The Link Between Identity Processing Style and Compassionate Love: Are Mindfulness and Self-Compassion Key Components?

by

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ABSTRACT

This research examined the relationship between compatibility in identity processing styles (informational, normative, and diffuse-avoidant) and compassionate love in long-term married couples, as well as the mediating effects of mindfulness and self-compassion. Fifty heterosexual couples ($N = 100$; couples 35 and older) completed measures of identity style, compassionate love (for humanity, close others, and intimate partner), mindfulness, and self-compassion. Compatibility in couple level of the informational style alone was found to positively predict compassionate love for both humanity and close others. The level of couples' normative identity style was positively related to compassionate love for close others, while compatibility in level of the diffuse-avoidant style was negatively related to compassionate love for intimate partner. Hierarchical regressions revealed that only the informational style made a unique positive contribution to compassionate love for humanity, over and above mindfulness and self-compassion. Mindfulness and self-compassion were not found to be mediators of this relationship.

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The Link Between Identity Processing Style and Compassionate Love: Are Mindfulness and Self-Compassion Key Components?

INTRODUCTION

> "It is very important for us to realize that love, to be true, has to hurt. I must be willing to give whatever it takes." (Mother Theresa, address to the US Senate and House of Representatives, February 3, 1994)

Love has been the topic of extensive research over the last two decades, specifically centering around defining and operationalizing the concept of love and examining its predictors, outcomes, and correlates within romantic relationships (for a review, see S. S. Hendrick & Hendrick, 2000). Love outside of romantic relationships has received less attention by researchers, and love for humanity as a whole has received almost no attention in the empirical literature. In recent years, researchers have introduced the concept of compassionate love as a type of love that is felt and expressed both within and beyond romantic relationships. Compassionate love is defined as "an attitude toward other(s), either close others or strangers or all of humanity; containing feelings, cognitions, and behaviors that are focused on caring, concern, tenderness, and an orientation toward supporting, helping, and understanding the other(s), particularly when the other(s) is (are) perceived to be suffering or in need" (Sprecher & Fehr, 2005, p. 630). Some preliminary evidence suggests that the altruistic, self-sacrificing behavior characteristic of compassionate love may be augmented by strong self-acceptance (e.g., high self-esteem; Underwood, 2008). The general objective of this thesis is to add to the literature by examining the qualities of self-identity that predict the capacity for compassionate love.

The concept of self- or ego-identity has received considerable attention in lifespan development research following from Erikson's theory of personality development. Erikson (1963, 1968) posited that developing a clear identity during late adolescence and early adulthood is pivotal for later character development and well-being. Identity is defined by Erikson as a sense of inner sameness that allows a person to define him or herself as an individual in a social world. In other words, identity is a sense of knowing oneself relative to others, and thus, Erikson claims that identity clarity and commitment is critical for developing intimacy/love with romantic partners so that one does not "lose" oneself in a relationship.

Considerable research on Erikson's conception of identity has focused on the social-cognitive processes that contribute to the formation and maintenance of a strong and mature sense of identity. For example, Berzonsky (1988, 1990) identified individual differences in social-cognitive processing *styles* which appear to differentially predict psychosocial maturity and well-being during early and middle adulthood (details of this research will be reviewed later). One particular form of social-cognitive identity processing, an information-oriented style, is specifically related to maturity in the form of the capacity for greater intimacy, proactive coping, purpose, wisdom, and personal growth well-being (Beaumont, 2009a, 2009b; Beaumont & Pratt, 2007; Seaton & Beaumont, 2008b; Vleioras & Bosma, 2005). It is believed that it is the self-reflective, self-aware, tolerant, and open nature of this particular identity style that affords greater propensity for maturity such as wisdom (Beaumont, 2009a, 2009b). This thesis adds to the growing body of literature on the characteristics associated with this mature form of identity by examining whether an informational identity style predicts compassionate love. Examination of couple

compatibility in this mature form of identity style and its predictive relationship to compassionate love will further delineate the characteristics of the informational identity processing style.

In order to examine the full complexity of aspects of self-identity that may be related to the capacity for compassionate love, this research will also examine the roles of two psychological capacities that may be related to both identity and compassionate love – mindfulness and self-compassion. *Mindfulness* has been shown to be positively related to relationship quality (Barnes et al., 2007; Burpee & Langer, 2005; Carson et al., 2004), and s*elf-compassion* is positively related to both self-acceptance and compassionate love (Neff, 2003b). One broadly used definition of mindfulness is "the awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment by moment" (Kabat-Zinn, 2003, p. 145). Self-compassion has been defined as a loving way of acting towards the self that includes self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness (Neff, 2003). With regard to potential links with identity, mindfulness has been found to be positively predicted by wisdom, which is positively predicted by the informational identity style (Beaumont, 2009a). Thus, it stands to reason that the informational style may predict compassionate love via the capacities of mindfulness and self-compassion. This prediction will be examined in the present research.

Overall, the purpose of this thesis is to systematically examine the predictive relationship between identity processing styles and compassionate love (for humanity, close others, and intimate partners). In order to glean a more complete understanding of compassionate love in the realm of identity style, the importance of compatibility in identity styles must also be examined. This study will examine the relationship between compatibility

in identity style and compassionate love within specific romantic relationships. If identity style is indeed predictive of compassionate love (for strangers, close others, or specific others), it follows that similarity between spouses in identity styles, and specifically the informational style, should enhance this link. Compatibility in social-cognitive processing styles should enhance connection, communication, and understanding between individuals, thus allowing for the growth of compassionate love. Romantic relationships were chosen as the arena of study because they afford the strongest emotional bonds and are one realm in which homogomy is important to relationship satisfaction (Cook & Jones, 2002).

Thus, this study will focus on the outcome of compassionate love from three predictors: compatibility in couple identity style, mindfulness, and self-compassion. The research questions addressed will be: (1) Is compatibility in identity styles positively related to compassionate love in intimate partners?, and; (2) Do mindfulness and self-compassion (of either partner and both partners) mediate the positive relationship between compatibility in the informational identity style and compassionate love? To provide a context for these research questions, literature on identity, intimacy, compassionate love, mindfulness, self-compassion, and the potential links between these constructs will be reviewed.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The following section will review relevant literature on identity, intimacy, compassionate love, mindfulness, and self-compassion. The goal of this literature review is to provide support for the supposition that a well-defined and committed identity style is necessary for the development of true intimacy/love, whereas a self-reflective and explorative identity style is necessary for the expression of compassionate love. The roles of mindfulness and self-compassion for both identity and compassionate love will also be established.

Identity Theory and Research

In modern psychology, the concept of identity is best understood as part of Erikson's (1963, 1968) lifespan development model. Erikson posited that character develops via eight stages across the lifespan, with each age-graded stage reflecting a pivotal psychosocial task or crisis during which the individual develops the full capacity for a particular character strength or virtue. During each developmental period, the individual grapples with a particular crisis that is identified in Erikson's theory by two poles (e.g., trust versus mis-trust), the goal of which is to develop a balance between the two extreme outcomes. For example, in infancy, it is important to establish an integrated balance between trust in others and mistrust of the world in order to develop the virtue of hope which will be important for further developmental stages. Thus, Erikson posited that balance developed in earlier stages affords mature and healthy development in later stages.

The two stages that are of particular interest here are Stage 5 (identity vs. identity diffusion) when the virtue of fidelity is developed (being true to oneself) and Stage 6 (intimacy vs. isolation) when the virtue of love is developed. Although identity development

begins in adolescence, Erikson (1968) suggested that this developmental task continues to be faced during early adulthood, with identity revisions occurring throughout one's life at pivotal transition points. The development of intimacy is believed to be the task faced by young adults, with a true capacity for love only possible after the full development of fidelity which comes with a strong and balanced (integrated) commitment to one's chosen identity.

Because Erikson focused so much on the value of identity for character development and psychological adjustment, considerable research has been geared towards expanding Erikson's suppositions about identity commitment and the processes by which identity is developed and maintained. The earliest and most prolific paradigm for studying identity was developed by Marcia (1966) who expanded on Erikson's theoretical writings by identifying different statuses with which individuals accomplish the task of identity development. He claimed that four identity statuses can be identified as individuals progress towards forming an identity by way of their level of commitment to a chosen identity and presence of identity exploration. Thus, there are four possible statuses with regard to Erikson's identity crisis: (1) *identity achievement* (commitment to one's identity following prior self-exploration); (2) *moratorium* (ongoing self-exploration without firm commitments); (3) *foreclosure* (high identity commitment in the absence of any self-exploration); and, (4) *diffusion* (low identity commitment and self-exploration). Using this paradigm, considerable research has demonstrated that identity achievement is related to positive outcomes, and identity diffusion and moratorium are related to poorer psychological outcomes (Kroger, 2007). The foreclosure status, although high in identity commitment, is related to a cognitively rigid and protected sense of self (Kroger, 2007).

While Marcia viewed the process of identity formation as static (once formed or not formed in early adulthood no further identity development occurs), Berzonsky (1989) added social-cognitive processing as a key element, a concept he developed from Erikson's writings on identity processing. Specifically, Berzonsky (1988) frames the concept of ego-identity as a self-constructed theory of self, conceptualizing identity in terms of individual differences in "self-theories" that reflect different patterns of social-cognitive processes. In support of Berzonsky's focus on dynamic identity processing, many studies have found substantial identity-status movement over time (Hart, 1989; Helson, 1992; Stewart & Vandewater, 1993). For example, Hart (1989) reanalyzed personality data for identity status in a sample of women at Mills College at the ages of 21 and 43 and found that only about half of the sample had the same identity status at 21 as they did at 43, with all combinations of movement being shown.

According to Berzonsky (1990), there are three styles of theorizing about the self: (1) scientific theorists rely on an information-oriented identity style; (2) dogmatic theorists use a norm-oriented identity style; and (3) ad hoc theorists use a diffuse-avoidant identity style. Berzonsky believed that by late adolescence, individuals should be able to use all three identity processing styles, although individual differences in preference for a particular style should be evident. With regard to strength of commitment to one's identity, the diffuse-avoidant identity style is associated with low commitment, whereas the informational and normative styles are associated with high identity commitment (e.g., Berzonsky, 2003). Berzonsky (2003) encourages the use of hierarchical regressions to examine the unique variance of the identity styles while controlling for commitment, in order to ensure that identity commitment does not become a confounding variable (i.e., the necessity of a clear

sense of self for adjustment should naturally entail a positive association between identity commitment and positive outcomes; Beaumont & Seaton, 2008).

Considerable research has established that there are adaptive characteristics associated with the two committed identity styles, although the type of adjustment associated with each is somewhat different (Seaton & Beaumont, 2008b). The use of an informational identity style positively predicts self-actualization, purpose in life, personal growth, proactive coping, mature defenses, resilience, psychological hardiness, and wisdom (Beaumont, 2009b; Berzonsky, 2003; Seaton & Beaumont, 2008a, 2008b; Vleioras & Bosma, 2005). It is believed that these aspects of positive adjustment are afforded by the social-cognitive qualities characteristic of those who prefer to use an informational style. Namely, the use of an informational identity style has been found to be positively associated with a high need for cognition, cognitive complexity, self-reflection, an internal locus of control, openness to experience, conscientiousness, and agreeableness (Berzonsky, 1990, 1992a; Berzonsky & Sullivan, 1992; Dollinger, 1995; Nurmi et al., 1997). Berzonsky (1990) believed that informational individuals deal with identity issues in a mentally effortful manner, being skeptical of their self-views while suspending judgment and reevaluating aspects of these self-constructions when confronted with discrepant feedback. Thus, it is the specific cognitive processing aspects of this style (open, insightful, self-reflective, and self-evaluative) that afford a greater propensity towards a high level of character development, such as wisdom (Beaumont, 2009b).

In contrast to the open and reflective nature of the informational identity style, normative individuals deal with identity issues in a somewhat automatic fashion by internalizing the values and beliefs of significant others and society without engaging in self-

evaluation (Berzonsky, 1990). While normative individuals have been found to possess the big five factors of conscientiousness and agreeableness (Dollinger, 1995), they lack the openness associated with the informational style, being closed to information that may threaten their beliefs and values, having a limited tolerance for ambiguity, and a high need for structure (Berzonsky, 1992a; Berzonsky & Ferrari, 1996; Berzonsky & Sullivan, 1992; Dollinger, 1995; Soenens, Duriez, & Goossens, 2005). The normative identity style is positively associated with conservative and authoritarian sociocultural views and the use of immature defenses (Seaton & Beaumont, 2008a; Soenens, Duriez, & Goossens, 2005). Similarly, research has shown that a diffuse-avoidant identity style is also associated with the use of immature defense mechanisms (Seaton & Beaumont, 2008a), but unlike the normative style, diffuse individuals are neurotic, depressive, and use self-handicapping and maladaptive coping and decisional strategies (Beaumont & Seaton, 2008; Berzonsky & Ferrari, 1996; Berzonsky & Sullivan, 1992). In addition, the use of a diffuse style is negatively correlated with self-awareness, cognitive persistence, conscientiousness, and measures of well-being (Berzonsky, 1990, 1994; Berzonsky & Ferrari, 1996; Dollinger, 1995; Nurmi, Berzonsky, Tammi, & Kinney, 1997). Thus, in terms of psychological adjustment, the diffuse style predicts the poorest levels of adjustment (e.g., Seaton & Beaumont, 2008b).

Identity and Intimacy

To understand the connection between identity processing style and compassionate love, the link between identity and intimacy must first be delineated. Intimacy refers to the ability to form close, committed, and reciprocal relationships (Erikson, 1968). The virtue of love is an indicator of the successful resolution of the intimacy stage and is strongly supported by fidelity, the character strength resulting from successful identity stage

resolution (Markstrom et al., 1997). Erikson (1968) emphasized that a well defined identity was necessary for the blossoming of true intimacy, which includes both a counterpointing and a fusing of identities (i.e., mutual devotion).

The research expanding on Erikson's original suppositions about the link between identity and intimacy is limited but informative. Two lines of research have been conducted based on Marcia's identity statuses, one focusing on statuses with regard to resolution of the intimacy task (parallel to the identity statuses) and the other focusing on prediction of the virtue of love. Orlofsky, Marcia, and Lesser (1973) categorized individuals into five intimacy statuses with identity achieved individuals having the greatest capacity for intimacy (intimate status or preintimate status), findings which have been replicated by several authors (e.g., Fitch & Adams, 1983; Tesch & Whitbourne, 1982). In a study of Erikson's virtues, Markstrom and Kalmanir (2001) used a measure of psychosocial ego strengths to determine that successful resolution of the identity stage predicted the virtue of fidelity for both genders. Of even greater interest is their finding that the successful resolution of both the identity and intimacy stages predicted the virtue of love for women, whereas prediction of love for men stemmed only from the identity stage. These authors echoed the explanation Erikson and countless other identity researchers have suggested: women's identities are partly defined in the context of relationships, with the intimacy and identity stages being more thickly entwined in women than in men (e.g., Josselson, 1996).

Being true to oneself (fidelity) establishes an individual's ability to maintain commitments to ideological sources, and in love, such commitment is transferred to mutual interpersonal commitments (Markstrom et al., 1997). Thus, the virtues of fidelity and love share the underlying trait of commitment, and the development of a strong personal identity

"predisposes the individual for the kind of interpersonal commitments associated with the ego strengths of love," without the loss of either individual's personal identity (Markstrom & Kalmanir, 2001, p. 182). Erikson believed that intimacy occurred in good marriages, as well as between friends, family members, and neighbors. Thus, it is reasonable to believe that intimacy and love can also extend to strangers and all of humanity.

Although limited research exists on the relation of identity processing style to intimacy, a connection is probable based on research that has identified individual differences in characteristics that may be associated with the capacity for intimacy. For example, both committed identity styles are positively associated with the personality traits of agreeableness, extraversion, and conscientiousness (Dollinger, 1995) as well as the coping strategy of seeking social support (Berzonsky, Nurmi, Kinney, & Tammi, 1999), suggesting that the active social capacities characteristic of these styles are precursors to a natural ability for forming intimate relationships. Furthermore, Vleioras and Bosma (2005) found that although both the normative and the informational styles were positively related to environmental mastery (competence in managing life's demands), the informational identity style was uniquely associated with well-being in the form of positive relationships with others, autonomy, personal growth, and having a purpose in life. Berzonsky and Sullivan (1992) have found that an informational identity style loaded positively on a factor marked by self-reflective tendencies, including introspectiveness, the salience of personal identity content, and openness to personal feelings and fantasies. These relationship strategies are all contributors to the growth of relationships that are rich in intimacy and love. Individuals who use the normative style may close off "core" areas of the self (e.g., personal values and self-views such as those examined in the present study) in order to defend against potential self-

invalidating information (Berzonsky, 1990), a strategy that likely impedes the development of intimacy, at least at a deep and integrate or mature level.

