



People have different needs, wants, expectations, and ways of going about things. At the center of every conflict is a core need that is threatened. The stakes are emotional, physical, or relationship life or death. They strike at the person's need for safety and security. It only takes one person to feel unloved or unappreciated when his or her currency is not understood or fulfilled. It is amplified when they expect the other person to interpret what they want instead of asking for it. Make sure the conflicts don't outnumber the points of connection.

- ☐ Absence due to war or other cause
- ☐ Addiction (of any kind)
- ☐ Differences in age and/or experience
- ☐ Different backgrounds (small town/big city)
- ☐ Bad choices (you know you are doing something wrong and do it anyway)
- ☐ Blaming each other for things (real or imagined)
- ☐ Blending families
- ☐ Broken promises
- ☐ Changing expectations (often after a commitment is made)
- ☐ Children versus no desire for children
- ☐ City versus country
- ☐ Differences in education
- ☐ Differences in financial status, values, management
- ☐ Differences in level of commitment
- ☐ Differences in personality types
- ☐ Differences in social status
- ☐ Different approaches to problems
- ☐ Different beliefs in social justice
- ☐ Different communication styles
- ☐ Different core values
- ☐ Different conditioning
- ☐ Different emotional currencies
- ☐ Different friends
- ☐ Different opinions
- ☐ Different goals
- ☐ Different ethnicity, culture, species, paranormal entities
- ☐ Different levels of intimacy
- ☐ Different leisure activities
- ☐ Different obligations



- ☐ Different planning styles (back-up plans versus winging it)
- ☐ Different politics
- ☐ Differences in religion
- ☐ Different social needs
- ☐ Different values
- ☐ Disparity in income or financial infidelity
- ☐ Divided loyalties
- ☐ Division of Labor
- ☐ Family dysfunction or objections
- ☐ Familiarity breeding contempt
- ☐ Fighting about superficial topics instead of deeper issues
- ☐ Fighting styles
- ☐ Friends that interfere or offend
- ☐ Geography
- ☐ Handling stress
- ☐ How to spend free time
- ☐ Inability to admit being wrong
- ☐ Inability to apologize
- ☐ Insecurities
- ☐ Internal resistance to pairing for life
- ☐ Jobs
- ☐ Legal impediments
- ☐ Lifestyle incompatibility
- ☐ Miscommunication or opposing communication styles
- ☐ Mistakes (you didn't know you were doing something wrong)
- ☐ Misunderstandings (past or present)
- ☐ Prejudice
- ☐ Pride
- ☐ Past relationships/history
- ☐ Psychological dysfunction or illness
- ☐ Relationship deal-breakers
- ☐ Resentment
- ☐ Secrets and Lies
- ☐ Sexuality forbidden
- ☐ Sexual needs and preferences
- ☐ Shame or guilt over something
- ☐ Societal restrictions or taboos



- ☐ Who controls the money
- ☐ Who contributes financially and how that money is spent
- ☐ Who is in the power position in the relationship

Something to be conscious of when writing Romance is that you can't have an antagonistic/abusive relationship up until the fourth quarter of the book then suddenly turn it around at the end, or as I call it "the plot called for it" resolution. To portray healthy relationships, there must be more positive moments than negative moments, more things bringing them together than tearing them apart. A good ratio is three positives for every negative.

There must also be resolution to the major conflicts. This happens when characters state their needs and fears, ask for change, get reassurance, make a commitment to change, then show the change happening. It doesn't require a full chapter to do so. It can be quick moments. Too many novels show the breaking up but not the making up. Every character needs what I call "witnessing." That is feeling loved, seen, heard, and appreciated. Show the characters displaying these things to each other to heal the story rifts.

Don't make the differences so great that reconciliation becomes implausible. You can build realistic obstacles to love and conflicts without stretching credibility.

To learn more about plotting the Romance, check out the *Romance Build A Plot Workbook* available in [print](#) and [e-book](#).