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An Aisle Report

Better  
Because of

LOVE

Insights from 5,868 Urban Indian Singles

# FOREWORD

## To understand how love, dating and relationships impact modern Indian singles.

This industry report brings together insights from **5,868 urban Indian singles** and reveals a powerful shift: love is no longer performative, it's intentional. To deepen the psychological understanding of these insights, we consulted with **Arouba Kabir**, relationship expert, one of India's leading counselling psychologists, and Founder of Enso Wellness.



At Aisle, we've always believed that the right kind of love changes you - for the better. These findings reaffirm why meaningful connections matter, and why dating platforms must move beyond volume to focus on depth and intention.

- **Sample Size:** 5868 Indians
- **Generational Breakdown:**  
Gen Z (43%) | Millennials (54%)  
| Gen X (3%)
- **Regional representation**  
Metro & Tier 1 (87%) | NRI (9%) |  
Tier 2 & 3 (4%)

**You become better,  
because of love!**

**Chandni Gaglani**

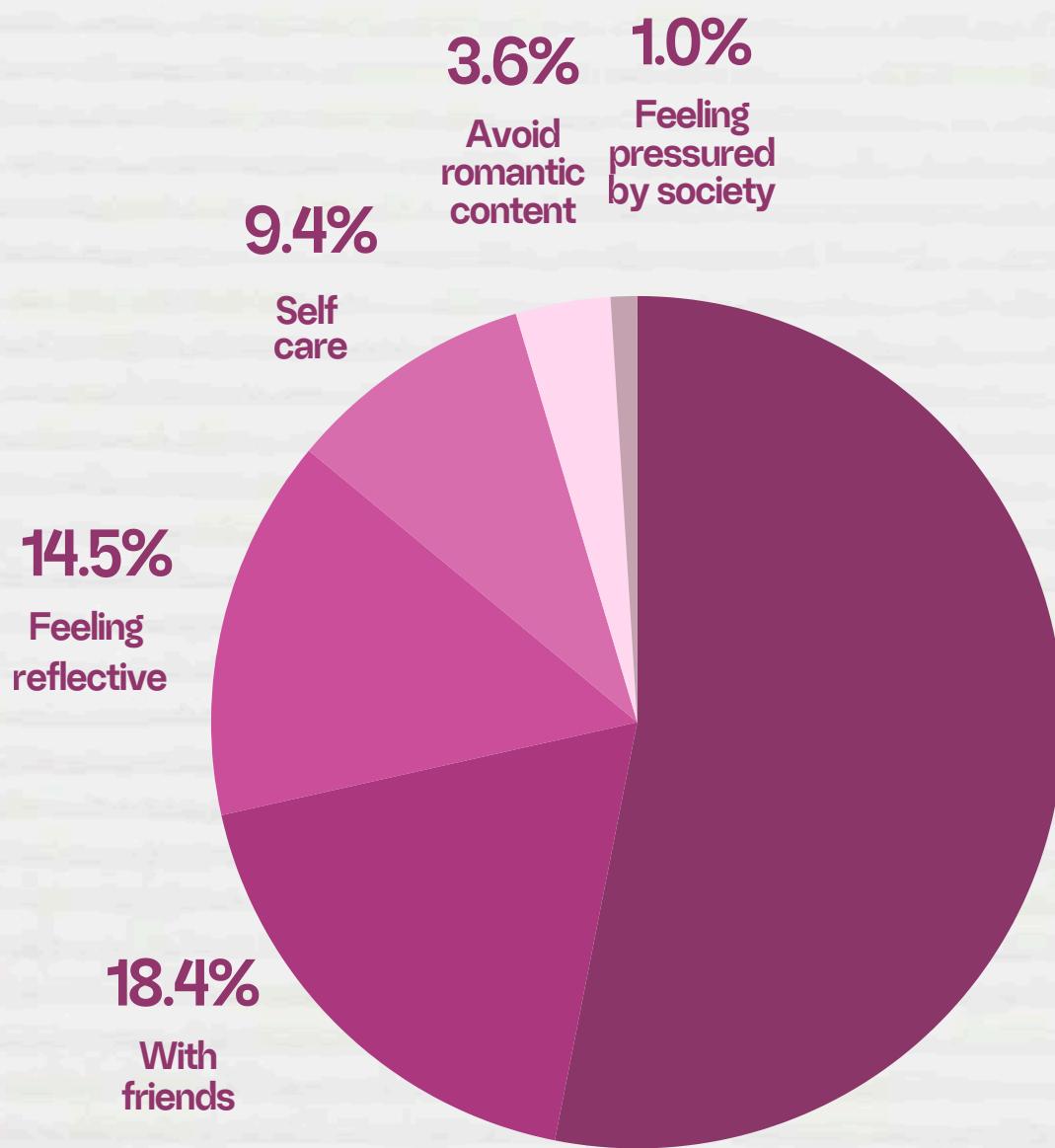
Head of Aisle Network



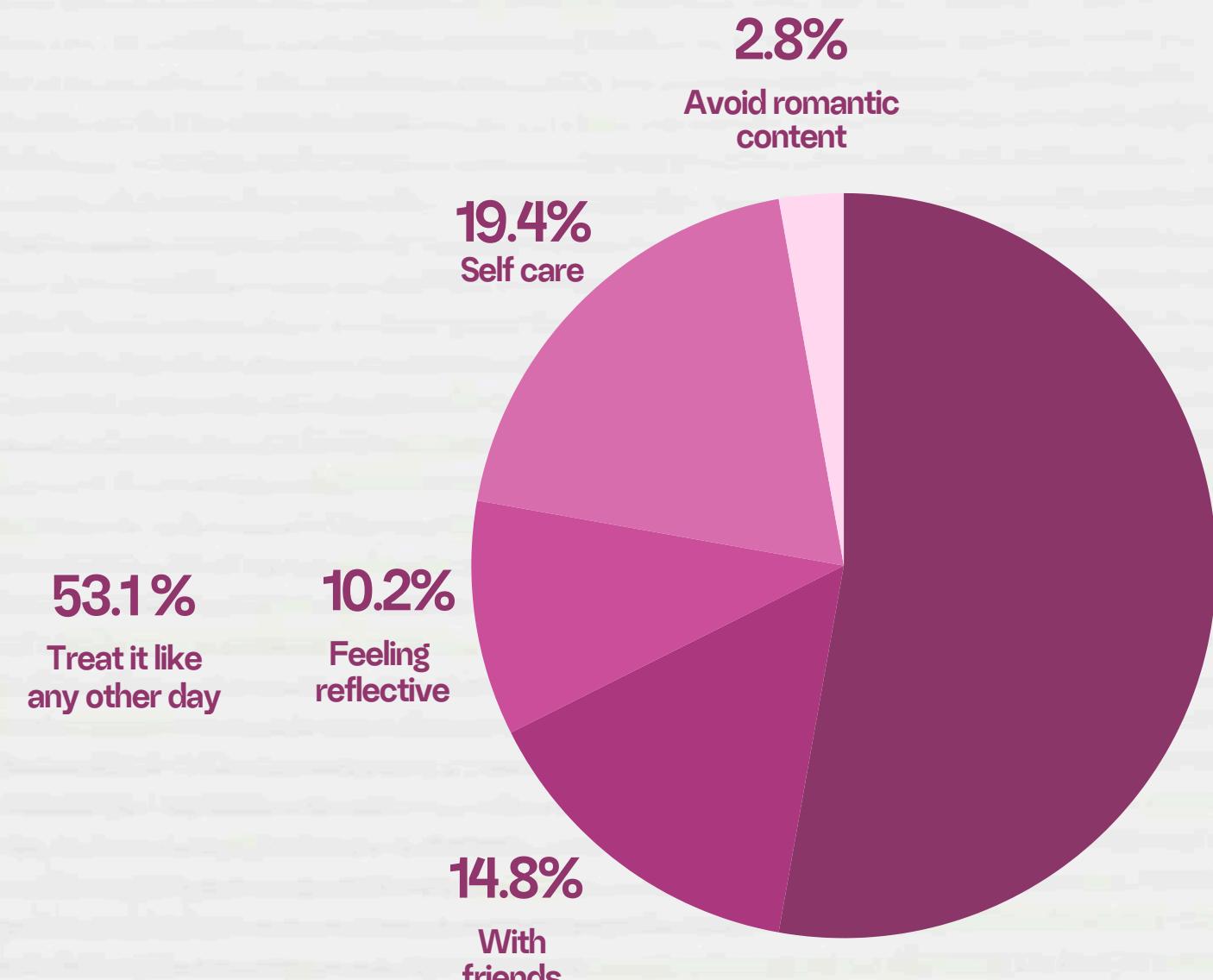
# Valentine's Day Special

53% of the singles surveyed treat Valentine's

Day like any other day



Men



Women

## How Singles Spend Valentine's Day

“What looks like indifference is actually emotional maturity. Singles today aren't waiting for a date, a gift, or a relationship status to feel complete. As they invest in fuller lives, the internal dialogue has shifted: they are no longer asking, 'Will love happen to me?' but rather, 'What kind of person will I become if it does?'”

