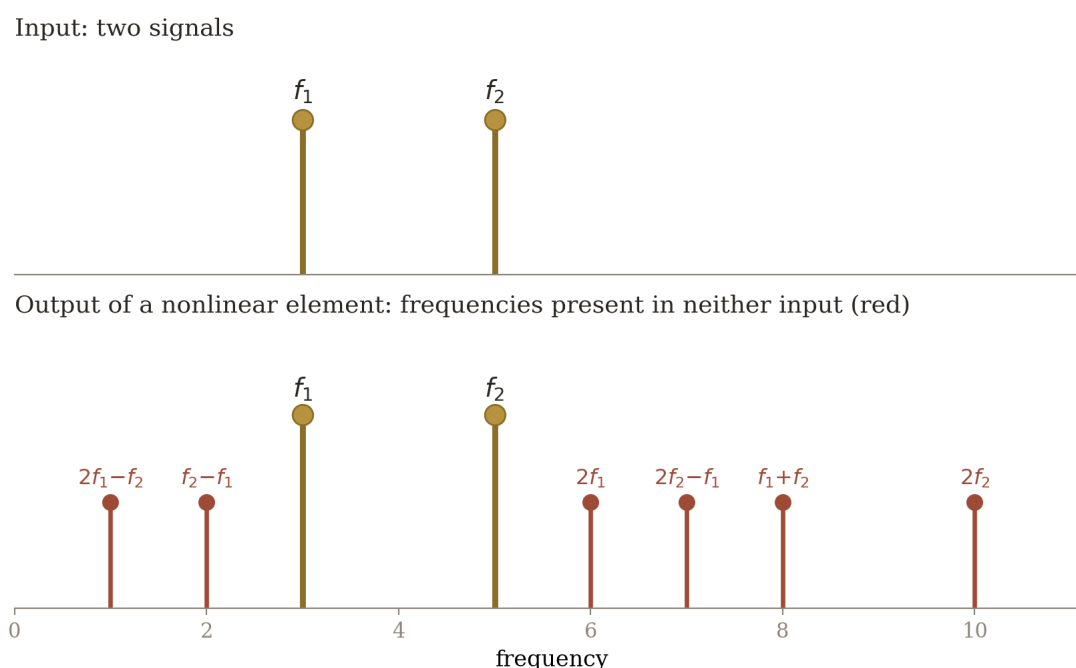


Fig. 3. Nonlinear mixing. Above, the two input signals. Below, the output spectrum: in red, the frequencies absent from both inputs. This is the engineering specimen of something new arising out of the interaction of two.

The whole of superheterodyne practice is built on this effect: receiving a radio signal depends on mixing the incoming frequency with the local oscillator to give an intermediate frequency that was never on the air. The unwelcome side of the same phenomenon is intermodulation interference, in which two lawful transmitters create a third signal that nobody is radiating.

4.4. Carrying this over to interpersonal contact

Three propositions about the operation of generation come from here, and Part II gives them a chapter of their own.

1. Generation requires coincidence, not quantity. As with resonance: what matters is not how hard one side is trying, but whether the two sides land inside each other's parameters.
2. Generation requires nonlinearity. If each participant simply adds their own without transforming the other's, the system stays linear and yields nothing new — that is addition, which is to say exchange. The new appears where one person's contribution changes how the other responds.
3. Generation does not repeal conservation. As in the circuit, the resource does not come from nowhere: both sides put it in. What is new here is not the quantity but the result — the thing neither participant would have produced alone.

Looking ahead: in this picture the full DCL code 11111 corresponds precisely to resonance — the coincidence of all five parameters. It follows that matched contact does not merely avoid losses, it has a product of its own. Chapter 16 is devoted to that.

The limits of the transfer are worth naming outright. The psyche is neither a linear nor a stationary system, and the notions of quality factor and natural frequency are used here as images, not as measurable quantities. Not one of the results in Part II follows logically from these analogies; the analogies explain where the construction came from and make it easy to hold in view.

PART II. THE 3×4 CONTACT MATRIX

5. The main idea

Take a conversation and ask two questions: what is passing from person to person in it, and what exactly is being done with that. The proposal is that there are essentially three answers to the first question and four to the second. Three by four gives twelve cells, and the overwhelming majority of contacts can be assigned to one of them.

This is a working instrument, not a claim to a complete classification of human communication. Its usefulness is that once you have identified the cell of the contact matrix, you usually already know what an apt response would be — and, more often the more important thing, what it had better not be.

From practice. A wife tells her husband about a hard day at work. The husband offers a solution: “talk to your boss.” She is hurt, and he cannot see why. Breaking it down by the matrix: she came in through the cell “state — give,” needing to hand over an affect and have it received. He answered from the cell “information — give.” The cells are not complementary, and both came away dissatisfied, although both acted from the best of motives. This is probably the most frequent contact-matrix mismatch seen in the consulting room.

6. The three substances

Substance here means what passes between people in contact. The grounds for dividing it up this way are given in chapter 2; below are the working definitions.

Information

Everything belonging to the picture of the world: facts, explanations, assessments, notions about who is worth what and who stands where. Status usually falls in here too: when two people are establishing which of them is in charge, for the most part they are adjusting their pictures of the world about each other.

Resource

Matter, access, action. Money, objects, time, services, help. Access to other people belongs here as well: an introduction is a transfer of social resource.

State

Affect and tone. Anxiety, anger, joy, calm, arousal, grief. This substance appears to differ from the other two in its mechanism of termination — see chapter 9 and Part IV.

7. The four operations

- Take — the substance comes to me. A question, a request, a demand.
- Give — the substance leaves me. A message, a gift, help, the discharge of an affect.
- Exchange — movement in both directions. A deal, a purchase, a comparing of notes, mutual support, dialogue.
- Generate — a result appears that was not present in that form in either participant.

The first three operations describe circulation: the total quantity does not change, it is redistributed. The fourth is built differently, and chapter 10 is devoted to it.

8. The matrix

This is the central instrument of the manual.

	TAKE	GIVE	EXCHANGE	GENERATE
INFORMATION	A question, an enquiry; sounding the other person out	A message, teaching, a warning, advice, passing on what you heard	Comparing pictures of the world: “is it like that for you too?”; establishing who stands where; dialogue	A thought neither of you would have reached alone
RESOURCE	A request, a demand, a taking away	A gift, help, a contribution, an introduction to the right person	A purchase, a deal, dividing up the chores, coordinating actions	A joint undertaking: value out of joining unlike things
STATE	Comfort, attention, a recharge, pleasure received	Getting it off your chest, passing on a mood, giving your partner pleasure	Sharing an experience; mutual pleasure; cursing the weather together	Verve, flow, being in step — what is unreachable on your own

Table 2. The contact matrix. The right-hand column is set apart: generation works differently from the first three operations (chapter 10).

9. How to read the contact matrix

9.1. There are usually two cells

A conversation as a rule has not one purpose but two — one per participant — and they often differ. It is more useful to identify the pair of cells than a single one.

Example. A client calls: “could I ask your advice?” His cell is quite often “state — give.” Yours, if you fail to notice that, is “information — give.” You then give good advice, and he leaves with the feeling that he was not heard.

9.2. The closure test

A simple way to check whether you have identified the cell correctly: satisfy the stated need completely. Give the answer. Settle the question. If the contact ends there, the cell was most likely the right one. If it does not end but finds a reason to continue, it is worth supposing either that the stated cell is not the one being executed, or that the contact has moved on to a different purpose.

One substantial caveat: the test is reliable mainly for information and resource. For state it tends to give a false positive — see the next section.

9.3. The three substances terminate differently

This is probably the most useful practical distinction in the whole work, and it follows directly from the engineering picture of chapter 2.

1. Information terminates with an answer. The event is discrete: the question is asked, the answer received, the topic exhausted.
2. Resource terminates with the transfer. Discrete as well: the money has changed hands, the help has been given.
3. State, it appears, does not terminate by the same mechanism. An emotion has no answer in the sense that a question has one. Rimé's data do not support the simple cathartic version: in his studies, telling someone about an experience did not extinguish arousal but rather reactivated it in both parties.

How, then, does contact in state terminate? A satiation model is proposed. On the reviewer's remark, this transfer is broken into three parts, because the first two do not justify it but merely lead up to the third.

	The three parts of the transfer
E	Established: in Rolls and colleagues, the pleasantness of the particular food a person has eaten drops markedly more than the pleasantness of dishes not eaten, while appetite for another modality is preserved. Obtained with food.
T	Extrapolation: it is assumed that emotional states terminate by a mechanism of the same type — not by satisfaction but by satiation specific to the state in question. This does not follow from the food data; the transfer is an independent assumption.
H	Prediction: after prolonged exposure to one state, receptivity to that state falls more than receptivity to states of another modality, and the curve of that fall has the shape of a monotonic decline rather than a stepped termination.

Table 3. The transfer of the satiation mechanism: what is established, what is assumed, what is predicted.

All the empirical content of this section sits in the third row. The first two do not substitute for it, and the reference to Rolls proves nothing about states by itself. The shape of the curve is the subject of Part IV.

The engineering parallel here is the same as in chapter 2: a receiver's operating point is not “satisfied,” it recovers on its own time constant, and a strong signal that keeps coming holds it displaced.

What this gives you in practice. A client spends forty minutes describing her anger at her mother. You wait for it to let go, and it does not. Possibly it is not supposed to: anger closes not by satisfaction but by satiation. The sign, then, is not relief but a fall in the force of the experience within that particular topic while liveliness in other topics is preserved. If after forty minutes of anger the person starts talking about something else with interest, the work has most likely done its job.

9.4. Pleasure runs along the whole row

In everyday lists of “why people talk to each other,” pleasure is given an entry of its own. That mixes up levels: pleasure is a particular case of state, and therefore it runs through all four operations rather than occupying one cell.

- Take — to get pleasure out of the contact.
- Give — to give the other person pleasure while getting nothing yourself.
- Exchange — mutual pleasure: each gets something from what they give.
- Generate — verve, shared exhilaration, being in step: a pleasure that neither party had and that is hard to catch alone.

The same spread applies to any state, including anger, fear and grief. Part VI deals with this.

10. Generation

When you take, give or exchange, the total quantity of substance in the system is conserved — it is redistributed. Generation differs in that at the output there is something that was at the input in neither participant. The engineering specimen of this is the nonlinear mixing of chapter 4.

T. The exact formulation: generation is an operation whose result is an outcome of the interaction that was not present in that form in either participant.

The wording was deliberately chosen to be cautious, and it replaced an earlier one — “substance comes into being.” The earlier version asserted something about the nature of what happens and was therefore open to a simple objection: no substance comes into being anywhere. The new one speaks only of comparing input with output, and is therefore testable — it is enough to record independently what each participant had before the interaction and compare that with the result.

A side benefit of the replacement: it supplies an assignment procedure for the cell of the contact matrix that was previously the least operational of the twelve. You can only label a contact “generate” after recording the starting positions; without that, the cell is not assigned.

Three consequences follow.

1. Generation appears to require both sides to be engaged — for reasons that are mechanical rather than ethical. You can take from someone who does not want to give. Creating alongside someone who is not engaged is difficult: they have nothing to put in, and the system stays linear.
2. Consent here is given to an unknown result. In an ordinary exchange both sides know what they are handing over and what they are getting. In generation nobody knows. This is consent of a different kind — consent to the unpredictable.
3. The closure test is unreliable here and tends to raise a false alarm. A generative conversation often fails to end, because there is nothing to end: there was no original need that could be closed. A more reliable sign is that

neither participant can name the result in advance, and both find out roughly at the same time.

A familiar practice. Group supervision in which the formulation of a case is born in the discussion is “information — generate.” A facilitator who knows the conclusion in advance and steers the group towards it is working in the cell “information — give” under the guise of generation. One question tells them apart: could the facilitator have named the result before they started?

A practical warning. If you use the matrix as a filter at the door — screening out conversations with no clear purpose — then what you will most likely screen out is precisely the generative ones. At the door they are hard to tell from empty ones: the purpose is not being hidden, it does not exist yet, it assembles as you go. A noticeable share of valuable professional connections begins as inconsequential chat.

PART III. DCL MARKING AND THE MATCHING OF THE CHANNEL

11. Why put actions into digits

11.1. The problem: the goals of psychological work measure badly

Psychological work suffers from the fact that its result is hard to count. “The client feels better,” “the relationship improved,” “the person came to live at peace with himself” — these are meaningful phrases, but not one of them is a unit of measurement. Two persistent difficulties come from this: it is hard to demonstrate effectiveness, and it is hard to discuss progress with the client, because neither side has anything to look at.

DCL is an attempt to narrow that gap by changing what is measured. What is marked is not the person's state but their actions. The difference is fundamental: a diagnosis describes a personality and is therefore received as a verdict, while a code describes a deed and is therefore reversible. The same action tomorrow may carry a different code.

T. DCL is a way of putting actions into digits: each action is assigned a short binary code. What is assessed is not the person but the particular act.

11.2. The three parameters

The three parameters, introduced in chapter 3 out of the picture of the matched line, each take two values: 1 (present) or 0 (absent).

- D (Desire) — do I want this? In the engineering analogy: is there a signal at the input?
- C (Consent) — do I agree to this, understanding the consequences as they are known to me at the moment of acting? Is the load matched?
- L (Legality) — do the circumstances, the rules, the law allow it? Is the band permitted?

Desire and consent are different parameters, and that is the point of separating them. You can want something and not consent to it: a person wants it but believes he should not. You can consent without wanting: you went to the birthday party out of politeness. Confusing D and C is the commonest mistake on first meeting the method.

11.2.1. A strict definition of L

The reviewer pointed out that in earlier versions the parameter L was doing duty at once for legal lawfulness, social norms, institutional permission, circumstance

and admissibility — and that these are different notions: “lawful,” “authorised by the boss,” “socially accepted” and “safe” are not synonyms. The point is accepted. L cannot be split into several bits without losing compactness — every extra bit doubles the state space — so a strict definition is introduced instead.

T. $L = 1$ if and only if the action is not forbidden by an authority capable of imposing a sanction for it. The authority may be formal — a law, a regulation, a contract — or informal — a family, a group, a professional community — but it must be identifiable, and the sanction must be nameable.

The definition is deliberately narrow, and it moves three things out from under L that used to fall there wholly or in part.

What has been moved out of L	Why it is not L	Where it belongs
Lack of possibility: no time, no money, different cities	Nobody is forbidding it and no sanction will follow. This is a shortage of resource, not an absence of permission	A constraint on execution; not part of the DCL marking
Danger	Danger is a consequence of the action, not permission for it. Conflating the two lets you declare L zero after the fact, on the evidence of the harm done	A separate assessment of the risk of the action; it enters the C bit of each participant. It can also create constraints in L in the form of rules, laws and so on. Most prohibitions in L are in fact factors that reduce the danger of actions.
A prohibition you impose on yourself	Forbidding yourself something is exactly a zero in the C bit. Filing it under L duplicates one and the same parameter	The C bit

Table 4. What has been moved out from under the parameter L.

The price of the refinement. The strict definition reclassifies some familiar examples. “We live in different countries” is not $L=0$ but a constraint on execution: nobody forbids it and no sanction will follow. “In one of our countries our union is forbidden by law” is $L=0$: the authority and the sanction can both be named. Workplace subordination, a family prohibition and someone else's marriage remain $L=0$.

11.3. A single action: eight states

It is easier to start DCL marking not with contact but with a single action. Three parameters give eight combinations.

Code	D	C	L	What this is	Example
111	1	1	1	A matched action. I want it, I consent to it. It is permitted, it is lawful.	I am doing what I chose myself and consider right. And it is legal.
110	1	1	0	An external barrier. I want it and consent to it, but it is not allowed.	I want and consent to work in my own field; I do not have the clearance.
101	1	0	1	Absence of consent. I want it and it is allowed, but I do not consent.	I want to rest; I consider that laziness.
100	1	0	0	A double block. I want it, but I do not consent and it is not allowed.	A desire the person considers both wrong and inadmissible.
011	0	1	1	Consent without desire. I do not want it, but I agreed, and it is allowed.	Duties on a rota, taken on voluntarily.
010	0	1	0	Consent for nothing. I do not want it, I agreed, but it is not allowed.	I took on an obligation I cannot carry out without breaking the rules.
001	0	0	1	I do not want it, I do not consent, it is allowed.	Rota duties taken on voluntarily earlier, which I no longer consent to now.
000	0	0	0	I do not want it, I do not consent, it is not allowed.	Forced participation in a forbidden action.

Table 5. The eight states of a single action (three-digit code).

Of the eight rows, the model supposes that only one produces no wear — 111. The rest leave an unmet demand standing: either desire without consent, or consent without desire, or a prohibition.

How this gets used. A first-week exercise: in the evening the client lists five or six of the day's actions and assigns three bits to each. Often by the third day it is already visible that the zeros are gathering in one and the same bit. That is the target for therapy — noticeably more specific than “life is hard for me.”

11.4. Eustress and distress: what is added here

Selye defined stress as the non-specific response of the body to any demand placed upon it. The key word is “any”: the pleasant and the unpleasant both set off a similar reaction. In his later work he introduced the distinction between eustress and distress — stress that does not destroy and stress that does; he himself regarded that distinction as the most important result of his scientific life.

The distinction has a known weakness. Selye's criterion is largely subjective: the difference, as he put it, lies in how the person takes it. A position advanced in the current literature is that eustress and distress cannot be separated physiologically, and that the concept in its present form is incomplete and needs revising.

This is where DCL's contribution is proposed: move the distinction from perception to marking.

H. A full DCL code predicts a different profile of subjective and physiological consequences of load, compared with an incomplete code at a comparable strength of exposure.

The wording was changed on the reviewer's remark and replaced an earlier one — “111 is eustress, any zero is distress.” The earlier version required accepting in advance a dichotomy that the current literature disputes; the present one does not depend on it at all. The gain is threefold: the contested category is not needed, what is to be measured is specified — a profile of consequences rather than membership of a class — and control over the strength of exposure is preserved, without which the comparison is meaningless.

The practical advantage is that the code can in principle be determined before the experience, not only afterwards. The question “was that good stress or bad stress” gives an answer that depends on your mood when asked. The questions “did you want it, did you consent to it, was it allowed” give, as a rule, steadier answers.

DCL marking also gives a practical sign for telling two kinds of load apart without recourse to the contested terminology. A load of the first kind the person initiated himself and can stop at will — that is precisely ones in D and C. A load of the second kind he did not initiate, or cannot stop, and there a zero stands. A workout begun voluntarily and breakable at any moment, and an eight-hour shift at a job you dislike, differ not in the strength of the load but in those two bits. Hence the different tactics: a load with a zero in it is worth reducing; a load with a full code is worth keeping in reasonable measure, since the body needs a moderate load.

