CUADERNO DE IDEAS

Why Do Some People Prefer an AI Partner? Love, L

Psicología y comportamiento · 15/11/2026 · Por Camilo Calderón

People are exploring emotional and romantic relationships with AI companions. Learn how loneliness, connection, personalization, and control shape this phenomenon—and what risks deserve attention.

Why Do Some People Prefer an AI Partner? Love, Loneliness, and Intimacy in the Digital Age

Artificial intelligence is entering a space once considered exclusively human: emotional relationships and sexual intimacy. Some people talk with virtual partners, develop emotional bonds with chatbots, or use AI to explore erotic fantasies. Understanding this trend requires looking at connection, loneliness, personalization, and the limits of simulated relationships.

1. Loneliness and the need for connection

People need to feel heard, understood, and accompanied, but not everyone finds those experiences easily in daily relationships. For someone facing isolation, difficulty forming bonds, or fear of rejection, an AI companion may feel accessible. A chatbot can be available at many hours, respond without visible impatience, and provide a space to discuss personal matters with less fear of social judgment. A 2026 study of 858 U.S. university students reported that 17% had used AI for companionship and found an association between loneliness and this use. That finding is an association; it does not establish that loneliness is the only cause or that AI companionship necessarily improves or harms well-being.

2. A relationship where rejection seems less likely

Human relationships involve uncertainty: expressing interest, negotiating differences, building trust, and accepting another person’s boundaries. With an artificial companion, users may customize appearance, personality, interests, and responses. This degree of control can feel comfortable, but it raises questions about expectations. In human relationships, the other person has independent needs, desires, and limits. A highly personalized system may respond in ways that are difficult to expect from people in everyday life.

3. Can someone fall in love with AI?

An AI does not experience love as a human being does, but users can develop genuine feelings in response to attention, continuity, recognition, and personalization. The emotions of the person are real even when the system does not reciprocate them with human consciousness or care. Clear communication about what the technology is matters, especially when an interface encourages users to treat it as a sentient partner.

4. Romance, sexuality, and personal exploration

Some people use AI companions to explore romantic or erotic scenarios in a private setting. This may offer a sense of safety or an opportunity to express preferences. At the same time,

generated interactions are shaped by platform rules, data practices, and design choices. Users should understand that intimate messages may be stored or processed according to a service's policies. Privacy, consent, age restrictions, and respectful boundaries remain important.

5. Possible benefits and limitations

For some users, a companion can provide conversation, entertainment, or a low-pressure way to practice expressing thoughts. These potential benefits should not be confused with professional mental-health care or mutual human connection. AI can make mistakes, reinforce a user's assumptions, or change its behavior after an update. It may also be unavailable or discontinued. A system designed to maximize engagement may not always support a user's long-term interests.

6. When to pay attention to the relationship

It can help to ask: Is this interaction adding something enjoyable to my life, or replacing relationships and responsibilities I want to maintain? Can I take breaks? Do I understand what personal data I am sharing? Am I spending more money or time than intended? If the interaction increases distress, isolation, or disruption to daily life, consider setting limits and talking with someone you trust or a qualified professional.

AI companions reflect real human needs for intimacy, attention, and belonging. The technology can simulate a responsive conversation, but it does not remove the importance of autonomy, privacy, and relationships with people. A thoughtful approach recognizes both why these systems can feel meaningful and what they cannot provide.