- Arouba Kabir, in association with Aisle

Consulting Psychologist & Relationship Expert

# Key Insights

## Everyday Love Wins

Valentine's Day is largely treated as just another day - and gender makes no difference. About **53%** of both men and women opt out of the hype.

## The Self-Care Divide

Women are 2x more likely to pamper themselves on V-Day (**19.4% vs 9.4%**), signalling self-care as a distinctly female response to being single.

## The Male Emotional Reckoning

Men are **42%** more likely to feel reflective about wanting a relationship (**14.5% vs 10.2%**), using Valentine's Day as a moment for introspection.

## Men Own Galentine's Now

Men are more likely to spend the day with friends (**18.4% vs 14.8%**). Despite the buzz around Galentine's Day, men lead the **friendship-first celebration**.

## Pressure Has a Gender

**Only 1% of men** feel social pressure on Valentine's Day - marginal, but notable because **women register 0%**. This suggests that singlehood on Valentine's Day is **more socially accepted for women than for men**.

## Community Support vs. Emotional Resilience

Gen Z uses the day to foster **community and reflection**, with a higher preference for friendship celebrations and relationship soul-searching. Meanwhile, Millennials show a grounded **emotional independence**: for 57%, the day has lost its power to disrupt their peace.

# Women Learn Boundaries, Men Learn Patience

Relationships teach them what

traditional upbringing didn't.

## WOMEN:

Discover what they won't tolerate

- My boundaries/deal breakers
- What I need to be happy
- My resilience

## MEN:

Discover their capacity for emotional depth

- My capacity to care deeply
- My boundaries/deal breakers
- What I need to be happy

Top learning  
(single-select)

36.1%

BOUNDARIES &  
DEAL BREAKERS

Women  
Learned

CAPACITY TO  
CARE DEEPLY

20.7%

Men  
Learned

\*Percentages reflect how many respondents from each group selected a particular option

Modern love in India isn't just evolving – it's undoing decades of emotional conditioning. Women are moving from endurance to choice, and men are moving from silence to awareness.

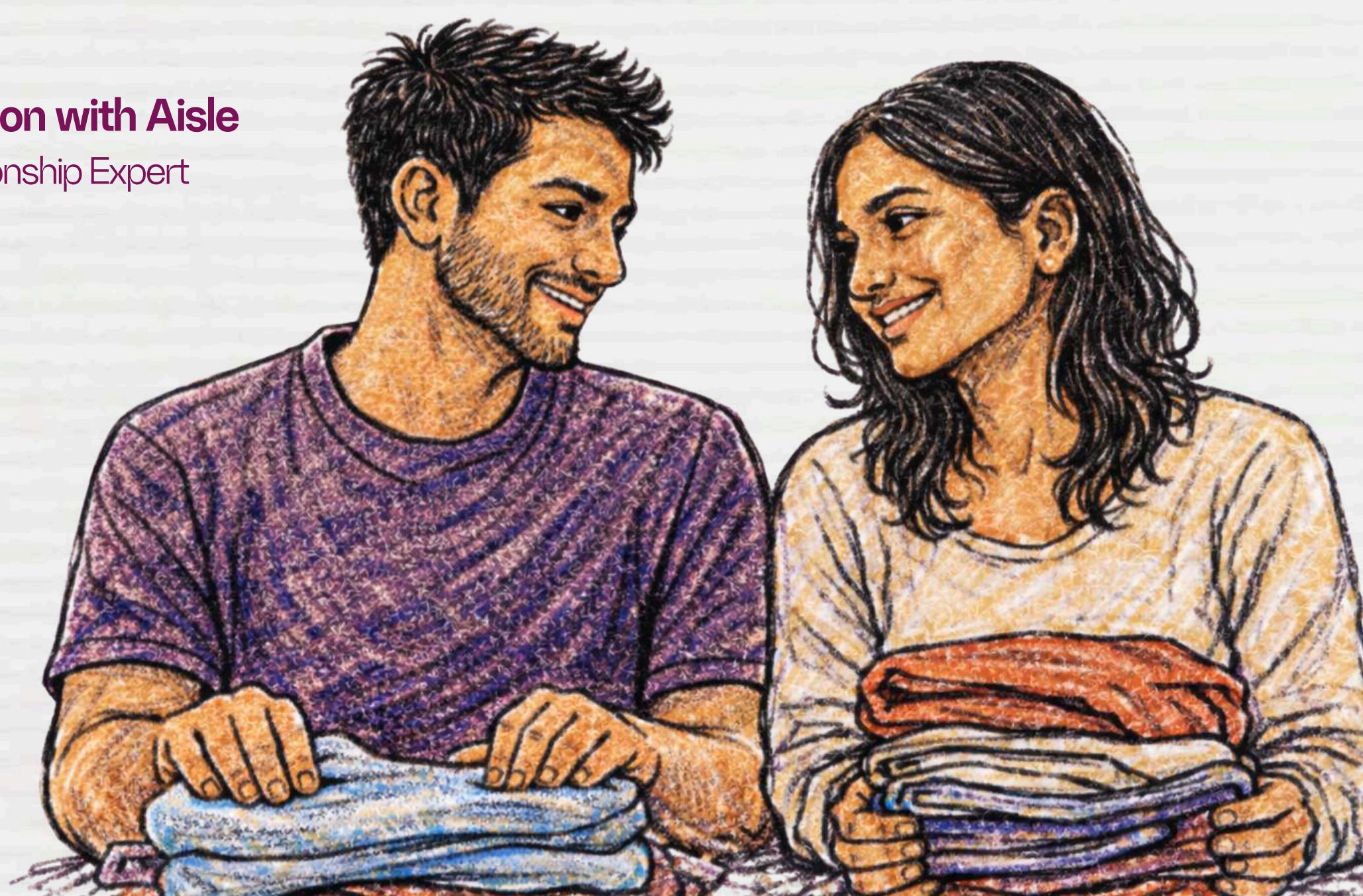


# 54% Indian Women Reject Grand Gestures

Historically, "Care" was often synonymous with "Provision" (financial security/protection). However, this created a deficit in emotional safety. The new India doesn't want you to buy love, it wants you to build love.

"This preference reflects a deeper cultural correction. For years, affection was often expressed through provision – gifts, money, or protection – while emotional and domestic care fell disproportionately on women. Today, choosing acts of service signals a rejection of that imbalance. Indian singles aren't looking to be provided for; they're looking for partners who participate."

– Arouba Kabir, in association with Aisle  
Consulting Psychologist & Relationship Expert



Men lead in quality time (41.1%) while

women prefer acts of service (39.8%)

## How do i most naturally express love?

(By Gender)

Love Language	Men	Women
Quality time	41.1	38.0
Acts of service	29.3	39.8
Physical touch	15.4	5.6
Words of affirmation	12.9	13.8
Gift giving	1.3	2.8

\*Data shows top love language choice by gender. Percentages within each gender = 100%



**Millennials lead in quality time (43.1%)**

## How do i most naturally express love?

(By Generation)

Love Language	Gen Z	Millennials
Quality time	38.4	43.1
Acts of service	31.8	29.6
Physical touch	14.6	14.3
Words of affirmation	12.9	12.4
Gift giving	2.3	0.6

Data shows top love language choice by generation. Percentages within each generation = 100%.