Two studies have directly examined the link between intimacy and identity processing, with both finding a unique pattern associated with the informational identity style. In one study, Berzonsky and Kuk (2005) found that undergraduate students who used an informational identity style were better adjusted to university in the area of intimacy development, with this style alone positively predicting mature interpersonal relationships. With a sample of both young and middle-aged adults, Beaumont and Pratt (2007) found that both the informational and normative styles positively predicted Eriksonian intimacy balance. Yet, in a path model that included identity and generativity balance in conjunction with intimacy balance, the direct positive prediction of intimacy balance was found only for the informational style. Together these studies provide some preliminary evidence for the strong connection between identity styles and intimacy; however, further examination of the types of intimacy predicted by the three identity styles is necessary. In this thesis, the form of intimacy that is examined is compassionate love. The research addresses the question of whether different styles of identity processing predict different forms of compassionate love. This thesis also examines whether similarity and level of identity style (compatibility) in married and common-law couples will predict compassionate love.

Compatibility in Identity Styles

Identity is an important precursor to the satisfaction one can experience from intimate relationships in adulthood (Cook & Jones, 2002). However, little is known about the processes inherent in transitioning from identity formation (Erikson's [1963] fifth psychosocial stage) to intimacy (Erikson's [1963] sixth stage). Conceivably the most visible

marker of identity changes (and intimacy) is through marriage, in which individuals are perceived by the role they play in that relationship (Cook & Jones, 2002). Further, a relationship provides an arena where those that have largely adopted a particular identity processing style can further define their identity by fusing it with that of their partner, gaining self-knowledge and a clearer sense of self during this process. However, the challenges that committed partners face in attempting to reformulate their identities to include the significant other, while at the same time dealing with the vulnerabilities associated with the possibility of jeopardizing one's sense of self in the process are many (Cook & Jones, 2002).

While no studies to date have examined the relationship between similarity in identity style and compassionate love, one study has found increased marital satisfaction for women who have more similar identity styles to their husbands (Cook & Jones, 2002). Due to this gap in the literature and the properties of compassionate love that have been found to enhance marital and nonmarital relationships (e.g., Neff & Karney, 2006; Underwood, 2008), marital satisfaction and compassionate love can be thought of as synonymous in the current study. It is likely that couples who have differing identity styles will have different outlooks on the world, dictating how they perceive, analyze, and process self-relevant information from both their internal and external worlds. Looking at the compatibility of partners' identity styles in long-term couples should provide a window into the identity style homogomy necessary to have a healthy, fully functioning relationship.

Identity is a self-theory that dictates appropriate and inappropriate behavior, is useful in organizing and interpreting data, and helps one make sense of his or her world (Cook & Jones, 2002). Erikson's (1963) epigenetic notion states that one must have knowledge of self before that knowledge can be shared with an intimate partner or spouse; identities cannot be

fused without losing oneself until identity has already been sufficiently formed. Thus, if we assume that individuals who use the two committed identity styles, informational and normative, have different but well-formed identities, while the diffuse style does not, a greater understanding of how the expression of compassionate love may be affected can be gleaned from analysis of possible identity style interaction differences. For instance, findings show that specific perceptions of a partner may be affected by spouses' cognitive complexity (Neff & Karney, 2008), a characteristic of the informational identity style. This finding suggests that intimate partners that use an informational identity style are better able to understand the specific positive and negative qualities that their partners possess, leading to correct (other-focused) motivation and discernment and the full expression of compassionate love.

Spouses with limited levels of cognitive complexity may be unable to engage in the process of minimizing negative perceptions of their partners, which will likely lead to an inability to maintain global feelings of love while also both understanding and accepting the partner's strengths and weaknesses. Further, a partner with an informational identity style might become frustrated with the lack of flexibility demonstrated by their normative-oriented partner; while a normative-oriented partner may find it incomprehensible that their information-oriented partner refuses to adhere to certain standards for how things "should be done" (Cook & Jones, 2002). It follows that couples with similar identity styles will have less to argue about, and thus fewer difficulties in defining themselves in the context of their marriage. A major gap in the literature is that no studies to date have utilized more diverse samples with regard to age and years of marriage. Also, undergraduate students were asked to get married couples they know to complete questionnaires (Cook & Jones, 2002), despite

there being no way of ascertaining the completion of this task. Self-awareness or understanding, the product of a well-defined identity, combined with sufficient identity homogamy should result in compassionate love for an intimate partner being fully expressed.

What is Compassionate Love?

Overview. Western conceptions of psychological health are often built on the belief that the self is separate, independent, and unique; yet, there is increasing criticism of the field for being too individualistic, for overemphasizing the need for autonomy and personal identity while not paying enough attention to equally important needs for relationship, community, and responsibility (e.g., Fancher, 1995; Richardson, Fowers, & Guignon, 1999). While a committed and healthy identity style is important, it is the melding of this identity within close relationships and society that needs to be analyzed further; *compassionate love* may provide the broadest link between individual identity and the expressed effect this individual identity has on romantic partners, close others, and humanity as a whole. As noted, Sprecher and Fehr (2005) have operationalized compassionate love as "an attitude toward other(s), either close others or strangers or all of humanity; containing feelings, cognitions, and behaviors that are focused on caring, concern, tenderness, and an orientation toward supporting, helping, and understanding the other(s), particularly when the other(s) is (are) perceived to be suffering or in need" (p. 630). Compassionate love has been so termed because of Underwood's (2002) recent scholarship on the topic and her proposition that "*compassion* alone leaves out 'some of the emotional and transcendent components which the word *love* brings in'" (p. 78).

Theoretical model of compassionate love. The basic model of compassionate love (depicted in Figure 1) outlines the individual as the substrate, nested within his or her social

and physical environment and surrounded by all possible limitations to freedom, as well as the characteristics that encourage compassionate love, such as being loved by others (Underwood, 2002). Freedom is necessary to fully express compassionate love but can be hindered in a variety of ways, including: physical limitations (e.g., disability or low SES), social structures and environment (e.g., self-protection may take precedence), emotional limitations (e.g., different levels of baseline empathic ability, emotional stability, and extroversion), and cognitive factors (e.g., intellectual capacities; Underwood, 2002). Various motives, in the form of words or actions, can also detract from the quality of compassionate love, including the needs for: acceptance, belonging, love and affection, control and power, and avoidance of confrontation (Underwood, 2002).

Motivation and discernment, the internal processing governing decision making and actions, comprises the middle of the model, and leads to compassionate love fully expressed if a balance of correct motives and wisdom are chosen (Omoto, Malsch, & Barraza, 2008; Underwood, 2002). However, it is also possible to use inappropriate motives, such as when the motives for self outweigh those for other, a situation that can lead to either no action or inappropriate action (downward-curving arrows; Figure 1). Despite the negative intent, inappropriate actions can also lead to positive action but the major ill effects in this case are often on the person acting. The mental discernment or discriminating awareness component of compassionate love is a mental ability that many religious traditions profess all human beings to possess (Underwood, 2002). Mental discernment allows individuals to clarify their experiences and distinguish between such things as self-deception and truth (Underwood, 2002), a capacity that parallels mindfulness which is often a component of Eastern religious traditions. The actions we choose to take shape our moral and spiritual development, and

hopefully have positive effects on the outside world, again begging the case for the importance of proper discernment (De Wit, 1991). Further, De Wit (1991) believes that the devotion to an inner cultivation of spiritual life predisposes an individual to compassion, defined as contemplative action.

Underwood (2002) conducted structured, in-depth interviews with 13 Trappist monks (age 35 to 75) and learned that the monks accept from their teachings the core value of compassionate love, and hold each other to this standard within the community more so than many other groups. The monks practiced right motivation and discernment in order for this inner capacity to work effectively for the world as a whole, realizing that without awareness this developed ability could become rusty or minimal, as it does for many individuals in society. Interestingly, essential features of compassionate love mentioned by these monks included self-acceptance (in order to accept others) and 'being present' in order to experience the inner and outside interactions occurring between self and others (Underwood, 2002). These latter two features tie in seamlessly with the concepts of mindfulness and self-compassion, two constructs in the present study that were expected to motivate the expression of compassionate love. An underlying attitude that shaped compassionate decisions was that depending on others for identity made it harder to be freely compassionate (Underwood, 2002).

Operationally defining and measuring compassionate love. Following from Underwood's (2002) interview study, Sprecher and Fehr (2005) developed a self-report measure of compassionate love. Using principle components analysis to determine the factor structure of their *Compassionate Love Scale* (CLS), three factors were extracted, which the authors determined to be: tenderness and caring; acceptance and understanding; and, helping

and sacrifice. However, further scree test and factor loadings analysis revealed that

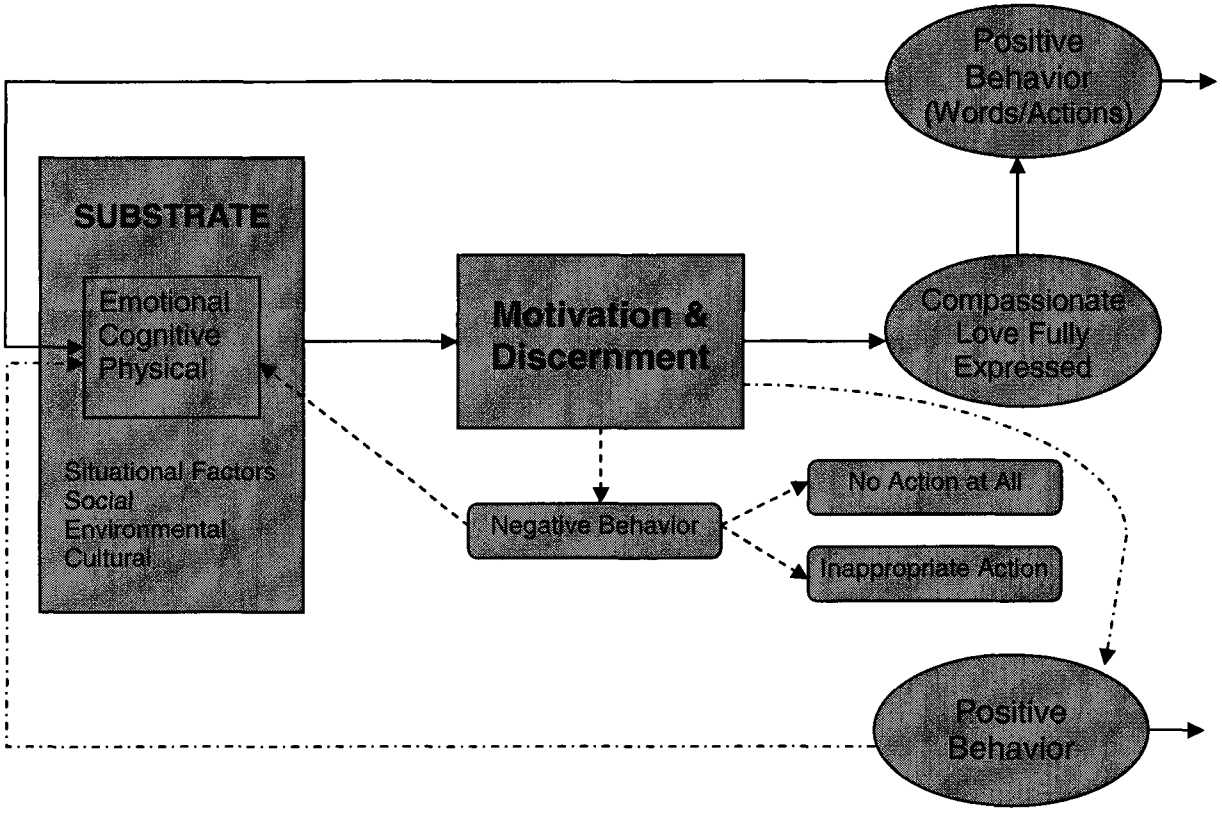

Figure 1. Working Model of Compassionate Love

Note. From *Altruism and altruistic love: Science, philosophy and Religion in dialog*, ed. S. G. Post, G. Underwood, J. P. Schloss, and W. B. Hurlbut (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

compassionate love was better conceptualized as a unidimensional measure, which includes all three factors. This type of love has also been described as 'altruistic love,' 'unconditional love,' and 'agape' (Post, Underwood, Schloss, & Hurlbut, 2002; Underwood, 2005, 2008). With respect to agape, Lee's (1973) theory of love styles assumes that each individual exhibits each of six love styles (Agape, Eros, Ludus, Storge, Pragma, and Mania) to varying degrees, with no one having an ideal love type. Agape is altruistic love, characterized as a deep spiritual love that transcends self, with some degree of agapic altruism improving a love relationship, but total agapic love being reserved for the heavenly and not for human beings (Hendrick & Hendrick, 2000, 2003). "Agape expands the scope of love to the enemy, makes all strangers into neighbors, and extends affective presence and care to persons with severe derangement, dementia, or retardation" (Post, 2002, p. 56). Thus, agape is a prototype for altruistic love. For the purposes of this study, compassionate love was operationally defined as the self-sacrificing love for close others, specific others, and humanity characterized by acceptance, understanding, empathy, and compassion. Like other prototype constructs in social psychology (e.g., attachment), the measurement of compassionate love reflects the degree to which individuals match the prototype of a compassionately loving person.

Self-identity and compassionate love. Just as self-awareness is important to identity and intimacy, an advanced understanding of self and others seems central to the concept of compassionate love (Volling, Kolak, & Kennedy, 2008). In the realm of human relationships, a better understanding of compassionate love could mean a more complete picture of human interaction, and thus a heightened ability to facilitate harmonious relationships in all sectors of global society. Studies have shown that fully expressed compassionate love leads to positive outcomes for the self, including moral and spiritual growth, wisdom, and a realistic

perspective on the self (Dovidio & Penner, 2001; Underwood, 2008). A common myth is that altruistic love eclipses care of the self, but this is unlikely as an individual who did not care for the self would eventually be unable to perform altruistic acts (Post, 2002). Feedback from compassionately loving others can expand the capacity to love, transforming a person's self-identity and developing a greater capacity to love others fully (De Wit, 1991). Thus far, studies using the Compassionate Love Scale have mainly involved convenience-based university samples (e.g., Sprecher & Fehr, 2005) composed of individuals who are likely still in the process of identity formation and who may be lower on other age ascendant constructs, such as self-compassion and mindfulness. Thus, this thesis aimed to substantiate the findings on compassionate love by using community samples with a greater age range (35 and older).

Types of compassionate love. Sprecher and Fehr (2005) created three versions of the CLS: compassionate love for *close others* (family and friends), for *strangers/humanity*, and for *specific others* (romantic partners). These researchers found that more compassionate love was shown for close others than for humanity or strangers, which is substantiated by findings that 'love for humanity' was rated by laypersons as a less typical example of love than types of love associated with family and friends (Fehr & Russell, 1991). Compassionate love for close others has mainly been examined from the perspective of caregiving recipients, with the examination of the relationship between identity processing style and compassionate love for close others being nonexistent thus far.

Compassionate love for humanity is important to study because it is likely to be a precursor for prosocial behavior directed towards others and these relationships with 'peripheral ties', including strangers in one's environment, contribute to human development and happiness (Fingerman, 2004; see also Fingerman & Hay, 2002). While empathy has long

been associated with short-term prosocial behavior (Davis, 1996; Dovidio & Penner, 2001) and is considered a building block to compassionate love (Underwood, 2002), the more encompassing and enduring state of compassionate love may be associated with longer term prosocial behavior, such as volunteerism directed at strangers and social support directed toward loved ones (Sprecher & Fehr, 2005). Using multivariate analysis, Sprecher and Fehr (2005) revealed that compassionate love for strangers and humanity was a stronger predictor of helping than empathy, which was no longer significant after controlling for compassionate love. However, empathic concern, moral reasoning, agreeableness, and the ability to take the perspective of others have been identified as personality traits associated with altruistic helping (Dovidio & Penner, 2001), several of which are also elements of the informational identity style. Further, active listening, openness, and receptivity were also found to be important elements to the full expression of compassionate love (Underwood, 2002).

