

Chapter 9: Close Relationships

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Chapter 9 introduces you to the dynamics of interpersonal attraction and relationships. The chapter begins with discussions of the need for affiliation, the need for intimacy, loneliness, and social anxiety. The next main topic concerns love relationships. Sternberg's triangular theory of love is discussed extensively, including discussions of the three components of love and how those components combine to form different types of love. Various types of love are defined as well. The process of relationship formation is covered next which includes a discussion of attachment styles and how those styles affect love relationships. The next major section covers three important factors leading to interpersonal attraction: Physical proximity, similarity, and physical attractiveness. Physical attractiveness is discussed in detail including information on the role of attractiveness in attraction, the attractiveness bias, the matching principle, the dimensions of attractiveness, and attractiveness from an evolutionary perspective. Next, the dynamics of close relationships are explored. Material is presented on relationship formation, evaluating relationships, and sculpting a relationship over time. The chapter also includes information on the role of conflict in relationships and the consequences of how conflict is handled. Gottman's "four horsemen of the apocalypse" is also presented. The chapter concludes with a section on friendships focusing on gender differences and friendships over the life span.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

The roots of interpersonal attraction and close relationships

Affiliation and intimacy

Loneliness and social anxiety

Love and close relationships

Love's triangle

Types of love

Unrequited love

Secret love

The formation of intimate relationships

Attachment styles and adult love relationships

Determinants of interpersonal attraction

Physical proximity: Being in the right place

Similarity

Physical attractiveness

Dimensions of physical attractiveness

Physique and the attractiveness bias

Beauty and the view from evolutionary psychology

Mate selection: Good genes or good guys?

How to attract a mate

Dynamics of close relationships

Relationship development

Evaluating relationships

Exchange theories

Communal relationships

Love over time

Sculpting a relationship

Responses to conflict

Love in the lab

Friendships

Gender differences in friendships

Friendships over the life cycle

Gertrude and Alice revisited

Chapter review

Internet exercise

Suggestions for further reading

KEY TERMS

Need for affiliation (325)

Need for intimacy (325)

Loneliness (326)

Social anxiety (327)

Triangular theory of love (328)

Romantic love (330)

Limerence (330)

Consummate love (330)

Unrequited love (330)

Secret love (331)

Working model (332)

Physical proximity effect (334)

Similarity effect (335)

Matching principle (336)

Physical attractiveness bias (337)

Social penetration theory (346)

Self-disclosure (346)

Social exchange theory (347)

Equity theory (347)

Communal relationship (349)

Accommodation process (353)

Four horsemen of the apocalypse (355)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of Chapter 9, you should be able to:

1. Discuss how the needs for affiliation and intimacy are involved in interpersonal attraction.

You should be able to define and compare the needs for affiliation and intimacy. You should be able to specify how each of the needs relates to interpersonal attraction.

2. Define and discuss *loneliness* and *social anxiety*.

After reading Chapter 9, you should be able to define loneliness and social anxiety. You should understand that loneliness is a psychological state relating to a lack of desired interpersonal relationships, and not merely being alone. You should also understand the factors that can lead to loneliness and its outcomes, most notably social anxiety. You should also be able to list the traits associated with social anxiety.

3. Describe the triangular theory of love and the different kinds of love predicted by the model.

You should recognize the three components of love proposed by Sternberg (1986), along with the taxonomy produced by various combinations of these components.

4. Compare and contrast the different types of love.

You should be able to define and distinguish between different types of love (romantic, limerence, consummate, unrequited, and secret).

5. Define and discuss the three main attachment styles characterizing interpersonal relationships.

You should be familiar with the psychological, emotional, and physical markers of secure, avoidant, and anxious/ambivalent attachment styles. You should also understand how the different attachment styles relate to the formation of close relationships.

6. List and describe several determinants of attraction.

Included here are the four big predictors of interpersonal attraction: physical proximity, familiarity, similarity, and physical attractiveness. You should be aware of the relative importance of each factor in producing attraction and understand why the perceived importance of each determinant may vary as a function of gender.