The caveat is obligatory: this is a hypothesis, not a result. The relation between codes and physiological indicators of stress has not been measured. What exactly ought to be measured is set out in chapter 49.

11.5. The DCL index

A numerical indicator grows naturally out of the marking: the share of actions over a period that carry a full code. For single actions that is the share of 111s, for contacts the share of 11111s.

It is counted simply. At the end of the day you list your actions, assign the bits to each, and divide the number of full codes by the total. You get a figure between zero and one that can be tracked over time.

What this gives you. First, the vague goal “live at peace with yourself” turns into an observable quantity. Second, what shows up is not only the value but the structure: which bit in particular keeps coming out zero. A person with a persistent zero in C and a person with a persistent zero in L are in different situations, and the work with them differs, even though the complaint may sound much the same.

How to put it to a client. “Let's look not at how badly you feel, but at what share of your day goes by at your own wish and with your own consent. That can be counted, and in a month we will see whether anything has changed.”

Limitations of the index. There are no normative data: it is not known what share counts as ordinary, and it almost certainly differs between people, occupations and periods of life. The marking is done by self-report and is therefore biased. The boundaries between actions are largely arbitrary. So the index is appropriate as an instrument of self-observation and as material for joint discussion, but not as a measurement procedure, and still less as an assessment of a person.

11.6. What DCL is not

- It is not a diagnosis and not a typology of personality. The code belongs to the action. One person will have different codes across a single day.
- It is not an ethical system. The code 011 does not mean the person acted badly. It means the action was performed without desire, and that there will probably be a price for it.
- It is not a substitute for clinical assessment. The marking says nothing about the presence of a disorder, about risk, or about safety.
- It is not a validated instrument. DCL has no validated scale, no norms and no reliability data. As of today it is a way of structuring observation.

12. Five bits for a pair

Contact involves two people, and the marking expands. The parameter L stays shared — the circumstances are the same for both and the parameter applies to the action — while D and C double. We label the participants neutrally: partner A and partner B.

D(A) C(A) D(B) C(B) L

The first two bits belong to partner A, the next two to partner B, the last is shared. In the tables the code is written in groups — 11 11 1 — so that you can read off at once which bit belongs to whom; in the text the run-together form 11111 is used for brevity.

Thirty-two combinations. Exactly one of them is fully matched — 11111: both want it, both consent, the circumstances permit. In the terms of Part I this is the resonant configuration — the coincidence of all five parameters — and, as with resonance, its consequences do not reduce to the absence of losses (chapter 16).

The marking does not depend on the cell of the contact matrix: any of the twelve cells of the contact matrix can be realised in any of the 32 states. There are no bad cells — there are badly matched contacts.

13. Matching the channel between two people

Up to this point the two instruments have been applied separately: the contact matrix said what was happening, DCL marking said how well matched it was. In this chapter they are joined. Each participant is treated as a transceiver: he is transmitting in some cell of the contact matrix and is at the same time ready to receive. As soon as contact begins, a channel forms between the devices, and two things get checked in it — whether the cells of the contact matrix land in each other, and whether the channel is matched on DCL.

13.1. Notation for the operation in the contact matrix

Substance plus the arrow of the operation.

Arrow	Operation	Which way it goes	Sample codes
←	take	towards me	INF← a question · RES← a request · STA← I need comforting
→	give	away from me	INF→ advice · RES→ help · STA→ getting it off my chest
↔	exchange	both ways	INF↔ dialogue · RES↔ a deal · STA↔ sharing an experience
↑	generate	something appears that neither had	INF↑ a shared thought · RES↑ a joint undertaking · STA↑ verve

Table 6. Notation for the operations. Substance: INF — information, RES — resource, STA — state.

13.2. Notation for the channel

The DCL code is written between the devices, because that is precisely what it is — a property of the channel.

STA→ (11111) STA←

On the left, what partner A is doing. On the right, partner B. In brackets, the five bits of the channel: A's desire and consent, B's desire and consent, and the permission of the environment, shared by both.

13.3. Matching is not sameness, it is complementarity

This is the easiest place to get it wrong. In radio work through a repeater, your transmitter is tuned not to the frequency your own receiver is on, but to your correspondent's receive frequency. Matching means “my output lands in your input,” not “we are both on the same wavelength.”

Pair of operations	Outcome	Why
take ← and give →	matched	A complementary pair: one's output lands in the other's input
exchange ↔ and exchange ↔	matched	Symmetrical: each takes and gives in comparable amounts
generate ↑ and generate ↑	matched	Symmetrical; generation is possible only when both sides are engaged
give → and give →	collision	Both are transmitting, reception is closed in both
take ← and take ←	silence	Both are waiting, neither is transmitting
generate ↑ and take ←, or give →	impossible	Generation requires both sides to be engaged

Table 7. Complementarity of the operations. The full list of every combination is in Appendix B.

T. Identical cells of the contact matrix do not mean matching. INF← and INF→ are different cells and a matched pair. INF→ and INF→ are identical cells and a collision.

13.4. Why what is not taken comes back

In radio engineering you can load a transmitter into a dummy load and broadcast into nowhere: nothing will get hot. In human contact, the equivalent of a dummy load is an internal image. But a transmission is most often addressed to someone — even at a delay: people speak to those who listen; the author of a book writes as if into a void, but the book is then read, and feedback comes back or fails to.

In passing, about two words. The term “feedback” came into psychology from engineering and cybernetics. In engineering it means that information about the result of a system's operation is returned to its input and influences how it goes on working. Psychology uses the same principle: the result of a person's action becomes information for correcting his subsequent behaviour. Behind the shared term stands one and the same logic of a closed control loop. The same story lies behind “being in tune” and “being on the same wavelength”: in radio engineering, detuning is the loss of tuning relative to a reference frequency, and “out of tune” in everyday speech is the loss of inner balance or of agreement with someone else. The engineering sense came first in both cases.

13.5. Who exactly “gets hot”

This is where intuition goes wrong most often. The source is the one transmitting; the load is the one receiving. A mismatch on the load side sends power back into the source. Which means that in an unasked-for transmission, the one who gets hot first is the one transmitting, not the one being transmitted to.

But the recipient gets his share too, and that is settled by a single DCL bit — C.

H. Partner B's DCL bit C is the switch between “reflects” and “absorbs.” If B does not consent, he refuses to receive: the power is reflected and partner A gets hot. If B consents without wanting to, he receives and absorbs the unwanted: B gets hot. And from A's side the channel looks matched — he sees no problem.

Mechanism	When it arises	Who pays (gets hot)
Reflection	The recipient can refuse and does refuse	The transmitter
Absorption of what was not needed	The recipient cannot refuse: an asymmetry of power, dependence, age	The receiver; the transmitter notices nothing
Operating outside the band	$L = 0$: the environment does not permit the contact	Both, regardless of how well matched it is

Table 8. The three mechanisms of heating.

13.6. In series or in parallel

If both are transmitting and the frequencies did not coincide, the order of the heating depends on the isolation between them. In full duplex — where a person is capable of receiving while speaking — both sides heat in parallel. In half duplex they heat alternately: first one transmits and is not received, then the other.

A practical sign. Parallel heating is recognised by the rising tempo: both talk louder and at the same time. Alternating heating is recognised by the taking of turns, each monologue waiting for its slot in order not to be heard.

13.7. The limit of the analogy

In a radio line, reflection is instantaneous and symmetrical. In interpersonal contact it may be deferred: a person receives today and returns it in three days, three months or three years. The analogy describes the balance, not the timing. Inferring from it when exactly the bill will be presented may well be a mistake.

13.8. Analysis 1: contact fully matched

STA→ (11111) STA←

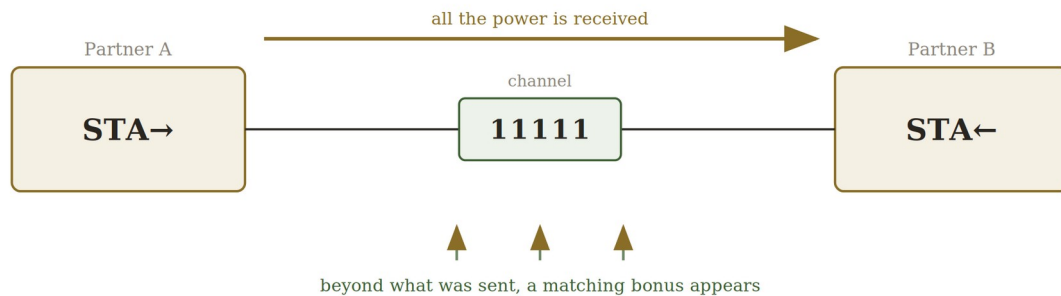


Fig. 4. Complementary frequencies, full DCL code in the channel. There is no reflection, and beyond what was transmitted a matching bonus appears.

She wants to get something off her chest and is transmitting in state. He is ready to receive state and does not substitute advice for receiving. Both want this, both consent, the circumstances permit.

All the transmitted power is absorbed in the load. There is no reflected wave, so there is no heating on either side. But something more than that also happens: when the parameters coincide, the system's response is not proportional to the drive. Besides the movement of state, something appears that was not in what was transmitted — a strengthening of the bond between them and a positive psychophysiological response in both.

What matters is that the bonus accumulates over a series, not in a single episode. In a low-loss circuit the amplitude grows not from the force of one push but from the pushes landing in time with the swing. A bond is strengthened by a series of matched contacts, and is not strengthened by one strong but mismatched contact, however much effort goes into it.

Engineering term	Psychological term	How the client says it
Matched load	The request and the response coincide	"It is easy with him, I do not get tired"
Zero reflection	The contribution was fully received	"I was heard"
Resonant response	The bonus of being matched	"After the conversation I felt better than before it"

13.9. Analysis 2: different substances, past each other

STA→ (11111) INF→

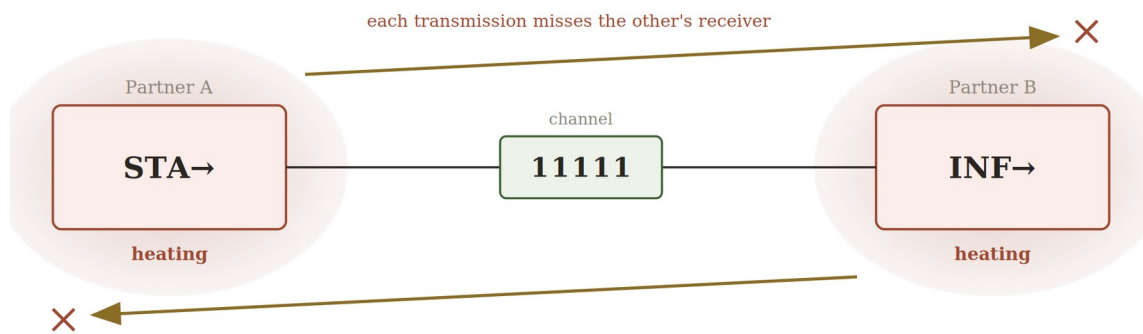


Fig. 5. The DCL code of the channel is full, but the substances differ. Both transmissions go past the other's receiver. Both get hot.

She describes a hard day — transmitting in state. He answers “talk to your boss” — transmitting in information. Both want the contact, both consent to it, the circumstances are no obstacle. The DCL code of the channel is full.

H. And nonetheless the contact wears down both of them. This is the main reason this analysis stands first among the unsuccessful ones: a full DCL code does not save you when the frequencies do not match. Consent to the contact itself is a necessary condition, not a sufficient one.

Both transmissions go past. She does not get her state received, he does not get his information received. Both sides put something in and both are left with nothing, so both are worn down — and what makes the case especially galling, both from the best of motives. Nobody is at fault, and that is exactly why the conversation tends to repeat.

Engineering term	Psychological term	How the client says it
Detuning in frequency	The types of request do not coincide	“I am talking about one thing and he is talking about another”
Two-sided heating	Both put something in for nothing	“We are both trying, and we are both angry”
A full DCL code with detuning	Good intentions in the wrong type	“But he meant well”

13.10. Analysis 3: collision, both on the same frequency

INF→ (11111) INF→

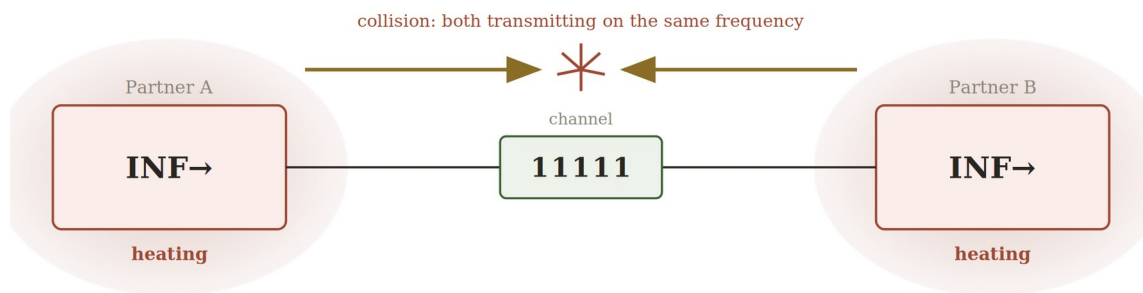


Fig. 6. The same cell in both. Both are transmitting; reception is closed on both sides.

An argument in which each explains to the other how things really work. One cell of the matrix, one substance, one operation — and total mismatch, because the operation is not complementary to itself.

The difference from the previous analysis is subtle and important. There the two were working in different cells of the contact matrix — different substances — and simply did not hear each other. Here they are in the same cell, INF→, and actively blocking each other: each transmission arrives where reception has been switched off by the receiver's own transmitting.

A practical consequence: a collision gets worse with volume. The harder each one transmits, the more tightly reception is closed in both. The advice “explain it to him more clearly” makes things worse here — it raises the power in a channel where power is not the problem.

The way out: one side switches to the complementary operation, that is, stops talking and starts receiving. Which one is a question not of fairness but of willingness to receive: whichever of them has it.

Engineering term	Psychological term	How the client says it
Collision of transmissions	Both talking, nobody listening	“He does not hear me” — from both sides at once
Reception closed by transmitting	You cannot listen while you are talking	“Let me finish!”
Raising the power	Raising the voice and the pressure	“How many times do I have to say it!!!”

13.11. Analysis 4: silence, both waiting to receive

INF← (11111) INF←

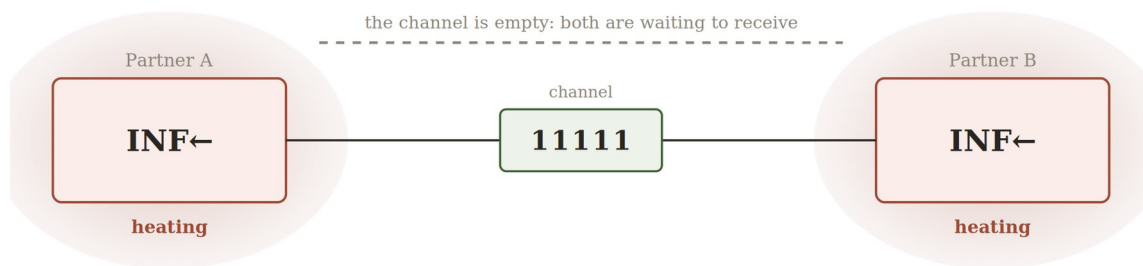


Fig. 7. The mirror image of the previous case: both are open to receive, neither is transmitting. The channel is empty.

Two people, each waiting for the other to begin. Both want contact, both consent to it, the circumstances permit — and nothing happens.

This case looks harmless and is therefore overlooked. Yet there is an unmet demand standing here in both of them: the desire is there, the realisation is not. The heating is mild, but it accumulates — and it accumulates all the more surely because no occasion to notice it ever arises. After all, nothing happened.

In couples this turns up as “we drifted apart and it is not clear why.” There is no event at the root of it, because the event is precisely the thing that did not take place.

A diagnostic sign. Silence is distinguished from an absence of desire by a single question: was the person upset when the contact did not happen? With D at zero, he is not. In silence he is — but he usually explains it to himself some other way.

Engineering term	Psychological term	How the client says it
The channel is empty	Each waiting for the other's first move	“He does not text me”
An unmet demand	Desire without realisation	“Everything seems fine, but something is missing”
Accumulation without an event	Drifting apart with no occasion for it	“We drifted apart and I do not understand when”

13.12. Analysis 5: reflection, the recipient is able to refuse

RES→ (11001) RES←

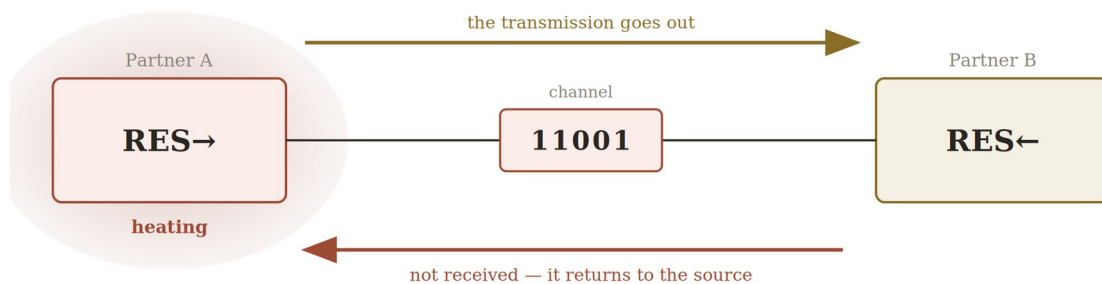


Fig. 8. The frequencies are complementary, but B has zeros in desire and consent. The power comes back. A gets hot.

A mother brings food to her adult son that he did not ask for. The cells of the contact matrix formally line up: she is giving resource, he is in the receiving position. But he does not want it and does not consent to it — he puts the food in the fridge, does not eat it, and throws it out when it has gone off.

The zeros stand on B's side, and it is A who gets hot. This runs against intuition and is therefore worth saying outright: reflection returns the power to where it came from. Unasked-for care exhausts the one doing the caring, not the one being cared for.

P. The phrase by which this case is recognised in the consulting room: “I give him everything, and he could not care less.” That is a description of a source heating up, written by the source.

The work here is not with the recipient and not with the amount of care. It is with the fact that A goes on transmitting into a reflecting load, and with the question of why stopping is harder than getting burned.