Underwood (2002) noted that those who have an other-centered focus also tend to be more satisfied and have a better quality of life. The findings from a qualitative study involving interviews with 24 exemplary clinicians (Graber & Mitcham, 2008) support Underwood's (2002) conclusion that individual motivation is the foundation for compassion as compassion occurred primarily when clinicians' focus was on the patient, rather than the self (Graber & Mitcham, 2008). It is reasonable to assume that individuals with committed identity styles, either informational or normative, will be more able to focus on the needs of others without interference from unfulfilled security and esteem needs than individuals who use the diffuse identity style. This other-centered focus can only be the product of a committed identity, coupled with mindfulness and self-compassion, a hypothesis which this study examined.

Compassionate love for intimate partners. Relationship researchers have elucidated the origins of love and intimacy (e.g., Berscheid & Walster, 1978) and, more recently, have focused on the dynamics of well-functioning relationships (Wenzel & Harvey, 2001). The theory and measurement of love in romantic relationships underscores the importance of compassionate (altruistic) love both in romantic relationships and in people's conceptions of love (Sprecher & Fehr, 2005). The emotional challenges inherent in maintaining intimacy necessitate that all couples will have to regularly negotiate such vulnerable emotional experiences as hurt, fear, and sadness in the context of their relationships (Wachs & Cordova, 2007). Neff and Karney (2008) have said that "what makes love compassionate is the fact that love endures despite the recognition of the other's specific weaknesses" (p. 214). These authors argue that love should be stronger and more resilient over time when positive global perceptions of a partner are combined with an accurate knowledge of the partner's specific positive *and* negative qualities. However, these positive partner perceptions may only be possible for individuals who possess the qualities inherent in the informational identity style which lend themselves to this ability.

The positive, mature, and integrated qualities that have been found to be associated with the informational style could all be important components in complete partner understanding. Further, the wisdom (Beaumont, 2009b) native to the informational style may be particularly important in complete partner understanding, and is a capacity which normative individuals do not possess. Thus, the self and partner understanding that may be necessary for the full expression of compassionate love may be predicted from compatibility in informational styles alone.

Much of the research on marriage and intimate relationships has been conducted with newlyweds, which limits the generalizability of findings to all marital/intimate relationships. While newlyweds may focus solely on global attributes, without having a realistic knowledge or understanding of their spouses positive and negative specific traits, couples in long-term marriages/partnerships will have surpassed this point in the relationship and thus have a more realistic understanding of the specific strengths and weaknesses which comprise their partners (Neff & Karney, 2002a). Neff and Karney (2008) suggest that only partners who affirm and adore the partner globally, as well as accurately recognizing the partner's specific strengths and weaknesses, are providing their partners with compassionate love. Thus, newlyweds who have less accurate perceptions of their partner's specific negative *and* positive qualities may be yet incapable of compassionate love for a specific other.

Neff and Karney (2005) have found that there was substantial variability across newlywed spouses in the extent of specific trait accuracy, showing that only a subset of these loving, recently married couples seemed to be engaging in compassionate love. Neff and Karney found that the likelihood of divorce over the first 4 years of marriage was associated with wives' level of compassionate love; those who loved compassionately were less likely to divorce. However, husbands' compassionate love was not associated with divorce. The dearth of research on compassionate love in long-term marriages or partnerships has left a gap in the literature which I attempted to fill. Overall, it appears that a global love may be even more powerful when combined with an accurate understanding of a partner's specific attributes (Neff & Karney, 2008).

Motivations underlying spouses' love for their partner may vary between couples. While some spouses love may be guided by more selfish desires, for others, positive

behaviors may stem from a true concern for the well-being of the other (Neff & Karney, 2008). The former is characterized as a more romantic, immature type of love (Noller, 1996) which may result in inappropriate relationship behaviors, while the latter represents compassionate love, where the partner is fundamentally valued and promoted regardless of cost to self; a love based on genuine selflessness. Previous research on compassionate love has shown that this love inspires behaviors such as compromise, tolerance, empathy, and support (Underwood, 2002), suggesting that compassionate love should be a fundamental component of a healthy marriage or partnership.

Mindfulness and Self-Compassion

The present study examined the roles of mindfulness and self-compassion in the relationship between identity processing and compassionate love. The following review is geared toward emphasizing the conceptual similarities between the constructs of compassionate love, mindfulness, and self-compassion, as well as the role of self or identity in these three social-cognitive attributes.

Mindfulness. Although the topic of mindfulness has become relatively popular in well-being research with the recent positive psychology movement, it's conceptual and philosophical roots come from Buddhist meditation practices (Bennett-Goleman, 2001; Hahn, 1976; Kornfield, 1993; Rosenberg, 1999). In reference to Buddhist philosophy, Baer (2003) wrote that, "mindfulness is the nonjudgmental observation of the ongoing stream of internal and external stimuli as they arise" (p. 125). Thus, within Buddhist philosophy, the capacity for mindfulness is believed to develop via meditation practices geared towards being mindful. Mindfulness-based meditation practices "have in common a conscious attempt to focus attention in a non-analytical way, and an attempt not to dwell on discursive, ruminating

thought" (Shapiro, 1980, p. 14). The goal of mindfulness meditation is to attend, non-judgmentally, to all internal and external stimuli in the environment, without focusing on one particular object (Goleman, 1972; Shapiro, Schwartz, & Santerre, 2002). With respect to meditation practices, mindfulness has been conceptualized as being composed of twelve qualities: nonjudging, nonstriving, acceptance, patience, trust, openness, letting go, gentleness, generosity, empathy, gratitude, and lovingkindness (Kabat-Zinn, 1990; Shapiro & Schwartz, 2000).

Initial research interest in mindfulness spurred the development of many mindfulness-based intervention programs to reduce symptoms, and more recently, to enhance the capacity for mindfulness and increase other growth-related characteristics related to overall well-being. One of the most popular interventions is Kabat-Zinn's (1990) Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program, the well-defined nature of which has allowed for empirical study of the positive outcomes that mindfulness may entail. For example, Tloczynski and Tantriella (1998) examined the effects of meditation in comparison to relaxation on college adjustment and found that after 6 weeks, interpersonal problem scores decreased only for those individuals in the meditation group. Also, in a study examining participation in a 7-day Vipassana meditation retreat (Theravadin Buddhist practice of mindfulness) compared to a matched control group, Emavardhana and Tori (1997) found that only those in the meditation group had significant increases in self-esteem, feelings of worth, benevolence, and self-acceptance, as well as significant changes in ego-defense mechanisms. Mindfulness meditation interventions have also been shown to increase self-compassion (Baer, Smith, Hopkins, Krietemeyer, & Toney, 2006; Ortner, Kilner, & Zelazo, 2007), empathy (Shapiro et al., 1998), affiliative trust, oneness motivation (Weinberger, McLeod,

McClelland, Santorelli, & Kabat-Zinn, 1990), acceptance, sense of coherence (Shapiro et al., 2005), insight, and equanimity (Kabat-Zinn, 2000).

In more recent years, positive psychologists have taken the Buddhist concept of mindfulness and expanded it to focus on a type of attention that is not necessarily based in meditation philosophy. The development of self-report questionnaires is an important milestone in the study of mindfulness because it enhances empirical ability to examine the nature of mindfulness and the relationship of mindfulness to other psychological constructs (Baer et al., 2006). Some researchers, such as Brown and Ryan (2004) have argued for a single factor (attention to and awareness of present moment experience) with acceptance being subsumed under attention, whereas others have viewed mindfulness as a multifaceted construct. Baer et al. (2006) examined the psychometric properties of the existing mindfulness questionnaires, before combining items from all available questionnaires into one large pool which eventually became the Five-Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ). Of the current questionnaires available, the Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS; Brown & Ryan, 2003) is a single factor measure operationalizing mindfulness as attention to and awareness of present-moment experience, the Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory (FMI; Buchheld, Grossman, & Walach, 2001) was designed solely for meditating samples and yields only a total score, the Cognitive and Affective Mindfulness Scale (CAMS; Feldman, Hayes, Kumar, & Greeson, 2004) measures more facets than attention but yields only a single total score, and the Mindfulness Questionnaire (MQ; Chadwick, Hember, Mead, Lilley, & Dagnan, 2005) has a negative focus on distressing thoughts and images and can only validly provide a total score, despite having several factors.

Clear support for a four factor structure has been found only for the Kentucky Inventory of Mindfulness Skills (KIMS; Baer, Smith, & Allen, 2004), which can validly provide both subscale and total scores. While the FFMQ would appear to be even broader in scope, with five clearly defined facets, exploratory factor analysis using an undergraduate sample revealed that the observing facet did not fit the overarching mindfulness construct (Baer et al., 2006). However, in a study by Baer et al. (2008) examining the construct validity of the FFMQ, the observing facet added significantly to the good fit of the model in a sample of experienced meditators. Further, regression analysis revealed that although the five facets are intercorrelated, each facet accounts for a significant amount of unique variance (Baer et al., 2008). Thus, the strong psychometric properties, broad nature, and nonexistent use to date on a sample of middle to older (35 years or older) non-meditators make the FFMQ ideal for mindfulness measurement in the current study.

Mindfulness in romantic relationships. Several authors have suggested that mindfulness may be key to enhancing the quality of romantic relationships; such as Kabat-Zinn (1993) and Welwood (1996) who have both suggested that mindfulness promotes attunement, connection, and closeness in relationships. Barnes et al. (2007) conducted the first two studies that specifically implement mindfulness in the prediction of romantic relationship well-being, showing that the positive outcomes that mindfulness has for psychological well-being (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Carlson & Brown, 2005) may extend to romantic relationships. The positive potential that the heightened attention and awareness that defines mindfulness may have for interpersonal relationships is best described by Bavelas, Coates, and Johnson (2000, 2002) who emphasized the importance of attentive, active listening for successful communication.

With a sample of middle aged married couples who had been together at least ten years, Wachs and Cordova (2007) found that more mindful couples had greater relationally skillful emotional repertoires, were better at communicating their emotions to others and at identifying their own emotions, and had more skilled empathic responding. The concept of mindful relating suggests that greater attentiveness to the present moment enables partners to create and maintain a healthy intimate process by improving the quality of their moment-to-moment emotional interaction. More mindful partners should literally see each other more clearly, regard each other more nonjudgmentally, behave more responsively toward each other, and navigate the emotionally challenging waters of intimacy more gracefully (Wachs & Cordova, 2007).

Previous studies have confirmed that there is a positive relationship between mindfulness and romantic relationship satisfaction (Barnes et al., 2007; Burpee & Langer, 2005). However, the relationship found was weak and the sample in both studies consisted of newly married couples in their early twenties. Burpee and Langer (2005) found that mindfulness was a more important marital satisfaction factor for those over forty years of age and married longer than nine years, suggesting that using an older and longer-married sample in the current study would yield more substantial results. Further limitations of the Burpee and Langer (2005) study were that they used a mindfulness scale which measures the dimensions of: novelty seeking, novelty producing, flexibility, and engagement (Langer, 2001), several of which are not documented to be accurate markers of mindfulness. In the two studies thus far that are specifically about mindfulness and romantic relationship satisfaction (Barnes et al., 2007) samples were composed of dating college students, which does not lend itself to older or married couple generalization. If compassionate love, a love

that is founded on specific partner understanding, is a stronger factor in the creation of happier, healthier, intimate relationships than love without understanding, we need to examine what the antecedents to specific understanding are and how they may be created within relationships (Neff & Karney, 2008). Thus, individual differences in various areas must be examined in order to determine which variables predict compassionate love, such as the contribution of mindfulness and self-compassion to the informational identity style.

Self-compassion. Although self-compassion is a key element of the Buddhist psychology from which mindfulness stems, scientific study has begun only recently (Baer et al., 2006). Neff (2003) defines self-compassion as being composed of three elements: (1) self-kindness (extending kindness and compassion to oneself in times of perceived inadequacy or suffering rather than judgment and self-criticism); (2) common humanity (observing one's experiences as segments of the larger human experience instead of viewing them as separating and isolating); and, (3) mindfulness (holding one's painful thoughts and feelings in balanced awareness rather than over-identifying with them in an exaggerated manner). This construct has many similarities to the definition of compassion itself (Neff, 2003b), making a clear case for the connection between self-compassion and compassionate love. Moreover, even though a component of self-compassion is mindfulness, it cannot be reduced to mindfulness (Neff, 2004). It is here that a brief discussion of semantics must ensue.

Due to their criticisms of the well-used self-esteem construct (Neff, 2003), several psychologists have attempted to introduce alternative conceptualizations of a healthy attitude and relationship to oneself including: self-respect (Seligman, 1995), self-efficacy (Bandura, 1990), true self-esteem (Deci & Ryan, 1995), self-acceptance (May, 2005), and unconditional

self-acceptance (Rogers, 1951). Self-acceptance is a commonly used term which has many similarities to self-compassion, but also has negative connotations, including resignation, self-indulgence, defining ourselves by our limitations, and isolation (May, 2005), and lacks the compassion element that is so important to self-compassion. While self-acceptance may theoretically be a passive construct, self-compassion is both semantically and theoretically active, involving a desire to alleviate one's suffering with self-kindness and mindfulness while maintaining an empathic stance towards a common humanity (Neff & Lamb, 2009).

Those who approach themselves with compassion are more likely to feel compassion towards others simply because self-compassion, unlike self-esteem, does not require downward social comparisons for an individual to think of themselves as acceptable (Neff, 2003). Less judgment of oneself also allows for less judgment of others (Neff, 2003), suggesting that individuals with higher levels of self-compassion may also possess higher levels of compassionate love. Affective wisdom, which assesses constructive emotions towards others, such as feelings of kindness and compassion, is positively associated with self-compassion, which further suggests that concern for the self and others are interrelated (Neff, Rude, & Kirkpatrick, 2007). Self-compassion has been found to have a stronger negative association with social comparison, public self-consciousness, self-rumination, anger, and need for cognitive closure than self-esteem, and self-esteem rather than self-compassion has been found to be positively correlated with narcissism (Neff & Vonk, 2009). Further, self-compassion appears to be related to caring and communion, while self-esteem is related to competition and agency (Helgeson & Fritz, 1999). Research has found that self-compassion is positively associated with social connectedness, self-determination, self-concept accuracy (similar to identity), and greater emotional equanimity when confronting

daily life events, which should encourage feelings of responsibility to others, and thus increase the expression of compassionate love.

Self-compassion in romantic relationships. There is some evidence that self-compassion benefits others within interpersonal relationships. In a study of young adult heterosexual couples in committed relationships (Neff, 2006), self-compassionate individuals were described by their partners as being more emotionally connected, accepting and autonomy-supporting while being less detached, controlling, and verbally or physically aggressive. Self-compassionate people feel more connected to others, which would naturally suggest that their romantic relationships would be both healthier and deeper than those of less self-compassionate individuals. Preliminary findings lend support to the general belief that caring for oneself allows one to be more caring towards others (Neff, 2009). Also, the reduced emphasis on the separate self means that self-compassion is more related to functional relationship behavior than self-esteem. Because self-compassionate people are caring, understanding, and supportive towards themselves they appear to have more emotional resources available to give to their romantic partners. Finally, the ability to admit mistakes without ego-defensiveness means that self-compassionate people may have less need to project their faults onto partners via angry accusations (Feldman & Gowen, 1998).

Self-compassion has been associated with more relationship satisfaction (as reported by oneself and one's partner), greater psychological well-being, and greater attachment security (Neff, 2006). Of particular importance to romantic relationships is the finding that those high in self-compassion reported being more likely to take other's perspectives than those that were lower on this construct, suggesting that the ability to detach from one's own viewpoint and take another perspective may be facilitated by self-compassion (Neff, 2008).

One high in self-compassion may be more likely to hold the attitude that all humans make mistakes and are worthy of forgiveness, which should lead to the full expression of compassionate love. The combination of mindfulness and self-compassion is expected to add significantly to the relationship between compatibility in informational identity styles and compassionate love.

Summary

According to Erikson's lifespan development theory, having a strong sense of identity is critical for the development of true intimacy and love. A particular style of identity processing, an open and self-reflective informational identity style, is specifically linked to psychological maturity and adjustment including greater intimacy. Recent theory and research on the importance of love for humanity has delineated the value of a particular type of love, compassionate love, which appears to be related to aspects of mindfulness and self-compassion. All three of these constructs appear to be related to or strengthened by particular aspects of self. Nevertheless, no previous research has examined the role of identity in compassionate love, mindfulness, or self-compassion. The goal of this thesis was to examine the predictive relationships among these aspects of character in the arena of romantic relationships.

PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES, AND HYPOTHESES

Very limited research exists on the positive outcomes associated with the two committed identity styles, with a complete absence of studies on identity processing style using compassionate love as an outcome measure. Berzonsky's (1989) three identity processing styles are differentially related to aspects of personality and social functioning that provide a basis for potential predictive links with compassionate love. For example, both the informational and normative styles are positively related to seeking emotional and instrumental social support (Beaumont & Seaton, 2008), and the informational style is positively associated with intimacy and empathy (Beaumont & Pratt, 2007; Seaton & Beaumont, 2009; Soenens et al., 2005). Specifically, only the informational identity style predicted Eriksonian intimacy over-and-above identity commitment, and this relationship was mediated by emotional intelligence. In contrast, the normative style did not add to the prediction of intimacy over the contribution of identity commitment (Seaton & Beaumont, 2009).

Another area of connection between compassionate love and identity is in the realm of friendships, where individuals who cultivate a friendship with a member of another social group increasingly include aspects of that person in the self (Wright et al., 2002). The normative identity style is not associated with openness to experience (e.g., Dollinger, 1995) and these individuals tend to stick rigidly to the beliefs and attitudes dictated by family and other authority figures (Berzonsky, 1988), and would thus be less likely to show compassionate love to individuals outside their social group (Brody et al., 2008). This study intended to further delineate the relationships between identity processing style and compassionate love for specific others, close others, and strangers/humanity.

Overview

This research extends the results of research on identity and intimacy (Beaumont & Pratt, 2007; Seaton & Beaumont, 2009) and research on compassionate love (Sprecher & Fehr, 2005) by examining the relationship between identity processing styles and compassionate love for humanity, close others, and specific others. Specifically, this research examines the predictive link between the informational identity processing style and compassionate love for humanity, as well as the predictive ability that mindfulness combined with self-compassion add to this relationship. The overarching thesis examined was that the informational identity processing style is positively related to compassionate love for humanity and that mindfulness and self-compassion mediate the positive relationship between the informational identity style and compassionate love for humanity. That is, compassionate love specifically for humanity is an expected outcome for the informational style alone, differentiating between the informational and normative identity processing styles. Although this relationship is expected to be significantly positive, the open-minded and broader world-view resulting from mindfulness, and the diminished focus on self that self-compassion allows, should significantly enhance the expression of compassionate love for humanity.

The goal of this study was to further examine the relationship between identity style and compassionate love, and the roles of mindfulness and self-compassion, by focusing specifically on heterosexual married or common-law couples. The following review adds to the previous literature review by focusing on compatibility in married partners. The thesis examined in this study is that compatibility in identity styles should predict greater compassionate love among married couples.

Objectives

This research extended the results found by Cook and Jones (2002) and Sprecher and Fehr (2005) by examining the relationship between compatibility in identity processing styles and compassionate love for married couples. The addition of compatibility in identity styles extended the findings on the relationship between identity style and intimacy (Beaumont & Pratt, 2007; Seaton & Beaumont, 2008) to the context of actual couple relationships, which has rarely been done in previous research. The correction of several limitations plaguing the Cook and Jones study (discussed above), as well as the addition of the compassionate love construct, was expected to add to their findings that similarity in identity style predicts marital satisfaction. The ultimate thesis being examined was that compatibility in either of the two committed identity styles positively predicted compassionate love in married or common-law couples. It was expected that the difference between the informational and normative styles would be apparent in that mindfulness and self-compassion would mediate this relationship for the informational identity style alone.

Two research questions were posed: (1) Is compatibility in identity style positively related to compassionate love in intimate partners?, and; (2) Do mindfulness and self-compassion (for either partner) mediate the positive relationship between compatibility in the informational identity style and compassionate love?

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research question 1: Predictive relationships between compatibility in identity styles and compassionate love. This research objective was addressed by creating two types of dyadic scores to reflect the identity styles of the couple: (1) a difference score for the wife's and the husband's identity style scores; and, (2) a summed score indicating the relative

level of each identity style reflected in the couple. The difference scores reflected level of similarity in identity styles (smaller scores = more similarity), whereas the summed scores reflected the relative presence of each style for the couple. Both types of scores were included to determine if it was only similarity of styles that was important for predicting compassionate love, or whether relative level of style across the couple was also an important factor. This research objective was addressed by measuring similarity in and level of identity styles in couples and the three forms of compassionate love: for intimate partner, for close others, and for humanity.

It was hypothesized that the informational style difference scores would be negatively related to all three types of compassionate love. The normative style difference scores would be negatively related only to compassionate love for close others and intimate partners. The diffuse-avoidant style difference scores were expected to be positively related to all three forms of compassionate love.

With respect to total summed scores, it was hypothesized that the couples' informational style scores would be positively related to all three types of compassionate love. The couples' normative style scores were expected to be positively related only to compassionate love for close others and intimate partners. The couples' diffuse-avoidant style scores were expected to be negatively related to all three forms of compassionate love. These hypotheses were tested via correlational analyses based on difference similitary and summed level of identity style raw scores.

Research question 2: Is the relationship between compatibility in the informational identity style and compassionate love for humanity mediated by mindfulness and self-compassion? It was expected that any positive and significant

relationship between compatibility in the informational identity style and compassionate love would be at least partially mediated by mindfulness and self-compassion. Three analyses were performed: (1) husband's scores (mindfulness and self-compassion); (2) wives' scores; (3) and, with a composite (summed) score indicating the mindfulness and self-compassion for the couple. This question was addressed using hierarchical regressions. A series of regressions following the mediation analysis technique developed by Baron and Kenney (1986) was used to determine whether this relationship existed.

Addressing Research Design Issues

A limitation of using a university sample is that the developmental nature of the constructs examined in this study is such that a young adult sample will not provide an accurate representation of prevalence within society. For example, studies using university-based samples normally have a mean age around 19-20 years old (e.g., Paul & Hayes, 2002; Regan & Dryer, 1999), where the age range may only include individuals between the ages of 18-23 (Paul & Hayes, 2002). Thus, this thesis sought to capture a sample that would accurately represent the distribution and strength of these constructs by recruiting a diverse group of older, long-term married participants through a community-based study.

METHOD

Participants

Couples were recruited from Prince George and surrounding BC Interior communities through advertising (face-to-face interactions) via several organizations (e.g., Prince George Chateau; Elders Recreation Centre; Books & Co.; Tastebuds) and through general word-of-mouth. Purposely, couple members were expected to be 35 years or older, were expected to have various levels of education and have been in a heterosexual marriage or common-law relationship for at least 5 years.

The sample included a total of 55 couples ($N = 110$). In two of the couples, one or both of the couple members failed to answer a sufficient number or questions; these couples were removed due to extreme levels of missing data. Two couples were extreme outliers in terms of age, with one member of each couple being at or close to the age of 80; these couples were removed. The final couple that required removal contained a woman who had extreme outlying scores on compassionate love for intimate partner/spouse. After outlier removal, the final sample was composed of 50 couples ($N = 100$; 50 men, 50 women), with an age range of 31 to 68 for women ($M = 51.80$, $SD = 8.89$), and 38 to 80 for men ($M = 55.41$, $SD = 8.57$). Unlike the many studies on newlyweds, the range of years married for this sample was between 5 to 48 years ($M = 24.92$, $SD = 11.42$), with 80% of couple members stating that they had spent a lot of time working on their marriage. Further, the vast majority of couple members stated that they were in love now (90%), with 8% of the sample saying no, and 2% stating that they were unsure of their love status.

For women, the sample was composed predominately of Caucasian (88%) individuals, followed by other (10%) and Aboriginal (2%) women. Education levels for

women were variable, with the highest number having university degrees (40%), followed by those with high school diplomas (16%), those having college diplomas (14%), some college (12%), and those with some university (8%). For men, we again saw a sample devised of mainly Caucasian (90%) individuals, followed by other (8%). Education for men was more variable, with the highest number of men having trade or technical school (32%), followed by a university degree (26%), a college diploma (12%), and a high school diploma (10%). The majority of women were employed full-time (52%), with the next highest number being employed part-time (26%), and 14% being retired. For men, a greater number of them were employed full-time (70%), followed by those retired (18%), and those employed part-time (10%).

Procedure

Data collection included a series of four questionnaires (168 questions; described below) which took approximately 45 minutes to complete. Consenting coffee shop/restaurant managers allowed the primary researcher and research assistants to casually and discretely ask couples who looked to be in these age groups if they would be willing to participate in the study. The primary researcher also had a chance to interact with the independent living (60+) residents of Prince George Chateau and was able to bring survey packages to residents within the facility. There was no compensation offered, but the participants were told that they could receive the results of the study upon completion, if they wished.

Before commencement of the questionnaires, participants were asked to read an introductory information and informed consent page (Appendix A), and answer *Yes* to a question asking if they consented to participate in the study. Following the completion of a demographic questionnaire (Appendix B), participants were asked to complete all the

measures, with the order of the three Compassionate Love Scale versions counterbalanced. Couples were allowed to take the survey packages home to finish if they did not have sufficient time to complete them at the recruitment location and were instructed to either mail the completed surveys to the primary researcher or return the complete surveys to the recruitment location. Business owners kindly let the primary researcher keep folders at their establishments for survey collection. With a return rate of close to 50%, the majority of the surveys that were returned were given out through word of mouth (28), with 17 couples completing surveys at Books and Company, followed by 10 couples at Second Cup, and 3 couples at Tastebuds. The majority of couples did not complete surveys on site, and the vast majority of couples that fit participation requirements agreed to participate, although some may have agreed out of politeness.

Measures

Identity Style Inventory: Six-Grade Reading Level (ISI-6G; Appendix C). The ISI-6G questionnaire was created by White et al. (1998) and is based on Berzonsky's (1989) original Identity Style Inventory. This ISI-6G measures the degree to which individuals tend to use each of the three identity styles, along with the degree of commitment that one feels towards his or her particular self-identity. Four scales are included in this 40-item inventory: the *informational identity style* scale (11 items) the *normative identity style* scale (9 items), the *diffuse/avoidant identity* style scale (10 items), and the *identity commitment* scale (10 items; Berzonsky, 1992b). Participants were asked to respond to statements on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5). Scoring consisted of summing the responses to relevant items for each sub-scale. As reported by White et al. (1998), the ISI-6G has demonstrated good psychometric properties, with Cronbach's alphas

ranging from .59 to .78 for the various scales, and convergent validity with the original ISI being significant (Information, $r = .81$; Normative, $r = .85$, Diffuse/Avoidant, $r = .85$). In the present study, the overall Cronbach's alpha was .79, with an alpha of .77 for the *Commitment* sub-scale, an alpha of .80 for the *Informational* sub-scale, an alpha of .52 for the *Normative* sub-scale, and an alpha of .71 for the *Diffuse* Sub-scale. All missing data was replaced with mean item scores.

Compassionate Love Scale (CLS; Appendix E). The CLS (Sprecher & Fehr, 2005) is a 21-item inventory with three versions, identical except for changes in wording to measure compassionate love for *humanity*, *close others*, and *specific other/intimate partner.* Participants were asked to respond to statements on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from (1) *Not at all true of me* to (7) *Very true of me.* For the close others and intimate partner versions of the scale, instructions urged participants to think of how they might feel in relationships with significant others (family members and friends or intimate partners), whereas the stranger/humanity version of the scale instructed participants to think of their feelings towards either all of humankind or specific strangers. Scoring involved computing a mean total score for each version of the scale. Previously, the various versions of the CLS have been counterbalanced (Sprecher & Fehr, 2005) to avoid practice effects; this method of administration occurred in the current study as well. Evidence has shown that the CLS has good psychometric properties, as indicated by overall Cronbach's alpha of .94 to .95, inter-item correlations, and item-to-total correlations (Sprecher & Fehr, 2005). In the present study, the overall Chronbach's alpha for the Close Others version of the CLS was .95, the alpha for the Humanity version was .96, and the alpha for the Intimate Partner version was .96.

Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ; Appendix F). The FFMQ (Baer et al., 2006) is a 39-item measure composed of five component skills: observing (8 items), describing (8 items), acting with awareness (8 items), nonjudging of inner experience (8 items), and nonreactivity to inner experience (7 items). Participants were asked to respond to statements regarding their internal and external actions on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from (1) *Never or very rarely true* to (5) *Very often or always true.*

In the past there has been a lack of consensus among researchers about whether mindfulness is unidimensional or multifaceted, as well as what components comprise this construct (Baer et al., 2008). Further, many of the previous multifaceted inventories yielded only a total score, rather than measuring subscales separately (Baer et al., 2008). To create the FFMQ all items from five existing mindfulness measures were combined into one item pool with both exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis used to determine structure (Baer, Smith, Hopkins, Krietemeyer, & Toney, 2006). The birth of the FFMQ resulted from the five-factor solution that was extracted and allows for scoring of subscales separately, as well as allowing for computation of a mean average total score. Items in the FFMQ were arranged to approximate alternation between the five facets (Baer et al., 2006), with several subscales composed of reverse-score items. Good internal consistency has been demonstrated by this measure, with alpha coefficients ranging from .75 to .91, although the observing facet was not a clear indicator of an overarching mindfulness construct (Baer et al., 2008). In the present study, the overall Cronbach's alpha was .90, with the Observe sub-scale having an alpha of .88, the Describe sub-scale having an alpha of .54, the Act with Awareness sub-scale having an alpha of .85, the Nonjudge sub-scale having an alpha of .84, and the Nonreact subscale having an alpha of .81.

Self-Compassion Scale (SCS; Appendix G). The SCS (Neff, 2003) is a 26-item inventory with 6 subscales, including: the self-kindness scale (5 items), the self-judgment scale (5 items), the common humanity scale (4 items), the isolation scale (4 items), the mindfulness scale (4 items), and the over-identification scale (4 items). Participants are asked to respond to statements on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *almost never* (1) to *almost always* (5). Subscale scores are computed by calculating the mean of subscale item responses, after reverse-coding negative subscale (self-judgment, isolation, and over-identification) items. To create an overall self-compassion score the total mean is computed from the addition of all mean subscale scores. The use of the total mean is different than the method reported in the original article on validation of this scale where each subscale was added together (Neff, 2003), but has been found to make interpretation easier (Neff, 2008). However, the method of using total summed scores created from the sum of all 6 sub-scales, after reverse scoring the self-judgment, isolation, and over-identification items, has also been used (e.g., Ortner, Kilner, & Zelazo, 2007), and will be used in the current study. The use of total couple scores throughout the measures in this study entailed the need for summed, rather than mean scores. One couple measure does not move to a lower level of self-compassion if their partner is less self-compassionate; using mean scores would result in this scenario occurring.

Confirmatory factor analysis has shown that the intercorrelations between all six subscales could be explained by a single higher-order factor of self-compassion (Neff, 2003a). The SCS has shown internal consistency of .92 and test-retest reliability of .93 using a 3-week interval (Baer et al., 2006; Neff, 2003). For the present study, the overall Cronbach's alpha for the Self-Compassion Scale was .91. The Cronbach's alpha for the Self-

kindness sub-scale was .74, the alpha for the Self-Judgment sub-scale was .77, the alpha for Common Humanity was .69, the alpha for the Isolation sub-scale was .71, the alpha for the Mindfulness sub-scale was .68, and the alpha for the Over-identified subscale was .79.

RESULTS

Overview of the Analyses and Preliminary Data Screening

Prior to analysis, the data was examined for accuracy of data entry, missing data, outliers, and normality. There were a few missing scores for several of the scale items, as well as a small amount of missing data for some of the demographics variables. Missing data was random in nature, with no more than one value missing for a single scale item and less than 5% of cases missing overall. Thus, all missing values were replaced with mean item scores. For the demographics variables, one man and one woman neglected to provide ages, with three women choosing not to answer whether they were spiritual persons, and three men neglecting to answer whether they had spent time working on their marriage. Demographics data was not of a nature that required value replacement or estimation. Examination of the data for normality revealed a few outliers, but the distributions were not skewed and kurtosis was minor. No multivariate outliers were identified through Mahalanobis distance ($p < .001$). Paired sample *t*- tests for age and education revealed a significant gender difference for both age, $t(98) = 4.83$, $p < .001$, and education, $t(98) = 2.47$, $p = .02$. Descriptive statistics revealed that overall education levels were higher for women than men, whereas men were normally older than women (see Table 1).

Two main sets of analyses were conducted in order to examine the research hypotheses: (1) correlations between couples' difference and summed scores for identity styles and compassionate love variables were examined to determine patterns of relationships between similarity, and level of, couple identity style and compassionate love for close others, intimate partner, and humanity; and, (2) the Baron and Kenney (1986) mediation analyses were conducted to determine whether mindfulness and self-compassion mediated

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Age and Length of Marriage.

