

2. The Heart Line

Relationship Symbols, Stories, and Strategies

“When you accept yourself the whole world accepts you.”

—Lao Tzu

RELATIONSHIPS CONSUME the majority of our waking lives. Every day we have hundreds of opportunities to connect with other people, including our mates, children, parents, grandparents, siblings, coworkers, bosses, subordinates, business partners, and more. Our best relationships start with ourselves.

You can deepen your understanding of your own or someone else’s essential relationship or love style by reading one line in the hand—the Heart Line. The simple knowledge you glean from this etching can pick up, perk up, and improve your daily interactions. Imagine understanding and embracing your emotional system more intimately and improving your relationships by even ten percent.

Your emotional system began its development in the womb. We now know that embryos are affected by relaxing music, car horns, laughing or shouting family members, and any number of other stimuli. After birth, there are an infinite number of environmental factors that continue to influence emotional growth. Our emotions meander and change from day to day, so think of the Heart Line as a river flowing across a plain. As we mature and change, the shape, length, and quality of the Heart Line can and most likely will change as well. You can read your river of the Heart Line to accurately describe your emotional character, tendencies, and requirements.

Non-negotiable needs in relationships—such as the need for

freedom, connection, consideration, or stimulation—are depicted in the Heart Line. It's important you know these needs and that you can claim them for yourself as part of loving yourself. If you can clarify and ask for what you need in a relationship, you're more likely to have that need met. And when you love yourself and your needs are met, you can connect with others more deeply and completely, and therefore appreciate others in a more loving and compassionate way.

This chapter introduces you to four basic, easy-to-read Heart Line types: the Passionate, Big Heart, Hermit, and Rational Romantic. Each represents a style of emotional behavior that is typically displayed to others. How you like to be treated in relationship and how you like to treat others can be read in this line.

Be curious and open to understanding this information, and practice becoming aware of your needs and articulating them in relationships. Be sensitive to others' needs as well. The motivations for connection are different in different people.

I have seen many people who courageously claim their true heart language and live it. It does take bravery to be who you are meant to be. It's not easy, but I'm here to say that living authentically leads to your best life with the most authentic relationships.

Heart Line Identification: Discovering the Heart Line

The Heart Line starts on the outer edge of the palm, under the pinkie finger, and runs horizontally across the hand. (See Figure 4.) The line may be long or short, straight or curved. It usually ends somewhere beneath the middle or index finger. Any Heart Line style is possible on a hand. You may also find a different Heart Line on each hand. The type of Heart Line is independent of culture, gender, or sexual preference. That means any type of Heart Line can show up on any person from any country, man or woman, gay or straight, etc.

The shape of the Heart Line indicates preferred characteristics when relating to others. Curvy lines belong to expressive people who typically show their feelings easily. The Big Heart and Passionate types have curvy lines. They exhibit their feelings more than those with flat or straight Heart Lines. Straight lines belong to people who are more reserved. They reveal their feelings reluctantly. The Hermit and



Figure 4: Long, curving Heart Line

Rational Romantic types have flat Heart Lines. They are less likely to display their emotions outwardly.

The description of your style in relationships is determined by the termination point(s) of your Heart Line. Since 2003, I've used the method of placing an imaginary cross on the palm, as taught by my teacher, Richard Unger, to precisely establish where the Heart Line ends. (See Figure 5.) Find where the widest part of the line ends. Sometimes the line will thin out near the end. To be most precise with your reading, locate the quadrant where the *thickest* part of the Heart Line ends. You'll sometimes see a Heart Line fork into two lines, or even split into three lines; we'll learn more on these splits later in this chapter.