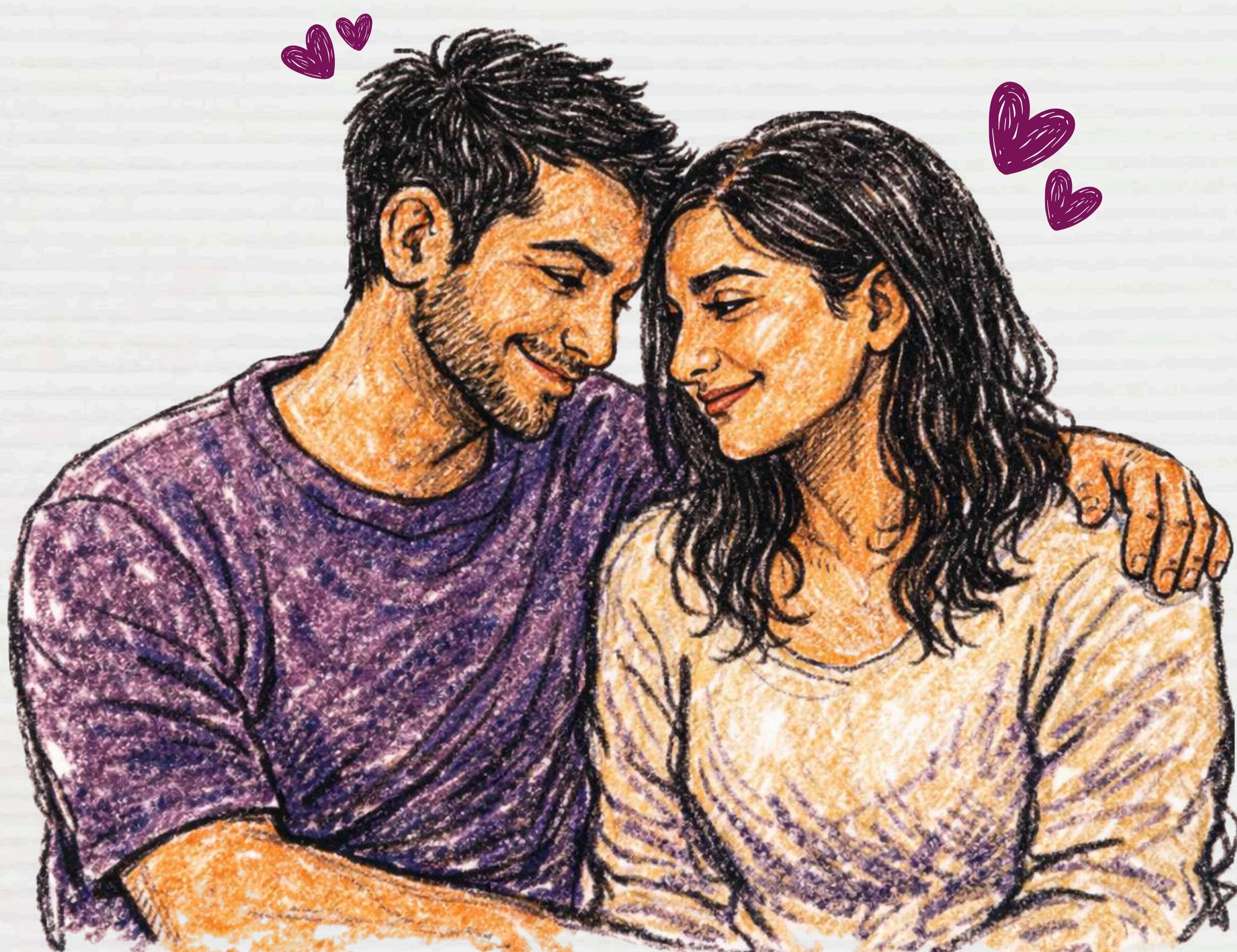


## The Love Language Gap

### How Genders Want to Receive Love

(By Gender)

Love Language	Men	Women
Quality time	37.6	31.5
Acts of service	42.2	53.7
Physical touch	7.5	1.9
Words of affirmation	11.5	10.2
Gift giving	1.2	2.7





## The Love Language Gap

- Both genders want more Acts of Service than they give
- While men tend to express affection through touch and time, women are more likely to value acts of service.
- Gen Z wants verbal affirmation 43% more than Millennials



**The Verdict:** Everyone wants their partner to do more for them.

But women are already giving closer to what men want – men aren't returning the favor.



# 50% of Indian Women Say 'No Thanks' to Emoji Flirting

In 2026, Emojis Don't Equal Effort.

Half of Indian Women Agree.

The emoji economy worked when dating was casual. It breaks when dating becomes intentional. Women prefer words for clarity and reassurance.

"Emojis are emotionally ambiguous – they don't offer reassurance, accountability, or clarity. Verbal reassurance signals presence, intent, and emotional safety in ways symbols simply can't."

- Arouba Kabir, in association with Aisle  
Consulting Psychologist & Relationship Expert

In a culture moving toward commitment, words feel safer than icons.

## Indians in love want:

- Less ambiguity
- More verbal reassurance
- Fewer emotional shortcuts



## Emoji They Use for Flirting :

### By Gender

Emoji	Men	Women
None, I use words	27.6	50
🙈	21.6	17.6
❤️	21.3	11.1
😍	12.4	5.5
😘	7.6	8.3
Others	9.5	7.5

### By Generation

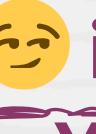
Emoji	Gen Z	Millennials
None, I use words	26.8	32.1
🙈	24.2	19.8
❤️	16.7	22.1
😍	12.2	11.1
😘	10.1	5.9
Others	10	9

Percentages shown by gender and generation; each group sums to 100%.

The progression from emoji-mediated courtship (73.2% Gen Z) to language-based clarity (32.1% Millennials) represents maturation in romantic communication.



## Key Patterns:

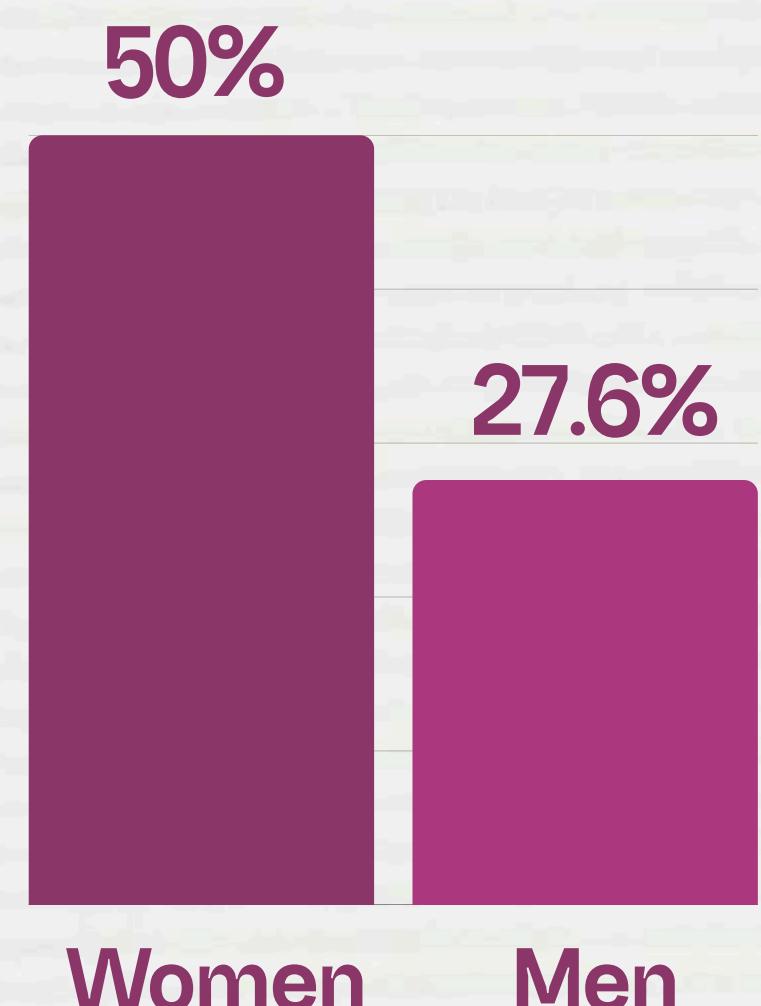
- Gen Z loves the  - playful, non-committal, leaves room for plausible deniability
- Gen X+ gravitates to  - direct, classic, unambiguous
- The smirk  is dying - 10.1% (Gen Z) → 5.9% (Millennials) → 3.4% (Gen X+) use it
- Gen Z uses  3x more than Millennials - the "I see you" flirt is generationally specific

## 50% Women Reject Emojis for Flirting

### The Generational Shift:

- Gen Z: They grew up with emojis, hence, 73.2% feel symbolic communication is natural.
- Millennials & Gen X: Experienced dating before and after emoji culture. 32.1% reject the confusion of symbols, and choose words.