Variable	*M*	*SD*	*SE*	Range of Scores
Age (F)*	51.80	8.89	1.27	31 - 68
Age (M)**	55.41	8.57	1.22	38 - 80
Education (F)	6.24	2.03	.29	2 - 9
Education (M)	5.46	2.19	.31	1 - 9
Length of Marriage	24.92	11.42	1.62	5 - 48

*F denotes women, ** M denotes men

the relationship between compatibility in couple (summed) identity styles and all three versions of compassionate love. Subsequent exploratory analyses of gender differences in all measures, as well as separate intercorrelations among variables were conducted to examine possible differences between self-reports of husbands and wives.

Research Question 1: Predictive Relationships Between Compatibility in Identity Styles and Compassionate Love

Descriptive statistics for summed and difference scores for couples are presented in Table 2, and the correlation matrix is presented in Table 3. With respect to difference scores (with smaller differences indicating greater similarity), the hypotheses were not supported. Contrary to hypotheses, the differences in husband's and wives' informational styles were not significantly related to compassionate love, although the correlations for compassionate love for humanity approached significance ($p = .07$). Neither the couples' diffuse-avoidant style nor normative style difference scores were correlated with the compassionate love scores. However, couples' similarity in diffuse identity styles was positively related to similarity in commitment.

With respect to summed scores, couples' levels of informational identity style scores were positively related to compassionate love for humanity and for close others, as was expected. As hypothesized, couples' normative style was significantly related to compassionate love for close others and was unrelated to compassionate love for humanity. However, the normative style was not found to be significantly related to compassionate love for intimate partner. The hypotheses for the diffuse-avoidant style were also supported. Couples' level of diffuse-avoidant style was negatively related to compassionate love for intimate partner and was unrelated to both compassionate love for humanity and close others.

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations for all variables as a Function of Couple.

Variable	*M*	*SD*	Range of Scores
Similarity (Difference Scores)			
Informational	5.30	4.33	0.00 – 19.00
Normative	4.47	3.49	0.00 – 13.00
Diffuse	6.04	4.46	0.00 – 17.0
Commitment	5.39	5.12	0.00 – 18.00
Level (Sum Scores)			
Informational	77.92	10.39	47.00 – 98.00
Normative	56.84	6.56	30.00 – 72.00
Diffuse	46.37	8.00	36.08 – 69.08
Commitment	79.52	8.69	34.00 – 94.00
Compassionate Love			
Humanity	8.59	1.80	7.57 – 12.38
CloseOthers	11.64	1.31	4.90 – 13.57
Intimate	12.07	1.35	5.56 – 13.86
Self-Compassion	6.46	.89	3.62 – 8.15
Mindfulness	5.82	.67	2.99 – 7.03

* All scores are summed unless otherwise noted

Table 3. *Zero-order Correlations Between All Couple Variables and Compassionate Love.*

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. CLHumanity[a]												
2. CLCloseOthers	.65**											
3. CLIntimate	.39**	.62**										
4. ABSInformational[b]	-.25	-.19	-.04									
5. ABSNormative	.23	.11	.02	.04								
6. ABSDiffuse	-.06	.03	-.03	-.15	-.02							
7. ABSCommitment	-.18	-.32*	-.17	.14	-.05	.36**						
8. Sum Informational	.49***	.33*	.21	-.07	.22	-.13	-.25					
9. Sum Normative	.17	.29*	.06	-.35*	.02	.17	-.03	.02				
10. Sum Diffuse	.01	.03	-.32*	-.02	-.17	.05	-.09	-.26	.28			
11. Sum Commitment	.29*	.36**	.32*	-.13	.29*	-.30*	-.58*	.47***	.33*	-.21		
12. Mindfulness	.22	-.01	-.23	-.21	.04	.27	.05	.20	.23	.25	-.01	
13. Self-Compassion	.16	.10	.14	-.02	-.12	-.45**	-.38**	.19	-.09	-.13	.44**	-.03

*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$; [a] CL is the abbreviation for Compassionate Love; [b]ABS symbolizes absolute difference score

Research Question 2: Is The Relationship Between Compatibility in the Informational Identity Style and Compassionate Love for Humanity Mediated by Mindfulness and Self-Compassion?

Correlational relationships with mindfulness and self-compassion. As shown in Table 3, contrary to Hypothesis 2, couple's levels of mindfulness and self-compassion were not intercorrelated. In addition, mindfulness was not significantly related to compatibility in level of couples' identity styles, nor to any of the three forms of compassionate love. Similarly, no significant correlations were found for couple's self-compassion and either identity styles or compassionate love. Nevertheless, as would be expected, couple self-compassion was positively related to the couple's levels of identity commitment.

With respect to difference scores for husband's and wives' identity styles, only one significant relationship was found with self-compassion, and this relationship was contrary to expectation. Couple self-compassion was negatively related to the difference in husband's and wives' diffuse identity styles.

Hierarchical regression analyses. Table 4 displays the standardized regression coefficients (β), *F Change*, R^2, R^2 *Change*, Adjusted R^2, semi-partial correlations (Part), and squared semi-partial correlations (sr^2). Analysis of correlation matrices did not support the hypothesis that the relationship between compatibility in couple informational identity style and compassionate love was mediated by mindfulness and self-compassion. However, hierarchical regressions were still used to determine if the addition of mindfulness and self-compassion improved prediction of compassionate love beyond that afforded by compatibility in couple identity style.

Table 4

Sequential Regression Predicting the Mediation Effect of Mindfulness and Self-Compassion.

	β	*F* Change	R^2	R^2 Change	Adjusted R^2	Part	sr^2
Info. Style Level	.44	14.89***	.24	.24	.22	.43**	.18**
Self-compassion	.08	.69	.26	.02	.21	.08	.01
Mindfulness	.14	.69	.26	.02	.21	.13	.02

Note: All variables are summed couple scores. $^{**}p < .01$; $^{***}p < .001$

Using the Baron and Kenney (1986) mediation model, only Steps 1 and 2 could be performed (see Table 4). After it was established that there was an effect that might be mediated, Step 2 involved adding couples' mindfulness and self-compassion scores to the equation to determine if the level of couples' informational identity style was correlated with either variable.

Completion of Step 2 revealed no relationship between couples' informational identity style and either mindfulness or self-compassion; couples' level of the informational identity style does not predict their level of either mindfulness or self-compassion. Thus, there is only a *direct* effect, without an *intervening* or *mediation* effect. The adjusted R^2 value of .21 indicates that over a fifth of the variability in compassionate love for humanity was predicted by level of couples' informational identity style, mindfulness, and self-compassion. However, 18% of the unique variability (sr^2 = .18) in compassionate love for humanity was predicted by level of couples' informational identity style, while there was no significant change in the amount of unique variability accounted for when self-compassion (sr^2 = .01) and mindfulness (sr^2 = .02) were added to the equation. Step 2 was not passed, and therefore, the performance of Step 3 and 4 of Baron and Kenny's (1986) model was rendered unnecessary.

Exploratory Results

Table 5 provides statistics comparing means on all variables for women and men. Paired *t*-tests revealed no significant differences as a function of gender.

Tables 6 and 7 provide zero-order correlations on all variables for women and men respectively. The relationship between the informational identity style and compassionate love for humanity was stronger for men than it was for women. Results also showed that the

Table 5

Paired-sample t-tests for Gender Differences in All Variables.

	M	*SD*	*t*	Sig.(2-tailed)
Commitment	1.16	7.39	1.07	.29
Informational	1.07	6.80	1.11	.27
Normative	.08	.81	.09	.93
Diffuse	-.94	1.06	-.89	.38
CL Intimate	-.16	.11	-1.36	.18
CL Close Others	.21	1.08	1.39	.17
CL Humanity	.35	.19	1.90	.06
Self-Compassion	-.08	.10	-.75	.46
Mindfulness	-.04	.05	-.83	.41

Table 6

Women's Correlations for All Summed Variables and Age, Education, and Years Married.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Age												
2. Education	.23											
3. Years Married	.66**	.01										
4. Informational	.22	.39**	.02									
5. Normative	.11	-.07	.18	.13								
6. Diffuse	.13	-.04	.04	-.05	.03							
7. Commitment	.09	.07	.04	.18	.62**	-.18						
8. CLHumanity	-.12	.22	.06	.33*	.07	.06	.02					
9. CLCloseOthers	.10	-.04	.14	.18	.35*	.15	.29*	.50**				
10. CLIntimate	-.02	.12	.03	.23	.11	-.03	.14	.48**	.42**			
11. Mindfulness	.04	.06	-.22	.24	.01	.26	-.12	.18	-.08	-.09		
12. Self-Compassion	.25	.02	.25	-.02	.19	-.22	.37**	.01	-.05	.08	-.06	

*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$

Table 7

Men's Correlations for All Summed Variables and Age, Education, and Years Married.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Age												
2. Education	-.07											
3. Years Married	.70**	.07										
4. Informational	-.23	.38**	-.20									
5. Normative	-.30*	-.39**	-.16	.08								
6. Diffuse	-.32*	-.19	-.20	-.19	.40**							
7. Commitment	.08	.19	-.08	.55**	.14	-.19						
8. CLHumanity	.15	.14	.13	.44**	.01	.04	.24					
9. CLCloseOthers	.03	.05	.06	.44**	.14	-.03	.37**	.59**				
10. CLIntimate	.13	-.03	.05	.14	-.04	-.22	.21	.31*	.70**			
11. Mindfulness	-.16	.03	-.14	.18	.17	.21	-.003	.26	.06	-.20		
12. Self-Compassion	.16	.39**	-.004	.32*	-.12	-.20	.57**	.22	.18	.07	-.07	

*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$

relationship between the informational style and compassionate love for close others was not significant for women, even though the overall level of couples' informational identity style was significantly related to compassionate love for close others. Interestingly, the relationship between the informational identity style and compassionate love for close others had a strong correlation for men. Women and men also differed in their levels of commitment, with a strong positive relationship between the normative style and commitment for women and no relationship at all between these variables for men. However, higher levels of the informational identity style corresponded with higher levels of commitment for men, whereas this relationship was non-existent for women. There was a significant positive relationship found between the informational style and self-compassion for men. Further, higher levels of self-compassion were associated with higher levels of identity commitment for both men and women.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this thesis was to systematically examine the predictive links between compatibility in identity processing styles for married or common-law couples and compassionate love, mindfulness, and self-compassion. Two research questions were posed: (1) Is compatibility in identity style positively related to compassionate love in intimate partners?; and, (2) Do mindfulness and self-compassion (for either partner) mediate the positive relationship between compatibility in the informational identity style and compassionate love? It was hypothesized that couple similarity and level of the three identity processing styles would be differentially related to compassionate love for humanity, close others, and intimate partners. Further, it was expected that any positive and significant relationship between compatibility in the informational identity style and compassionate love would be at least partially mediated by mindfulness and self-compassion. The results partially supported Hypothesis 1 in that level of couples' informational identity style predicted compassionate love for humanity. However, Hypothesis 2 was not supported. Detailed discussion of the findings is presented below.

Research Question 1: Predictive Relationships between Compatibility in Identity Styles and Compassionate Love

Overall, the important elements of hypotheses for compatibility in the level of couple informational and normative processing styles were supported, but findings for compatibility in similarity (difference scores) of couple identity style were not supported.

Compassionate love for humanity. Similarity in couples' informational identity style was expected to be negatively related to compassionate love for humanity, whereas the similarity of couples' normative identity style was expected to be unrelated to

compassionate love for humanity. Further, it was hypothesized that similarity in the diffuse-avoidant identity style would be positively related to compassionate love for humanity. Similarity in couples' informational identity style was actually found to be only marginally related to compassionate love for humanity. As expected, similarity in both couples' normative style and the diffuse-avoidant identity style were unrelated to compassionate love for humanity. The close approximation to significance for the relationship between couples' similarity in the informational identity style and compassionate love for humanity warrants further research. With a larger sample size this relationship may become significant.

Level of couples' informational identity style was expected to be positively related to compassionate love for humanity, whereas level of both the normative and diffuse-avoidant identity styles were expected to be unrelated and negatively related to this type of compassionate love, respectively. Consistent with hypotheses, the level of couples' informational identity style was positively related to compassionate love for humanity. Also consistent with hypotheses, level of couples' normative identity style was unrelated to compassionate love for humanity. While level of couple's diffuse-avoidant identity style was not negatively related to compassionate love for humanity, it was found to be unrelated.

The finding that level of couples' informational identity style was related to compassionate love for humanity supports previous research suggesting that elements of this style are related to other-centered expressions of love and altruistic helping (Dovidio & Penner, 2001; Sprecher & Fehr, 2005; Vleiros & Bosma, 2005). Further, the relationship between level of couple informational style and compassionate love for

humanity fits seamlessly into the list of positive outcomes predicted by the informational identity style. This form of social-cognitive identity processing is specifically related to maturity in the form of the capacity for greater intimacy, proactive coping, wisdom, self-actualization, purpose in life, and personal growth well-being (Beaumont, 2009a, 2009b; Beaumont & Pratt, 2007; Seaton & Beaumont, 2008b; Vleioras & Bosma, 2005). Open individuals actively seek out unfamiliar ideas, values, and actions (Costa & McCrae, 1978), a cardinal difference between the informational and normative identity styles that alone would make it more likely for informational couple members to express compassionate love towards humanity as a whole. The specific cognitive processing aspects of this style (open, insightful, self-reflective, and self-evaluative) afford a greater propensity towards a high level of character development, such as wisdom (Beaumont, 2009a, 2009b), as well as a greater ability to express compassionate love towards humanity. The tendency to seek out new and challenging experiences facilitates personal growth opportunities (e.g., Kashdan et al., 2004), and only the informational identity style has been shown to predict Ryff's personal growth well-being (Seaton & Beaumont, 2008b).

Personal growth opportunities could be characterized as expressions of love towards humanity or strangers; only individuals who are open to experiences are likely to seek out such experiences and be open enough to respond to them with altruistic helping. Berzonsky (1990) believed that informational individuals deal with identity issues in a mentally effortful manner, being skeptical of their self-views while suspending judgment and reevaluating aspects of these self-constructions when confronted with discrepant feedback. These cognitive processes are likely to result in the realistic decision-making

and opportunity taking that is not clouded by prejudice. Further, active listening, openness, and receptivity were also found to be important elements to the full expression of compassionate love (Underwood, 2002). These mature communication strategies are native to the informational style, thus affording highly functional relationships between couple members and allowing them to focus their love outside the relationship because needs within the relationship are already fulfilled. It appears that couples with higher levels of this self-reflective and explorative informational identity style, regardless of which couple member possesses a higher level, are better able to express compassionate love to strangers and humanity.

As expected, the lack of relationship between compatibility in level of and similarity in couples' normative style suggests that these individuals would be less likely to show compassionate love to individuals outside their social group (Brody et al., 2008). This can be understood in that the normative identity style is not associated with openness to experience (e.g., Dollinger, 1995), and these individuals tend to stick rigidly to the beliefs and attitudes dictated by family and other authority figures (Berzonsky, 1988). In the past, the normative identity style has been found to be unrelated to empathy (Soenens et al., 2005) which can be understood by considering that cognitive complexity, and perspective taking are prerequisites for empathy (Seaton & Beaumont, 2008b). Empathy is a component of compassionate love and may be a limiting factor for the expression of this type of love to humanity for normative individuals; while they may have sufficient empathy for family members and friends, the lower cognitive complexity found for these individuals may not allow for the higher emotional capacities of empathy. Also, the finding that the fear of attack to their foreclosed values may lead normative

individuals to defensively close themselves off from specific experiences, such as interactions with strangers, which might induce cognitive dissonance (Berzonsky & Sullivan, 1992) is suggestive of another barrier to the expression of compassionate love towards humanity as a whole.

Scarcity of the relationship between compatibility in couples' diffuse-avoidant identity style and compassionate love for humanity is supported by previous research suggesting that these individuals are neurotic, depressive, use self-handicapping and maladaptive coping and decisional strategies, and are lacking in curiosity/exploration (Beaumont & Seaton, 2008; Berzonsky & Ferrari, 1996; Berzonsky & Sullivan, 1992). In addition, the use of a diffuse style is negatively correlated with self-awareness, cognitive persistence, conscientiousness, and measures of well-being (Berzonsky, 1990, 1994; Berzonsky & Ferrari, 1996; Dollinger, 1995; Nurmi, Berzonsky, Tammi, & Kinney, 1997). These characteristics entail an inability to be curious about or explore relationships with strangers or humanity, coupled with a lack of awareness regarding their unloving actions towards strangers or humanity. The negative relationship found between the diffuse identity style and empathy (e.g., Berzonsky & Sullivan, 1992; Dollinger, 1995; Soenens et al., 2005) further delineates the lack of relationship between this style and compassionate love for humanity. Lastly, compassionate decisions to act lovingly towards humanity do not result from a dependence on others for identity; this is characteristic of the diffuse identity style and has been found to make it harder to be freely compassionate (Underwood, 2002).