You will want to employ this method on both your right and left

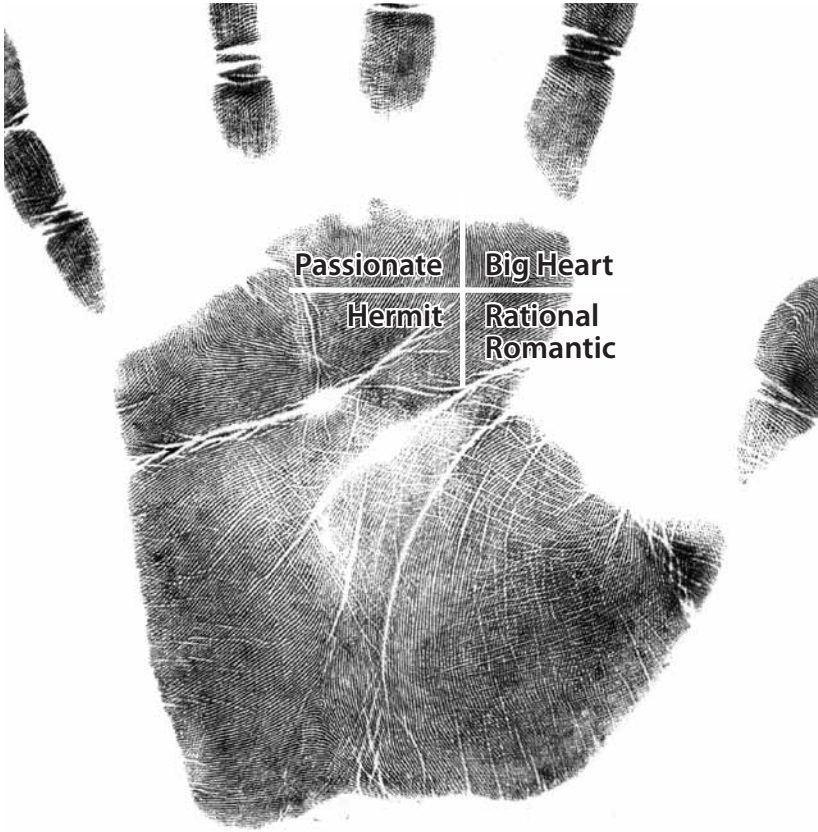


Figure 5: Names associated with termination points of the Heart Line

hands. Empirical evidence shows that the Heart Line on the right hand demonstrates the emotional characteristics displayed to the world, whereas the left hand most often shows the traits used at home and in the inner, more intimate world.

The imaginary cross creates four quadrants. To position the cross, draw an imaginary line straight down between the index and middle finger. Decide whether the Heart Line ends on the index or the middle finger side of the vertical line. Next draw an imaginary horizontal line across the vertical line about half an inch from base of the fingers. Now determine whether the Heart Line ends above or below the horizontal line.

Using this method, look to see where the Heart Line terminates

on each hand. The Heart Line type is named according to where the line ends. These line-types correspond to the elements of nature—Earth, Water, Air, and Fire. The names illustrate emotional behaviors found in owners of these lines. As an example, the Heart Line in Figure 5 is short, flat, and ends in the lower quadrant formed by the imaginary cross below the middle finger. This is called the Hermit Heart.

The Passionate Heart

The Passionate Heart Line, associated with the element Fire, curves up toward the middle finger (Figure 6). It touches the top of the palm and ends in the upper quadrant formed by the imaginary cross under the middle finger.