% who say "I use words"  
for flirting



\*Percentages reflect how many respondents from each group selected a particular option

## Women Are Nearly 2x More Likely to Evaluate Practical Compatibility Before Committing

How they decide	Men	Women
Gut feeling/intuition	29.1	15.7
Logic + emotions	26.8	18.5
Evaluating consistency	19.1	25.9
Practical Compatibility	17.1	29.6
Overthinking	4.2	8.3
Advice from friends	2.9	0.9
Advice from family	0.8	1.1

### How people decide if they've found "the one" (By gender)

\*Percentages reflect how many respondents from each group selected a particular option

## Key Surprises

- Men trust gut nearly 2x more compared to women
- Women prioritize practical compatibility  
73% more than men
- Women are ~2x more likely to report overthinking. Possibly they are reassessing if their decision is correct?



# Gen Z vs Millennials

Gen Z is more expression-forward;

Millennials are more consistency-seeking

Physical Touch as love language (Give)



Quality time as love language (Want)



Grew up seeing verbal expressions of love



Social Media & Influencers shaped view of love



Past relationships taught them communication skills

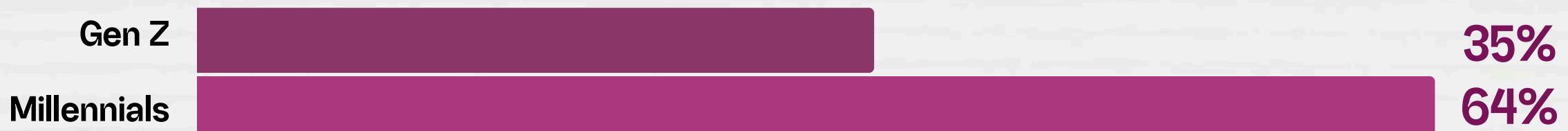


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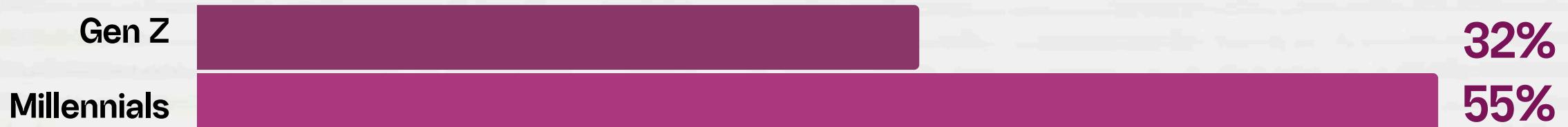
### Gut feeling/intuition decides “the one”



### Ghosting is frustrating



### Having too many options is frustrating



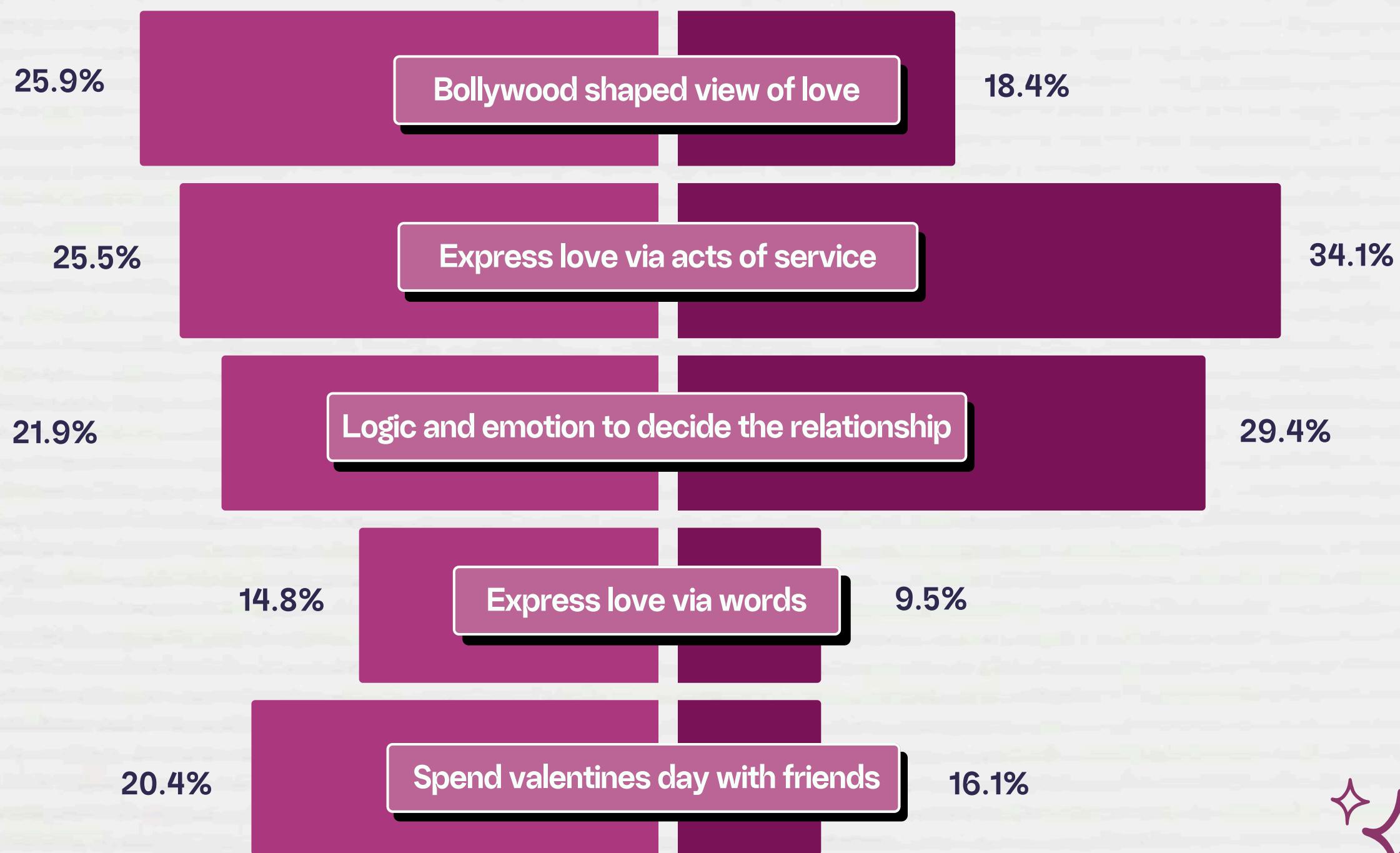
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While Millennials remain paralyzed by the 'Paradox of Choice' and ghosting fatigue, Gen Z is executing a radical return to primal instinct. By prioritizing physical touch at a rate 500% higher than Millennials and favoring 'gut-feeling' over anything else, the youngest dating cohort is letting their instincts decide who they love while Millennials are more analytical in their love lives.



# How Geography Shapes India's Love Behaviour

## North vs South



- **The North is still chasing the Bollywood Dream**, with 25.9% looking to the silver screen for romantic cues - while the South has moved past the credits to focus on Logic & Emotion.
- **The North remains the capital of Verbal Affirmation (14.8%)**, proving that while the **South acts**, the **North speaks**.
- North India is 26% more likely to turn **Valentine's Day into a celebration with friends**.
- **The North loves the 'idea' of love, but the South loves the 'work of love**. We're seeing a clear transition from Cinematic Passion to Pragmatic Partnership.

