

Interpersonal Attraction: From First Impressions to Close Relationships

Chapter 10

What causes attraction?

- People in close relationships are highly interdependent
- feeling of “oneness”
- another person becomes part of your “self”

Propinquity

- People you see and interact with the most often are most likely to become your friends (and perhaps more)
- “mere exposure” effect: the more we see something (i.e., more familiar) the more we like it

Exercise

- Write down your favorite fruit, vegetable, and letter of the alphabet

Similarity

- match between two people's interests, attitudes, values, backgrounds, and/or personality, fuels the development of relationships that begin based on propinquity
- similarity in interpersonal style
- similarity in interests and experiences

3 reasons similarity is important in attraction

- we expect similar others to like us and are more likely to initiate relationships
- similar others validate our characteristics and beliefs
- we draw inferences about character based on perceived similarity

Reciprocal Liking

- If we think another person likes us, we're more likely to like them
- Self-fulfilling prophecy (we act more likable in their presence)
- Low self-esteem people like those who criticize them better!

Physical Attractiveness

- major determinant of liking in studies of first impressions
- both sexes rate physical attractiveness as important

What is attractive?

- Cultural norms transmitted via media
- features listed in book
- Appears to be some cultural consistency about what is attractive

The power of Familiarity

- Familiarity is a critical variable that explains attraction (why do couples look alike?)
- Familiarity underlies propinquity, similarity, and reciprocal liking
- We like what we know!

What is beautiful is good

- People assume that PA is highly correlated with other desirable traits (“what is beautiful is good” stereotype)
- more sociable, extraverted, and socially competent
- operates across cultures
- kernel of truth (self-fulfilling prophecy; Snyder, Tanke, & Berscheid (1977) study)

Initial Attraction

- retrospective reports
- Aron et al (1989) found reciprocal liking and attractiveness important for love; similarity and propinquity were less important. For friendships: reciprocal liking, attractiveness, similarity, and propinquity were all important
- Duck (1994) physical attractiveness and similarity were strongest predictors of romantic attraction

Theories of Interpersonal Attraction

Social Exchange Theory

- How people feel about a relationship depends on
 - their perceptions of the **REWARDS** and **COSTS** of the relationship
 - the kind of relationships they believe they deserve or expect to have (**Comparison Level or CL**)
 - their chances of having a better relationship with someone else (**CL alt**)

Social exchange (con't)

- Outcome of relationship = rewards - costs
- Satisfaction in relationship depends on CL
- Whether or not you leave depends on CL alt
- Research evidence supports the theory

Long-term relationships

- Rusbult's investment model of relationships
- Investments = something that would be lost if one left the relationship
- greater the investment, less likely to leave
- Commitment = satisfaction, CL_{alt} , and investments

Exchange Theory Demonstration

- Need volunteers

Equity Theory

- People are happiest in relationships when rewards, costs, and contributions are equal to those of the other person
- Under- and over-benefitted persons should be motivated to restore equity (most likely for under-benefitted!)

Long-term relationships

- Exchange relationships (tit for tat)
- Communal relationships (accounting is looser and occurs over time)

Close Relationships

Defining Love

- Companionate Love vs. Passionate Love
- Triangular theory of love
- Love styles

Companionate vs. Passionate Love

- Companionate love: feelings of love and affection we feel for another person, but not necessarily passion or arousal
- Passionate love: intense longing, physiological arousal
- Americans value PL over CL

Triangular Theory of Love

Love Styles

- Basic theories people have about love that guide their behavior in relationships
- Eros (passionate)
- Ludus (love as a game)
- Storge (love from friendship)
- Pragma (pragmatic love)
- Mania (roller-coaster love)
- Agape (self-less love)

- Hendrick & Hendrick (1986) find that men are more ludic and women more storgic and pragmatic; no differences in eros and agape.
- Real-life couples have similar love styles
- Longer lasting relationships characterized by high eros and low ludus love

Evolution and Choosing a Mate



Attachment Style

- People develop expectations about the trustworthiness of others and lovability of the self from earlier relationships with caregivers (Bowlby, Ainsworth)
- Three attachment styles
- Influence adult relationships

Secure Attachment

- responsive caregivers as infants
- trust, lack of concern with being abandoned
- self is worthy and liked
- others are reliable and trustworthy

Avoidant Attachment

- caregivers were aloof and distant
- suppression of attachment needs because attempts to be intimate were rebuffed
- self is worthy but others are not to be trusted
- Difficult to develop intimate relationships

Anxious/Ambivalent Attachment

- inconsistent and overbearing caregivers
- concerned that others will not reciprocate one's desire for intimacy
- high levels of anxiety
- self is unworthy, others are trustworthy

Attachment Style

- early relationships develop into schemas for later relationships
- can change over time and in the contexts of different relationships
- see the female anxious/male avoidant pairing often (reverse doesn't work well)

Ending Relationships

- American divorce rate is 50%
- 2/3 of all current first marriages will end

Duck's 4 stages of dissolution

- Intrapersonal (focusing on dissatisfaction)
- Dyadic (revealing dissatisfaction to partner)
- Social (announcing breakup to others)
- Intrapersonal (devising accounts of the breakup as recovery begins)

Rusbult

- 4 types of behavior that occur in troubled relationships
- exit (harming or terminating the relationship)
- voice (actively constructively attempting to improve conditions)
- loyalty (waiting for conditions to improve)
- neglect (letting things deteriorate)

Remaining facts

- no gender differences in who initiates breakups
- people who break up feel better, being dumped feels worse, and mutual are in the middle (no surprises there!)
- 30% of breakups in college were “fatal attractions” qualities that were initially attractive became the reasons for the breakup

Breaking Up