Engineering term	Psychological term	How the client says it
Reflected power	A contribution not taken in	“I give him everything, and he could not care less”
Heating of the source	Depletion of the giver	“I cannot keep putting myself into this”
Mismatched load	Refusal to receive it in that form	“I do not need this, leave me alone”

13.13. Analysis 6: absorption, the recipient is unable to refuse

RES→ (11011) RES←

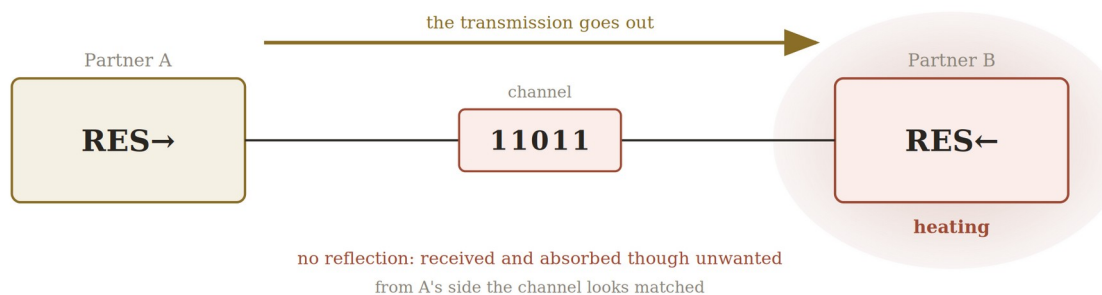


Fig. 9. The difference from the previous case is one bit: B has consent in the absence of desire. There is no reflection; B gets hot.

A child is made to eat when he does not want to. Essentially the same contact, but the recipient is not in a position to refuse: child and adult, subordinate and boss, the dependent and the one depended on. There is no desire, but there is consent — because refusing would have cost more.

The difference from the previous analysis is one bit of the DCL code, and it turns the picture upside down. The load stops reflecting and starts absorbing. No power comes back to the source, so A feels nothing and quite sincerely believes all is well. B gets hot, in silence.

H. This is the most dangerous of the eight cases precisely because the instruments on the initiator's side read as matched. An absence of objections here is not a sign of consent, it is the consequence of being unable to object.

Hence a practical rule for checking: consent should be counted as present only when there exists an available way to interrupt the action, the other party recognises it, and it actually stops things. If there is no such way, what is recorded is not consent but the absence of any possibility.

Note separately that it is this configuration that underlies the phenomenon analysed in Part IV: a persistent zero bit repeated daily is precisely the accumulation of wear. A disliked job you have no choice about, eight hours a day five days a week, is the same code 011 on B's side.

Engineering term	Psychological term	How the client says it
Absorption of what was not needed	Enduring under compulsion	"I have to put up with it"
Perfect SWR as seen from the source	The initiator does not see the cost	"What is the problem? He did not object"
Reflection made impossible	No right of refusal	"And how am I supposed to say no?"

13.14. Analysis 7: operating outside the permitted band

STA↔ (11110) STA↔

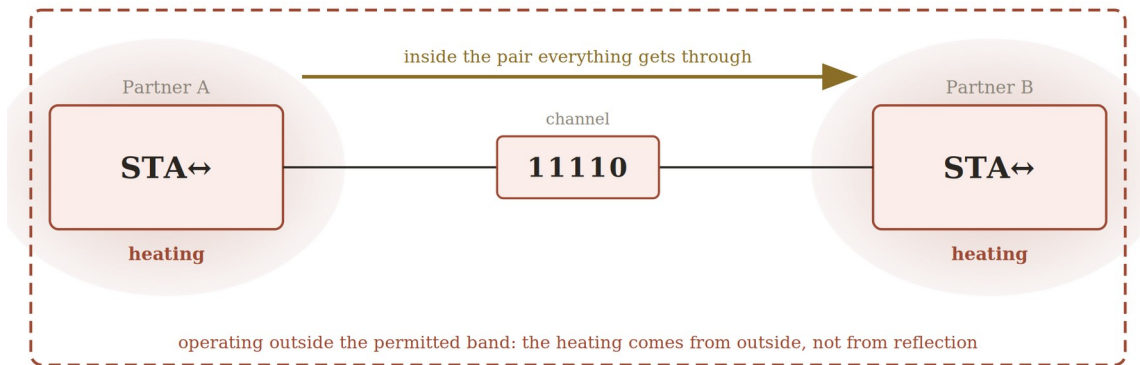


Fig. 10. The frequencies are complementary and both have desire and consent; the only zero is in the environment bit.

Inside the pair everything has come together: both want it, both consent, the operations are complementary. The single zero stands in the permission bit — the relationship is not allowed by an authority capable of imposing a sanction: workplace subordination, a family prohibition, someone else's marriage.

The mechanism of heating here is different, and that is worth stressing. There is no reflection: the transmission inside the channel gets through in full. What heats things is not power coming back but operating outside the permitted band — the cost of concealment, the permanent readiness to be found out, and an external risk that no amount of good matching will remove.

P. Improving the matching is useless here, because it is already complete. The work is with the reality of the constraint. Attempts to “sort out the relationship” in this configuration produce nothing, because the problem is not inside the relationship, it is outside it.

The quality of contact inside such a pair may be high, and the participants feel that quite accurately. That is not a contradiction. Four of the five personal DCL bits really are ones, and that is exactly why the configuration is so durable.

Engineering term	Psychological term	How the client says it
Operating outside the permitted band	A relationship under external prohibition	“We are not allowed to, and yet we are”
The cost of concealment	The overhead of secrecy	“I am on edge the whole time”
External risk	The price of being found out	“If they find out, it will be bad”

13.15. Analysis 8: an overdose of resonance

STA↑ (11111) STA↑

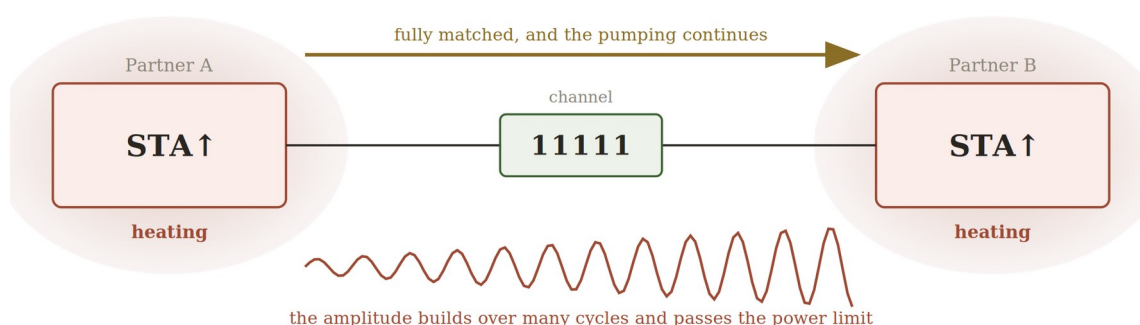


Fig. 11. There are no zeros in the code and the frequencies are complementary. The wear comes from the matched pumping going on too long.

The last analysis differs from the other seven in that the DCL code is full and the cells of the contact matrix are complementary. And there is wear nonetheless.

The engineering picture is exact. In a low-loss circuit, energy accumulates over many cycles, and the voltage across the reactive elements exceeds the supply many times over — the more so the higher the Q. Keep pumping longer than the components are rated for and you get breakdown. What destroys it is not mismatch but matching that is too good, continued too long.

Psychologically this is fusion. The contact is so well matched that you do not want to leave it, and precisely because it is matched, no occasion to leave ever arises. Then the amplitude builds: the intensity rises, the circle narrows, the other channels fade out, and at some point the participants discover that apart from this one contact there is almost nothing of them left.

A direct practical consequence comes from Part IV: a state has a peak, after which continuing yields less and less. In a matched contact the peak is passed without being noticed, because nothing unpleasant is happening. The sign is not deterioration inside the contact but the narrowing of everything else: how many channels the person has left besides this one.

What this does not mean. It does not mean that being matched is harmful, or that closeness should be rationed by the clock. It means that the quality of the matching is not by itself a guarantee: a full DCL code tells you how the contact is built right now, and tells you nothing about what its many-times repetition does to a person.

Engineering term	Psychological term	How the client says it
Resonant overvoltage	Fusion with no way out	"It was so good between us that I stopped existing separately"
Pumping beyond the limit	Intensity above the available resource	"I dissolved into it"

Engineering term	Psychological term	How the client says it
Narrowing of the band	The other bonds fading out	“Apart from him I have nobody left”

13.16. Summary of the eight analyses

Configuration	Cells of the contact matrix	DCL code	Who gets hot	What to do first
STA→ (11111) STA←	complementary	full	nobody	Watch the dynamics; do not let it overload
STA→ (11111) INF→	different substances	full	both	Name your own substance out loud before the content
INF→ (11111) INF→	collision	full	both, and rising	One of them switches to receiving; volume only harms
INF← (11111) INF←	silence	full	both, mildly	Somebody starts transmitting
RES→ (11001) RES←	complementary	incomplete	the transmitter	Do not increase the contribution; work out why stopping the transmission is hard
RES→ (11011) RES←	complementary	incomplete	the receiver	Check whether he has any way of refusing. That comes first
STA↔ (11110) STA↔	complementary	incomplete	both, from outside	Work with the constraint, not with the relationship
STA↑ (11111) STA↑ — overdose	complementary	full	both, after the peak	Look not at the contact but at what is left outside it

Table 9. Summary of the analyses. The full list of configurations is in Appendix B.

T. The general rule visible from the summary: a full DCL code does not mean the contact is in order. In four of the eight cases the code is full and there is wear anyway — with non-complementary cells of the contact matrix, with collision, with silence, and with overdose. Consent is necessary, but not sufficient.

The eight analyses do not exhaust the set: they are illustrative cases. The full list of frequency combinations is given in Appendix B, and the full list of channel states in Appendix A.

14. A working index of codes

The complete table is given in Appendix A. Below are the ten codes met most often in practice. The code is written in groups: two bits for partner A, two bits for partner B, and the shared L bit.

Code	What it is called	What is happening	Where to look
11 11 1	Matched contact	Both want it, both consent, it is allowed. The only configuration with no supposed wear.	Watch the dynamics; do not let it overload.
11 01 1	Politeness at a loss	The first wants it and consents; the second consents but does not want it. Guests, calls from relatives, office parties.	For the second: the right to say no. For the first: noticing the partner's zero D.
11 10 1	An internal prohibition in the second	The second wants it but does not consent with himself. The desire is there, the permission to himself is not.	A conflict of values, shame, a ban on wanting. A frequent therapeutic target.
11 00 1	One-sided contact	The second neither wants nor consents, and the contact goes ahead anyway.	Boundaries, safety. If it persists, a question about the nature of the relationship.
01 01 1	A ritual running empty	Neither wants it, both consent. The conversation runs on autopilot.	Not pathological in itself. Cause for concern if this has become the main regime.
01 11 1	One-sided pull	The first does not want it but consents; the second wants it and consents. The relationship rests on one of them.	The mirror of code 11011. A frequent picture in "he loves me and I allow it."
11 11 0	Both want it, and it is not allowed	Desire and consent coincide completely, under a prohibition from the setting.	Work with the reality of the constraint, not with the feelings.
10 11 1	An internal prohibition in the first	The first wants it but does not permit himself; with the second all is well.	The mirror of code 11101. The target is inside, not in the pair.
00 00 1	Empty contact	Nobody wants it, nobody consents, but it is allowed.	Formal interactions. The question is why they keep going.
00 00 0	Zero across the board	Neither desire, nor consent, nor permission.	Forced participation in a forbidden action.

Table 10. A working index of the commonest codes.

15. Wear and allostatic load

Wear here means the price the participants pay for the configuration not being matched. The word was not chosen as a metaphor: it has both an engineering prototype (reflected power, chapter 3) and a physiological one.

15.1. What allostatic load is

Allostasis is the body's capacity to maintain stability through change: when a demand is placed on it, the neuroendocrine, cardiovascular, immune and metabolic systems come into play and the parameters are reset for the load. This is a normal and useful mechanism.

E. Allostatic load (McEwen & Stellar, 1993) is the accumulated wear on brain and body that arises when the adaptive systems are engaged too often, for too long, or fail to switch off in time. In short: allostasis is adaptation, allostatic load is the price of having adapted too much.

The load is assessed by a composite index of biomarkers across four systems — neuroendocrine, cardiovascular, immune-inflammatory and metabolic. It accumulates by several routes: frequent new loads that leave no room for recovery; failure to habituate to a repeated load; and failure of the reaction to complete once the demand has been lifted.

The last route matters to us more than the others. That, on the model's supposition, is how a contact with a zero bit is built: the demand has been placed, the reaction has started, and no lifting occurs, because the desire went unrealised or the consent was never obtained. The engineering and the physiological pictures agree here: the reflected wave and the uncompleted reaction both come back to the source.

H. Contacts with zeros contribute to allostatic load; 11111 contacts do not, or contribute substantially less. If that is so, it explains why wear is felt not at the moment of contact but cumulatively and at a delay.

Caveat: the relation between codes and biomarkers has not been measured. The claim is given as a testable hypothesis; the way to test it is in chapter 49.

15.2. Typical regimes

Five configurations met more often than the rest.

Where the zero is	How it looks	What it turns into
D(A)=1, D(B)=0	Only one of them wants it	Imposition. The second bears the cost of taking part with nothing gained.
D=0, C=1	Consent without desire	Politeness at a loss. A slow accumulation of irritation with no visible occasion.
D=0 in both	Nobody wants it, and it goes on	Automatism: retelling the news, dutiful conversations, filling the silence.
C=0 through concealment	Consent to a substituted cell of the contact matrix	Being used. Smooth on the outside; the feeling comes later and with no explanation.
L=0	The setting does not permit it	An apt action in an inapt place. For circulation, a block; for generation, a price.

Table 11. The main regimes of wear in contact.

16. The resonance of being matched: what the code 11111 gives

Up to now the code 11111 has been described negatively — as the only configuration that produces no wear. That description appears to be incomplete. Being matched is not merely the absence of losses; it is a regime in its own right with a product of its own.

16.1. Two varieties of the new

Here the distinction drawn in Part I pays off. Two different mechanisms for the appearance of something new were described there: nonlinear mixing, which gives frequencies that were in neither input (chapter 4.3), and resonance, which gives a response disproportionate to the drive when the parameters coincide (chapter 4.1). Two different things in the model correspond to them, and they should not be conflated.

T. Generation by cell is the fourth column of the contact matrix: a new substance appears, of the same kind as the one circulating (a thought, an undertaking, a state). Resonance by DCL marking is the code 11111: given complementary cells, something additional appears that was not in the content of the contact at all.

In the channel notation of chapter 13, the first of these is the cells of the contact matrix at the edges, the second is the code in brackets between them. Any cell can turn out to be resonant. A matched request for money is 11111 too, and it too yields this additional product, even though the operation here is purely one of circulation and nothing new in the substance arises in it.

16.2. What exactly appears

The additional product of a matched contact is, on the grounds available, twofold.

The first is a strengthening of the bond. The engineering parallel here is fairly exact: in a low-loss circuit, energy accumulates over many cycles, and the amplitude grows not from the force of one push but from the pushes landing in time with the swing. A bond, by this logic, is strengthened not by one strong contact but by a series of matched ones — and is not strengthened by contacts that are strong but mismatched, however much effort goes into them.

The second is a positive physiological response. Care in the wording is needed here, so we shall go system by system, separating what is established from what is supposed.

16.3. The known families of response

Listed below are the mechanisms on which the supposition rests. Each of them has been studied in its own right; none has been measured in relation to the DCL code.

System	What is established	What the model supposes
Dopaminergic	Dopamine neurons signal not reward as such but the discrepancy between what was expected and what was received (Schultz et al., 1997). A fully predicted reward produces no burst.	A matched action more often ends no worse than expected, which sustains the motivation to repeat it. “Being matched raises dopamine” would be an oversimplification.
Opioid	Hedonic “liking” is mediated by opioid and endocannabinoid mechanisms in restricted brain sites (Berridge & Kringelbach, 2015) and is separable from “wanting.”	A matched action is more likely to land in “liking” and not only in “wanting” — that is, not to come apart along the cascade scenario of chapter 21.
Oxytocinergic	Oxytocin takes part in social bonding and maternal behaviour (Uvnäs-Moberg, 2003). At the same time, the effects of intranasal oxytocin on trust replicate poorly, and caution here is obligatory.	Matched social contacts sustain bonding. The specific hormonal attribution remains a supposition.

System	What is established	What the model supposes
Serotonergic	Serotonin is linked to the regulation of mood; for a review of non-pharmacological influences see Young (2007).	The link between “acting in accordance with one's own values” and serotonergic activity is an extrapolation; there are no direct data behind it.
Vagal tone and HRV	Heart rate variability is linked to the working of prefrontal-subcortical regulatory circuits (Thayer et al., 2012) — this is well supported.	A reduction in internal conflict is accompanied by a rise in HRV. Comparatively inexpensive to test, and it is on the list in chapter 49.
Inflammatory	Chronic social adversity is linked to increased pro-inflammatory gene expression and to levels of IL-6, TNF- α and C-reactive protein (Cole, 2014).	A rise in the share of matched actions shifts that profile the other way. The reverse direction of causation has not been shown.

Table 12. The physiological mechanisms on which the resonance hypothesis rests, with the established separated from the supposed.

A separate caveat about polyvagal theory. In the literature on body-oriented work, positive vagal effects are often set out with reference to polyvagal theory (Porges, 2011). The reader should know that this theory is under serious professional criticism: the reading of heart rate variability as a direct index of vagal tone, the role of the dorsal vagal nucleus, and the evolutionary premises are all disputed (Grossman, 2023). The discussion continues, and Porges replies to the criticism. Polyvagal theory is not used as a foundation in the present work; what is used is the substantially narrower and better supported claim about the relation of HRV to regulatory circuits (Thayer et al., 2012).

16.4. What here has been measured, and what is supposed

Saying this outright matters more than listing the mechanisms. The following is established: each of the six families of response exists and has been studied. It is also established that chronic stress accumulates as allostatic load (chapter 15) and that social adversity leaves a trace in inflammatory markers.

The following is not established: that the DCL code of an action predicts any of these responses. Not a single study has been carried out in which actions were marked by D, C and L and set against physiology. Joining the two halves — the marking and the physiology — is the central untested hypothesis of the whole work, and it is to that above all that the caveat about the status of this document on the title page applies.