# Most Indians Can Only Express Deep Emotions in Their Mother Tongue

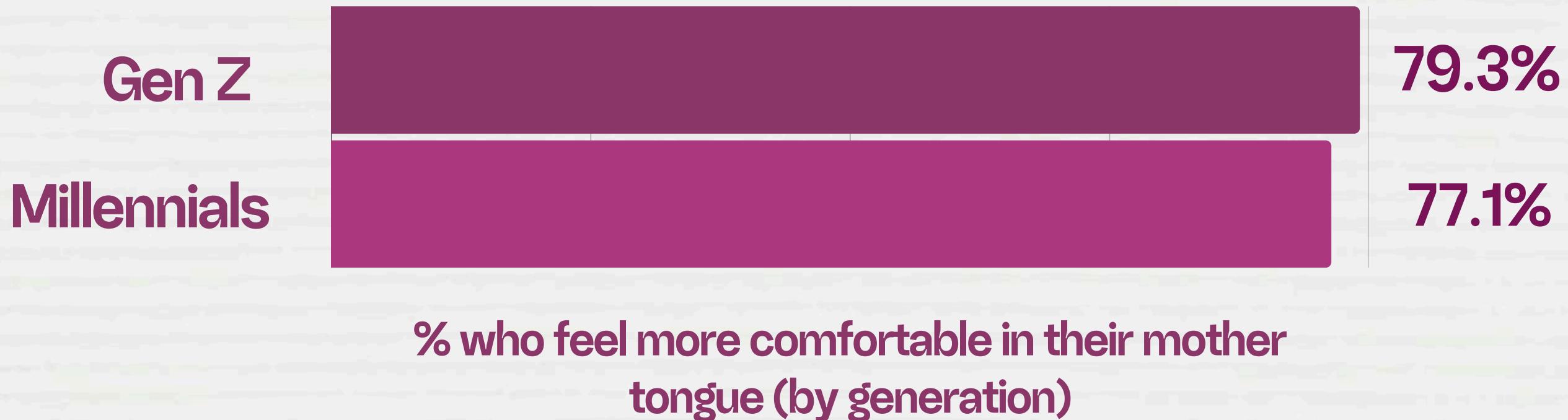
Not in English. In the language they grew up speaking.



The emotional language barrier affects men more – challenging every stereotype about who struggles to communicate feelings.



Question: Do you feel more emotionally expressive in your mother tongue?



The generation raised on English-language internet, global pop culture, and "neutral accents" retreats to their roots when love gets real. Globalization didn't erase linguistic identity – it made it more precious.

**78% Feel More Emotionally Expressive in Mother Tongue**

**Yet 89.3% Actually Use English to Express Emotions**

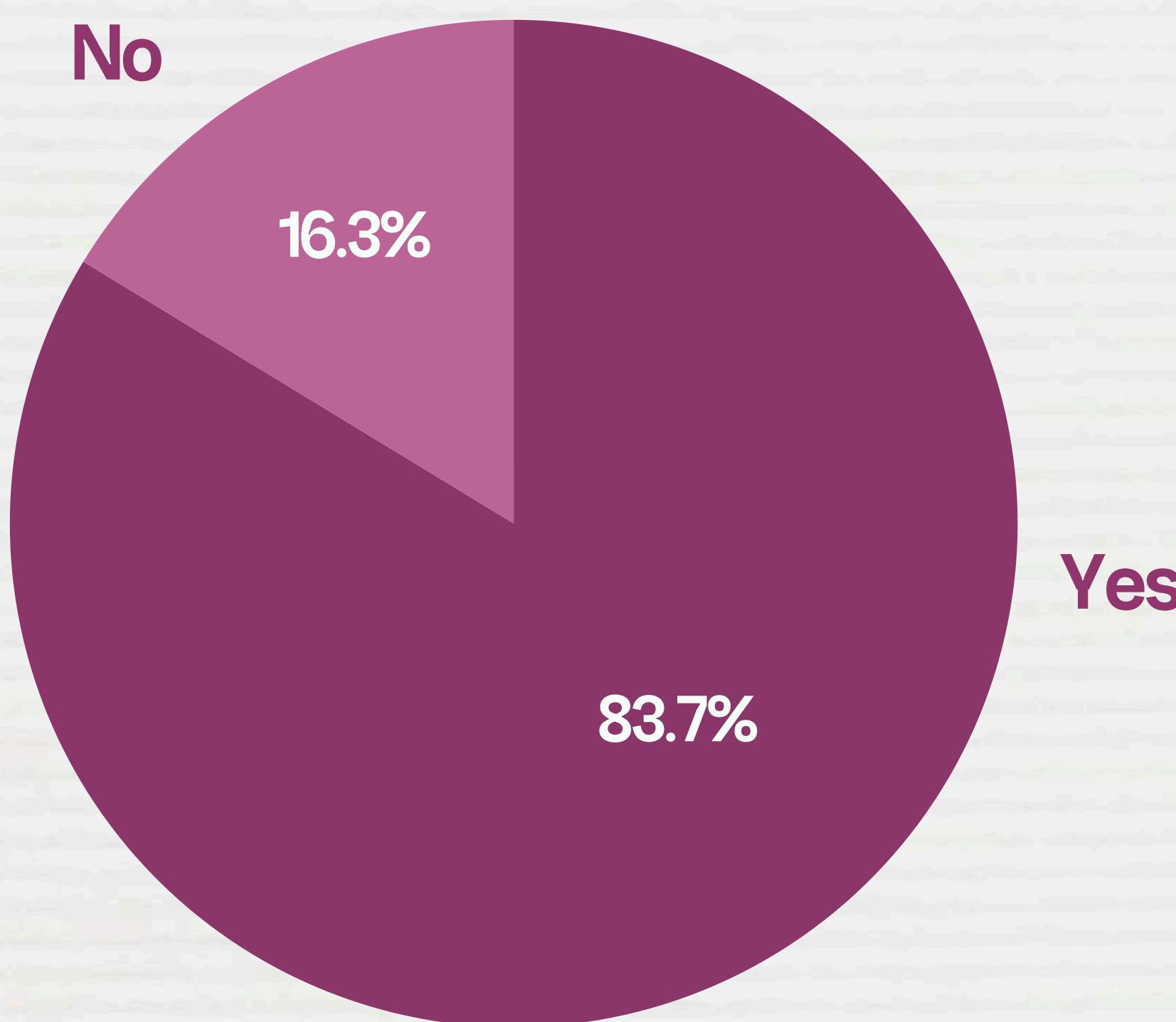
Cross-cultural partnerships require linguistic common ground – English becomes the default, sacrificing emotional authenticity for mutual comprehension.

When you express love in English versus your mother tongue, you're not just translating words – you're inhabiting a different version of yourself. The gap between what feels authentic (78%) and what gets used (89%) means most Indians are performing romance in a linguistic identity that doesn't fully capture their emotional truth.