The strong relationship discovered between compassionate love for humanity and level of couples' informational identity style has far reaching possibilities for application

to bettering humanity through altruistic helping. Previous research has found support for the hypothesis that compassionate love for humanity and strangers is associated with volunteer behavior (Sprecher & Fehr, 2005), which would intuitively make a link between the informational identity style being related to greater volunteerism. Sprecher and Fehr (2005) suggest that those individuals who experience high levels of compassionate love, but are not discriminating in the targets of that love, may be those who are more likely to dedicate their lives to the service of others. Both compassionate love for humanity and close others are associated with the provision of social support, empathy, helpfulness, and volunteerism (Sprecher & Fehr, 2005).

Compassionate love for close others. Similarity in both couples' informational and normative identity styles were expected to be negatively related to compassionate love for close others. Further, similarity in couples' diffuse-avoidant identity style was expected to be positively related to compassionate love for close others. Unexpectedly, similarity in all three identity styles was unrelated to couples' scores for close others' compassionate love. Level of couples' informational and normative styles were expected to be positively related to compassionate love for close others, while level of couples' diffuse-avoidant identity style was expected to be negatively related to compassionate love for close others. Hypotheses for the informational style were supported as level of couples' informational identity style was significantly positively related to compassionate love for close others. As expected, level of couples' normative style was also positively related to compassionate love for close others. Consistent with hypotheses, level of couples' diffuse-avoidant identity style was found to be unrelated to compassionate love for close others, although this relationship wasn't negative as expected.

The findings that both level of couples' informational and normative identity styles were positively related to compassionate love for close others supports the findings that both committed identity styles are positively associated with the personality traits of agreeableness, extraversion, and conscientiousness (Dollinger, 1995) as well as the coping strategy of seeking social support (Berzonsky, Nurmi, Kinney, & Tammi, 1999), suggesting that the active social capacities characteristic of these styles are precursors to a natural ability for forming intimate relationships. Erikson (1968) believed that intimacy occurred in good marriages, as well as between friends, family members, and neighbors. Scores on the compassionate love for close others scale have been found to be more closely related to social support for others scores than compassionate love for humanity (Sprecher & Fehr, 2005). Normative style couple members are especially likely to show support, or compassionate love, for members of their social group (Brody et al., 2008), and if those couples high in the informational style are able to express compassionate love to humanity, there is no reason why they wouldn't also express this love to family members and close friends. These findings support the assumption that individuals with both the informational and normative identity styles will be more able to focus on the needs of others without interference from unfulfilled security and esteem needs than individuals who use the diffuse identity style (Sprecher & Fehr, 2005).

Compassionate love for intimate partners. Similarity in couples' informational and normative identity styles were expected to be negatively related to compassionate love for intimate partners. Additionally, similarity in couples' diffuse-avoidant identity style was expected to be positively related to compassionate love for intimate partner.

Adversely, similarity in all three identity styles was unrelated to couples' scores for intimate partner compassionate love.

The lack of significant relationships found between similarity in all three identity style couples' scores and compassionate love parallels the lack of predictable pattern in similarity of couple identity style to level of marital satisfaction found for men in the Cook and Jones (2002) study. Further, only a moderate size similarity in identity style effect was found for wives. It is important to note that the Cook and Jones (2002) study required participant couples to be married less than 10 years, with the mean age for couples being under 25. It was expected that the older ages and greater number of years married for the couples in the current study would result in greater similarity in identity effects expressed through compassionate love. In the current study, with compassionate love for intimate partner being comparable to marital satisfaction, no discernable relationship was found for either gender.

It is possible that similarity in couples' overall identity style is not an important correlate of compassionate love or marital satisfaction. For example, there is little evidence for similarity in couple members on the most frequently studied dimensions of personality, Neuroticism and Extraversion (Eysenck, 1990). By contrast, there is considerable evidence of concordance for social attitudes (Eaves, Eysenck, & Martin, 1989) and other variables related to Openness (Carlson & Williams, 1984), which is an element of the informational identity style. While it has been known for quite some time that couples tend to have congruent values (Coombs, 1961; Kirton, 1977), this element of similarity may not be a significant enough portion of the informational identity style for compatibility in style to be related to either compassionate love or marital satisfaction. A

further possibility is that the longer a couple is married, the more entwined identity styles become; these couples have moved past Erikson's (1982) identity/intimacy transition with the melding of identities and maintaining of separate identities complete. Thus, it may be difficult for these couples to answer questions on the ISI-6R while thinking only of self; spouses responses/support may factor heavily into each answer. While the current findings do not suggest that Cook and Jones' (2002) findings generalize to older, long-term married couples, further research is needed to determine the validity of these quandaries.

Alternatively, the lack of relationship between similarity in couples' identity style and compassionate love for intimate partner is underscored by Aron and Aron's (1986) self-expansion model. Aron and Aron developed the self-expansion model of motivation and cognition in close relationships, which posits a fundamental need to expand potential efficacy. One implication of this model is that people should be attracted to those that will offer maximum possibilities for expanding the self (Aron et al., 2006). While this theory still posits that similarity is important for the cementing of an initial relationship, evidence shows that when people believe a relationship is likely, similarity becomes less important in predicting attraction. However, Goldstein and Rosenfeld (1969) found similarity to be less important for individuals who were assessed as low on "fear of rejection" or who scored low on "need for approval" on a standard personality test. Greater maturity, afforded by the informational identity style, and presumably greater confidence, afforded by both committed identity styles, in the ability to form and maintain relationships would make it less likely that similarity would be a reason for attraction (Izard, 1963).

Level of couples' informational and normative identity styles were expected to be positively related to compassionate love for intimate partners, while level of couples' diffuse-avoidant identity style was expected to be negatively related to compassionate love for intimate partners. Hypotheses for the informational style were unsupported, as level of couples' informational identity style was not significantly positively related to compassionate love for intimate partners. Contrary to hypotheses, level of couples' normative style was unrelated to compassionate love for intimate partners. Interestingly, the mean score for couples' compassionate love for intimate partner was the highest of all three compassionate love types. As expected, level of couples' diffuse-avoidant style was significantly negatively related to compassionate love for intimate partners.

Findings for compatibility in level of the informational and normative styles may not have been significant because compassionate love for intimate partner may be more related to prosocial behavior, specifically social support (Sprecher & Fehr, 2005), than it is to either committed identity style. For example, variables including volunteerism and spirituality which were significantly related to compassionate love for humanity, and thus the informational identity style, were found to be unrelated to compassionate love for intimate partner. It must be remembered that Berzonsky's (1989) identity styles are social cognitive processing systems, which may be more in line with values, actions, and ideologies than they are with feelings. While it may take an open, reflective, and accommodating informational processing style to fully express compassionate love for humanity, no such cognitive abilities may be necessary for the expression of love for an intimate partner. However, it is notable that the relationship between compatibility in level of couples' informational style was the only style to approximate a significant

relationship to compassionate love for intimate partner. Marcia (2002) postulated that identity achieved, or informational individuals, would display the greatest capacity for 'true intimacy.' With a larger sample size, it is likely that this relationship would have reached significance.

While this study was not longitudinal in nature, the finding that there are no gender differences in couples' expressed compassionate love in the current sample of older couples, when there were in the previous studies with younger couples (Sprecher & Fehr, 2005), suggests support for continuity of identity development throughout adulthood. Although identity development begins in adolescence, Erikson (1968) suggested that this developmental task continues to be faced during early adulthood, with identity revisions occurring throughout one's life at pivotal transition points. However, while finding intimacy balance is the developmental task facing those who have reached identity achievement, the developmental task more fitting of middle adulthood is generativity, although these stages can occur concurrently. Erikson (1968) emphasized that a well defined identity was necessary for the blossoming of true intimacy, which includes both a counterpointing and a fusing of identities (i.e., mutual devotion). Thus, it is possible that couples with a high level of the informational identity style have already achieved 'true intimacy' and are now at the stage where their love is focused outwards, to cultivate strength in the next generation (Erikson, 1982), with the development of generativity now more related to compassionate love than the development of identity. The lack of significant relationship for couples' with high levels of the normative style may also be related to a focus on generativity development, rather than identity

development, although for them this generativity appears to extend only to close others, rather than to humanity as a whole.

Conceivably the most visible marker of identity changes (and intimacy) is through marriage, in which individuals are perceived by the role they play in that relationship (Cook & Jones, 2002). For instance, findings show that specific perceptions of a partner may be affected by spouses' cognitive complexity (Neff & Karney, 2008), a characteristic of the informational identity style. This finding suggests that intimate partners that use an informational identity style are better able to understand the specific positive and negative qualities that their partners possess, leading to correct motivation and discernment and the full expression of compassionate love. It is valid to assume that in order for the couples in the current study to have formed such long-lasting relationships, some form of intimacy must be present. However, while identity changes and intimacy adjustments might still be occurring in long-term married couples, it is possible that these couples are now expending the largest amount of personal growth energy towards successfully resolving Erikson's (1968) generativity stage.

The negative relationship between couples' compatibility in level of diffuse-avoidant identity style can be understood in terms of Orlofsky, Marcia, and Lesser's (1973) five intimacy statuses. Erikson (1959) postulated that "It is only after a reasonable sense of identity has been established that real intimacy with the other sex (or, for that matter, with any other person, or even with oneself) is possible" (p. 95). Just as self-awareness is important to identity and intimacy, an advanced understanding of self and others seems central to the concept of compassionate love (Volling, Kolak, & Kennedy, 2008). Couple members with higher levels of the diffuse-avoidant identity style have less

clearly defined identities than their informational and normative counterparts, suggesting that they would only be able to form stereotyped (may date and have friends but lack depth in relationships) or pseudointimate relationships, characterized by an absence of 'true intimacy' (Erikson, 1959, 1968). Thus, it is understandable that a higher level in couple diffuse-avoidant compatibility would result in a lower level of compassionate love for spouse.

The present finding that compatibility in couples' informational style alone predicts compassionate love for humanity is notable in that this directly supports the proposed relationship and is suggestive of possible real world applications. Empathic concern, moral reasoning, agreeableness, and the ability to take the perspective of others have previously been associated with altruistic helping or compassionate love in some situations (Dovidio & Penner, 2001). Previous research on marital satisfaction suggests that the predictors include similarity in cognitive skills (e.g., Kaslow & Robinson, 1996), which is supported by the level of couples informational style predicting compassionate love, especially in light of the need for cognitive complexity expressed by informational individuals. The current study suggests that the informational identity style should be added to this list of positive predictors, and that compassionate love is indeed associated with a variety of other-oriented, pro-social behaviors. Interestingly, to the extent that spirituality motivates compassionate love, it is strangers and humanity that will likely benefit. The intent to extend love to all human beings is irrefutably tied to various spiritual traditions, with one main example being the loving kindness element of mindfulness (Kabat-Zinn, 1990), which is an outcome and tenet of many Eastern religions, often reached through various meditation techniques.

Research question 2: Is the relationship between compatibility in the informational identity style and compassionate love for humanity mediated by mindfulness and self-compassion?

It was expected that any positive and significant relationship between compatibility in the informational identity style and compassionate love would be at least partially mediated by mindfulness and self-compassion. Baron and Kenney's (1986) mediational technique was employed in the performance of hierarchical regressions to determine if there was a relationship between the informational identity style and either mindfulness or self-compassion (step 2), once it was determined that a relationship existed between compatibility in couples' informational identity style and compassionate love for humanity (step 1).

Mindfulness. Contrary to hypothesis, mindfulness was found to be unrelated to both the informational identity processing style and the outcome measure of compassionate love. However, the mean for individual mindfulness levels was just below three ("sometimes true of me") on a 5 point scale, with a standard deviation of less than one (Table 2). Choosing the safe middle-ground on the scale suggests that couple members were either unwilling or unable to reflect on their mindfulness in various situations. It is also possible that they found the questions too general, rendering them unable to circle a decisive "never true of me" or "always true of me"; couple members were found to be neither mindful nor mindless.

Although mindfulness as characterized by Western researchers has aspects related to the informational identity style, it appears that mindfulness cannot be subsumed under

the umbrella of this cognitive processing style. Mindfulness is bigger than identity, operating on, rather than within, thought, feeling, and other contents of consciousness (Brown & Ryan, 2003). For instance, studies have shown that mindfulness as measured by the Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS; Brown & Ryan, 2003), is only moderately related to emotional intelligence and openness to experience, as well as minimally related to the need for cognition. In Eriksonian terms, ego identity appears to include that which is known about the self-as-knower (Berzonsky, 1990), which resembles James' (1890/1950) conception of the I as active "knower," and the me as the entity that is "known." However, if this were the case, one would expect mindfulness to be related to the informational identity style, which predicts higher levels of ego development. In the current study, the lack of relationship between these two constructs suggests that while the socio-cognitive elements of the informational style may contain aspects of the self-as-knower, such as the openness and lack of judgment characteristic of this style, it also contains too many ego-bound constructs to represent the self-as-knower without further ego development (Wilber, 1979).

The finding that compatibility in couples' informational identity style was not related to mindfulness can be understood in light of the higher level of ego development reported to be required for the development of mindfulness (Alexander et al., 1991). Although mindfulness has been found to be positively predicted by wisdom, which is positively predicted by the informational identity style (Beaumont, 2009a), this finding was not further supported by the existence of a link between the informational identity style and mindfulness. While the informational identity style may predict wisdom and wisdom may predict mindfulness the propensity for wisdom may still need to be

cultivated through experience, reflection, and meditation in order to later be manifested as mindfulness. The intention of meditation, and the reason it is used to reach higher levels of ego development (Cook-Greuter, 2000; Loevinger, 1976) is to move individuals from this suboptimal state of consciousness, in order to wake up to their own true nature (Shapiro, Schwartz, & Santerre, 2002). This liberation involves recognizing and letting go of old structures and boundaries and evolving to more complex worldviews.

It appears that mindfulness skills need to be cultivated for a relationship between this and other positive predictors of functioning to be found. Meditation provides road maps to reach optimal openness, awareness, and insight. Both theory (e.g., Boorstein, 1996; Kabat-Zinn, 1990) and research have linked mindfulness to positive interpersonal qualities and healthy relational functioning (Barnes et al., 2007; Burpee & Langer, 2005; Carson et al., 2004). Several studies have also found that greater mindfulness is associated with increased feelings of acceptance for intimate partners (Brown & Barnes, 2004; Carson et al., 2004; Wachs & Cordova, 2007). Meditation traditions consistently suggest that the practice of mindfulness cultivates such qualities as wisdom, compassion, insight, and equanimity (Shapiro et al., 2002). For example, in a study examining participation in a 7-day Vipassana meditation retreat (Theravadin Buddhist practice of mindfulness) compared to a matched control group, Emavardhana and Tori (1997) found that only those in the meditation group had significant increases in self-esteem, feelings of worth, benevolence, and self-acceptance, as well as significant changes in ego-defense mechanisms.

While Barnes and colleagues (2007) found that mindfulness predicted romantic relationship satisfaction without an intervention to increase mindfulness, the measures

used involved video-coding of conflict discussions which may be necessary for greater variability in positive outcomes related to mindfulness to be found. Like Beaumont (2009a), Barnes and colleagues (2007) used the MAAS to measure mindfulness, which may have been the reason for significance in a non-meditating sample; this scale has been found to measure mindlessness, rather than mindfulness. Beaumont (2009a) has previously found small correlations between mindfulness and the informational identity processing style. It seems that the MAAS scale can be recognized and understood by the general public; the concept of mindlessness entails a lack of attention or "auto-pilot effect" which most individuals can understand. However, the overall couple and individual mean of around 3 in the current study suggests individuals are having trouble understanding the concept of mindfulness; the FFMQ has been found to actually measure mindfulness. Basic learning principles suggest that one must be able to understand a concept before one can answer questions pertaining to it accurately. This study suggests that mindfulness is not recognizable to the general public; instead, only those in interventions to increase mindfulness skills or individuals who maintain mindfulness practices independently would be able to readily recognize and answer questions pertaining to mindfulness.