The practical conclusion is not “do not use it” but “do not promise.” The marking is useful as a way of structuring observation regardless of whether the physiological part is confirmed. There are no grounds today for promising a client a fall in inflammatory markers from an increased share of matched actions.

16.5. The therapeutic conclusion

If the hypothesis is even partly right, the mechanism of improvement consists not in removing a symptom but in gradually increasing the share of matched actions across the day — that is, in a rise of the DCL index from chapter 11.5.

This consideration is symmetrical to Part IV, and the symmetry is not accidental. The cascade describes accumulation in the negative direction: repeated episodes with a zero shift the baseline down. Resonance describes accumulation in the positive: repeated matched episodes shift it up. One and the same mechanism of accumulation works in both directions, and that is exactly why a single action settles little and a regular one settles a great deal.

The commonest case. A disliked job gives the code 011 — I do not want to, but I consent, and it is allowed. One such action is harmless. Eight hours a day five days a week over years is, on the model's supposition, the single largest source of chronic wear in most of those who come for help, and it is from there that the compensatory habits analysed in Part IV most often grow. DCL marking makes that source visible and allows it to be discussed separately from the symptoms the person came in with.

Note that the conclusion does not reduce to the advice “quit the job.” A zero bit can be closed from several sides: by restoring D, by reconsidering C, by changing L, or by increasing the share of matched actions in the rest of the day. Which of those roads is available is a question for the particular piece of work, not for the model.

16.6. Relation to existing approaches

What has been set out makes no claim to be a new therapeutic method, and it overlaps in many places with ones that already exist. Work with the divergence between action and values is the substance of acceptance and commitment therapy (Hayes, Strosahl & Wilson, 1999). Identifying and testing the automatic assumptions by which a person denies himself permission is the province of cognitive behavioural therapy (Beck et al., 1979). Attention to bodily signals as a source of data about one's own state rests on research into interoception (Craig, 2002; Barrett, 2017).

The contribution of the marking, if it has one, lies not in new content for the work but in a unit of account: it fixes what exactly is to be counted and which bits to look in for the cause. Whether that unit turns out more useful than the ones already available will be shown by testing, not by argument.

17. Deferred consent

A frequent situation in the consulting room: a person describes what is happening as compulsion by somebody else's will. "I am obliged," "it is demanded of me," "that is how it is done in our family." On checking the code, what often turns up is a zero of his own rather than another's will.

An obligation taken on a year ago and carried out today without desire often proves to be the configuration "consent without desire" rather than the action of an outside agent. The consent has already been given, and the setting holds it in place. A collective's rule is L; accepting that rule on joining was the person's own C.

T. Consent has a period of validity. People quite often meet their own past consent and fail to recognise it as theirs — hence the persistent sense of pressure from outside.

This analysis is of course not applicable to every case: there are obligations taken on under compulsion, and circumstances in which there really was no choice. The marking helps tell one from the other; it does not declare all compulsion imaginary.

From practice. The Abilene paradox: a family drives somewhere none of them wants to go, because each decided the others wanted it. It looks like the will of the family. By code it is more like 01011 in every pair inside the group: D=0, C=1. There is no separate "will of the family" to look for here — there are four people, each of whom consented without wanting to.

18. A concealed purpose as a defect of consent

When a person hides what he actually came for, this is usually described as lying. The marking proposes to localise the defect differently.

Concealment does not touch D: the initiator's desire is genuine. What it appears to do is zero the C of the other party. Consent obtained for a contact of one type while a different one is actually carried out was given on substituted grounds. The logic is the same as with informed consent in medicine: if the procedure was described wrongly, the signature loses its force, even if every individual word was true.

H. What probably makes a contact inadmissible is not lying as such, but a mismatch between the cell of the contact matrix a person consented to and the cell that is carried out.

This lets us analyse a frequent complaint that is otherwise hard to pin down: “everything seemed honest, and yet I feel I was used.” Every statement may have been true while the type of contact was switched.

Example. An acquaintance invites you for coffee “just to catch up,” and forty minutes in asks for a loan. Not a false word was spoken: he did want to catch up. But the consent was given to the cell “state — exchange,” and the cell carried out was “resource — take.” Hence the residue the person afterwards finds hard to explain to himself.

19. How to mark out loud

The direct question “what is your purpose here?” is usually counterproductive: it asserts out loud that your interlocutor has a hidden agenda and damages the contact more than the vagueness did. Three indirect forms work better.

1. Ask not about the purpose but about the result wanted. “What would be more use to you right now — thinking it through together, or my just listening?” It sounds like care and works as marking.
2. Limit the resource. “I have twenty minutes — what is the best thing to spend them on?” People are rarely offended by this, and your interlocutor has to name his own priority.
3. Name your own cell first. “Right now I just need to complain; nothing needs solving.” That is neither weakness nor rudeness — it is handing the other party the thing they can actually consent to.

In professional practice the first form is already standardised: the therapeutic contract, the agenda of a meeting, the question “what result from this session would be a good one for you” — these are all procedures for marking C explicitly.

PART IV. DYNAMICS OVER TIME

20. The shape of the curve and the exit window

Chapter 9 said that state terminates not by satisfaction but by satiation. Here that curve is examined more closely, because the practical recommendations depend on its shape.

The typical shape is this: a rise, a peak, then a decline in which the same action yields less and less. Rolls and colleagues found a detail that matters most to us: subjects invited to eat until satiated stopped shortly before the food ceased to be pleasant to them. That is, the process has a point past which continuing starts to work against itself.

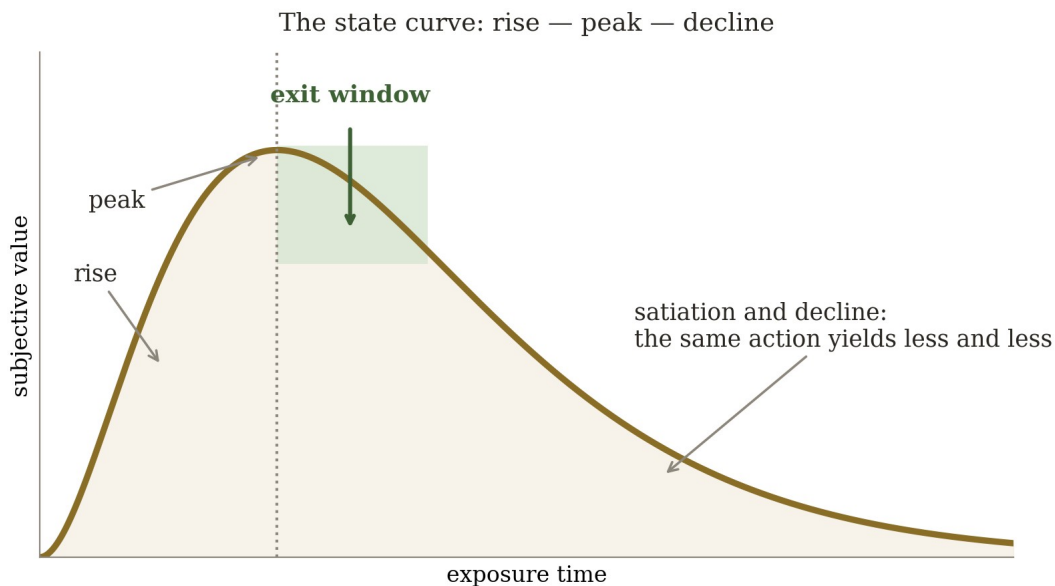


Fig. 12. The curve of a state. In green, the zone in which exiting appears to be most advantageous: the peak is past and the decline has not yet set in.

An adjacent and earlier observation is alliesthesia, described by Cabanac: the pleasantness of one and the same stimulus depends on internal state. A sweet solution is pleasant to the hungry and unpleasant to the sated; warm water is pleasant to the chilled and unpleasant to the overheated. In other words, the value of a stimulus is not a property of it: it is set by how far it is needed right now. This explains why the curve has a decline at all rather than levelling off into a plateau.

20.1. Where it is better to exit

From the shape of the curve it follows that the moment of exit matters — and that the optimum does not lie where it is usually looked for.

- Exiting before the peak leaves an unmet demand: the desire went unrealised, and the D bit is in effect left hanging. This is exactly the situation chapter 15 describes as a contribution to allostatic load.
- Exiting well down the decline means a noticeable part of the time was spent on diminishing returns, and the last impression falls at the lowest point. In memory, judging by the data on how the peak and the ending shape the assessment of an episode, it is the ending that lodges first of all.
- Exiting soon after the peak appears to be the most advantageous: the demand has been met, the decline has not gathered force, and the episode stays in memory on a high note.

This is of course an idealisation. The curve differs between people and between states in duration and steepness, the moment of the peak is rarely known in advance, and the ability to recognise it is itself a skill. Even so, the rule “exit soon after the peak, not when you have had enough” proves practically useful, and it explains why the traditions of many cultures limit the length of something pleasant not by prohibition but by form: a feast has a running order, a festival has an end.

How to put it to a client. “You do not feel emptied out because it was bad for you; you feel that way because you left late. Good things are not endless: they have a peak, after which continuing yields less and costs more.”

21. The cascade: when the curve stops coming back

So far we have looked at a single episode. With repetition the picture changes, and it changes in a regular way.

The classic description was given by Solomon and Corbit. On their model, any emotional stimulus sets off a fast primary process (the a-process) and, following it, a slow opposing one (the b-process) that returns the system to equilibrium. On repeated presentations the a-process weakens while the b-process strengthens and lengthens. The result is a lower peak and a deeper, longer after-effect.

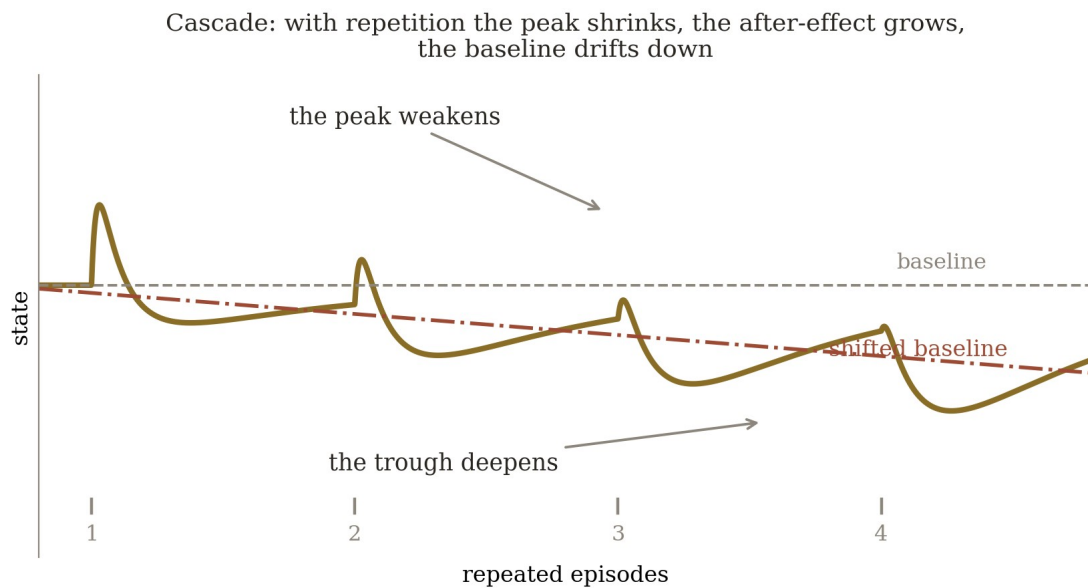


Fig. 13. The cascade on the opponent-process model: with repetition the peak falls, the after-effect deepens, and the baseline shifts downwards.

From this follows a paradox the authors themselves noted: the greatest dependence arises when there is almost no pleasure left. The b-process that generates the craving grows in exactly the period when the a-process that gave the joy is fading. The person continues not because it feels good but because without it things feel bad.

Robinson and Berridge described an adjacent mechanism from another side: the brain systems responsible for “wanting” are separable from those responsible for “liking.” With repeated use it is “wanting” that becomes sensitised; “liking” does not grow with it. In later work the authors note that their theory does not require “liking” to fall — all that matters is that “wanting” strengthens independently.

E. The practical conclusion: the strength of a craving is not an indicator that the person needs this or that it does him good. These are two different quantities, and in a cascade they come apart.

The status of Part IV. Opponent-process theory and incentive-sensitisation theory are established positions in the psychology of addiction, obtained independently of the present work and long before it. Setting them out here is an integration of existing theory with the proposed model; it is not a result of the author's own and not an empirically established part of DCL. The claim “these mechanisms explain the dynamics of contacts with a full code” has the status of a hypothesis: a similarity in the shape of curves does not prove that one mechanism is at work.

22. Chemical and behavioural cascades

The mechanism is not tied to substances. It has been described both for chemical agents and for actions — including actions involving information.

22.1. Chemical

The classic case is the opiates: an acute rise on the first administrations, then tolerance, a deepening withdrawal, and a shift of motivation from seeking pleasure to avoiding suffering. The same logic in a milder form can be traced for alcohol, nicotine and stimulants.

22.2. Informational and behavioural

Short video formats — reels feeds, infinite scroll — are built so that the stimulus is delivered often, briefly, and with an unpredictable result. These are the conditions under which a cascade unfolds fast: the intervals between episodes are too short for the system to return to baseline, and the unpredictability of the reward sustains “wanting” independently of “liking.” The characteristic observation users make about themselves — “I get stuck in it and I get no pleasure from it” — corresponds precisely to those two quantities coming apart.

The engineering parallel is useful again here. A radio receiver has the notion of dynamic range: if a strong signal is constantly present at the input, automatic gain control lowers the sensitivity and weak signals drop below the detection threshold. The receiver is not broken — it has been set for the strong and has stopped distinguishing the quiet. That is exactly what people are describing when they say that after a few hours of the feed, ordinary life seems bland: the threshold has risen.

A second parallel is positive feedback. An amplifier that returns part of its output to its input in phase stops being an amplifier once the loop gain reaches unity and turns into an oscillator: it produces a signal by itself, regardless of what is fed in. That is a fairly exact image of what happens to the reward circuit in a cascade: it stops serving its original function and starts sustaining itself.

What to say to a client. “Your system has not broken. It has adjusted to the strongest signal that regularly arrives in it. To hear the quiet again you need to take the loud away for a while — and that is not a punishment, it is the restoration of sensitivity.”

23. What the cascade does to the marking

A serious difficulty for the model has to be admitted here rather than got round.

Take a person who puts the feed on in the evening. He wants it — D is one, and over the years more confidently so. He consents to it: he sees no negative consequences, C is one. The setting does not forbid it, L is one. Code 111 — by definition a matched single action with no wear. And yet the wear is obvious.

There are two ways of resolving this, and both cost something.

1. Hold that C is not in fact one. Many people in that situation do not approve of their own behaviour, and ambivalence is a characteristic sign of dependence. The picture then fits the marking as a code with a zero in C. The weakness of this solution is that it allows any C to be declared zero after the fact, on the evidence of the harm done, and thereby makes the marking unfalsifiable.
2. Accept that DCL marking describes an episode and does not describe dynamics. The code applies to one action; a cascade is a property of a sequence of actions. A single episode may be fully matched while a sequence of such episodes shifts the baseline. This solution is the more honest one, and it means that Part IV is not an ornament on Parts II and III but a necessary complement to them.

The second is adopted. Hence a practical rule.

T. The marking answers the question of whether this contact is matched. It does not answer the question of what the regular repetition of such contacts does to a person. The second question requires a separate look — at the shape of the curve, at the intervals between episodes, and at whether the baseline returns to its starting level.

In practice this question went into the checklist as its last item: does the person come back after an episode to the place he set out from — or a little lower every time?

PART V. THE FLOW OF LOVE

24. Why definitions of love diverge

Let us assemble the instrument and apply it to the word for whose sake this book was written.

Begin with an observation anyone can check for himself. Ask ten people what love is and you will most likely get ten different answers. One will say kindness. The second, care. The third, passion. The fourth, that he never betrays me. The fifth, that she leaves me alone.

One word, many definitions. It resembles the situation where every factory cuts threads to its own pitch and tells nobody: the parts appear to be there, nothing will assemble, and each side is sure the other is at fault.

H. A considerable share of conflicts in a couple arise not because people do not love, but because each proceeds from a definition of his own without knowing the other's. The argument is not about whether love is present but about what is to count as a sign of it.

The analysis of more than twenty existing definitions is set out in Part VI. It shows there that the definitions diverge not in content but in which coordinate they name out loud: some name the substance, others the operation, others the condition of execution. All three coordinates have already been introduced in the preceding parts, and now they can be joined.

How this looks in the consulting room. She says: “you do not love me,” meaning the absence of an experience in her partner. He answers: “I do everything for you,” meaning a set of actions. Both are right inside their own frame and neither hears the other, because they are naming different coordinates of one and the same cell of the contact matrix. Until that is named, the conversation can run for years without moving.

25. Complementarity as a factor

Chapter 13 showed that a full code does not by itself save you: two people can sincerely want the contact, consent to it, and be in a permitting setting — and still come apart, because what they are doing is incompatible.

For this to enter the formula, complementarity has to be written as a quantity. We shall denote it COMPL.

T. COMPL = 1 if and only if two conditions hold at once: the substances on both sides coincide and the operations are complementary. In all other cases COMPL = 0.

The full list of combinations is given in Table 7 of chapter 13 and in Appendix B. Here it is enough to recall the main point: complementarity is not sameness. INF← and INF→ are different cells of the contact matrix and a complementary pair; INF→ and INF→ are identical cells of the contact matrix and a collision.

Analysis. She describes a hard day, transmitting in state — the cell STA→. He answers “talk to your boss,” transmitting in information — the cell INF→. Both want it, both consent, nobody forbids it: code 11111. And the contact falls apart, because the substances differ and COMPL equals zero. What the formula gives here is not a verdict but a target: not “he does not love me” but “we are working in different bands.” Those are two entirely different conversations, and the second is the more productive.