# 84% Say Love Has Made Them Better

Has love made you a better

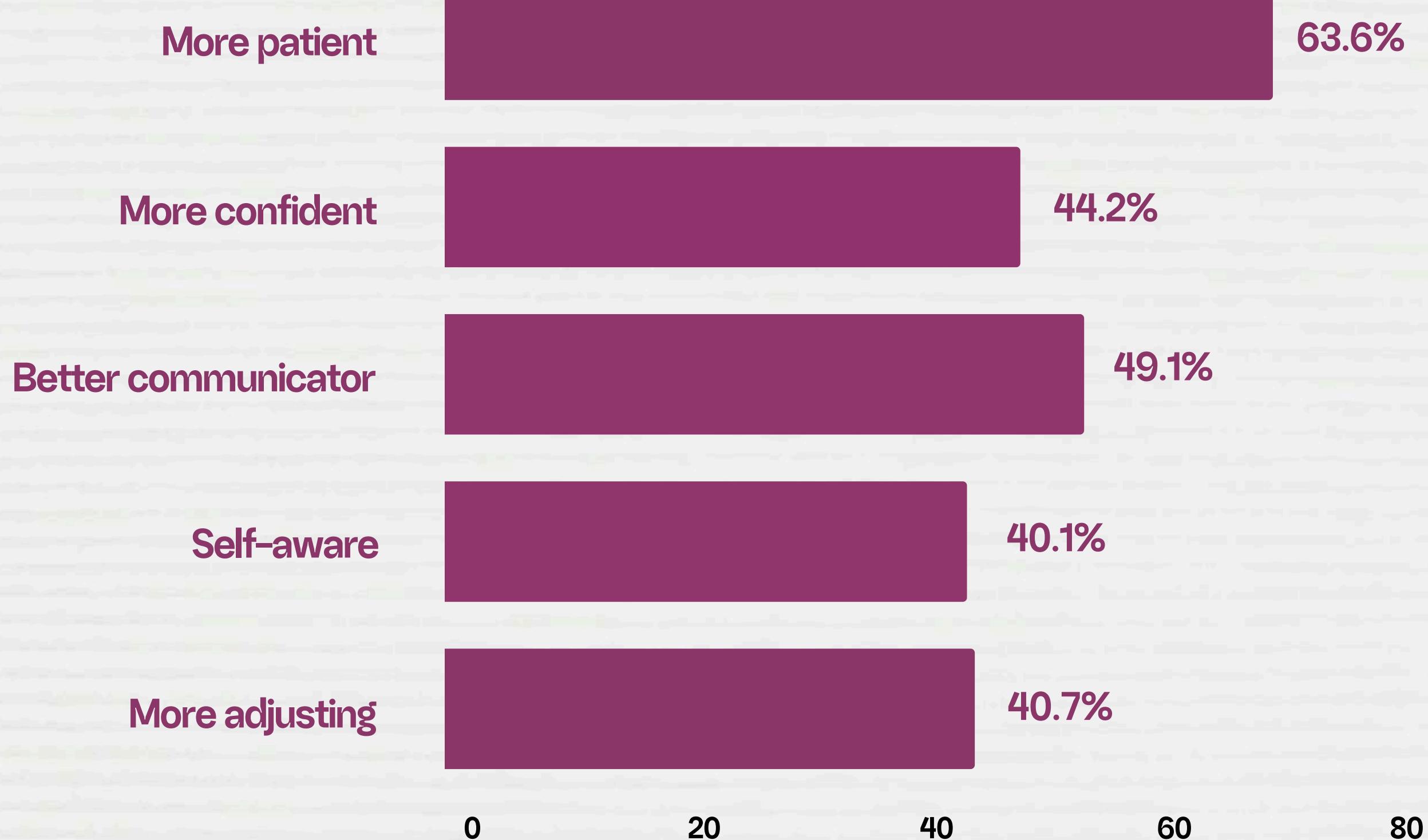
person/helped you grow?



With 83.7% of Indians declaring that love has made them better, romance is officially the country's most successful self-help tool. It's no longer just about "finding the one"; it's about growing with the right person!



## Love has made me...



Multi-select question: Respondents chose an average of 3 options each, so percentages total more than 100%

## Love Makes Life Better By..

- Giving meaning/purpose
- Being understood/cared for
- Transforming ordinary moments

### Standout Responses:

*"Making your existence feel wanted and craved for"*

*"Giving that courage with the presence of a partner which can help go through life's hurdles"*

# Whose Love Story Are You Living?

This section maps dating mindsets to familiar pop-culture archetypes.

Bollywood characters aren't just

entertainment – they're dating blueprints.

They reveal how different genders and generations navigate love, make decisions, and show up in relationships. Here's what your favorite character says about how you date:



## Character

Men%

14.4%

Surinder

(Rab Ne Bana Di Jodi)

Men%

11.8%

Kabir

(Kabir Singh)

Men%

14.8%

Raj

(Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge)

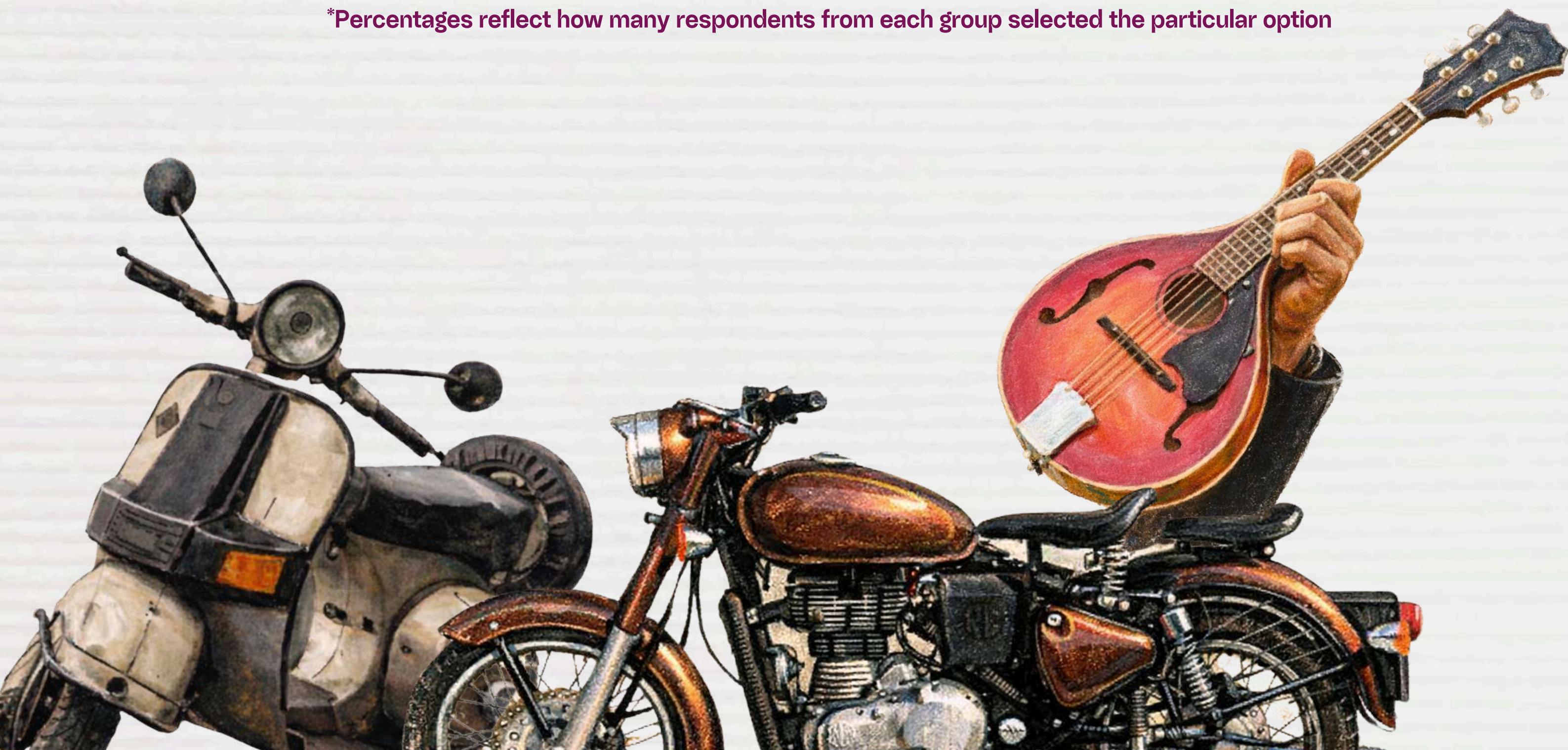
Men%

17.7%

Bunny

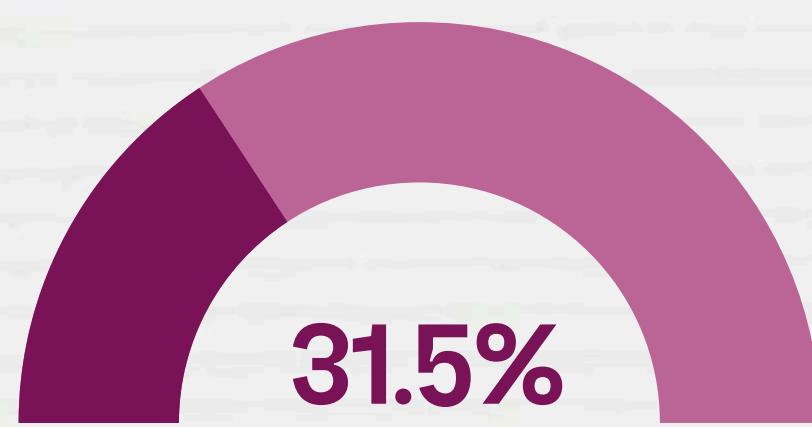
(Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani)