Several authors have noted the importance of discriminating outcomes of practicing mindfulness from elements of the mindfulness construct. Wachs and Cordova (2007) state that the MAAS (Brown & Ryan, 2003) may not capture the quality of acceptance characteristic of "true" mindfulness and suggest that other measures, such as the FFMQ may be better markers of mindfulness. Research of this nature was used to determine that the use of the FFMQ to measure mindfulness in the current study would

be more likely to discern a significant effect. However, the present study has not found this to be the case. Also, Bishop et al. (2004) suggested that nonreactivity and compassion, although sometimes discussed as components of mindfulness, might be better understood as outcomes of mindfulness practice, and Brown and Ryan (2004) made a similar point about acceptance. This would suggest that self-compassion would be an outcome of meditation (mindfulness) practice, rather than a predictor of mindfulness.

Self-compassion. Support was neither established for a relationship between the informational identity style and self-compassion, nor the relationship between self-compassion and compassionate love. However, the positive relationship between couples' level of informational identity style and men's self-compassion suggests that in couples with a high level of informational processing style, the husband is also higher in self-compassion. Further, it is important to note that couples higher in self-compassion were also higher in level of identity commitment. Paralleling the findings for mindfulness, men with higher levels of education also had higher levels of self-compassion.

Previous research has determined that self-compassion is positively related to both self-acceptance and compassionate love (Neff, 2003b). However, these findings were not supported by the results of the current study, suggesting that although self-compassion has an element of mindfulness, it cannot be reduced to mindfulness (Neff, 2004). It is important to note that (most) studies where significant relationships between self-compassion and mindfulness have been found were intervention studies conducted to increase mindfulness (e.g., Ortner, Kilner, & Zelazo, 2007), with one such study

specifically having a "loving kindness" meditation aspect to the intervention (Shapiro, Astin, Bishop, & Cordova, 2005). In this study, a 7-week mindfulness meditation (MM) program led to an increase in mindfulness skills, as well as level of self-compassion, suggesting that these abilities can be developed congruently. Further, in a study of young adult heterosexual couples in committed relationships (Neff, 2006), self-compassionate individuals were described by their partners as being more emotionally connected, accepting and autonomy-supporting while being less detached, controlling, and verbally or physically aggressive; many of these self-compassionate outcomes parallel the elements of the informational identity style. Finally, the ability to admit mistakes without ego-defensiveness means that self-compassionate people may have less need to project their faults onto partners via angry accusations (Feldman & Gowen, 1998).

Interestingly, May (2005) states that mindfulness and compassion for inner experiences are the essential ingredients to developing self acceptance, or self-compassion. However, she felt that these ingredients needed to be developed in intervention sessions. According to Brach (2003), the Buddhist path of cultivating mindfulness and compassion is self-acceptance, with these being the two wings of radical self-acceptance. It is easy to see how intertwined the concepts of mindfulness and self-compassion are, while the lack of relationship between these constructs in the present study suggests that they remain quite separate. Neff (2003) considers self-compassion to be equivalent to self-esteem, without the inherent downward comparison. A healthy level of self-esteem is an element of both the informational and normative identity processing styles, although studies have found that the self-reflective nature of the informational style results in a lower level of self-esteem for this style than for the normative style (e.g.

Berzonsky, 2003). While previous evidence clearly connects identity style and self-compassion, the current study was the first to examine this relationship, with the resultant dearth of significance suggesting that self-compassion may be unrelated to self-esteem. For example, Neff (2009) suggests that the comparative dynamic inherent in self-esteem creates interpersonal distance and isolation that subverts connectedness.

If mindfulness is necessary for the true development of self-compassion and self-esteem is an element of both committed identity styles, this would suggest that mindfulness would also have to be a component of these identity styles. However, the current study has shown that mindfulness exists at low or non-existent levels in a broad sector of the general population (broad range of age and education) while the informational identity style is quite prominent. Thus, like mindfulness, self-compassion may be a construct that is not readily understood or exhibited by the general population. After all, self-compassion does entail a non-judgemental acceptance of the entire self, an ability to see personal experience as part of universal experience, and an ability to mindfully observe painful feelings without disconnection or over-identification (Neff, 2006). It is highly unlikely that couples high in the normative identity style, who defensively close themselves off from specific experiences and are lacking in the ability for self-reflection (Berzonsky & Sullivan, 1992), would be able to have high levels of self-compassion. Further, the propensities for greater intimacy, proactive coping, purpose, wisdom, self-actualization, purpose in life, and personal growth well-being exhibited by the informational identity style (Beaumont, 2009a, 2009b; Beaumont & Pratt, 2007; Seaton & Beaumont, 2008b; Vleioras & Bosma, 2005) entail a higher level of self-compassion for this identity style. Yet, the lack of relationship between

compatibility in the informational style and self-compassion provides further evidence for the lack of congruency between self-esteem and self-compassion. The low levels of self-compassion found in the sample population suggest that, like mindfulness, higher levels of ego development are necessary for the true development of this construct; cultivation is necessary to reap the rewards of this more loving and self-respecting view of self.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Although this research represented an initial attempt to delineate the relationship between identity processing style and compassionate love in married or common-law couples, further research is necessary to determine causality between these constructs. Possible limitations to the current study need to be addressed. First, it needs to be remembered that identity is a multifaceted construct that constitutes a variety of interdependent dimensions, including process, structure, function, context, and content, with identity style assessments focusing on only one dimension of identity (Berzonsky, 1992). Further, Berzonsky and Sullivan (1992) have cautioned that the dimension of identity measured may not correspond to specific cognitive and behavioral responses to actual life events. As discussed below, methods for observing the full spectrum of identity need to include the use of both this self-report measure and other more performance-based procedures. Also, it needs to be remembered that the current sample was heterosexual and predominantly Caucasian, resulting in a limitation to generalize the results outside of this sample population. Another important point is that the discontinuous nature of identity status movement across time (e.g., Adams & Fitch, 1982; Kroger, 1986; Waterman, 1985) raises questions regarding the usefulness of overall

global status classification (Berzonsky, 1990). Useful information was provided by the ISI-6R; however, these findings should not be used alone to classify identity globally. Researchers need to go beyond self-reported identity style or status and investigate the processes that individuals use to structure self-relevant information into a sense of self-identity (Berzonsky, 1990), preferably taking into account the conscious nature of human beings and obtaining reports of moment-by-moment processing.

A supplemental limitation to the current study is that independent completion of the compassionate love scale may be overly prone to practice effects due to the similarity of questions for all three versions. While the order of the three versions was counterbalanced, this may not have been sufficient as participants were still expected to answer the same question for all three versions, with the only difference being that one version referred to strangers/humanity, one to close others, and one to specific others. Quick and consecutive completion of the compassionate love surveys may have resulted in unavoidable fatigue from having to answer the same question several times. Unconscious frustration may have led participants to circle a number on the scale without attending to or thinking about the question. Future studies that employ this measure will need to pace participant completion of the versions, perhaps with distraction exercises or games between versions, as well as requiring the presence of the experimenter.

The compassionate love scale in this study proved to be a good measure for both close others and humanity. However, with the exception of the expected relationship for the diffuse style and compassionate love for intimate partner, this version of the measure did not behave predictably. In future studies this measure may be better construed as a measure of other-centered love for close others and humanity, relating more closely to

measures of social support and volunteerism, than to measures of romantic love and relationship satisfaction. However, while it may not be useful to construe this version of the compassionate love scale as marital satisfaction, the underlying compassionate love model holds substantial promise for future research. Underwood (2002) includes in her theoretical model of compassionate love the substrate (individual) nested within his or her physical environment and surrounded by all possible limitations to freedom. Further, the inclusion of motivation and discernment, to govern decision making and action suggests that the conscious self or self-as-knower is also taken into consideration. The inclusive and nested nature of this model suggests a leaning towards the contextual model of development, with the specific incorporation of the conscious self making this model especially conducive as a lens through which to view future relationships between the two suggested versions of compassionate love and constructs of interest.

In addition to the usual criticisms associated with self-report assessment (e.g., habituation, practice effects, retrospective in nature, intentional and unintentional response distortion), my method of data collection is subject to an additional criticism: I trusted couples to answer questionnaires honestly without being biased by the responses of their spouses, and without filling out surveys for reluctant spouses. I have no way of ensuring that this was done. The self-report nature of the measures only allows for the dissemination of retrospective information, making the assumption that the memories of past experience are not tarnished or enhanced by present awareness. Further, the single measurement time design did not allow for the assessment of whether a higher level of couple informational identity style led to compassionate love for humanity; correlation does not entail causation. Longitudinal research is necessary to evaluate the complex

relationships between both couples' and individuals' levels of the various identity processing styles, compassionate love, mindfulness, and self-compassion.

The major psychological trends of this century, all share a common epistemology; in an attempt to be as scientific as possible they have ignored the existence of the conscious self. To provide a more complete view of what human behavior and experience entail, it is crucial to begin observing peoples' moment-by-moment actions and the repercussions of those actions when they are not confined to the couch or the laboratory, but are immersed in the real ecological settings that comprise their daily lives (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988). Thus, future research needs to use a contextual approach, taking into account all elements of the ecological systems that comprise each human life. For instance, it is important to remember that environmental constraints also play a role in identity processing style favoritism. Individuals living in relatively stable tradition-oriented settings, a *postfigurative* culture (Mead, 1970), will find a normative approach to be adaptive while individuals in a *prefigurative* culture (Mead, 1970) will find that values, rules, and expectations change as they grow older. This constant change would ensure that analysis and evaluation of problem-relevant information, entailed in the informational style, would enhance adaptability in such circumstances (Baumeister, 1987; Berzonsky, 1990). Future research needs to take the environment, including nature, culture, and society into account. Further, a more global picture of identity can only come from the analysis of an individual in various relationships, situations, and locations. Also, a narrative research approach may be useful in determining the individual differences between couple members on identity, compassionate love, mindfulness, and self-

compassion, as well as providing a broader picture with regard to the developmental process behind these constructs.

The difficulty in funding and orchestrating a contextual approach to this research, coupled with the importance of the informational identity style and compassionate love to the full-functioning of society suggest the focus of future research should be on intervention development. For instance, research has shown that mindfulness training may contribute to positive outcomes in couple therapy (Carson et al., 2004). As William James (1961) so astutely noted, citizens can do nothing better for their neighbors than to strive for self-actualization; those who don't strive, make the path to self-actualization more difficult for those around them. Erikson (1982) posits that the capacity for self-transcendence is an aspect of ego growth that is motivating during each developmental period, and thus, it can be realized at any age through practice and mature coping (Tornstam, 1994). Self-transcendence is the ability to see oneself and the world in a way that is not hindered by the boundaries of one's ego identity (Erikson, 1982), and thus, it involves a heightened sense of meaning and connectedness with others and with the world (Frankl, 2000; Tornstam, 1994). The unbounded connection to the universe as a whole suggests an intermingling of compassionate love for humanity and strangers, with established compassion for the non-self. Interventions to facilitate ego development, and thus self-actualization and self-transcendence, would do well to experiment with the inclusion of mindfulness and self-compassion enhancement in their strategies. Further, if the informational identity style provides the greatest propensity for mindfulness development (Beaumont, 2009a), more interventions (e.g., Berman et al., 2008) to

increase the use of this style may need to occur before compassionate love can be fully expressed to humanity/strangers, close others, and intimate partners alike.

Conclusions

The results of this study add to the literature on social-cognitive identity processing by making an initial attempt to delineate the importance of compatibility in couples' informational processing style to the expression of compassionate love for humanity and close others. This study was the first to address compatibility in identity styles and compassionate love, as well as the mediating abilities of mindfulness and self-compassion using a sample of older, long-term married couples. Another important implication was the attempt to address the predictive link between the informational identity style and both mindfulness and self-compassion. While a relationship between mindfulness, self-compassion, and compatibility in couples' informational identity style was not found, the evidence still suggests that the informational identity style may hold the greatest propensity for the development of mindfulness and self-compassion. Compassionate love, especially for humanity, has important implications for the harmony of our society, as well as the universe as a whole. The current study points towards the importance of the informational identity style in predicting yet another tenet of positive psychological functioning and healthy marital relationships, in the form of compassionate love.

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Appendix A – Letter of Consent

The Link Between Identity Processing Style and Compassionate Love: Are Mindfulness and Self-Compassion Key Components?
University of Northern British Columbia

Principal Investigators:
Rebecca Bruser, UNBC Candidate for a Master's of Science in Psychology
Dr. Sherry Beaumont, Professor of Psychology, UNBC

Purpose of Research
The purpose of this study is to explore self-identity and compassionate love (altruistic love) in couples.

Prerequisites for Participating in this Survey
- You must be 35 or above
- You must be in a heterosexual marriage or common-law relationship that has lasted for 5 or more years
- You must be able to read and understand English

Procedure
The survey package consists of four questionnaires with questions about your personal background, sense of self, mindfulness, and love for others and yourself. There are a total of 168 questions, which should take approximately 45 minutes to complete.

Confidentiality and Anonymity
Your responses to the questions will be confidential; no personal identifiers (e.g., name or contact information) will be requested. Each survey will be given an ID number (e.g., C1 for Couple 1) and an M (male) or an F (female) will be written on each survey to distinguish the gender of couple members. There will be no way of determining the identity of any participant through these ID numbers; anonymity is guaranteed.

Right to Withdraw from Study
Your participation in the survey is completely voluntary. You are free to withdraw from this research project at any time without consequence. Withdrawing from the survey or choosing not to answer certain questions that you feel uncomfortable with will not result in any negative consequences.

Possible Benefits
Potential benefits include stimulating insight into one's close relationships, as well as contributing to knowledge about positive relationships. Satisfaction may also come from knowing that this research may shed light on what elements may increase compassionate (altruistic) love for humanity, as well as contributing to the scientific community.

Potential Risks
There are no foreseeable risks associated with this research. If you wish to talk to someone regarding issues raised as a result of being part of this project, the following organizations in Prince George can be contacted for information about mental health resources: (1) the Canadian Mental Health Association (250-564-3396), (2) the Elderly Services Program (250-612-4500), (3) or the Personal Supports Centre (250-563-2008).

Use of the Data Collected
The collected data will be stored on a computer in Dr. Beaumont's locked and secure lab for five years (approximately 2015). At this time, all electronic data files will be erased and any hard copies of the data will be shredded. Only the researchers will have access to the data files. Collected data is intended to be used for journal article publication and only aggregate (all participant responses combined) scores will be reported.

Contact Persons
If you have any questions or concerns, or you wish to obtain a copy of the study results, please contact either Dr. Sherry Beaumont (960-6501 or beaumont@unbc.ca) or Rebecca Bruser (bruserr@unbc.ca). Any concerns regarding this study should be directed to the Office of Research, UNBC, 960-5650 or reb@unbc.ca.

Consent
Making a check mark beside the "Yes" box in answer to the below question indicates that I have read the letter about the research project on identity style and compassionate love conducted by Rebecca Bruser and Dr. Sherry Beaumont and I consent to participate in this study. Specifically, I confirm that:
I understand that all the information gathered for this project is to be used for research purposes only and will be considered confidential;
There are no risks associated with this research, however, my participation in this research study is voluntary and I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty;
The purposes, procedures, and benefits of this project have been explained to me;
I have read and understood this informed consent and the attached information letter;
I consent to participating in this study.

Do you agree with the above (5) statements? Yes ____ No ____

Appendix B – Demoghraphics Questionnaire

The following demographic information is collected to allow us to accurately describe the sample of participants. Make a check beside the option for each question that applies to you.