26. An act of love

Now it all assembles into one line.

$$\text{cell A} \times \text{cell B} \times \text{COMPL} \times \text{DCL(AB)}$$

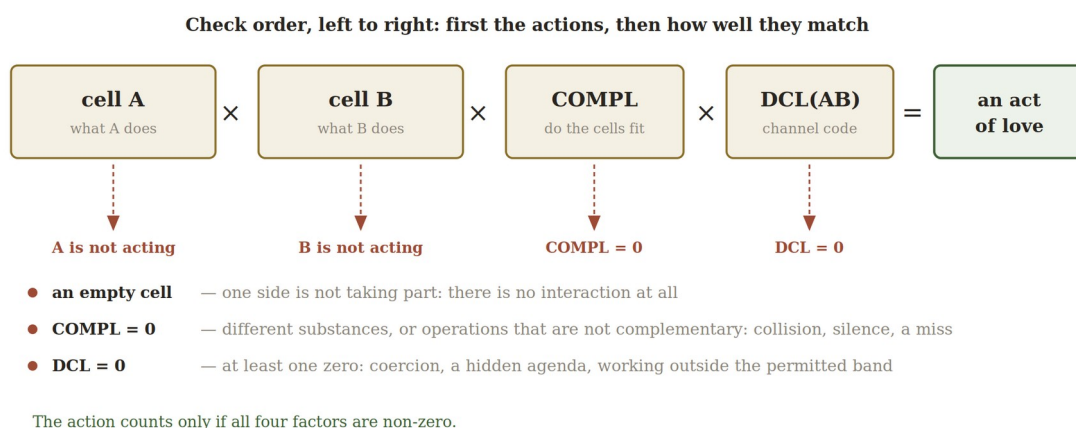


Fig. 14. An act of love as the product of four factors. A zero in any one of them zeroes the result.

The order of the factors is set by the order of checking. First you establish what each side is doing: until both cells of the contact matrix are determined there is nothing to say about complementarity — there is nothing to compare. Then you check whether the cells fit each other. And only after that does it make sense to take apart the code of the channel: it describes the manner in which an already determined content is carried out.

About the multiplication sign. The multiplication here is logical, not arithmetical: a cell is not a number, and there is nothing to multiply it by. The notation means that the result is non-zero if and only if all four factors are non-zero. The multiplication sign was chosen precisely because it alone conveys the property needed — zeroing from any side.

T. The engineering formulation. An act of love is a contact in which both sides perform a non-empty operation, the pair of cells of the contact matrix is complementary (COMPL = 1), and the code of the channel is full (DCL = 11111).

T. The everyday formulation. An act of love is when both of them are doing something for each other, what they are doing fits together, both want it, both consent to it, and nobody outside forbids it.

Multiplication was chosen not for the look of the line. It zeroes, and each zero answers to a fault of its own that would otherwise have to be described in a separate caveat.

1. An empty cell on either side. One acts, the other does not take part. However much one side puts in, there is no act of love — there is work in one direction. This is the first check, and it screens out more cases than you would think.
2. COMPL = 0. Both act, but past each other or into each other. They care with the wrong thing; they argue instead of listening; both wait for the first move.
3. DCL = 0. The action is performed without desire, without consent, or under prohibition. This is where control that gets called care, and submission that gets called responsibility, both live.

The converse consideration is no less important. If you keep the DCL code alone, the definition will take in any mutually wanted and permitted occupation — having lunch together, say. Few would call that love. If you keep the content alone, control becomes indistinguishable from care. That is why there are four factors and not one.

On the status of the formula. The formula is a definition, not an empirical result. It is not proved or refuted by observation — it is accepted or not accepted. What is open to testing is its consequences: does the configuration it describes predict satisfaction, the durability of the bond, and the wellbeing of the participants? None of those tests has been carried out as of the writing of this document.

27. The flow: composition, intensity, purity

A single act of love is not yet love. One good conversation does not make a bond into love, and one quarrel does not cancel it. What matters is not the episode but what repeats.

T. The flow of love is a dynamic set of acts of love between two people, considered over time.

The word “dynamic” is not decoration here. The set changes: some pairs of contact-matrix cells enter it, others drop out, the frequency rises and falls. The flow is described by three characteristics, and it is useful to keep them apart.

Characteristic	What it is	How it is determined
Composition	Which pairs of contact-matrix cells take part	The list of complementary pairs along which actions run
Intensity	How much interaction there is in a given period	Frequency of repetition multiplied by the duration of the interactions
Purity	What share of the interaction consists of acts of love	The ratio of acts of love to the intensity of all interactions over the same period — taking both frequency and duration into account

Table 13. The three characteristics of the flow.

T. The purity of a flow of love = acts of love ÷ the intensity of all interactions over the period. A quantity between zero and one. Since intensity takes duration into account, in practice purity is the share of the total interaction time that goes into acts of love. It answers a question that composition and intensity do not put: what part of what happens between two people belongs to acts of love at all.

Two flows have to be distinguished here, or the definition will run in circles. The flow of interactions is everything that goes on between the two: conversations, chores, silences, quarrels. The flow of acts of love is a subset of it, consisting of actions that are complementary and matched on DCL. Purity is the ratio of the second to the first.

Why the picture is incomplete without purity. Two people talk for two hours every day: the intensity is high. Of those two hours, twenty minutes turn out to be acts of love; the rest is mutual advice nobody asked for and establishing who is right, without wanting to. Purity is around one sixth. From outside this is an active bond; from inside it is mostly wear. Without the purity characteristic, such a couple looks better off than a couple who see each other once a month and spend all four hours of it in matched, complementary contact.

What purity does not mean. A purity of one is unreachable and is not the goal. Between people there are inevitably domestic interactions, practical ones, and simply neutral ones — these are neither acts of love nor wear. Low purity is alarming not in itself but when the remainder consists not of the neutral but of DCL configurations with zeros, or of non-complementary interactions. The one can be told from the other only by marking, not by feel.

27.1. A picture to hold onto

Picture two people with pipes running between them. Each pipe is one matched pair of contact-matrix cells. The colour of the pipe is set by the substance, the shape of the nozzle by the operation, the thickness by the intensity. If the DCL

code in that pair is full, the fluid inside is clear and does both of them good. If there is a zero in the code, the fluid clouds over: the connection through that pipe is still running, but now it is poisoning them both.

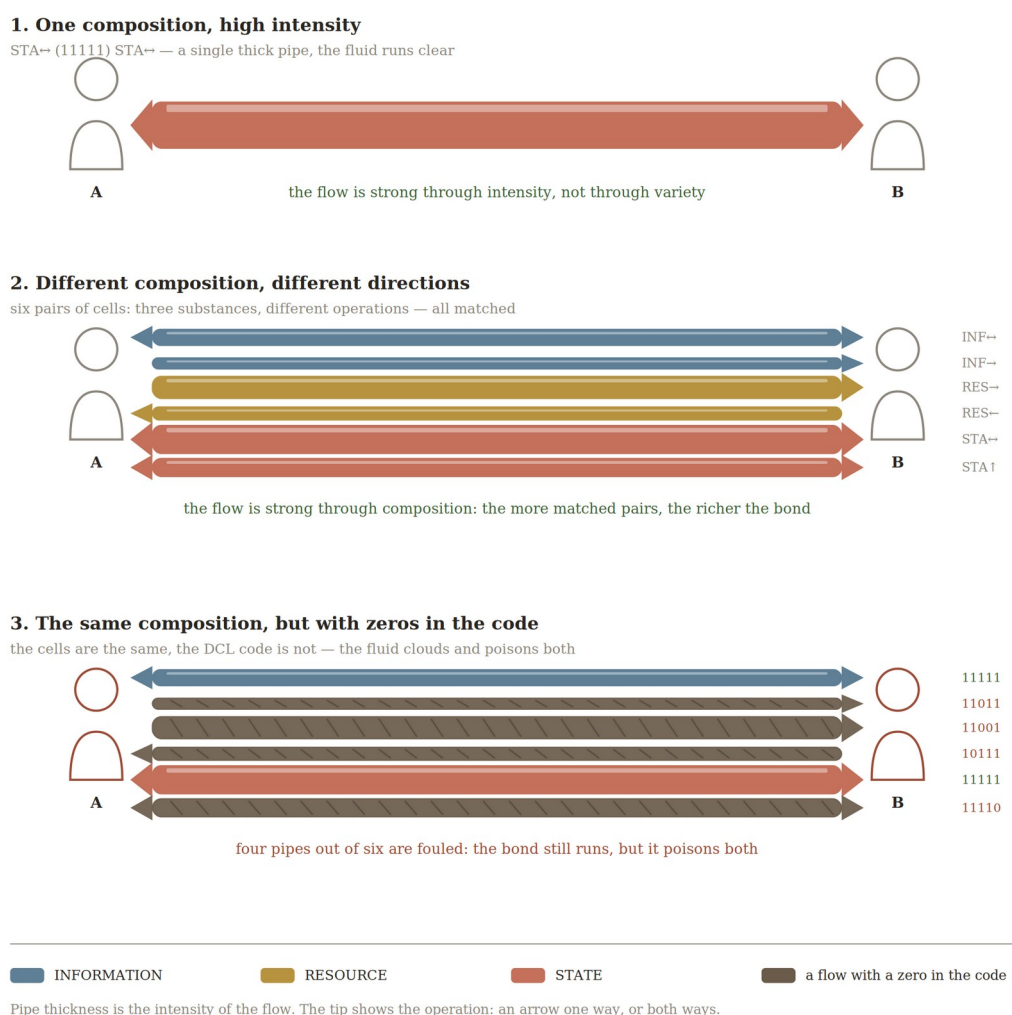


Fig. 15. The flow of love: three cases. The thickness of a pipe is intensity, the colour is substance, the shape of the nozzle is the operation, and the clarity of the fluid is the completeness of the DCL code.

27.2. Two ways of making a flow powerful

The picture shows that the power of a flow is built up by two independent routes, and it is useful not to confuse them.

- Through intensity. One complementary pair of contact-matrix cells, but actions along it happen often and at length. A bond narrow in composition and strong in intensity: two people for whom, say, only state comes together — but comes together every day.
- Through composition. Many different complementary pairs of contact-matrix cells, each with its own moderate frequency. A rich bond: information, resources and states travelling at once and in different directions.

Both flows can be powerful, and neither is better built than the other. The difference matters practically: a narrow intense flow is vulnerable — let the single pipe silt up and there is no bond left. A broad flow survives the loss of one pipe on the strength of the others.

From practice. A couple whose entire bond rested on working together — RES↑ and INF↔ every day. The project ended, and it turned out there had been no other pipes. From outside this looks like “they fell out of love”; by the composition of the flow it is a loss of contact. The formula offers no comfort here, but it does explain: what needs rebuilding is not the feeling but the composition of the contact.

27.3. Everyone has a recipe of his own

The model does not prescribe which set of cells a given couple counts as theirs. And here is where we return to what chapter 24 began with: love as a cocktail, with everyone holding a different recipe. Now you can see what it is made of — the ingredients are cells of the matrix.

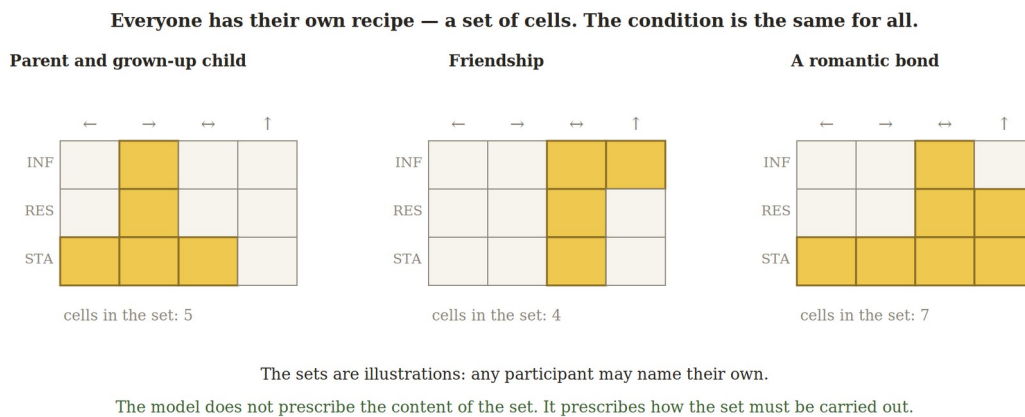


Fig. 16. Three different sets of cells. The content differs; the condition of execution does not.

T. There are two shared conditions: complementarity of the contact-matrix cells and a full DCL code. The set of cells itself is named by the participant, not by the model. The construction is pluralist in content and strict in form.

This is the answer to the problem posed in chapter 24. Nobody needs to be talked into adopting a single recipe for love. It is enough that each names his own and that both conditions hold. The unresolvable argument “what is love” then turns into the resolvable conversation “what is your set and what is mine.”

A procedure for a couple. Each of you separately, without consulting the other, marks on a grid of twelve cells what for you makes up love. Then the grids are compared. As a rule what turns up is not a conflict but a mismatch of sets: one has STA↔ and INF↔ lit up, the other RES→ and RES↔. After that the conversation is about something concrete, and the abstract argument ends by itself.

27.4. Intensity as a separate quantity

Intensity does not enter the definition, and therefore it does not sort bonds into the real and the unreal.

Both cases are a flow of love. They differ in intensity, not in existence.

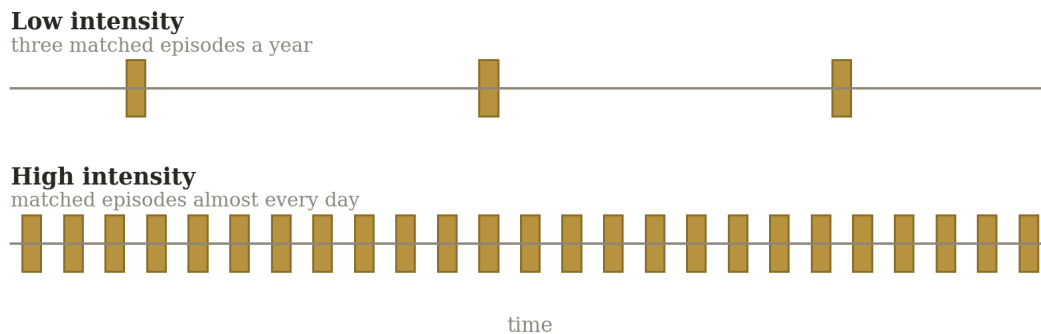


Fig. 17. The same composition and code, different intensity.

T. Three matched episodes a year, and daily episodes — both are a flow of love. They differ in intensity and purity, not in whether the flow exists.

The distinction settles a persistent argument. When someone says “how can that be love if he calls once every six months,” they are arguing about intensity while supposing they are arguing about existence.

Two	cases	side	by	side.
1.	An adult brother and sister see each other twice a year, and every meeting runs on a full DCL code in complementary cells of the contact matrix. The flow of acts of love is there, the intensity is low, the purity is high.			
2.	A married couple live together and interact daily, but half the episodes run with zero consent on one side. The flow of acts of love is there, the intensity is high, the purity is low.			

All the variability of the construction lives in time, and not in fractional values of the DCL bits. Giving up intermediate values inside a DCL bit was a deliberate choice: a quantity like “I want it sixty per cent” is poorly defined and breeds an argument about the number, whereas frequency and duration are observed directly.

28. Three positions that the everyday language of love calls by one word

A construction that does not state the limits of its application is dangerous in application. So directly after the formula comes an account of where it does not work.

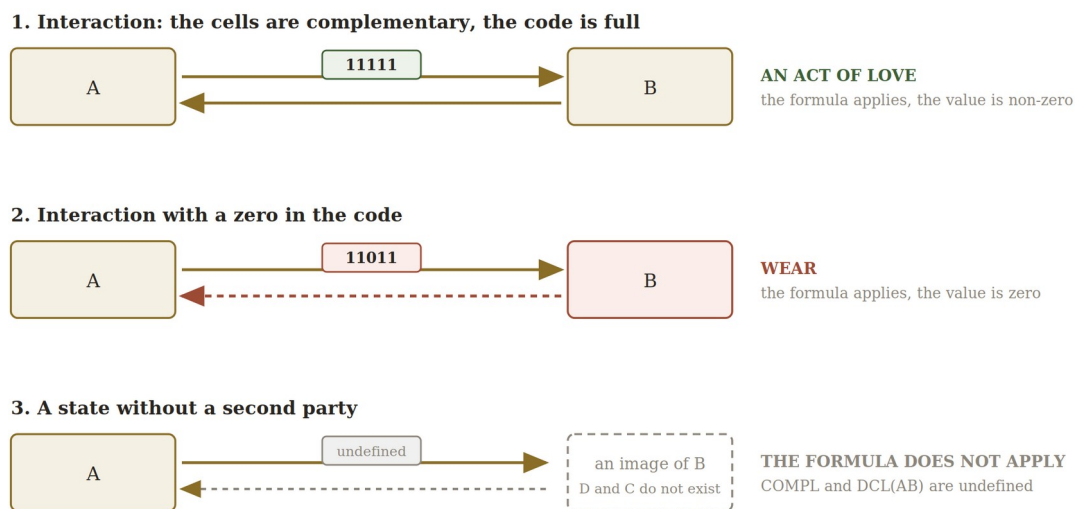


Fig. 18. Three distinct positions denoted in ordinary speech by one word.

28.1. Interaction with a full code

Both sides are present, the desire and consent of each can be established, the cells are complementary, all five bits are ones. The formula applies and gives a non-zero. This is what the whole construction was introduced for.

28.2. Interaction with an incomplete code

The other party is present and can be asked, but there is a zero in the DCL code. The formula applies and gives zero. This is where what is ordinarily called unrequited love belongs: one has desire and consent, the other's desire is zero. In the terms of chapter 15 this is code 11011 — a regime of wear with a known dynamic, not an act of love.

28.3. A state without a second party

Either there is no second party, or their desire and consent cannot be established — there is nobody to check with. COMPL and the DCL code of the channel are then not defined at all, and the formula does not give zero; it simply does not apply.

T. A state without a second party is an experience directed at an image rather than at a person whose desire and consent can be checked. The person's own action may be entirely matched on the three-bit DCL code. There is, however, no interaction: at the other end of the channel there is no receiver (no subject).

More cases fall into this position than it seems at first.

- Love of God. Asking the other party, in the sense the formula requires, is impossible.
- Love for someone who has died. In its construction this is an address to memory — that is, to an image.
- Love for a person one does not know personally: a performer, a correspondent, an imagined future partner.
- Love for an animal. The desire is observable; consent in the required sense cannot be established.

What happens technically. A receiver is capable of generating a signal by itself — without an internal oscillator a superheterodyne does not work at all. Here the person generates a representation of the other party and enters into interaction with his own product. The loop closes on itself: the output returns to its own input. The experience is genuine, and the model does not undertake to devalue it; what it declines to do is call it an interaction, since there is no interaction with another subject in it.

Why this needs distinguishing. Because confusing the two costs dearly. A person spends years investing in an image, believing he is building a relationship, and cannot see why it is not getting easier. The model's answer here is not “he is not trying hard enough.” Its answer is: the regime is a different one, there is no second party in the contact, and piling on more effort will not change that.