7. Discuss the importance of physical attractiveness to interpersonal attraction.

You should be able to discuss how physical attractiveness relates to attraction and how individuals tend to match on physical attractiveness. You should also be able to define and elaborate on the physical attractiveness bias and the dimensions that underlie it. Additionally, you should understand how body physique relates to physical attractiveness and be able to discuss physical attractiveness from an evolutionary psychology perspective.

8. Discuss how relationships develop and how we evaluate relationships.

You should be able to describe the stages of relationship formation and discuss social penetration theory. You should understand the role that self-disclosure plays in relationship formation. You should be able to define and compare social exchange theory and equity theory. You should also be able to discuss what happens when a person perceives inequity in a relationship.

9. Discuss the course of relationships over time.

You should be able to discuss how relationships change over time. You should also be able to describe differences in behavior between happy and unhappy couples, and know what kinds of behaviors predict that a relationship will end. Though one can usually recognize the "symptoms" of unhappy relationships, predicting the sustenance or dissolution of couples is more complex. Also, you should recognize the link between a couple's happiness and the couple's tendency to handle interpersonal conflict in a constructive manner. Finally, you should be able to list and describe Gottman's four horsemen of the apocalypse.

KEY QUESTIONS

These questions appear at the beginning of the chapter. As you read the text answer these questions as a way to learn the material.

What is a close relationship?

What are the roots of interpersonal attraction and close relationships?

What are loneliness and social anxiety?

What is the triangular theory of love?

What are unrequited and secret love?

How do attachment styles relate to close relationships?

How does physical proximity and similarity relate to attraction?.

What role does physical attractiveness play in attraction?

What is the evolutionary view of relationships?

How do close relationships develop?

How are relationships evaluated?

What are communal relationships?

How do love relationships change over time?

How does conflict affect relationships?

What are the four horsemen of the apocalypse?

What is the nature of friendships?

Are there gender differences in friendships?

How do friendships change over the life cycle?

PRACTICE TESTS

Multiple-Choice Questions

Choose the alternative that best completes the stem of each question.

1. Individuals who are high in the need for _____ wish to be with friends and act accordingly.

- a. intimacy
- b. affiliation
- c. closeness
- d. association

2. Research on loneliness shows that loneliness is

- a. common during adolescence and young adulthood.
- b. a subjective experience and not dependent on the number of people we have around us.
- c. related directly to the number of people we have around us.
- d. both a and b
- e. both a and c

3. In Sternberg's (1986,1988) triangular theory of love, the three components of love are

- a. romance, limerence, and intimacy.
- b. passion, romance, and intimacy.
- c. passion, intimacy, and commitment.
- d. intimacy, romance, and affiliation.

4. _____ love involves all three components of love.

- a. Consummate
- b. Limerence
- c. Romantic
- d. Companionate

5. Which of the following is true of romantic love?

- a. It is common across a large percentage of cultures studied.

b. It is more common in Western cultures than in other cultures..

c. It is possible only in heterosexual relationships.

d. It is a strong predictor of marriage in all cultures.

6. With _____ love, the love is expressed by one person who is rejected by the other.

a. empty

b. unreciprocated

c. unrequited

d. secret

7. In intimate relationships, a secure attachment style (working model) is related to

a. high levels of conflict

b. dissatisfaction and mistrust.

c. high levels of social anxiety.

d. satisfaction and trust.

e. none of the above

8. In one of your first classes as a college student, your instructor seats you alphabetically. You are most likely to become friends with a person who

a. you have a lot in common with, even if you sit on opposite sides of the room.

b. has a last name beginning with a letter close to the first letter in your last name, regardless of common interests.

c. has a last name beginning with a letter close to the first letter in your last name, but only if you and that person have common interests.

d. none of the above

9. According to the _____ effect, repeated exposure to a stimulus or person tends to enhance liking for that stimulus or person.