Age (Numerical value in years please): _____

Gender: male_____ female _____

Sexuality: Heterosexual_____ Homosexual_____ Bisexual_____

Unsure_____

Ethnicity: _____ Aboriginal _____ African-Canadian _____ Asian-Canadian_____ Indo-Canadian _____Caucasian _____ Other _____

Check all occupations that apply to you:

Employed full-time ____ Employed part-time ____ Student ____

Retired____ Unemployed ____ Other ____

Check your **highest** education level completed:

_____ Elementary school

_____ Secondary school

_____ High School diploma

_____ Trade or technical school

_____ Some college

_____ College diploma

_____ Some university

_____ University degree

_____ Other

What is the length of time you have been in a committed marriage or common-law relationship? Please respond in years ___

Are you in love now? Yes___ No____ Unsure ____

9. Have you spent a lot of time working on your marriage/partnership? Yes ___No ___

10. Have you meditated before? Yes ____ No ____

11. If so, how regularly? Please write out your answer._____

12. Do you consider yourself to be a spiritual person? Yes _____ No _____

Appendix C – Identity Style Inventory (6G)

INSTRUCTIONS

You will find a number of statements about beliefs, attitudes, and/or ways of dealing with issues. Circle the number between 1 and 5 that best shows how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

1 Strongly Disagree	2 Somewhat Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Somewhat Agree	5 Strongly Agree

1.	I know what I believe about religion.	1 2 3 4 5
2.	I've spent a lot of time thinking about what I should do with my life.	1 2 3 4 5
3.	I'm not sure what I'm doing with my life.	1 2 3 4 5
4.	I act the way I do because of the values I was brought up with.	1 2 3 4 5
5.	I've spent a lot of time reading and/or talking to others about religious ideas.	1 2 3 4 5
6.	When I talk to someone about a problem, I try to see their point of view.	1 2 3 4 5
7.	I know what I want to do with my future.	1 2 3 4 5
8.	I don't worry about values ahead of time; I decide things as they happen.	1 2 3 4 5
9.	I'm not really sure what I believe about religion.	1 2 3 4 5
10.	I was brought up to know what to work for.	1 2 3 4 5
11.	I'm not sure which values I really hold.	1 2 3 4 5
12.	I know where the government and country should be going.	1 2 3 4 5
13.	If I don't worry about my problems they usually work themselves out.	1 2 3 4 5
14.	I'm not sure what I want to do in the future..	1 2 3 4 5
15.	I feel that the work I do (or have done in the past) is right for me.	1 2 3 4 5
16.	I've spent a lot of time reading about and/or trying to understand political issues.	1 2 3 4 5
17.	I'm not thinking about my future now - it's still along way off.	1 2 3 4 5
18.	I've spent a lot of time talking to people to find a set of beliefs that works for me.	1 2 3 4 5
19	I've never had any serious doubts about my religious beliefs.	1 2 3 4 5
20.	I'm not sure what job is right for me.	1 2 3 4 5
21.	I've known since I was young what I wanted to do.	1 2 3 4 5
22.	I have a strong set of beliefs that I use when I make a decision.	1 2 3 4 5
23.	It's better to have a firm set of beliefs than to be open to different ideas.	1 2 3 4 5
24.	When I have to make a decision, I wait as long as I can to see what will happen.	1 2 3 4 5
25.	When I have a problem, I do a lot of thinking to understand it.	1 2 3 4 5

26.	It's best to get advice from experts (preachers, doctors, lawyers, teachers) when I have a problem.	1 2 3 4 5
27.	I don't take life too serious; I just enjoy it.	1 2 3 4 5
28.	It's better to have one set of values than to consider other value options.	1 2 3 4 5
29.	I try not to think about or deal with problems as long as I can.	1 2 3 4 5
30.	My problems can be interesting challenges.	1 2 3 4 5
31.	I try to avoid problems that make me think.	1 2 3 4 5
32.	Once I know how to solve a problem, I like to stick with it.	1 2 3 4 5
33.	When I make decisions, I take a lot of time to think about my choices.	1 2 3 4 5
34.	I like to deal with things the way my parents said I should.	1 2 3 4 5
35.	I like to think through my problems and deal with them on my own.	1 2 3 4 5
36.	When I ignore a potential problem, things usually work out.	1 2 3 4 5
37.	When I have to make a big decision, I like to know as much as I can about it.	1 2 3 4 5
38.	When I know a problem will cause me stress, I try to avoid it.	1 2 3 4 5
39.	People need to be committed to a set of values to live a full life.	1 2 3 4 5
40.	It's best to get advice from friends or family when I have a problem.	1 2 3 4 5

Appendix D – Five-Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire

INSTRUCTIONS

Listed below are statements that describe various ways you may be present in the world. Circle or click on the number which indicates the extent to which you think the statement is true for you the majority of the time. There are no right or wrong answers. For instance, if the statement is very often or always true, circle 5, if it is never or very rarely true, circle 1. Use the 1 to 5 point scale to indicate the frequency of which you think each statement is uncharacteristic (1) or characteristic (5) of you.

1	2	3	4	5
Never or very rarely true	Rarely true	Sometimes true	Often true	Very often or always true

1.	When I'm walking, I deliberately notice the sensations of my body moving.	1 2 3 4 5
2.	I'm good at finding words to describe my feelings.	1 2 3 4 5
3.	I criticize myself for having irrational or inappropriate emotions.	1 2 3 4 5
4.	I perceive my feelings and emotions without having to react to them.	1 2 3 4 5
5.	When I do things, my mind wanders off and I'm easily distracted.	1 2 3 4 5
6.	When I take a shower or bath, I stay alert to the sensations of water on my body.	1 2 3 4 5
7.	I can easily put my beliefs, opinions, and expectations into words.	1 2 3 4 5
8.	I don't pay attention to what I'm doing because I'm daydreaming, worrying, or otherwise distracted.	1 2 3 4 5
9.	I watch my feelings without getting lost in them.	1 2 3 4 5
10.	I tell myself I shouldn't be feeling the way I'm feeling.	1 2 3 4 5
11.	I notice how foods and drinks affect my thoughts, bodily sensations, and emotions.	1 2 3 4 5
12.	It's hard for me to find the words to describe what I'm thinking.	1 2 3 4 5
13.	I am easily distracted.	1 2 3 4 5
14.	I believe some of my thoughts are abnormal or bad and I shouldn't think that way.	1 2 3 4 5
15.	I pay attention to sensations, such as the wind in my hair or sun on my face.	1 2 3 4 5
16.	I have trouble thinking of the right words to express how I feel about things.	1 2 3 4 5
17.	I make judgments about whether my thoughts are good or bad.	1 2 3 4 5
18.	I find it difficult to stay focused on what's happening in the present.	1 2 3 4 5
19.	When I have distressing thoughts or images, I "step back" and am aware of the thought or image without getting taken over by it.	1 2 3 4 5
20.	I pay attention to sounds, such as clocks ticking, birds chirping, or cars passing.	1 2 3 4 5
21.	In difficult situations, I can pause without immediately reacting.	1 2 3 4 5
22.	When I have a sensation in my body, it's difficult for me to describe it	1 2 3 4 5

because I can't find the right words.

23.	It seems I am "running on automatic" without much awareness of what I'm doing.	1 2 3 4 5
24.	When I have distressing thoughts or images, I feel calm soon after.	1 2 3 4 5
25.	I tell myself that I shouldn't be thinking the way I'm thinking.	1 2 3 4 5
26.	I notice the smells and aromas of things.	1 2 3 4 5
27.	Even when I'm feeling terribly upset, I can find a way to put it into words.	1 2 3 4 5
28.	I rush through activities without being really attentive to them.	1 2 3 4 5
29.	When I have distressing thoughts or images I am able just to notice them without reacting.	1 2 3 4 5
30.	I think some of my emotions are bad or inappropriate and I shouldn't feel them.	1 2 3 4 5
31.	I notice visual elements in art or nature, such as colors, shapes, textures, or patterns of light and shadow.	1 2 3 4 5
32.	My natural tendency is to put my experiences into words.	1 2 3 4 5
33.	When I have distressing thoughts or images, I just notice them and let them go.	1 2 3 4 5
34.	I do jobs or tasks automatically without being aware of what I'm doing.	1 2 3 4 5
35.	When I have distressing thoughts or images, I judge myself as good or bad, depending what the thought/image is about.	1 2 3 4 5
36.	I pay attention to how my emotions affect my thoughts and behavior.	1 2 3 4 5
37.	I can usually describe how I feel at the moment in considerable detail.	1 2 3 4 5
38.	I find myself doing things without paying attention.	1 2 3 4 5
39.	I disapprove of myself when I have irrational ideas.	1 2 3 4 5

Appendix E – Compassionate Love Scale (Intimate Version)

INSTRUCTIONS

Listed below are statements that refer to how you might feel about your spouse. The _____ in each statement refers to your spouse. There are no right or wrong answers. For instance, if the statement is very true of you, circle 7, if it is not at all true of you, circle 1. Use the 1 to 7 point scale to indicate the degree to which you think each statement is uncharacteristic (1) or characteristic (7) of yourself.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all true of me			Somewhat true of me			Very true of me

1	When I see ____ feeling sad, I feel a need to reach out to him/her.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
1.	I spend a lot of time concerned about the well-being of _____.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
2.	When I hear about _____ going through a difficult time, I feel a great deal of compassion for him or her.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
3.	It is easy for me to feel the pain (and joy) experienced by _____.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
4.	If _____ needs help, I would do almost anything I could to help him or her.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
5.	I feel considerable compassionate love for _____.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
6.	I would rather suffer myself than see _____ suffer.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
7.	If given the opportunity, I am willing to sacrifice in order to let _____ achieve his/her goals.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
8.	I tend to feel compassion for _____.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
9.	One of the activities that provides me with the most meaning to my life is helping _____.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
10.	I would rather engage in actions that help _____ than engage in actions that would help me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
11.	I often have tender feelings toward _____ when he or she seems to be in need.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
12.	I feel a selfless caring for _____.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
13.	I accept ____ even when he or she does things I think are wrong.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
14.	If _____ is troubled, I usually feel extreme tenderness and caring.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
15.	I try to understand rather than judge _____.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
16.	I try to put myself in _____'s shoes when he or she is in trouble.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
17.	I feel happy when I see that _____ is happy.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
18.	_____ can assume that I will be there if he/she needs me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
19.	I want to spend time with _____ so that I can find ways to help enrich his/his life.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
20.	I very much wish to be kind and good to _____.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Appendix F – Compassionate Love Scale (Close Others)

INSTRUCTIONS

Listed below are several statements referring to how you might feel in your relationships with significant others, including family members and friends. Circle or click on the number which indicates the extent to which you think the statement is true of you. There are no right or wrong answers. For instance, if the statement is very true of you, circle 7, if it is not at all true of you, circle 1. Use the 1 to 7 point scale to indicate the degree to which you think each statement is uncharacteristic (1) or characteristic (7) of yourself.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all true of me			Somewhat true of me			Very true of me

1	When I see family members or friends feeling sad, I feel a need to reach out to them.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
1.	I spend a lot of time concerned about the well-being of those people close to me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
2.	When I hear about a friend or family member going through a difficult time, I feel a great deal of compassion for him or her.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
3.	It is easy for me to feel the pain (and joy) experienced by my loved ones.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
4.	If a person close to me needs help, I would do almost anything I could to help him or her.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
5.	I feel considerable compassionate love for those people important in my life.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
6.	I would rather suffer myself than see someone close to me suffer.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
7.	If given the opportunity, I am willing to sacrifice in order to let the people important to me achieve their goals in life.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
8.	I tend to feel compassion for people who are close to me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
9.	One of the activities that provides me with the most meaning to my life is helping others with whom I have a close relationship.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
10.	I would rather engage in actions that help my intimate others than engage in actions that would help me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
11.	I often have tender feelings toward friends and family members when they seem to be in need.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
12.	I feel a selfless caring for my friends and family.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
13.	I accept friends and family members even when they do things I think are wrong.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
14.	If a family member or close friend is troubled, I usually feel extreme tenderness and caring.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
15.	I try to understand rather than judge people who are close to me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
16.	I try to put myself in my friend's shoes when he or she is in trouble.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
17.	I feel happy when I see that loved ones are happy.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

18.	Those whom I love can trust that I will be there for them if they need me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
19.	I want to spend time with close others so that I can find ways to help enrich their lives.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
20.	I very much wish to be kind and good to my friends and family members.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Appendix G – Compassionate Love Scale (Humanity)

INSTRUCTIONS

Listed below are statements that refer to how you might feel about others. As you complete these items, think of those with whom you do not have relationships. For example, you might think about all of humanity or humankind or you might think about specific strangers. Circle or click on the number which indicates the extent to which you think the statement represents you. There are no right or wrong answers. For instance, if the statement is very true of you, circle 7, if it is not at all true of you, circle 1. Use the 1 to 7 point scale to indicate the degree to which you think each statement is uncharacteristic (1) or characteristic (7) of yourself.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all true of me			Somewhat true of me			Very true of me

1	When I see people I do not know feeling sad, I feel a need to reach out to them.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
1.	I spend a lot of time concerned about the well-being of humankind.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
2.	When I hear about someone (a stranger) going through a difficult time, I feel a great deal of compassion for him or her.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
3.	It is easy for me to feel the pain (and joy) experienced by others, even though I do not know them.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
4.	If I encounter a stranger who needs help, I would do almost anything I could to help him or her.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
5.	I feel considerable compassionate love for people from everywhere.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
6.	I would rather suffer myself than see someone else (a stranger) suffer.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
7.	If given the opportunity, I am willing to sacrifice in order to let people from other places who are less fortunate achieve their goals.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
8.	I tend to feel compassion for people, even though I do not know them.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
9.	One of the activities that provides me with the most meaning to my life is helping others in the world when they need help.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
10.	I would rather engage in actions that help others, even though they are strangers, than engage in actions that would help me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
11.	I often have tender feelings towards people (strangers) when they seem to be in need.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
12.	I feel a selfless caring for most of humankind.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
13.	I accept others who I do not know even when they do things I think are wrong.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
14.	If a person (a stranger) is troubled, I usually feel extreme tenderness and caring.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
15.	I try to understand rather than judge people who are strangers to me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
16.	I try to put myself in a stranger's shoes when he or she is in trouble.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

17.	I feel happy when I see that others (strangers) are happy.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
18.	Those whom I encounter through my work and public life can assume that I will be there if they need me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
19.	I want to spend time with people I don't know well so that I can find ways to help enrich their lives.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
20.	I very much wish to be kind and good to fellow human beings.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Appendix H – Self-Compassion Scale

INTRODUCTIONS

Listed below are a series of statements about different ways you may behave towards yourself. Circle or click on the number which indicates how often you behave in the stated manner. There are no right or wrong answers. For instance, if you behave this way almost always, circle 5, if you almost never behave this way, circle 1. Use the 1 to 5 point scale to indicate the frequency of which you think each statement is uncharacteristic (1) or characteristic (5) of you.

1	2	3	4	5
Almost Never				Almost Always

1.	I'm disapproving and judgmental about my own flaws and inadequacies.	1 2 3 4 5
2.	When I'm feeling down I tend to obsess and fixate on everything that's wrong.	1 2 3 4 5
3.	When things are going badly for me, I see the difficulties as part of life that everyone goes through.	1 2 3 4 5
4.	When I think about my inadequacies, it tends to make me feel more separate and cut off from the rest of the world.	1 2 3 4 5
5.	I try to be loving towards myself when I'm feeling emotional pain.	1 2 3 4 5
6.	When I fail at something important to me I become consumed by feelings of inadequacy.	1 2 3 4 5
7.	When I'm down and out, I remind myself that there are lots of other people in the world feeling like I am.	1 2 3 4 5
8.	When times are really difficult, I tend to be tough on myself.	1 2 3 4 5
9.	When something upsets me I try to keep my emotions in balance.	1 2 3 4 5
10.	When I feel inadequate in some way, I try to remind myself that feelings of inadequacy are shared by most people.	1 2 3 4 5
11.	I'm intolerant and impatient towards those aspects of my personality I don't like.	1 2 3 4 5
12.	When I'm going through a very hard time, I give myself the caring and tenderness I need.	1 2 3 4 5
13.	When I'm feeling down, I tend to feel like most other people are probably happier than I am.	1 2 3 4 5
14.	When something painful happens I try to take a balanced view of the situation.	1 2 3 4 5
15.	I try to see my failings as part of the human condition.	1 2 3 4 5
16.	When I see aspects of myself that I don't like, I get down on myself.	1 2 3 4 5
17.	When I fail at something important to me I try to keep things in perspective.	1 2 3 4 5
18.	When I'm really struggling, I tend to feel like other people must be having an easier time of it.	1 2 3 4 5

19.	I'm kind to myself when I'm experiencing suffering.	1 2 3 4 5
20.	When something upsets me I get carried away with my feelings.	1 2 3 4 5
21.	I can be a bit cold-hearted towards myself when I'm experiencing suffering.	1 2 3 4 5
22.	When I'm feeling down I try to approach my feelings with curiosity and openness.	1 2 3 4 5
23.	I'm tolerant of my own flaws and inadequacies.	1 2 3 4 5
24.	When something painful happens I tend to blow the incident out of proportion.	1 2 3 4 5
25.	When I fail at something that's important to me, I tend to feel alone in my failure.	1 2 3 4 5
26.	I try to be understanding and patient towards those aspects of my personality I don't like.	1 2 3 4 5

Appendix I – Participatory Thank-you

Thank you for participating in this research project!

If you have any comments or questions about the survey, or wish to obtain a summary of the results, please contact bruserr@unbc.ca or beaumont@unbc.ca. A summary of the results will be available after May 2010.

If you wish to talk to someone regarding issues raised as a result of being part of this project, the following organizations in Prince George can be contacted for information about mental health resources: (1) the Canadian Mental Health Association (250-564-3396), (2) the Elderly Services Program (250-612-4500), (3) or the Personal Supports Centre (250-563-2008).

Your contribution is greatly appreciated!