28.4. A separate word about parents and children

The hardest case, and one not to be sidestepped.

A mother loves her infant. The child is physically present, but its desire and consent cannot be established: it cannot report what it wants and cannot refuse in a way that would make the refusal mean an absence of consent in the required sense. Consequently, on the model this is a state without a second party — a state of the mother, brought about by the presence of the child and by the wish to care for it.

The conclusion is harsh. But it is honest, and something useful follows from it.

T. As the child acquires the capacity to express desire and to refuse, the state turns into interaction. The moment of transition is observable and is determined not by calendar age but by whether it becomes possible to check the desire and consent of partner B.

This gives a parent an operational criterion instead of a vague one. The question is not whether the child is big or small, and not whether he loves you. The question is whether you can check with him, and whether the adult stops when the child says no.

How this looks in the kitchen. A child is fed when he does not want to be. Desire is zero, consent is formal: he cannot refuse, because refusing would cost more. By code this is exactly the configuration of chapter 13.13 — the adult feels nothing, the child pays in silence. And the adult is quite sincerely certain that all is well: from his side no resistance is visible.

The rule that follows from this. If a person cannot refuse, an absence of objections does not mean consent. Consent exists only where there is an available way of saying no, the other party recognises it, and it actually stops things. This applies to children, to subordinates, to dependants — to everyone for whom refusal costs more than consent.

29. Why a technical definition is needed

In the consulting room the word “love” means something different to each person. One means attraction, the second attachment, the third obligation, the fourth habit. Working with a term that has no operational definition is difficult: claims about it are hard to test and arguments about it hard to resolve.

The definition proposed in chapters 26 and 27 is built in an unfamiliar way. It does not answer the question of what love is; it introduces two observable units: an act of love — one matched event between two people — and a flow of love — a set of such events over time. The word “love” as an entity in its own right the model does not define at all, and that is a deliberate decision; why, is taken apart in chapter 36, check 10.

How this changes the conversation in the consulting room. Instead of the question “does he love you,” a different one is put: “how many episodes were there this past week in which you both wanted it, both consented, and did things that fitted each other — and how much of everything that passed between you did they take up?” To the first question people give answers for years and never manage to answer it. The second they answer in five minutes, and the answer, unlike the first, can be changed.

30. From code to flow: what has changed

In early versions of this work, love was defined as the state code 11111: both want it, both consent, the setting permits it. The definition was compact, but it proved insufficient, and the reason can be seen from the analyses in chapter 13.

1. A full code with different substances. In the second analysis both want it, both consent, nobody forbids it — and the contact wears down both, because she is handing over state and he answers with information. A code-based definition would have called that episode love.
2. A full code in any mutually wanted occupation. Watching the feed together, a game of chess with a fellow traveller, a successful business meeting — all of these are 11111. A code without content does not distinguish love from any pleasant interaction.
3. A full code in a single episode. The code-based definition applied to a moment, whereas love is not usually defined through a moment: one good evening proves nothing, one quarrel cancels nothing.

So the code stopped being the whole definition and became one of the four factors of an action. And love stopped being a property of a moment and became a flow.

T. The code 11111 is a necessary condition of an act of love, but not a sufficient one. An act of love also requires non-empty cells on both sides and their complementarity. A flow of love requires such actions to be repeated over time.

The main thing from the code-based definition has been kept, and it carries over to the flow unchanged. Love is not transmitted, it is performed. It belongs to the pair, not to one of them. An incomplete code points to a specific target rather than to a vague “something is wrong.”

The engineering parallel is the same as before: a matched line is not something you can send down a line — matching is a property of the connection. A flow is the same thing stretched out in time: not a cargo travelling down a pipe but the regime in which the pipes are working.

Chapter 16 adds a dynamic to this. Matched actions, repeated, give a cumulative resonant effect, and in the language of the flow that means high purity at a steady intensity yields not only the absence of wear but a strengthening of the bond. The everyday observation that love is not so much spent as built up by matched interaction, and fades under formal interaction, gets an exact notation here: what is built up and what fades is purity.

31. Five questions: the code of the bond as a whole

The five questions from earlier versions are kept, but their status changes. They check the code not of a single action but of the bond as a whole — the base configuration against which individual actions run.

1. Do I want to be with this person? — D(A)
2. Do I consent to this desire of mine, do I permit it to myself, understanding the consequences as they are known to me at the moment of acting? — C(A)
3. Does he want to be with me? — D(B)
4. Does he consent to that, does he acknowledge it? — C(B)
5. Does the setting allow this relationship to exist? — L

Five ones mean that the base configuration is matched. Individual actions inside it are still checked separately: matched bonds have mismatched episodes in them, and mismatched bonds have matched ones.

H. The code of the bond as a whole appears to be related to the purity of the flow but does not determine it. With a zero at the level of the bond — if, say, one of the partners does not want to be in the relationship — most actions will carry that same zero, and purity will be low. But individual actions may have a full code: two people separating as a couple are capable of raising a child in a matched way.

In practice, “probably yes” and “I do not know” come up more often than unambiguous answers. The binary form here is a coarsening, accepted for the sake of the instrument working at all, and it should be taken into account when interpreting.

How this looks in practice. A couple answer the five questions — all ones. But a two-week diary shows purity of about a third: most of their evenings together go on mutual reproaches and advice nobody asked for. The bond is matched, the flow is clouded. The work is not with whether they love each other — that is established — but with which particular pairs of cells are producing the zeros.

32. The flow cannot be handed over

It follows from the definition that a flow is not transferred the way a resource is transferred: there is nothing to transfer. A flow is not an object but a set of actions, each of which is performed by two particular people.

The flow occupies no cell of the contact matrix. The cells hold substances and operations; the flow is what happens along the cells between two people. Everything that in ordinary speech gets called “giving love” turns out on analysis to be a single action in some substance: comforting, helping, explaining, delighting.

Three consequences for the work follow from this.

1. The phrasings “he took my love away from me,” “I gave him all my love,” “I have nothing left to give” describe what is happening inaccurately. Substances were given and taken; the flow was not given — it either ran or did not.
2. The demand “love me” is unfulfillable by construction, not for want of trying. A flow requires the desire of the other party, and desire cannot be issued on request. What can be issued is an action without desire — and that will be the code 011, which is precisely what both sides experience as a counterfeit.
3. The loss of a relationship is the ceasing of a flow, not the loss of an object. The grief is real and calls for the ordinary work of bereavement; but searching for “where is my love, who took it” leads away from the point.

The claim is a strong one and therefore vulnerable: finding a way to transfer a flow from one pair to another — without replacing the actions and the participants — would refute it.

33. Why replacing the person gives a different flow

In Foa's theory, love occupies the extreme position on what is called particularism: its value depends maximally on who exactly is conveying it. Money from anyone is still money, whereas love from another person is already a different thing. In a resource model this is an observed peculiarity requiring separate explanation.

In the definition proposed here there is almost nothing to explain. A flow consists of actions, and in each of them the cells and bits belong to these two people in particular. Replacing a participant is replacing the flow, not the same flow with a new owner.

What this gives you in the work. The post-breakup position: “I will find someone just like him.” The analysis shows why that does not work literally. A person “just like him” will give a different flow, since your own cells and bits go into it too, and by this point those have changed as well. What is at issue is not the search for a replacement but the building of a new flow — and that changes both the task and the expectations.

The ability to explain as expected what a competing model has to postulate as an observation is an argument in the construction's favour, though not a proof.

34. Analysis by bits: five clinical pictures

The practical strength of the construction is that every zero in the code of the bond gives a picture of its own, a target of its own — and its own effect on the purity of the flow.

Zero	How it sounds	What it is	The target of the work
D(A)=0	“I do not want him any more, but he is a good man”	The person's own desire fading while his assessment of the partner is preserved	Restoring D, or honestly acknowledging its absence. Do not substitute work on C for this.
C(A)=0	“I want to, but I have no right”	The desire is there, the permission to oneself is not: a conflict of values, shame, a prohibition after trauma	The internal prohibition. A frequent target in individual work.
D(B)=0	“He stayed, but he is not here”	The partner is in the relationship out of inertia or obligation	Check whether this is deferred consent (ch. 17). The work is with the couple.
C(B)=0	“He wants me, but he will not acknowledge us”	An unacknowledged relationship, “we are just seeing each other”	Do not confuse this with an absence of desire. The target is the partner's prohibition, not his feelings.
L=0	“We are not allowed”	A prohibition by an authority capable of imposing a sanction: family, employer, the law	Work with the reality of the constraint. Conversations about feelings usually change little here.

Table 14. Clinical pictures for each zero.

In the language of the flow, each zero lowers purity in its own way. A zero in D on one side makes most actions one-sided. A zero in C makes them forced or forbidden for the one acting. A zero in L moves the cost outside the pair — into the overhead of concealment and into external risk.

A widespread diagnostic error is worth noting: confusing $D(B)=0$ with $C(B)=0$. “He does not love me” may mean either that the partner does not want to, or that the partner wants to but does not permit himself. These are different situations with different prognoses, and one question tells them apart.

35. Relation to existing models

35.1. Sternberg's triangular theory

The model of love best known to psychologists is Sternberg's triangular theory (1986): three components — intimacy, passion and decision/commitment — and eight types depending on their combination, from the complete absence of love to consummate love with all three present.

The difference from the definition proposed here is fundamental.

- In Sternberg all three components are characteristics of one person, measured in each partner separately. Consequently unrequited love is in his terms a full-fledged love: in the one who loves, all three components may be at maximum.
- In the definition proposed here, a flow is a characteristic of the pair. What is usually called unrequited love does not fall under the definition: the configuration $D(A)=1$, $C(A)=1$, $D(B)=0$ is described as the code 11011 — that is, as a regime of wear with a known dynamic.

The divergence is substantive, not terminological: the two models give different predictions for the same cases, and that is testable in principle. It matters that the divergence is not a refutation. Sternberg has a validated forty-five-item scale in use for decades; the construction proposed here has no psychometric instrument as yet, and on rigour of measurement the advantage is on his side.

The models do not exclude each other. Sternberg's components read naturally as parts of the composition of a flow: intimacy and passion belong to the substance of state, commitment is closer to the C bit. The flow itself — as a set of matched actions over time — is not separately described in his model.

35.2. Foa's resource theory

The divergence from Foa touches two classes out of six. This is a substantive disagreement, not a simplification.

Class in Foa (1974)	Where it sits in the Flow of Acts of Love model
Money, goods, services	All three are the substance of resource. They do not differ substantially in the regime of their circulation and are therefore not singled out as separate classes.
Information	Unchanged.
Status	Inside the substance of information. Judgements of prestige and respect are proposed to be counted as facts about one's position in a shared picture of the world.
Love	Splits in two. Warmth, care and comfort are the substance of state. The rest is not a substance at all: it is not something conveyed but a flow — a set of matched actions across all three substances.

Table 15. Relation to Foa's resource theory.

Note too that Foa has no separate class for states, although Rimé's data on the social sharing of emotion argue for singling one out.

36. A check for internal coherence

A construction to which new elements have been added over several versions runs the risk of contradicting itself. So here it is checked for internal coherence — not for correspondence with life (that is the task of empirical testing), but for whether its different parts assert incompatible things.

Each check states a possible contradiction the way a captious reader would state it, and examines whether it can be dispelled.

No.	Possible contradiction	Result	What follows from it
1	A flow of love is defined through acts of love, and purity through the flow. Is that not circular?	Passed	There is no circle: two different sets are in question. The flow of interactions is everything that happens; the flow of love is a subset of it. Purity is the ratio of the second to the first
2	Appendix A called the code 11111 “the only row corresponding to love.” Love is now not a code	Required a correction	The wording has been fixed: 11111 is the only code under which an act of love is possible, but it is not sufficient for the act itself
3	“He fixes things, she keeps things warm” — the substances differ, COMPL equals zero, and yet the couple live well	Passed with a clarification	This is not one pair of cells but two pipes: RES→ and RES← in one, STA→ and STA← in the other. Each is complementary. A pair of cells is determined by a single action, not by a person's role in the relationship
4	Chapter 16 promises a bonus from a full DCL code; analysis 8 shows wear from a full DCL code	Passed with a consequence	The bonus is a property of the episode, the overdose a property of the sequence. Consequence: intensity has an optimum, and “the more the better” is false even at full purity
5	The formula requires symmetry, and many healthy bonds are asymmetrical: a parent gives more to an adult child	Passed	The formula requires symmetry of the DCL code — both want it, both consent — not symmetry in the direction of the substance. “Give” and “take” are complementary; an unequal contribution is not forbidden
6	The criterion “you can check with them” puts outside the model not only infants but also adults in severe dementia or in a coma	A limit of applicability	There is no logical contradiction, but the limit must be named outright. The model describes interaction between those capable of reporting D and C; where that is impossible, it is silent. The silence of the instrument does not mean there is no relationship or that it is a worse one
7	The bits are binary and purity is continuous	Passed	The binary form is at the level of the episode; continuity arises from accumulation over time. This is precisely the principle that variability lives in time, not in the bits
8	L is shared by the pair, but the parties may answer to different authorities: different families, different jurisdictions	Open, a solution proposed	Proposed: $L = 1$ if and only if the action is not forbidden by any authority to which at least one of the participants answers. L stays shared but is computed as the coincidence of all permissions
9	Purity requires counting all interactions, and the boundary of a single interaction is not defined	Partly open	Defining it through intensity — that is, through time rather than a count of episodes — solves half the problem: time is measurable unambiguously. It remains open how to mark a conversation inside which the DCL code changes

No.	Possible contradiction	Result	What follows from it
10	The book is called "The Flow of Love," yet the word "love" is not defined in the model	Passed with an explicit caveat	The model defines observable units — the act and the flow — and makes no claim on the entity the word denotes in ordinary speech. Feeling, memory and devotion remain: as substance in the flow, and as a state without a second party
11	"Intensity" was used in the text in two senses: the strength of a load and a characteristic of a flow	Required a correction	Separated: "intensity" is reserved for the flow, and for a load or an experience the word "strength" is used. Two meanings of one word in a formal construction are not admissible

Table 16. A check of the construction for internal coherence.

T. The result: of eleven checks, three passed unchanged, five required clarifications — all of which have been entered into the text — one indicated a limit of applicability, and two revealed an incompleteness that remains open. No direct contradictions were found that would require abandoning any part of the construction.

Why this is not enough. The check was carried out by the author of the model and his co-author — that is, by those with an interest in its coherence. Finding no contradictions does not prove there are none. An independent check remains necessary, and the table above is offered as a starting point for one, not as a substitute for it.

36.1. Three consequences that did not exist before the check

The check yielded not only confirmations but three new claims that had not been in the construction before.

The first: intensity has an optimum. At high purity, a rise in intensity at first strengthens the resonant effect, and past some boundary turns into overdose. Where the boundary lies is individual and unknown; the sign of its approach is described in analysis 8 — the narrowing of everything left outside the bond.

The second: a pair of cells is determined by the action, not by the role. "He is always in charge of resource, she of state" is a description of roles, not of pairs of cells. In every particular action, what gets checked is what each of them is doing right now.

The third: permission is computed across all authorities at once. If the partners have different families, different communities or different jurisdictions, an action is admissible only when none of them forbids it. It is clear from this why couples from different cultures so often run into a zero in L without having done anything wrong: they simply have twice as many authorities.

How this looks in life. A couple in which one partner's parents are against the union and the other has no parents. Inside the pair everything is matched. But by the rule that all permissions must coincide, L equals zero — the prohibition of one participant's

family is in force, and both bear the cost. From outside this looks like “his family does not like us”; by construction it is operating outside the permitted band, and there is no sense in trying to repair it inside the relationship.

37. The limits of the definition

- This is not a reduction of love to consent. The DCL code is only one of the four factors of an act of love, and a flow is described in addition by composition, intensity and purity.
- This does not abolish feelings or replace them. A feeling circulates in the flow as the substance of state, and in the absence of a second party it remains a state without a second party. The definition says only that a feeling is not identical with a flow and does occur with a mismatched code.
- This is not an ethical prescription. The model describes a regime, it does not demand it of people. From the fact that a flow is clouded it does not follow that the relationship should be ended.
- This is not a measurement procedure. Intensity and purity are measurable in principle by the diary method, but the procedure is not validated, and the five questions give a coarse marking, not a scale.
- The definition is in part analytic: the impossibility of handing a flow over follows from it by construction. The empirical content sits in the consequences — in whether the characteristics of a flow predict the outcomes of relationships — and not in the definition itself.
- An act of love applies to an episode, a flow to a sequence. The considerations of Part IV about dynamics apply to the flow directly.

37.1. A research programme

If a definition is offered as an alternative, it should be tested rather than defended. Here is a programme of six questions it is obliged to be ready for:

1. Does the purity of a flow predict satisfaction with the relationship, controlling for intensity and for the existing scales?
2. Is purity related to the durability of the relationship at a follow-up wave of assessment?
3. Do flows in which a full DCL code predominates differ in outcome from flows in which an incomplete DCL code predominates?
4. How do intensity and purity change over time, and does purity recover after a disruption?

5. Which of the four factors most often produces the zero in couples that break up?
6. Do partners diverge in their assessment of the purity of their own flow — and does the divergence itself predict the outcome?

H. The key question is the first. If the purity of a flow does not predict outcomes when intensity is controlled for, the definition is left without empirical content and remains a terminological proposal. That is precisely the condition under which it should be abandoned.

The sixth question stands apart. The model silently assumes that a flow belongs to the pair and that the participants see it the same way. If partners systematically diverge in their assessment, the marking describes not the pair but each person's representation of it — and that changes what the definition is about without refuting it.

PART VI. TESTED AGAINST THE EXISTING DEFINITIONS

38. Why and how the testing is done

Any new construction is worth trying out on material that exists independently of it. If the formula proposed here is worth anything, it must be able to express definitions of love that have been given for thousands of years — not necessarily to agree with them, but to express them and show how they differ.

The decomposition is carried out along the three coordinates introduced above: which substance is named, which operation, and what is said about the condition of execution. For each definition it is additionally noted which of the three positions of chapter 28 it belongs to.

A caveat without which this section would be dishonest. The decomposition into cells is the author's reading, not a reconstruction of anyone's intent. What is being shown is that the formula is capable of expressing these definitions, not that this is what the traditions meant. Another reader will decompose them differently, and there is room for long argument here. The section as a whole has the status T — theoretical interpretation.

38.1. A distinction without which the analysis turns into a quarrel

Some of the definitions considered belong to religious traditions, and a distinction has to be drawn here at once, or the analysis will slide into evaluation.