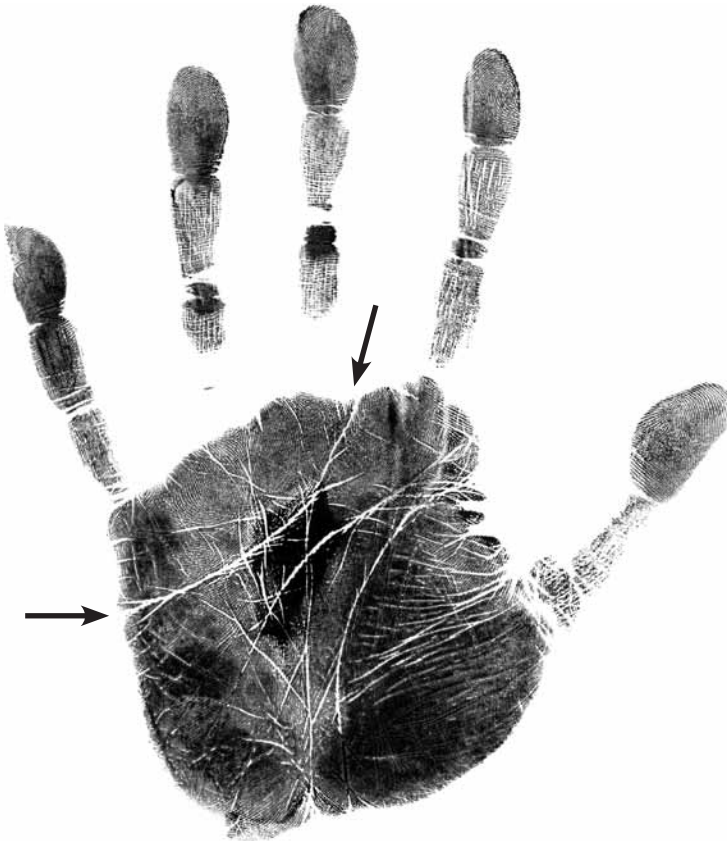


Figure 6: The Passionate Heart

If you are the Passionate Heart, you are likely enthusiastic, expressive, excitable, and even flirtatious. You have the charisma to be the life of the party. Your natural design is like a campfire, attracting people to your warmth. It's crucial for you to express your wants, even when others don't appreciate your directness. You tend to be happiest when you do expose your desires. Your biggest challenge is being stuck with people you consider boring. You can be so intense that when you feel something passionately, it shows loudly and clearly. A word of caution: that little campfire can turn into a forest fire if not contained or given appropriate outlet. I remind the Passionate Heart to display his or her wildest passions *and* be considerate of the needs of others.

Key Words: Enthusiasm, expressiveness, spontaneity, changeability, inspiration, impulsiveness, volatility

Passionate Heart Positive: I bring excitement and charisma to the scene.

Passionate Heart Negative: I can forget the emotional needs of others.

Mantra: I am claiming my desires and expressing my passion with grace and consideration.

The Big Heart

The Big Heart, coupled to the element Water, curves up toward the index finger. It touches the top of the palm and ends in the upper quadrant formed by the imaginary cross under the index finger, or closer to the index finger than the middle finger.

If you are a Big Heart, you feel emotions keenly and are warm-hearted, caring, and nurturing of others. You are a Sweetheart and like connecting with other people and animals. Your favorite song might be "All You Need Is Love" by the Beatles. Your natural design is like a water droplet that joins the pool at the base of a waterfall. Seeing others bond during a special gathering warms your heart. Your feelings are hurt if people suddenly disconnect with you or if you witness detachment and conflict between loved ones. Your biggest challenge is to nurture yourself along with others and not fall victim to emotional



Figure 7: The Big Heart

sell-out. If, in your view, someone disconnects from you abruptly, you might take it personally and become overly critical of yourself, blaming yourself (or the other) for the separation. I remind the Big Heart to look at the truth of the separation or change in the relationship to help him accept himself and all his feelings in all stages of the relationship.

Key Words: Caring, compassion, connectedness, charitableness, self-sacrifice, martyrdom

Big Heart Positive: I help people feel loved and cared for, while spending some time alone nurturing myself.

Big Heart Negative: I can easily lose myself in the drama of others and feel like a victim.

Mantra: I claim my boundaries, realizing I am the love I seek and long to embody.

The Hermit Heart

The short and straight Heart Line belongs to the Hermit and is associated with the element Earth. It ends in the lower quadrant formed by the imaginary cross below the middle finger. (The upper arrow in Figure 8 points to another line that looks like it could be a Heart Line, but it is not; these lines are not connected.)

If you are a Hermit, you are a lone settler. This doesn't mean you will always be alone or that you want to go through life solo. It does mean that you require sanctuary time. The Hermit certainly has emotions, but you display yours less than do owners of curved Heart Lines.



Figure 8: The Hermit Heart

You need time to marinate in your feelings before responding to emotional stimulation. You like loyal, solid, and dependable relationships in which you have a strong sense of freedom. In fact, freedom is non-negotiable to you. Your nature is to be productive and grounded. Privacy, security, and work are high priorities. You show your love by doing things for others. You assure protection for those few you are loyal to. You might not ask others “How are you feeling?” because you believe that actions speak louder than words. You simply look at how people are doing, without becoming entangled in uncomfortable emotional scenarios. Your biggest challenge is to tune in to your heart and communicate your feelings at the appropriate time of your own volition.

