

WTFRomantic

WTFFromantic

An alternative to romantic attraction labels. Abbreviated from "What the Fuck" romantic. Those who identify with WTFFromanticism may be unsure if they experience romantic attraction, unable to understand romantic attraction as a concept or feeling, unable to pin down a clear understanding of romantic attraction, or find the concept of romantic attraction to be inaccessible, inapplicable, or nonsensical.

Your straight friends had a habit of fixing you up on dates, despite your lack of enthusiasm in that area. There was the first boy you dated, in high school. The hunter. That ended quickly. You didn't know what you were doing. There was the second boy in college, the pianist. That ended when he fell for your friend instead, and you felt nothing but relief.

Then there was a period where relationships were looser, casual, lacking categories. Rather than playacting at something you barely understood, you at last felt comfortable, even fulfilled.

"Don't you want something more?" your friends would ask, in a way that implied there was something wrong with you if you didn't.

Your straight friends have a habit of asking your advice on relationships, even though you have little frame of reference for romantic relationships at all, much less straight ones. The rules are too confusing.

"I would never eat dinner alone with *a guy*. I'd feel like I was cheating on my boyfriend!" your straight friend says, and waits for your agreement.

You have no idea how to respond. You've recently come out as bisexual. If you followed her rules, you would never eat dinner alone with a friend of any gender. The idea is absurd to you, and you shrug it off, but the nagging feeling that you don't belong, don't fit, grows stronger.

Your straight friends start moving to the suburbs. You say you'd never feel comfortable there. It's not a place for queers, and you've never lived in a suburb before.

"I don't want to have to mow a lawn," you say.

"You just need a husband to do that for you," your friends say.

Is it romance you find so confusing, or is it the social and cultural rules tied to heterosexuality? How do you separate romantic attraction as a concept from all the societal baggage? Can it be separated? Should it be?

Is romance getting dinner one-on-one with a friend? (you hope not) Is it wanting to give gifts? (maybe closer, but you like giving your friends gifts too) Is it holding hands? (maybe sometimes, but not always; you also hold your friends' hands)

Maybe it's a feeling. Emotional intimacy, like friendship but *more*. You've felt that, you think. Maybe.

There was the man at the mutual aid meeting. "I'd like to get coffee," he said, "but I understand if I'm not your type." You like him. You're friends now, sort of. Somewhere in the fuzzy area between friendship and romance. He calls you his boyfriend, and you feel a surge of gender euphoria.

There's the person in the covid group chat. You trade mask tips, baked goods, flowers, visits. You talk about relationship anarchy, native plants, the anti-lawn movement. They call you their partner, and you feel a warmth deep in your chest when you think of them.

Greyromantic

A romantic orientation on the aromantic spectrum. Someone may identify as greyromantic if they experience romantic attraction but very infrequently. Some greyromantic individuals may only feel romantic attraction once or twice in their life, feel alienated from romance, or feel attraction only in specific circumstances.

**Maybe I can do this romance thing sometimes, you begin to think,
but only when I make my own rules.**

This was written in June of 2023 for the anti-romance jam. Definitions for wtfromantic and greyromantic were taken from the aromantics wiki. If you're reading this, I hope you have fulfilling relationships in ways that make sense to you, whether friendship, romance, or relationships that defy categories altogether. Thank you for reading.

— mxelm