T. In the terms of the model, faith and religion are different objects. Faith is a position on the worldview axis — that is, a personal configuration of the picture of the world; there is no sanction attached to it. A religion is an authority in the L bit: an institution that has rules and is capable of imposing a nameable sanction — excommunication, censure, loss of one's community.

The distinction is not evaluative: it simply says where in the model each of the two objects falls. A working rule for the analysis follows from it. When a definition of love describes a person's inner relation to the world, it is read along the worldview axis and has nothing to do with the L bit. When a definition prescribes who is to act and how, with a sanction implied for non-compliance, it works as L and is analysed accordingly.

The rule of symmetry. The same analysis is applied to secular sources with no allowances made. If asymmetrical configurations turn up only in religious definitions, that is ideology, not analysis. It will be seen below that a statutory formula about sacrifice, Socrates's definition and Tolstoy's definition produce zeros no less often. The model reads

the configuration, not the source, and imputes intentions to nobody: no claim about an institution's purpose follows from it and none is made here.

39. Religions and traditions

Source	Formulation	Decomposition by the contact matrix	What the model shows
Christianity, 1 Cor. 13	"Patient, kind. Does not envy, does not boast, is not proud"	STA→ with code 011 in the one who loves; a prohibition on INF→ about status	A definition through a condition rather than through content. "Patient" in decomposition gives 011 — consent without desire, that is, a configuration of wear. Detailed analysis in chapter 41.1
Christianity, "God is love"	Love as a property of a highest principle	—	A state without a second party: the second party cannot be asked in the required sense
Greece, agape	Sacrificial, unconditional	RES→, STA→	Readiness to act with the second party's D at zero. The model records the zero and does not call this an act of love
Greece, philia	Friendly	INF↔, STA↔, RES↔	Symmetrical across all three substances, COMPL equals one. The closest match to the formula in the whole list
Greece, storge	Kinship love	STA→ and ←, RES→ and ←	Often asymmetrical by age; when one side is very young it falls into position 28.4
Greece, eros	Sensual	STA↔, STA↑	The bodily as exchange and generation of state
Islam	Between spouses — mawaddah and rahmah	STA↔; RES→ and STA→	Both exchange and one-sided giving are named. Theological mahabbah belongs to a state without a second party
Judaism	"As yourself"	—	Not a set of cells but a requirement of symmetry: in effect a requirement that COMPL equal one
Hinduism, kâma and prema	Sensual and selfless	STA↔ and STA→	Two regimes of one substance, differing in operation
Hinduism, bhakti	Devotion to the Divine	—	A state without a second party
Buddhism, mettâ	Loving-kindness towards all	STA→ with no definite addressee	No addressee is named, so the second party is undefined
Buddhism, karuṇâ and muditâ	Compassion and sympathetic joy	STA← and STA→	Receiving another's state and giving your own — a complementary pair
Buddhism, upekkhâ	Equanimity	—	Does not enter the matrix at all: it describes the stance of an observer, not an action

Table 17. Religions and traditions.

40. Legislation, literature, science, dictionaries

Source	Formulation	Decomposition	What the model shows
LEGISLATION			
India	Love as the right to choose one's partner	—	Not content but the genuineness of consent: a requirement that C not be fictitious
China	Gǎnqíng, mutual attachment; its destruction is grounds for divorce	STA↔ cumulatively	A direct correspondence with the notion of the intensity of a flow. The parameter already exists in the tradition under another name
USA	The highest ideals of love, fidelity, devotion, sacrifice	RES→, STA→; the set restricted to one partner	Sacrifice with one's own D at zero the model counts not as an act of love but as wear
Indonesia	A bodily and spiritual bond	STA↔ and RES↔	A requirement of coverage in two substances at once
Russia	No definition in the legislation	—	The empty place that prompted this book
LITERATURE AND SCIENCE			
Socrates	Desire for what you do not have	INF←, RES←, STA← with nothing received	Desire without realisation. On the model this is an unmet demand, that is, a regime of wear rather than a flow of love
Shakespeare	Does not alter when alteration finds it	—	A claim about the stability of intensity over time
Tolstoy	An elemental force inseparable from suffering	STA↔ with a zero in one bit	Suffering in the model is a sign of a zero. Love is described outright as a configuration with wear
Saint-Exupéry	Looking together in the same direction	RES↑, INF↑	Lands in the fourth column: generation, not exchange
Fromm	Active concern for the life and growth of what we love	RES→, STA→, INF→ and ↑	The closest of all to the formula: defines through the operation rather than the substance
Sternberg	Intimacy, passion, decision/commitment	STA↔, STA↑ and the C bit	The first two components are substance, the third is a bit. Different levels are mixed in one list
Fisher	Three separate brain systems	—	Describes what provides it, not what is produced. A different level of description
DICTIONARIES			
Ozhegov	A deep emotional attraction	STA, operation not specified	The substance is named; the operation and the condition are not

Source	Formulation	Decomposition	What the model shows
Dahl	A feeling of attachment	STA, operation not specified	The same
Merriam-Webster	Strong affection arising out of kinship or personal ties	STA, operation not specified	The same. All three dictionaries define through the substance only

Table 18. Legislation, literature, science, dictionaries.

41. What the testing showed

41.1. One definition taken apart in full

The Christian formulation deserves an analysis of its own, because the whole procedure can be seen at work on it.

“Kind” — a substance is named with no operation: state, but it is not known whether it is being given, received or exchanged. On this part the definition stands where the dictionaries stand.

“Does not envy, does not boast, is not proud” — three prohibitions, and all three are about one thing: about comparing positions. In the matrix this is an information channel about who stands where. That is, the definition forbids running a status channel in the contact.

“Patient” — and here the substance of it begins. Patience means allowing actions to be performed on you that you do not want but do consent to. In three-bit DCL notation that is exactly 011: consent without desire.

T. Assembled, the decomposition gives this: on this definition, the one who loves renounces the status channel, experiences a state, and allows actions to be performed on him with his own desire D at zero. This is a one-sided configuration, and in the model it belongs to the regime of wear rather than to an act of love.

The divergence from the formula proposed here is exact and localises in a single bit: in the Christian definition the lover's D may be zero; in the model's formula it may not.

What matters is that the divergence is not about direction. The formula does not require the sides to give in equal measure: one-sided giving, where both have desire and consent, remains an act of love, since “give” and “take” are complementary (chapter 36, check 5). The divergence is precisely that the definition permits zero desire in the one who gives, and calls that a virtue.

What does not follow from this. It does not follow that the definition is wrong or that the tradition was pursuing some aim. The model reads a configuration and has no access to intentions; no claim about an institution's design can be derived from it. All that follows is that the two definitions are different and the difference is measurable. Being able to express a definition the construction disagrees with, and to point to the exact place of the divergence, is stronger evidence that the apparatus works than any coincidence would be.

The same analysis applied to secular sources gives exactly the same picture. The formula about sacrifice gives a zero in D. Socrates's definition gives an unmet demand. Tolstoy calls suffering inseparable outright. The asymmetry shows up where it is, regardless of where the text came from.

41.2. The definitions diverge by coordinate, not by content

H. The dictionaries name the substance and say nothing about the operation. Fromm and Saint-Exupéry name the operation. The Jewish formula, the Indian right of choice and Shakespeare name the condition of execution. Not one of the definitions contradicts another: each names out loud its own part of one construction.

This is where the persistent argument about whether love is a feeling or a deed comes from. Both sides are right and both are reading one cell from different axes: a feeling is a row of the matrix, a deed is a column. Arguing about which matters more is like arguing whether the street or the house number matters more in an address.

A practical consequence. A couple in which one defines love through state and the other through action can quarrel for years without finding the cause. It is enough to name the coordinate out loud — “you are talking about what I feel and I am talking about what I do” — and the subject of the argument disappears, because there was no subject.

41.3. Some definitions describe not a flow but wear

This is a result that was not expected. Socrates, Tolstoy, Christian patience, Greek agape and statutory sacrifice all describe configurations in which one side has the desire bit D at zero. On the model that is not love but a regime of accumulating wear.

There are no grounds for claiming that the authors were wrong. What can be claimed is something else: they were describing a different position with the same word. That is one more reason why people saying one word cannot come to terms.

41.4. The formula abolishes nothing

The testing declares no definition wrong. It translates them into a common language and shows exactly where they differ. That is where the usefulness lies: arguing about whose definition is correct is pointless, whereas saying “your set of contact-matrix cells and your condition are these, and mine are those” can be done — and the conversation continues afterwards.

PART VII. VALENCE

42. The sign of a state and the admissibility of contact

The bottom row of the contact matrix is neutral as to sign. Anger, rage, fear, grief and disgust travel through the same four cells as joy, warmth, pleasure and calm. They are taken, given, exchanged, and generated jointly.

A widespread notion puts an equals sign between a negative emotion and harm: if people are shouting at each other, something destructive must be happening. The marking proposes otherwise.

H. The admissibility of a contact is determined, it appears, by the DCL code and not by the sign of the state circulating. A state is never bad in itself; what is bad is its circulating with desire at zero, consent at zero, or permission at zero.

Two symmetrical conclusions follow.

1. Mutual rage with the code 11111 may be admissible and may produce no wear. If both want it, both consent to it, and the setting permits, the configuration is matched regardless of sign. Practice contains institutionalised forms of this kind: sparring in combat sports, competitive debate, ritual lament, conflict techniques in therapeutic protocols. They are built alike: first an explicit marking of D and C, then the admission of a negative state, often with a stop word or gesture as the procedure for withdrawing consent.
2. A pleasant contact with $C=0$ can produce wear, and the pleasantness here masks the defect rather than compensating for it, putting off the moment at which the person notices it.

43. What the data say about this

Gottman's observations give this indirect support, though they were obtained independently and in a different frame. In his research the presence of conflict did not by itself predict divorce: the number of conflicts was comparable in couples that did well and couples that broke up, and what differed was the way they were conducted. The strongest predictor of breakup turned out to be contempt — that is, not the strength of the negative emotion but the message “I am above you.”

In the language of the marking this reads as follows: a quarrel at 11111 is an exchange of state that both consented to; contempt is closer to a one-sided operation with $C=0$, since the partner did not usually consent to the role of the inferior.

Caveat: Gottman's data are consistent with this distinction but are not derived from it and do not confirm the model. They show only that separating sign from harm is empirically justified.

44. What to do instead of suppression

The practical conclusion: effort is better directed at marking than at suppressing negative states.

Suppression removes the observable sign and does not necessarily touch the source of the wear. It also closes off the forms in which a negative state is functional: the direct presentation of anger, grief, argument. A couple who have learned not to quarrel but have not learned to mark consent quite often come back — with the same problem in a quieter form.

How to put it to a client. “The question is not whether you are angry. The question is whether you both consent to this conversation in this form and whether you both want it right now. If you do — be as angry as you need to be. If you do not, the trouble is not the anger; it is that one of you is taking part in this against his own will.”

PART VIII. MORE THAN TWO PARTICIPANTS

45. When there are more than two participants

The contact matrix does not depend on the number of participants: the same three substances, the same four operations. What changes is the width of the marking.

With n participants, D and C are counted for each, and L stays shared. The width is $2n + 1$. The number of fully matched states remains one for any n .

Participants	Width	Total states	Share matched
1	3	8	12.5%
2	5	32	3.1%
3	7	128	0.8%
4	9	512	0.2%
5	11	2,048	0.05%
8	17	131,072	0.0008%

Table 19. Growth of the state space with the number of participants.

The table is built on the assumption that the parameters are distributed randomly and independently. The assumption is knowingly false — that is the point of it. The gap between the calculated share and the observed workability of real groups is the quantity that has to be explained by something.

The likely explanation: social ties work as a synchroniser. Norms, roles, rituals, reputation and prior agreements raise the probability that participants' desire and consent will coincide before the contact even begins. That is exactly what workplace regulations, family rules and professional codes are for: they do not create consent, but they make finding it cheaper.

A characteristic scale is explained in passing. Exponential growth means that at a fixed strength of the synchroniser there is a group size above which matched configurations stop being reachable. Dunbar's estimate of 150 people, and the observed ceiling of about four participants on a spontaneous conversational group, are consistent with this, although they were obtained independently and are not derived from this consideration.

The conclusion for group work. The larger the group, the earlier and the more thoroughly DCL marking is worth doing. In a pair you can settle things as you go; in a group of eight, “we will sort it out on the spot” fails statistically, not through anyone's fault.

PART IX. PRACTICE

46. How to determine the type of contact: five signs

The signs are ordered by decreasing reliability.

1. The closure test. Satisfy the stated need completely. If the contact does not end but finds a reason to continue, the stated cell is probably not the right one. Reliable mainly for information and resource.
2. The elaboration test. Ask for one level more detail. When the purpose is the person's own, the elaboration usually comes straight away. When he is relaying somebody else's, there is often no depth there, and he slides off into a commonplace.
3. Affect in the request. People come for information more calmly. Pronounced emotion in the question itself points rather to the bottom row of the matrix: what is needed is not information but the receiving of a state.
4. The length of the run-up. A disproportionately long preamble often precedes the cell "resource — take" and works as a down payment.
5. Behaviour in a pause. Stay silent. A pause removes the external compulsion to keep going. Whoever has a purpose will usually fill it and bring the conversation back to his own line.

47. Common faults

A summary table in the form in which such things go into technical documentation: the observable sign, the probable cause, what to check, what to do. The cause column names a configuration, not a culprit.

What is observed	Probable cause (configuration)	What to check	First action
"I give him everything, and he could not care less"	D and/or C of the other party equals zero, the contribution is reflected	Did he ask for this at all	Do not increase the contribution. Work out why stopping the giving is harder than getting burned
"He does not hear me" — and the same from the other side	Both on the operation "give," reception closed in both	Which of the two is receiving right now	One side switches to receiving. Turning the volume up makes it worse
"Everything seems fine, and something is missing"	Both on the operation "take," the channel is empty	Was the person upset when the contact did not happen	Somebody starts transmitting. Usually whoever noticed
"What is the problem, he did not object"	The other party's C bit equals one with D at zero	Is there an available way of saying no	First provide that way. Everything else after
"We drifted apart, and it is not clear when"	The intensity of the flow fell, with no event behind it	Count the episodes over the last month and over last year	Arrange contacts deliberately: it will not restore itself
"I do everything for you" — "I do not need this"	The substances differ, COMPL equals zero	Which substance the other party needs — ask directly	Change band, do not increase effort
"It was so good between us that I dissolved"	Matching with no way out, resonant overload	How many channels are left besides this bond	Restore the other interpersonal channels; that is not a betrayal of the present bond
"We are not allowed to, and yet we are"	A zero in the L bit	Which authority forbids it and with what sanction	Work with the constraint. There is nothing to repair inside the pair
"I love him and he does not love me"	The other party's D equals zero	Can you ask directly	On the model this is not a flow of love but a one-sided pull. Name it honestly
"I love someone I hardly know"	A state without a second party	Are the other party's desire and consent known	The formula does not apply; piling on effort changes nothing

Table 20. Common faults and first actions.

When the table is not what is needed. If a person is being beaten or intimidated, if he cannot leave, if there is a child nearby who is suffering — the analysis of configurations is postponed and help is required.

48. How to find someone to build a flow of acts of love with

So far we have been talking about how a flow is built. There is a second task that is constantly confused with the first: whom to build it with. These are fundamentally different tasks, and their instruments differ.

T. Finding a suitable person is a task of minimising friction. Building a flow is a task of matched interaction. The first does not predict the second and does not substitute for it: coinciding on every axis guarantees not a single act of love, while a strong divergence makes every one of them more expensive.

48.1. What is required of the reader of this chapter

The method set out below is intended for adults, and the word “adult” here has an operational meaning rather than a calendar one.

The first factor is biological, and it is given as context, not as a criterion. The structural maturation of the prefrontal cortex, including myelination, continues into the third decade of life. There is no single date of completion: the often-quoted figure of twenty-five years is a population average from imaging data, not an individual switch, and the spread between people is considerable. Relying on it as a threshold would be a mistake.

T. The working criterion is the second factor: the person answers the six questions out of his own experience rather than out of the environment he inherited. He tells monogamy from polyamory in practice rather than by definition; he holds a position in society because he has compared, not because that is how it is done where he grew up.

This can be put more briefly: in each of the six spheres (which are described below) the person acts as a subject and not as an object. If he cannot determine his own social position, that most often means not secretiveness but that he has not yet run into the question and has made no choice.

A check. Take any of the six axes and ask yourself: where did my answer come from? If the answer sounds like “that is how it is done in our family” or “that is what everyone does,” then on that axis you are still an object, and the method will give you noise along it. This is not a reproach and not a verdict — simply an indication that on that axis the decision is still ahead of you.

48.2. Friction instead of attraction

Compatibility is more practical to describe not as an attraction to be increased but as a friction to be reduced. Friction is the recurring cost of reconciling a difference that cannot be got round, because both of you are inside the same everyday environment.

A sphere is included in the model only if a difference in it satisfies five conditions at once.

1. It comes up daily or weekly, not once a year.
2. It cannot be delegated: it cannot be outsourced or sidestepped, both of you are inside the same environment.
3. It is a property of the person rather than a mood; it changes slowly, over years.
4. It cannot be compensated: a surplus in another sphere does not cancel this deficit.
5. It is cumulative: the cost is not settled once but adds up.

By these rules, tastes — music, films, food — do not enter the model: high elasticity, compensability, a low frequency of conflict. Looks do not enter: that is a filter, not a parameter of the environment. Interests do not enter for the same reason.

48.3. Six axes of compatibility by living environment

Axis	Options	What is chosen
Climate	5	Tropical, subtropical, temperate, cold, polar
Romantic relationships	4	Monogamy, polyamory, open relationships, an asexual arrangement
Domestic arrangements	6	Living alone, a patriarchal family, a matriarchal one, a partnership, a commune, living apart together
Social and political outlook	7	Liberalism, democracy, socialism, conservatism, communism, anarchism, authoritarianism
Money	6	Entrepreneur, employee, investor, freelancer, cooperative economy, universal basic income
Worldview	9	Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Judaism, unaffiliated believer, esotericism, agnosticism, scientific materialism, atheism

Table 21. The six axes of the environment and their cardinalities.

The axes are postulated to be independent, so the options multiply: $5 \times 4 \times 6 \times 7 \times 6 \times 9 = 45,360$ configurations. Each person at any given period is one point of that space. Closeness is measured by the number of coinciding axes: a score of “four out of six” means coincidence on exactly four.