- a. mere-exposure
- b. repeated exposure
- c. familiarity
- d. physical proximity

10. Research on the effects of attitude similarity on attraction shows that

- a. the number of attitudes you share with another person is critical in determining attraction.
- b. there is actually an inverse relationship between the number of attitudes people share and attraction.
- c. the proportion of attitudes you share with another person is more important than the number you share in determining attraction.
- d. attitude similarity is unrelated to attraction.

11. Research on the role of physical attractiveness in attraction shows that physical attractiveness

- a. is less important at the beginning of a relationship than it is after a relationship develops.
- b. is a strong predictor of preference for a dating partner.
- c. affects our desire to be with a person, but not how we interact with him or her.
- d. is more important to women than men.

12. The finding that infants as young as 2 months of age prefer attractive over unattractive faces suggests that the physical attractiveness bias

- a. has biological roots.
- b. is completely learned in the first 2 months of life.
- c. is totally innate.
- d. none of the above

13. Research on the evolutionary aspects of mate selection suggests that _____ is crucial in defining physical attractiveness.

- a. body type
- b. balance
- c. eye color
- d. symmetry

14. According to Levinger and Snoek's (1972) stage model of relationship formation, after the state of no relationship the correct order of stages is

- a. surface contact, awareness, mutuality.
- b. awareness, surface contact, mutuality.
- c. awareness, mutuality, surface contact.
- d. mutuality, surface contact, awareness.

15. In social exchange theory, a(n) _____ is an expectation of what we will obtain from a relationship.

- a. expectation level
- b. comparison level for alternatives
- c. comparison level
- d. equity level

16. According to equity theory, when we perceive inequity in a relationship we

- a. leave the relationship immediately.
- b. try to correct the inequity and restore equity.
- c. ignore the inequity and carry on with the relationship as best we can.
- d. confront our partner and then leave the relationship.

17. In a(n) _____ relationship, if one partner puts more into the relationship it does not matter that much.

- a. communal
- b. exchange
- c. equitable
- d. collective

18. In a healthy relationship, the partners

- a. ignore conflict.
- b. handle conflict with accommodation.
- c. ignore negative events and focus only on positive events.
- d. rationalize away conflict rather than deal with it through accommodation.

19. According to research by Gottman (1995), _____ couples survive by accentuating the positive and ignoring a relationship.

- a. validating
- b. denying
- c. validating
- d. conflict avoiding

20. arch on gender differences in friendships show that

- a. male friends tend to do things together, and female friends tend to share their emotional lives.
- b. males tend to make a sharper distinction between same-sex and cross-sex friends than do females.
- c. females tend to make a sharper distinction between same-sex and cross-sex friends than do males.
- d. both a and b
- e. both a and c

Fill-in-the-Blank Questions

21. The _____ is a motivation that underlies our desire to establish and maintain rewarding interpersonal relationships.
22. The _____ is a desire for close and affectionate relationships.
23. _____ is a psychological state that results when we perceive that there is an inadequacy, a deprivation, in our social relationships.
24. _____ occurs because of a person's expectation of negative encounters with others.
25. According to the _____, love comprises intimacy, commitment, and passion.
26. _____ love is a type of love where there are strong emotions but those feelings cannot be made publically known.
27. A(n) _____ contains our ideas about how close relationships operate.
28. The _____ reflects our tendency to be attracted to others who are like us.
29. When exposure to a stimulus repeatedly enhances one's positive feeling toward that stimulus, this is known as the _____.
30. When people tend to become involved with a partner with whom they are closely matched socially and physically, this is called the _____.
31. According to your text, males tend to use _____ when trying to prevent their partner from becoming involved with someone else, and females tend to use _____.
32. Altman and Taylor developed _____, which says that relationships vary in breadth, the extent of interaction, and depth, the range of aspects of our lives we discuss and share.
33. _____ is the ability or willingness to share intimate areas of one's life.
34. _____ suggests that people make assessments according to the rewards (all the positive things derived from a relationship) and costs (all the negative things derived from a relationship).