Key Words: Protection, security, devotion, freedom, sanctuary, productivity, reclusion, withdrawal

Hermit Heart Positive: I am dedicated to projects and loyal to very few people and to my pets.

Hermit Heart Negative: I can withdraw completely when faced with uncomfortable displays of emotion.

Mantra: I am keeping my heart open to mysterious feelings and practicing communication in my relationships.

The Rational Romantic

The Rational Romantic Heart Line, linked to the element Air, is long, flat, and straight, and ends in the lower quadrant formed by an imaginary cross below the index finger.

If you own this Heart Line, you are constantly assessing, analyzing, and pondering your own feelings and those of others. You loathe fights because disagreements give you even more to think, think, think about. Your thoughts swirl around you like the wind. One of your favorites songs might be “How Deep Is Your Love?” by the Bee Gees. Meaningful conversations, in which you have time to actually dialog with another person, are of utmost importance. Subtle nuances of words or facial expressions can put you into a tailspin of “What did she mean by *that*?” Your biggest challenge is to minimize your

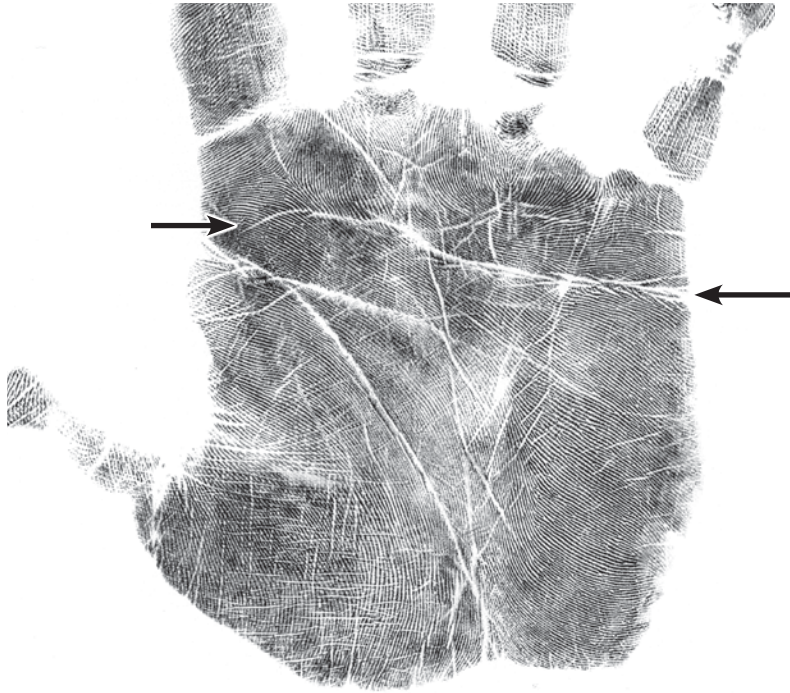


Figure 9: The Rational Romantic

own mental editing. Overly processing feelings come naturally to the Rational Romantic, and your best trait is consideration. It's very important for you to recognize and respect your own needs and desires and to make requests for those needs to be fulfilled.

Key Words: Thoughtfulness, consideration, intellectuality, high-mindedness, meaning, examination, indecisiveness.

Rational Romantic Positive: I am considerate and understanding of the thoughts and feelings of others.

Rational Romantic Negative: I can lose myself in ideals and excessive analysis of others.

Mantra: While I am appropriately mindful of the emotional needs of others, I am also aware of and honor my own passions.

Heart Line Impersonators

It is not uncommon to see a river veer off in another direction. People can be like that too. I consider an impersonator to be someone who subconsciously pretends to be someone he or she is not. Unfortunately, such a person can develop a deep, long-term pattern of revealing herself emotionally in ways other than that of her true type as shown in her Heart Line. It's not who she really is, and this, too, shows up in the palms.

A common impersonator is pictured in Figure 10. The curvature of this Heart Line would seem to end under the dotted arrow. However, at the last minute the actual Heart Line takes a sharp detour toward the index finger (under the solid arrow), signaling a Passionate Heart masquerading as a Big Heart.