\*Percentages reflect how many respondents from each group selected the particular option



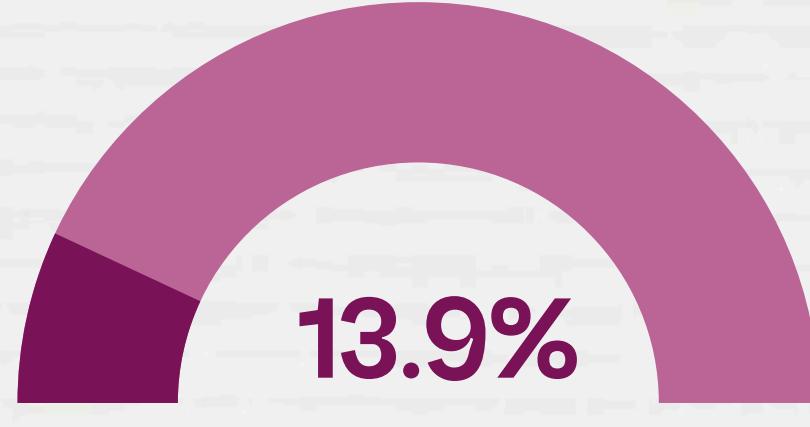
## Geet leads amongst women at 31.5%

Women%



Geet  
(Jab We Met)

Women%



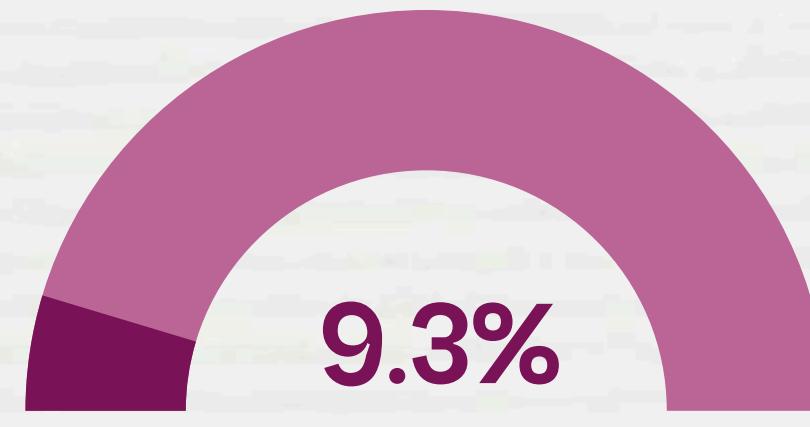
Anjali  
(Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham)

Men%



Aman  
(Kal Ho Na Ho)

Men%



Ved  
(Tamasha)

\*Percentages reflect how many respondents from each group selected the particular option



# Geet

Jab We Met



## Healed Anxiety | Boundary-Led Love

### Who identifies as Geet:

- 31.5% of women overall - 43.8% Gen Z & 56.2% Millennials

Women identifying as Geet have learned love the hard way. Now they choose with clarity.

### How Geet Decides "The One":

- Compatibility on finances, lifestyle, long-term goals
- Evaluates consistency patterns early
- Won't waste time on "maybe"

### What She Values in Early Dating:

- Quality time and undivided attention
- Deep, emotionally honest conversations
- Thoughtful gestures over grand performances

### Her Biggest Frustrations:

Geet is done with Anshuman-like dating

- Emotional unavailability
- Ghosting
- Situationships

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- Emotional unavailability
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- Situationships



## What Love Has Taught Her:

- Boundaries and deal-breakers
- Self-care and patience
- That she doesn't need saving – she needs partnership



Millennial women aren't chasing intensity anymore – they're choosing emotional regulation and reliability. Geet represents the evolution from "fixing broken men" to "choosing healthy ones."

## Ahana

Kho Gaye Hum Kahan

### Overstimulated Awareness | Hyper-Reflection

#### Who identifies as Ahana:

- 3.7% of women overall – 60% Gen Z & 40% Millennials

Gen Z women identifying as Ahana aren't confused. They're over-informed.

#### How Ahana Decides "The One":

- Evaluates consistency obsessively
- Admits to overthinking
- Analysis over impulse



### What She Values in Early Dating:

- Intellectual stimulation and debates
- Shared humour and banter
- Thoughtful gestures that show attention to detail

### Her Love Language:

- Needs: Verbal affirmation
- Gives: Acts of service, physical touch



### Her Biggest Frustrations:

- Too many options, too little clarity
- Relationships
- Surface-level connections

### What Love Has Taught Her:

- Less afraid of being alone
- More aware of her own flaws
- More selective about who gets her time

Gen Z women aren't commitment-phobic – they're cognitively overloaded. Ahana represents the generation learning to navigate abundance by becoming radically selective.



## Bunny

Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani

### Archetype: Intuition-First Explorer | Timing-Led Commitment

#### Who identifies as Bunny:

- 17.7% of men overall – 53.2% Gen Z vs 46.8% Millennials

Men identifying as Bunny believe in love. They just don't believe in forcing timing.



### How Bunny Decides "The One":

- Gut feeling first
- Logic + emotion balance
- Compatibility (but only when he's ready)

### What He Values in Early Dating:

- Deep conversations beyond small talk
- Quality time and shared experiences
- Physical chemistry and attraction

### His Love Language:

- Needs: Acts of service, quality time
- Gives: Quality time, acts of service

### His Biggest Frustrations:

- Ghosting
- Inauthentic behavior
- Emotional unavailability

### How Love Transformed Him:

- More patient with himself and others
- Better communicator
- More confident in his choices

Gen Z men prioritize chemistry and emotional readiness before permanence. Bunny represents the shift from "settling down by 30" to "committing when I'm actually ready." The question: Are they taking their time or avoiding responsibility?



# Surinder Sahni

Rab Ne Bana Di Jodi

## Secure Consistency | Quiet Commitment

### Who identifies as Surinder:

- 14.4% of men overall – 39.5% Gen Z & 60.5% Millennials

Men identifying as Surinder believe love is showing up, not showing off.

### How Surinder Decides "The One":

- Gut feeling + logic/emotion combo
- Evaluates consistency in both directions
- Long-term compatibility over short-term intensity

### What He Values in Early Dating:

- Deep conversations about values
- Quality time without distractions
- Thoughtful gestures that show care

### What He Values in Early Dating:

- Deep conversations about values
- Quality time without distractions
- Thoughtful gestures that show care