35. When we compare a relationship that we are in presently with other potential relationships, this is known as the _____.
36. _____ deals with the perception of justice in interpersonal relationships and focuses on the concept of fairness in relationships.
37. The concept of _____ states that fairness is achieved when people believe that those who make large contributions should obtain rewards equal to those contributions and those who make lesser contributions should obtain lesser rewards.
38. According to the _____, successful couples actually sculpt a relationship.
39. Research suggests that successful couples handle conflict by using _____.
40. According to Gottman (1995) _____ is the most destructive of the four horsemen of the apocalypse.

Answers

Multiple-Choice

#	correct	pages in text
1	b	325
2	d	326
3	c	328
4	a	329
5	b	330
6	c	330
7	d	333
8	b	334
9	a	335
10	c	335-336

11	b	336
12	a	337
13	d	341
14	b	345
15	c	346
16	b	348
17	a	349
18	b	353
19	d	354
20	d	356

Fill-in-the-Blank

#	correct	pages in text
21	need for affiliation	325
22	need for intimacy	325
23	Loneliness	326
24	Social anxiety	327
25	triangular theory	328
26	Secret love	331
27	working model	332
28	similarity effect	335

29	mere exposure	335
30	matching principle	336
31	display of resources; attractiveness	342
32	social penetration theory	346
33	self-disclosure	346
34	Social exchange theory	347
35	comparison level for alternatives	347
36	equity theory	347
37	equity	347
38	Michelangelo effect	350
39	an accommodation process	353
40	withdrawal (stonewalling)	355

KNOWLEDGE IN ACTION

The habits of the heart seem to be determined in part by the patterns of our childhood. Researchers have explored the importance of attachment styles observed in childhood on adult close relationships. While childhood patterns are not destiny and it is possible to change these attachment styles, they do seem to have a significant impact on who we are attracted to and how well the relationship goes.

Researchers have used a relatively simple way of determining these attachment styles. Textbook Table 9.2, reproduced in part below, presents the question used to determine attachment styles. You can ask individuals (and yourself) to respond to this question. You might also ask them to judge whether the individuals they have dated have styles are similar to their own.

An additional measuring device concerning the state of the relationship is to ask individuals to respond on a five-point scale as to how satisfactory the relationship is (or was until it ended). If you use this scale, you should find that the "secure-secure"

coupling is the best. You should also find that males who are not secure should feel most comfortable with females who are secure.

Adult Attachment Styles

Question: Which of the following best describes your feelings?

Percentage Who Agree

(newspaper sample)

Secure

I find it relatively easy to get close to others and am comfortable depending on them and having them depend on me. I don't worry 56% about being abandoned or about someone getting too close to me.

Avoidant

I am somewhat uncomfortable being close to others; I find it difficult to trust them completely, difficult to allow myself to depend on them. I am nervous when anyone gets too close, and 25% often, love partners want me to be more intimate than I feel comfortable being.

Anxious/Ambivalent

I find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like. I often worry that my partner doesn't really love me or won't want to 19% stay with me. I want to merge completely with another person, and this desire sometimes scares people away.

From Shaver, Hazen, and Bradshaw, 1988, p. 80.

KNOWLEDGE IN ACTION: OBSERVATION

Find a place where intimate couples congregate. This could be a park, a restaurant or bar, or an amusement park, for example. Bring a friend with you. Try to observe 10 different couples. For each couple you observe, rate each partner on a 1 to 10 scale of physical attractiveness, with 1 being not at all attractive and 10 being extremely attractive. Have your friend do the same.

Your ratings

Couple #	Male	Female
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		

Your friend's ratings

Couple #	Male	Female
1		
2		
3		

4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		

Look at your ratings for each couple. Do partners within the same relationship tend to have similar levels of physical attractiveness? Do the same for your friend's ratings.

Now, for each couple, look at your ratings compared to your friend's. Did you tend to agree pretty closely on levels of physical attractiveness, or did your ratings differ a great deal? Differences between ratings illustrate the problem of interrater reliability in observation. Because ratings such as physical attractiveness tend to be subjective to a large degree ("Beauty is in the eye of the beholder"), psychologists making observations such as these tend to use several raters and get them to come to some kind of agreement.