

CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS:

how and why we study them

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think about your happiest memory



think about your unhappiest memory

research in the public interest?

Elaine Hatfield



Ellen Berscheid



research in the public interest?

From “The Golden Fleece Award: Love’s Labours Almost Lost”:

In 1975, [we] were attempting to determine the extent to which the major cognitive and emotional theories could tell us something about the nature of passionate love and sexual desire.

We had a bit of money to work with since the National Science Foundation had awarded us a tiny grant to allow us to investigate the importance of social justice and equity in romantic exchanges.

Then along came Wisconsin’s US Senator William Proxmire, who awarded me what came to be a vastly publicized “Golden Fleece Award,” claiming I was “fleecing” taxpayers with my “unneeded” scientific research.

research in the public interest?



Ellen Berscheid, Elaine Hatfield, and the Emergence of Relationship Science

Harry T. Reis¹, Arthur Aron², Margaret S. Clark³,
and Eli J. Finkel⁴

¹The University of Rochester, ²Stony Brook University, ³Yale University, and ⁴Northwestern University

Perspectives on Psychological Science

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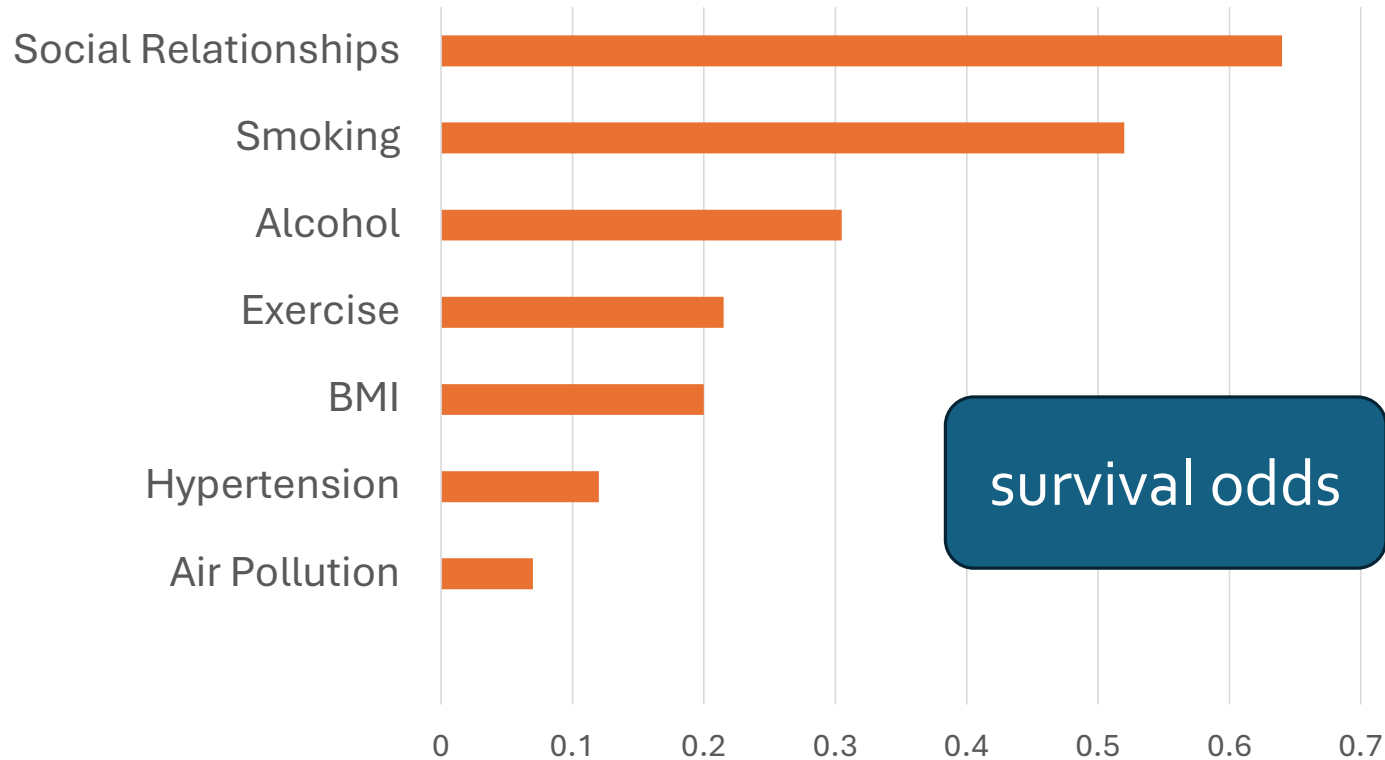


Abstract

In the past 25 years, relationship science has grown from a nascent research area to a thriving subdiscipline of psychological science. In no small measure, this development reflects the pioneering contributions of Ellen Berscheid and Elaine Hatfield. Beginning at a time when relationships did not appear on the map of psychological science, these two scholars identified relationships as a crucial subject for scientific psychology and began to chart its theoretical and empirical territory. In this article, we review several of their most influential contributions, describing the innovative foundation they built as well as the manner in which this foundation helped set the stage for contemporary advances in knowledge about relationships. We conclude by discussing the broader relevance of this work for psychological science.

research in the public interest?

148 studies (308,849 participants):



research in the public interest?

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PLoS MEDICINE

Social Relationships and Mortality Risk: A Meta-analytic Review

Julianne Holt-Lunstad^{1,3*}, Timothy B. Smith^{2,3}, J. Bradley Layton³

1 Department of Psychology, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, United States of America, **2** Department of Counseling Psychology, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, United States of America, **3** Department of Epidemiology, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, United States of America

Abstract

Background: The quality and quantity of individuals' social relationships has been linked not only to mental health but also to both morbidity and mortality.