Owners of Heart Lines that change course like this have easy access to two different Heart Line styles—think of a large tributary meeting the main river. Something within them flows in different directions. The owner of the hand in Figure 10 as a Passionate Heart is wired to be spontaneous, ask directly for what she wants, and display her vivaciousness without hesitation. However, as indicated by the



Figure 10: Passionate Heart impersonating a Big Heart

divergent line on her palm, her strong Big Heart tendencies typically dominate her emotional style, in which she is concerned about appearing selfish at the expense of others' feelings and desires. She might act to avoid the appearance of being manipulative to get her needs met. Her internal system is a bit confused as to which emotional style to claim.

After becoming aware of these Heart Line differences and understanding and claiming her real yet hidden Passionate Heart style, this woman said, "I always felt there was a big part of me that loved being spontaneous, the life of a party, needing to take care of my needs. Yet I felt compelled to be there for others in a big way. More times than not I would focus on the latter and get annoyed or resentful. Learning about the passionate part of myself has freed me to more regularly honor the passion in me and not feel guilty for being unable to be there for someone when it wasn't something I wanted to do from my heart or that I had the time to do."

Imagine the freedom she now feels. In a sense, she unmasked the impersonator to release and free herself so that she could see and be herself more clearly and authentically.

Key Words: Enthusiastic, expressive, dramatic, suppressed spontaneity, disconnection, resentment

Passionate to Big Heart Positive: I fully claim my natural style of spontaneous expression and release self-imposed obligation to meet the perceived needs of others.

Passionate to Big Heart Negative: I am completely lost and annoyed with myself as I squelch my needs and wear this mask, with guilt.

Mantra: In the moment, I recognize my true desires and make requests for what I want, while extending care and consideration for others, too.

Another possible Heart Line river system is one that splits into two or three forks. If all parts of the line still have the original width after the split, the owner will easily adapt to the Heart Line styles associated with each termination point.



Figure 11: Heart Line splits near the end

In Figure 11 the main Heart Line splits under the middle finger into two forks. One fork curves up to the index finger, while the other runs straight, also ending under the index finger. In this case three different Heart Line descriptions apply: Hermit, where the split occurs, Big Heart, and Rational Romantic.

I call this configuration the Adaptable Affections Heart Line. If you see this configuration in your palm, you likely are considerate and cautious in your connections with others. As long as your non-negotiable need for freedom is recognized and protected, you will be balanced in thought, concern, and reflection in relationships, and you can adapt as required to the love style around you. If privacy, loyalty, and dependability are needed, with little effort you can cultivate your Hermit form. If a meaningful conversation is called for, you're all ears. You also have an innate knowledge of when a hug would be the perfect medicine. Because you can give up your private sanctuary as you over-adapt to the affectionate needs of others, your internal push-pull requires balancing between your need for alone time and social time.

Key Words: Adaptability, caution, consideration, helpfulness

Adaptable Affections Positive: I can put others first with a hug or conversation.

Adaptable Affections Negative: I give up my private sanctuary as I over-adapt to the needs of others.

Mantra: I am contemplating romance with a big heart without sacrificing my own heart center.

Heart Line Variations

The Heart Line can show a variety of interesting twists, turns, and formations. Sometimes certain lines will accompany the main Heart Line and reflect emotional subtleties of their owners. These arrangements are considered distractions to the main Heart Line type because they reduce the strength of the flow of the main river. It's important to recognize potential distractions in your emotional life so that you can make conscious choices for either self-acceptance or course-correction, as you desire. Let's take a look at a few variations.

Bending Over Backward

See the downward hook coming off the Heart Line in Figure 12 that resembles a miniature waterfall. This tiny deviation indicates that emotions of the heart are pouring out for another at the expense of the owner's emotional needs. Keeping the peace is a high priority to you if this is your Heart Line offshoot. Research has found owners of this marking have a serious inclination to rearrange their emotional response system to conform to the perceived wants of others. Saying "Yes" to go on a date when you don't really want to is something you might do if this formation is in your hand.