### His Love Language:

- Needs: Acts of service
- Gives: Acts of service

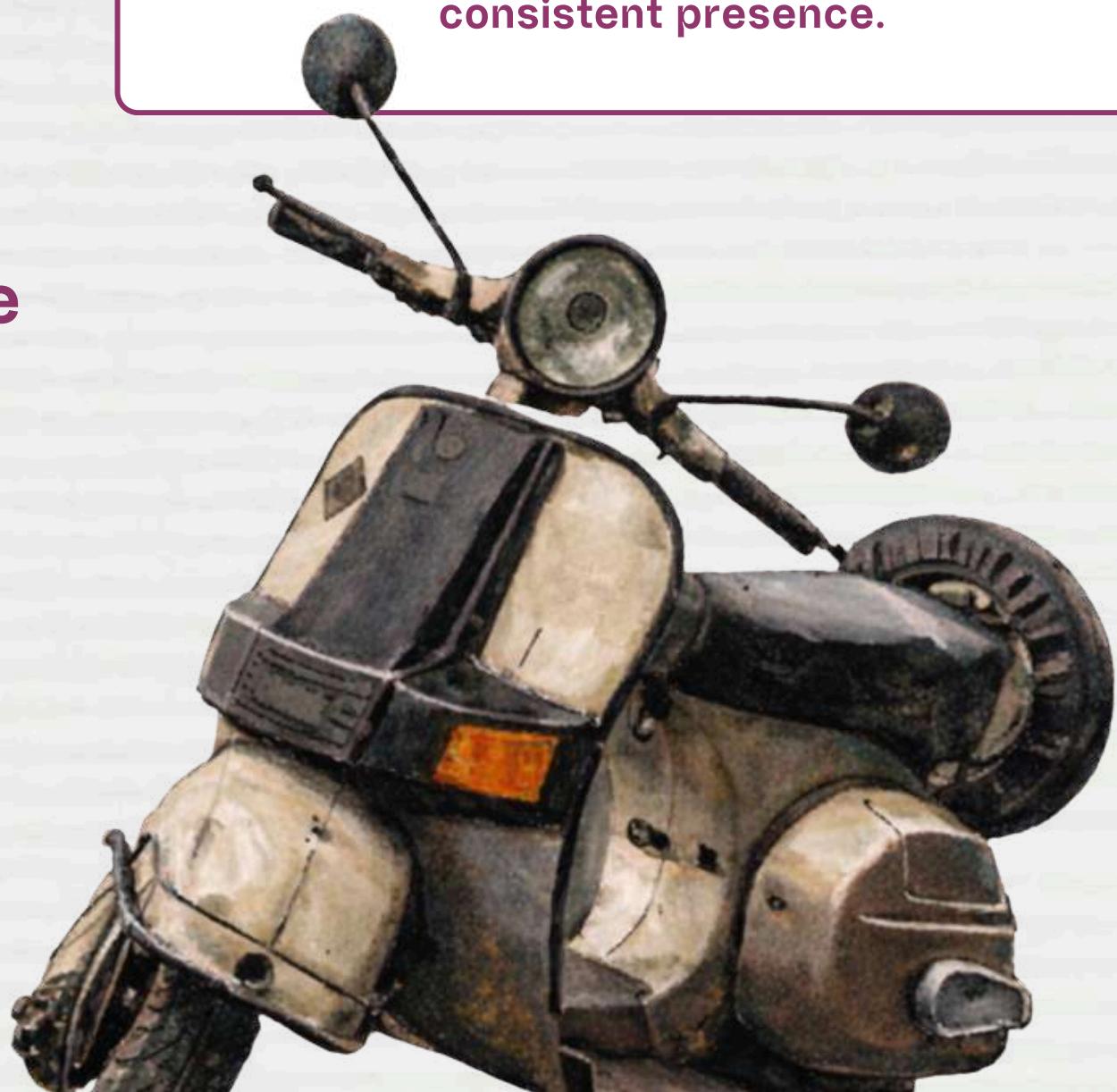
### His Biggest Frustrations:

- Ghosting
- Emotional unavailability
- People being fake or performative

### How Love Transformed Him:

- More patient and understanding
- Better communicator
- More aware of his own flaws

Millennial men are signaling a shift from romantic performance to emotional dependability. Surinder represents the quiet evolution happening – men learning that grand gestures matter less than consistent presence.



# Kabir

Kabir Singh



## Intensity Seeking Regulation | Growth Through Consequence

### Who identifies as Kabir:

- 11.8% of men overall – 52.9% gen Z & 47.1% Millennials

This is the character men identify with when they feel deeply but haven't learned control yet.

### How Kabir Decides "The One":

- Logic + emotion (learning balance)
- Gut feeling
- Evaluates consistency (growing awareness)

### His Biggest Frustrations:

- Ghosting
- Emotional unavailability
- People being fake

### How Love Transformed Him:

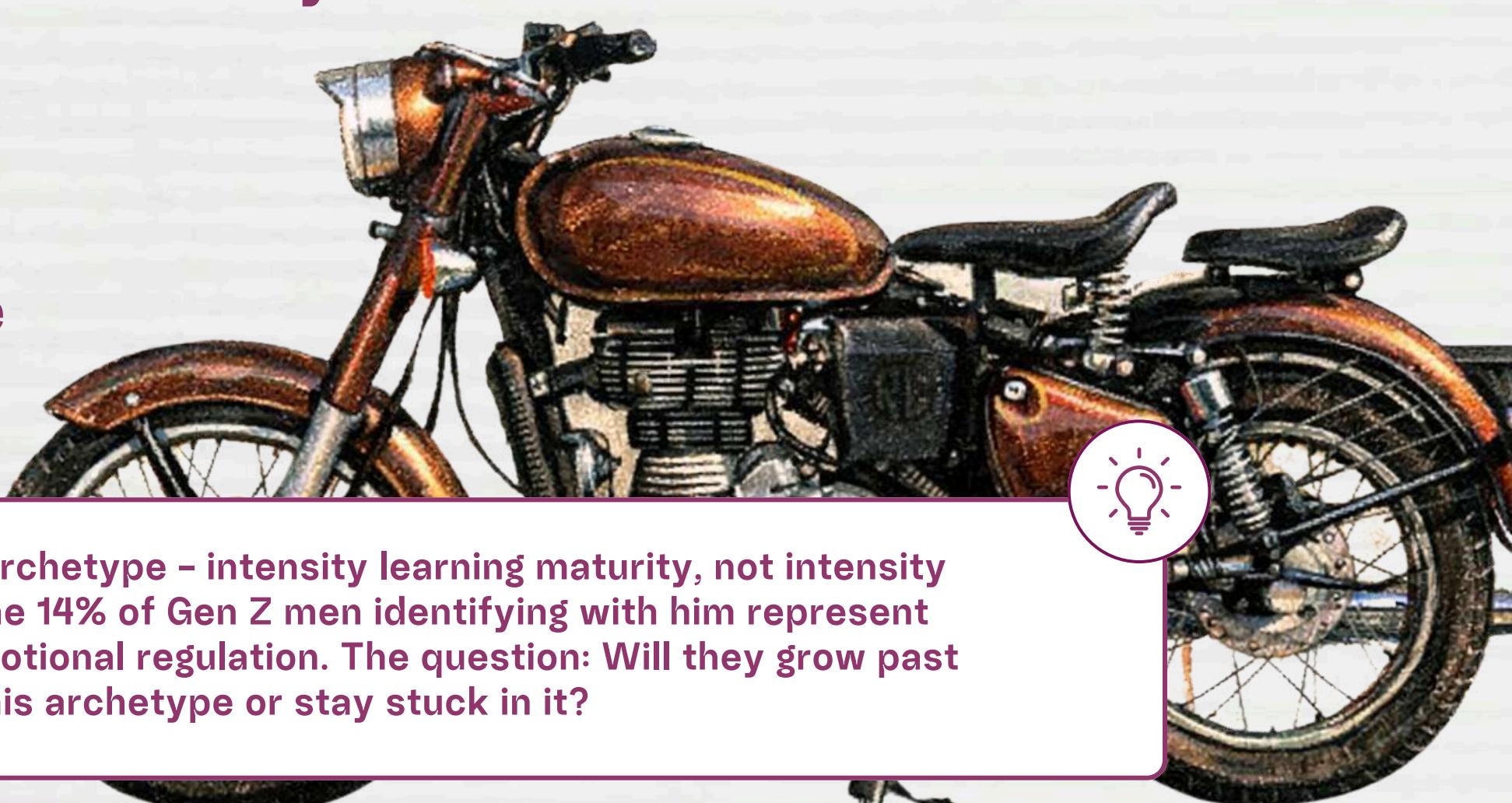
### What He Values in Early Dating:

- Deep conversations that go beyond surface
- Quality time
- Physical chemistry and intensity

- More patient (learning emotional control)
- More resilient
- More aware of his own flaws

### His Love Language:

- Needs: Quality time
- Gives: Quality time



Kabir is a transition archetype – intensity learning maturity, not intensity being celebrated. The 14% of Gen Z men identifying with him represent those still learning emotional regulation. The question: Will they grow past this archetype or stay stuck in it?

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