About the sixth axis. What is recorded on the worldview axis is faith in the sense of chapter 38.1 — a personal picture of the world, not membership of an institution. Coinciding on this axis means a similarity in the way the world is explained, not a shared denomination, and the distinction matters: two people of the same denomination may diverge on the axis, while an agnostic and an unaffiliated believer may coincide.

48.4. How many people you have to look through

Threshold of coinciding spheres	Expected sample size	Remark
3 out of 6 and above	about 15 people	A realistic threshold for an evening of meeting people
4 out of 6 and above	about 107 people	Requires directed selection
5 out of 6 and above	about 1,400 people	Almost never met by chance
6 out of 6	45,360 people	Practically unreachable by chance encounter

Table 22. Expected size of a random sample at different thresholds.

E (arithmetic). A random pair coincides on average on one axis out of six; about 72% of random pairs coincide on zero or one sphere. Suitable people are not few — what is small is their share of a random sample, and the usual procedure for meeting people looks through that sample on features unrelated to friction.

48.5. The working order

- A one-off registration: six questions, one choice per axis.
- After that the system works passively: no feeds, no reasons to come back. A notification arrives when a match appears.
- The list shows near neighbours too, not only full matches.
- Contact is opened only after consent from both sides: a request, then an acceptance.
- Changing your answers is limited, which operationally fixes the configuration as a slow variable rather than a state.
- At an in-person meeting it is enough to scan the code: the assessment is instantaneous.

The matching principle itself does not depend on any particular implementation and can be reproduced by hand. The six answers form a short code, one digit per axis. Two codes are compared digit by digit, and what is reported is the number of coinciding digits — nothing else is stored and nothing else is compared. Anything capable of holding six answers and counting matches will serve: a shared list, a spreadsheet, a card in a pocket. What makes the method work is not the medium but the discipline of comparing only these six axes and of not opening a contact until both sides have agreed to it.

48.6. Assumptions of the method

Named by the author before a reviewer names them. All the axes are counted as equal in weight: a divergence on climate is equated with a divergence on worldview. That is almost certainly wrong, and the weights have not been measured. The scales are treated as nominal, although some of them are ordinal: the distance from tropical to polar climate is not equal to the distance from tropical to subtropical. Independence of the axes is postulated, and in a population it is almost certainly violated — worldview and attitude to money are related. The answers are given in the modality of the desired rather than of observed behaviour. The intensity of sensitivity to a divergence is not measured at all: at the same divergence, the friction for two people may differ. Finally, the threshold of “six out of six” against “five out of six” is presented as a qualitative jump with no justification for the discontinuity. The method is a working scheme, not a measurement procedure.

49. The flow of love. What can be tested

The model of the flow of acts of love states testable claims. They are set out below in everyday language.

1. If the type of a contact is named out loud at its start, there will be less wear. Tested by comparing contacts with explicit and implicit marking on subsequent regret.
2. Joint generation happens less often if at least one participant is not engaged. Tested on recorded dialogues with independent marking of the novelty of the result.
3. The feeling of having been used depends more on a substitution of the type of contact than on lying. Tested with a design in which these two factors are separated.
4. The three substances terminate differently: information and resource by discrete satisfaction, state by gradual satiation specific to that particular emotion. This is the key test: if it turns out that all three behave the same way, the division into three substances loses its grounds.
5. Harm from a contact is predicted better by the code than by the sign of the state. Tested with a design in which the sign of the emotion and the completeness of the marking are varied independently.
6. Codes with zeros are accompanied by more pronounced physiological markers of an uncompleted stress reaction than full codes at a comparable strength of load. This is the test of the hypothesis of chapter 15 and, as of today, the most expensive on this list.

7. The purity of a flow predicts satisfaction with the bond better than intensity does, controlling for the latter. Tested by a diary study; refuted by purity making no additional contribution.

50. Limitations and safety practice

- A cell of the contact matrix is an attributed meaning, not an observed behaviour. Two observers will assign the same action to different cells. Do not pass your own marking off as a fact.
- A real contact quite often occupies several cells at once. The dominant one is identified, and that is a judgement call.
- A conversation can nearly always be decomposed into three substances, just as any object can be decomposed into atoms. That is why the test in chapter 49, item 4, is needed — without it the division risks remaining a convenient but empty scheme.
- The engineering analogies of Part I explain where the construction came from; they do not serve as proof that it applies to the psyche.
- The parameter L varies with culture. The admissibility of negative states in contact differs between cultures more than the admissibility of positive ones.
- The marking describes an episode, not a history. For repeated episodes, be sure to look at the dynamics from Part IV.
- Do not use the matrix as an entry filter for screening out “useless” conversations: the generative ones will be screened out first.
- Do not report a client's code to him as a diagnosis. The marking is a working hypothesis for you and material for checking together with him.
- Defining love through a set of matched actions does not replace a clinical assessment of a relationship, still less an assessment of safety. The DCL code 11001 in a couple is first of all a question of safety, and only after that a question of typology.
- The material of Part IV is not a guide to treating addictions. Where there are signs of an established dependence, specialist help is required, not marking.

51. The checklist

The order of checking is the same as in the formula — left to right.

1. What is he doing — which cell of the contact matrix is his: which substance and which operation?
2. What am I doing — which cell is mine?
3. Do the cells fit each other — is it one substance, and are the operations opposed?
4. Are all five DCL bits ones? If not — which zero exactly?

5. If this is repeating — what is the intensity of the flow, and what share of it is pure?
6. Does the person come back after an episode to the place he set out from, or a little lower every time?

And one rule over the top of all of it: if it is not clear what is happening, name your own cell first. That is cheaper than any diagnostics and usually restores agreement at once.

And the last thing, which is not in the formula. Everything set out here is about how things are built. It does not repeal the fact that people are not chosen from a table, and it does not promise that two people whose every cell lines up will be happy. The scheme is not here to decide for people. It is here so that when things go bad and go unclear, you can look and see: here is the zero, and here is why. That is often enough for a constructive conversation to happen instead of yet another quarrel. What comes after that, the two of them decide.

APPENDIX A. ALL CHANNEL STATES: 32 CODES

The DCL code for an action involving another person is five digits: D(A), C(A) — the desire and consent of partner A; D(B), C(B) — the desire and consent of partner B; L — permission, shared by both. In all, $2^5 = 32$ combinations.

The code 11111 is set apart — fully matched interaction: both want it, both consent, the action is permitted. It is the only code with no supposed wear and the only one under which an act of love is possible. For the act itself it is not sufficient: non-empty cells of the contact matrix on both sides and their complementarity are also required (chapter 26).

DCL code	D(A)	C(A)	D(B)	C(B)	L	Description
11 11 1	1	1	1	1	1	A — wants it, consents; B — wants it, consents; allowed
11 11 0	1	1	1	1	0	A — wants it, consents; B — wants it, consents; not allowed
11 10 1	1	1	1	0	1	A — wants it, consents; B — wants it, does not consent; allowed
11 10 0	1	1	1	0	0	A — wants it, consents; B — wants it, does not consent; not allowed
11 01 1	1	1	0	1	1	A — wants it, consents; B — does not want it, consents; allowed
11 01 0	1	1	0	1	0	A — wants it, consents; B — does not want it, consents; not allowed
11 00 1	1	1	0	0	1	A — wants it, consents; B — does not want it, does not consent; allowed
11 00 0	1	1	0	0	0	A — wants it, consents; B — does not want it, does not consent; not allowed
10 11 1	1	0	1	1	1	A — wants it, does not consent; B — wants it, consents; allowed
10 11 0	1	0	1	1	0	A — wants it, does not consent; B — wants it, consents; not allowed
10 10 1	1	0	1	0	1	A — wants it, does not consent; B — wants it, does not consent; allowed
10 10 0	1	0	1	0	0	A — wants it, does not consent; B — wants it, does not consent; not allowed
10 01 1	1	0	0	1	1	A — wants it, does not consent; B — does not want it, consents; allowed
10 01 0	1	0	0	1	0	A — wants it, does not consent; B — does not want it, consents; not allowed
10 00 1	1	0	0	0	1	A — wants it, does not consent; B — does not want it, does not consent; allowed
10 00 0	1	0	0	0	0	A — wants it, does not consent; B — does not want it, does not consent; not allowed

DCL code	D(A)	C(A)	D(B)	C(B)	L	Description
01 11 1	0	1	1	1	1	A — does not want it, consents; B — wants it, consents; allowed
01 11 0	0	1	1	1	0	A — does not want it, consents; B — wants it, consents; not allowed
01 10 1	0	1	1	0	1	A — does not want it, consents; B — wants it, does not consent; allowed
01 10 0	0	1	1	0	0	A — does not want it, consents; B — wants it, does not consent; not allowed
01 01 1	0	1	0	1	1	A — does not want it, consents; B — does not want it, consents; allowed
01 01 0	0	1	0	1	0	A — does not want it, consents; B — does not want it, consents; not allowed
01 00 1	0	1	0	0	1	A — does not want it, consents; B — does not want it, does not consent; allowed
01 00 0	0	1	0	0	0	A — does not want it, consents; B — does not want it, does not consent; not allowed
00 11 1	0	0	1	1	1	A — does not want it, does not consent; B — wants it, consents; allowed
00 11 0	0	0	1	1	0	A — does not want it, does not consent; B — wants it, consents; not allowed
00 10 1	0	0	1	0	1	A — does not want it, does not consent; B — wants it, does not consent; allowed
00 10 0	0	0	1	0	0	A — does not want it, does not consent; B — wants it, does not consent; not allowed
00 01 1	0	0	0	1	1	A — does not want it, does not consent; B — does not want it, consents; allowed
00 01 0	0	0	0	1	0	A — does not want it, does not consent; B — does not want it, consents; not allowed
00 00 1	0	0	0	0	1	A — does not want it, does not consent; B — does not want it, does not consent; allowed
00 00 0	0	0	0	0	0	A — does not want it, does not consent; B — does not want it, does not consent; not allowed

Table 23. The complete table of the 32 states of the five-bit DCL code.

How to use the table. Determine the five answers, assemble the code from left to right — two bits for partner A, two bits for partner B, then the shared L — and find the row. The interpretation of the commonest codes is in Table 10, and the analysis of the zeros as they apply to relationships is in Table 14. The eight states of a single action are in Table 5.

APPENDIX B. COMBINATIONS OF OPERATIONS IN THE CONTACT MATRIX

Appendix A lists all the states of the channel — the thirty-two DCL codes. Listed here are all the combinations of operations: what happens when partner A's operation meets partner B's.

The full space of contact configurations is the product of the two lists. There are four operations, three substances, and the substances either coincide or they do not. There are thirty-two channel states. There is no sense in listing the product in full — instead both axes are given separately, and they are combined by the rule at the end of this appendix.

B.1. Combinations when the substance coincides

Both participants are working in one substance: both about information, both about resource, or both about state. Ten unordered pairs of operations — an exhaustive list.

Pair	Outcome	What happens	Example and what to do
← and →	matched	One's output lands in the other's input. There is no reflection	A question and an answer; a request and help. Analysed in chapter 13.8
↔ and ↔	matched	Both open both ways, movement in both directions	A deal; comparing pictures of the world; sharing an experience
↑ and ↑	matched	The only pair in which generation is possible	A shared thought, a joint undertaking, being in step
→ and →	collision	Both transmitting, reception closed in both. Both get hot, and rising	An argument; mutual advice. Analysed in chapter 13.10
← and ←	silence	Both waiting, the channel empty. The heating is mild but accumulates	Each waiting for the other's first move. Analysed in chapter 13.11
← and ↔	partial	Exchange meets one-sided taking; half the transmission gets through, the return half does not	One is ready to trade, the other only takes. Name out loud what each is expecting
→ and ↔	partial	The mirror case: one-sided giving against a readiness to exchange	One gives, the other waits for reciprocity and is given no occasion to show it
↑ and ←	impossible	Generation requires both to be engaged; taking does not provide that	One invites you to think together, the other waits for a ready answer
↑ and →	impossible	The same in mirror: one's contribution is not transformed, the system stays linear	One invites you to create, the other sets out the finished article

Pair	Outcome	What happens	Example and what to do
↑ and ↔	degenerates	Generation reduces to exchange: the contributions add up but do not transform each other	A frequent case in working groups: instead of something new you get the sum of the old

Table 24. The ten combinations of operations when the substance coincides.

B.2. When the substance does not coincide

If the substances differ, the combination of operations no longer matters: the transmissions are in different bands and never meet.

Combination of substances	Outcome	Typical picture
RES and INF	substances do not coincide	One asks for financial help, the other explains how it should have been done. The request is not met and the explanation is not taken in
INF and STA	substances do not coincide	The commonest miss in practice: a complaint meets advice. Analysed in chapter 13.9
RES and STA	substances do not coincide	One needs a state received, the other offers practical help — or the reverse
INF and INF	see B.1	One band; the outcome depends on the complementarity of the pair of operations
RES and RES	see B.1	The same
STA and STA	see B.1	The same

Table 25. Combinations of substances. When the bands do not coincide, both sides get hot if both are transmitting, and one does if one is.

B.3. How to combine the two lists

A contact configuration is set by three things: the combination of substances, the combination of operations, and the DCL code of the channel. The order of checking is as follows.

1. Do the substances coincide? If not — Table 25, and you need read no further: matters will not reach the matching of the channel.
2. If they do coincide — which pair of operations? Table 24.
3. If the cells of the contact matrix line up — what is the DCL code of the channel? Appendix A gives the state, and Table 8 of chapter 13 gives who pays for it.

T. The order matters: the code of the channel counts only when the cells of the contact matrix are complementary. A full DCL code does not save you when the contact matrix is detuned, and when the substances do not coincide it is not considered at all. Consent applies to the contact, not to whether it landed where it was aimed.

The converse is also true and less obvious: cells of the contact matrix that do line up, with a zero DCL bit in the channel, give not a harmless miss but direct wear with a definite addressee. A miss by cell distributes the heating between both; a zero in the channel assigns it to a particular side by the rule of chapter 13.5.

B.4. What these lists do not give you

- They do not let you determine a configuration from outside. The cells of the contact matrix and the bits of the DCL code are known to the participants; only the consequences are available to an observer.
- They do not set any timings. The lists describe the balance of power, not when the bill will be presented.
- They do not take into account that a real contact usually occupies several cells at once and switches as it goes.
- They do not replace clinical assessment. A configuration in which refusal is impossible is first of all a question of safety, and only after that of typology.

APPENDIX C. AUDIT OF THE CLAIMS

Marked below are the claims on which the construction rests. The list is not exhaustive: those taken are the ones from which practical conclusions follow. The notation is that of Table 1 in chapter 1.4.

Claim	Mark	Basis, or what is required
THE ENGINEERING PART		
Information and energy are different entities in a communications channel	E	Communications theory. Does not transfer to the psyche automatically
Matching is a property of the pair, not of one end of the line	E	Transmission line theory
Under mismatch, part of the power returns to the source	E	The same
When the parameters coincide, the response is not proportional to the drive	E	Resonance theory
In a nonlinear element, frequencies appear that were not at the input	E	Mixer theory
These propositions describe interpersonal contact	H	As of the writing of this document, not one has been tested as applied to interpersonal contact. The main gap in the model
THE 3×4 MATRIX		
Information, resource and state circulate in contact	T	A classification. Judged by coverage and discriminability, not by truth
Four operations are performed with a substance	T	The same
The overwhelming majority of contacts can be assigned to one of the twelve cells	H	Not tested
Independent observers will assign one contact to one cell	H	Not tested.
Information and resource terminate by satisfaction, state by satiation	H	Chapter 9.3, third row of Table 3. The key test of the division into three substances
DCL MARKING		
Desire and consent are independent parameters	T	A distinction by definition. Testable as discriminability in practice
L is the absence of a prohibition from an authority capable of imposing a sanction	T	The definition introduced in chapter 11.2.1
An action with a full code leaves no unmet demand	H	Not tested
The receiver's C bit determines whether the contribution is reflected or absorbed	H	Not tested. Practically the most significant of the untested
In an unasked-for transmission the cost is borne first of all by the transmitter	H	Named by the reviewer as requiring testing in its own right
Chronic activation without resolution accumulates as allostatic load	E	McEwen & Stellar. Applies to stress in general, not to DCL
Codes with zeros contribute to allostatic load	H	Not measured. The most expensive test
The share of actions with a full code is a meaningful indicator	H	Requires standardising the unit of action

Claim	Mark	Basis, or what is required
DYNAMICS		
The pleasantness of a stimulus declines specifically to it while receptivity to others is preserved	E	Rolls et al. Obtained with food
The same holds for emotional states	H	Extrapolation, chapter 9.3
With repetition the peak weakens and the after-effect deepens	E	Solomon & Corbit
“Wanting” and “liking” are separable	E	Robinson & Berridge
These mechanisms explain the dynamics of contacts with a full code	H	An integration of existing theory, not a result of the author's own
LOVE AND VALENCE		
An act of love is the product of cell A, cell B, COMPL and DCL; a flow of love is their dynamic set	T	A definition. What is open to testing is not it but its consequences
The impossibility of handing a flow over follows from the definition	T	A logical consequence
The purity of a flow predicts satisfaction with and durability of a relationship	H	Chapter 37.1. All the empirical content of the definition is here
The number of conflicts does not by itself predict breakup	E	Gottman
The admissibility of a contact is determined by the code, not by the sign of the state	H	Not tested

Table 26. Audit of the main claims by evidential status.

C.1. What the audit showed

Of twenty-nine claims, nine are marked E, seven T and thirteen H. What matters, however, is not the ratio but the distribution.

All nine established facts are borrowed from adjacent fields — communications theory, the physiology of stress, the psychology of emotion. Not one of them concerns DCL or the contact matrix. The model has no established facts of its own as of the writing of this document: everything in it that is its own is marked H or T.

This is not a reproach to the construction but an exact description of where it stands. The model borrows facts from other people's fields, joins them with hypotheses of its own, and derives practical instructions from the join. The borrowed facts are solid; the joins are untested; the practical instructions inherit the status of the joins.

Hence a rule for reading the whole manual: if a practical recommendation cannot be traced back to an E, it remains a hypothesis about practice. Tracing one back to an E is rarely possible. This does not mean the recommendations are wrong — it means they are unconfirmed, and they should be applied with the caution proper to the untested.

What it would be wrong to conclude from the audit. It would be wrong to conclude that the manual should not be used. The marking is useful as a way of structuring observation regardless of whether the empirical part is confirmed: it fixes what to look at and what questions to ask. Something else is right — that nothing should be promised on the strength of it: neither physiological effects nor a predictable outcome for a relationship.

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