One client with this marking told me her "sympathy date" story. Her male friend hadn't had a date in two years. He had asked several women out, but no one would go with him. He even offered to pick them up and pay all expenses. Still no dates. After hearing his sad story, she told him she would go to a movie with him, in the hope of

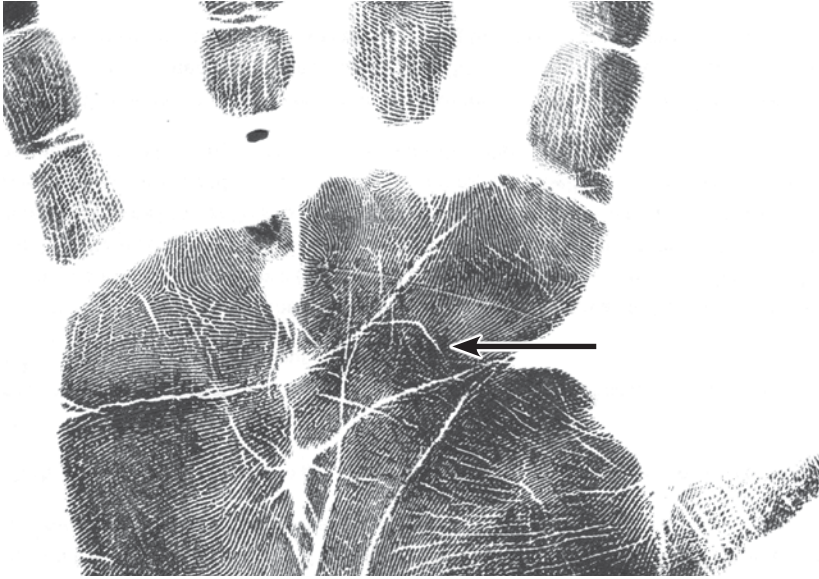


Figure 12: Bending Over Backward variation

lifting his spirits. He was elated. After the first movie, of course he asked her out again. Her intention was not to initiate a romantic relationship; it was simply a sympathetic reaction to his feelings. Instead of rejecting his invitation with a “No, thank you,” she changed phone numbers and moved to a new location. She couldn’t bear to hurt his feelings by telling him she didn’t want to date him. She went from sympathy date to date escape.

Another client with the Bending Over Backward Line has repeatedly undermined her emotional power by taking in wounded souls. She has great sensitivity for lonely hearts. She stretches her empathy to excess, maintaining peace at any price, until she explodes. The explosion can happen internally or externally, or both. Inward explosions come with fear, guilt, self-criticism, and retreat. External outbursts create shame, self-doubt, and regret. In either case, the heart temporarily closes up. After I talked with her about an incident in which her relationship style had backfired, she realized clearly how she had plummeted over the raging waterfall—as the line suggests. Understanding the implications of this line and realizing how she was prone to rearrange her emotional behavior in the hope of a heartfelt outcome helped her regain control. Now she is more aware of the negative ef-

fects of too much sympathy and is claiming her emotional authority to refrain from excessive outpourings of the heart. The first step was awareness that she was giving away her power to nurture, protect, and avoid hurt feelings. The second step was not saying “yes” when the appropriate response was “no.”

Key Words: Empathy, understanding, sympathy, powerlessness, readjustment

Bending Over Backward Positive: I care for and empathize deeply with the underdog.

Bending Over Backward Negative: I can lose my emotional worth during self-obligated interactions with others.

Mantra: By maintaining grace and respect for both others and myself, I am extending my heart appropriately.

Emotional Armor

Sometimes you'll find extra lines running parallel to the main Heart Line. These additional lines show extra channels where love has been intensely experienced, and also show a determination to protect the heart, like a suit of armor. If your hand shows such lines, you have a deep-seated need to keep your heart safe from being hurt. Pain is to be avoided at all cost. The extra parallel lines act as a shield and represent dependable protection to prevent rejection and disapproval. If you don't have this configuration but wish to better understand a friend who does, imagine a time in your life when your heart was broken. Was there a time in your life when your favorite pet died or had to be given away? Or imagine the heartache you felt as a result of your first break up in high school or college. The pain memory in the heart is so deep and the emotional loss so unbearable that a bulletproof vest is created around the heart to prevent that kind of pain from occurring again.