

♥ I Love You ♥

The English word “love” can mean so many different things. A different language can help us with nuances of the word. Consider seven Greek words translated as “love” and then think of someone you “love” in that way. You might want to make the name public or keep it private. You might want to add more “love” to your life by experiencing more of these types of love. Some of these happen in an instant, but many of them take time and investment to realize. Which one(s) would you consider to be “true love”?

Philia – Deep and authentic friendship from shared interests and perspectives and activities, usually developed over time by repeated investments as well as the give-and-take necessary for friendships to be safe and thrive. Some refer to this as being soulmates or a deep fondness.

Storge – A family type of love rooted in loyalty, familiarity, and shared history and experiences. It could also relate to a love of country or even your favorite sports team—sticking together through thick and thin.

Eros – The sensual, passionate, romantic, and even lustful feelings from the pull of physical attraction. Some let this carry them away mindlessly, while others stop it in its tracks for fear of its power. While you may want this with your life partner, because of its strong emotional basis, it comes and goes and needs to be paired with a more consistent love in order to have a foundation for its expression.

Ludus – A playful kind of feeling, sort of flirtatious or toying with someone, or back-and-forth. It’s most common with first impressions, like how people sometimes react to someone they’ve met for the first time and they come on to them playfully.

Philantia – Self-love. The positive side of this deals with taking care of yourself, such as following good health practices and setting appropriate boundaries. When someone says, “Take care of yourself,” this is what they mean. The negative side of this is ugly selfishness, the root of narcissism—something only you will love, but nobody else will.

Pragma – Committed companionship. While this sounds similar to *philia* (deep and authentic friendship), it may begin with *eros* (romantic feelings) but grow to commitment because of the companionship you develop together, but this requires time and more than simply being friends.

Agape – Unconditional unselfishness—note the “un” because it’s so different from most human loves. This altruistic principle that demonstrates itself in action comes from God. But God gives it to people to experience his bountiful commitment to them. Once you experience that from God, you can then love other people in this way as God *agapes* through you.