Objectives: This meta-analytic review was conducted to determine the extent to which social relationships influence risk for mortality, which aspects of social relationships are most highly predictive, and which factors may moderate the risk.

Data Extraction: Data were extracted on several participant characteristics, including cause of mortality, initial health status, and pre-existing health conditions, as well as on study characteristics, including length of follow-up and type of assessment of social relationships.

Results: Across 148 studies (308,849 participants), the random effects weighted average effect size was OR = 1.50 (95% CI 1.42 to 1.59), indicating a 50% increased likelihood of survival for participants with stronger social relationships. This finding remained consistent across age, sex, initial health status, cause of death, and follow-up period. Significant differences were found across the type of social measurement evaluated ($p < 0.001$); the association was strongest for complex measures of social integration (OR = 1.91; 95% CI 1.63 to 2.23) and lowest for binary indicators of residential status (living alone versus with others) (OR = 1.19; 95% CI 0.99 to 1.44).

Conclusions: The influence of social relationships on risk for mortality is comparable with well-established risk factors for mortality.

Please see later in the article for the Editors' Summary.

research in the public interest?

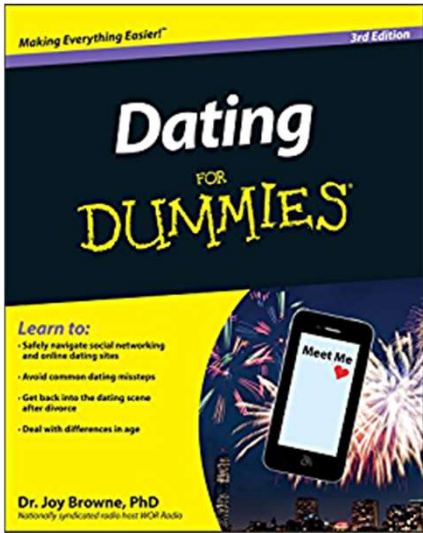
estimated annual cost of direct and indirect consequences
of struggling marriages* in the U.S. (Schramm, 2006):

\$33,300,000,000.00

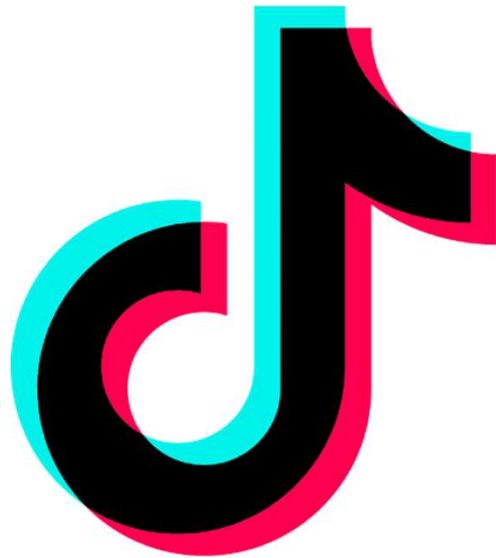
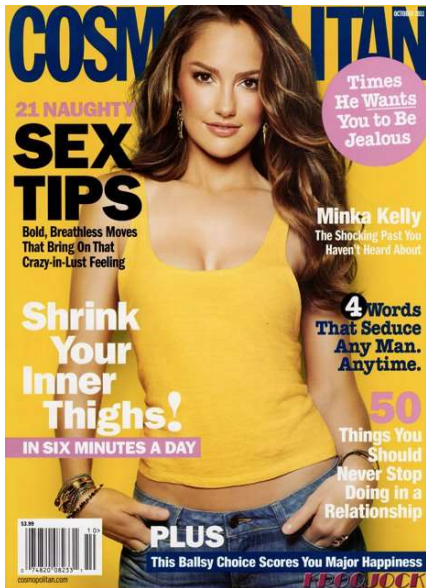
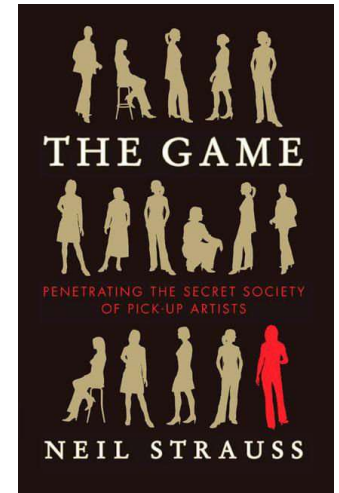
we study relationships because...

they matter.

a lot.



where do you learn about relationships?



what do we actually know
about relationships?

“opposites attract”









Journal of Personality and Social Psychology
1967, Vol. 5, No. 1, 82-90

ATTRACTION AND SIMILARITY OF
PERSONALITY CHARACTERISTICS¹

DONN BYRNE, WILLIAM GRIFFITT, AND DANIEL STEFANIAK

University of Texas

Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology
1961, Vol. 62, No. 3, 713-715

INTERPERSONAL ATTRACTION AND ATTITUDE SIMILARITY²

DONN BYRNE³

University of Texas

Journal of Personality and Social Psychology
1966, Vol. 4, No. 2, 220-224

EFFECT OF ECONOMIC SIMILARITY-DISSIMILARITY ON
INTERPERSONAL ATTRACTION³

DONN BYRNE, GERALD L. CLORE, JR., AND PHILIP WORCHEL

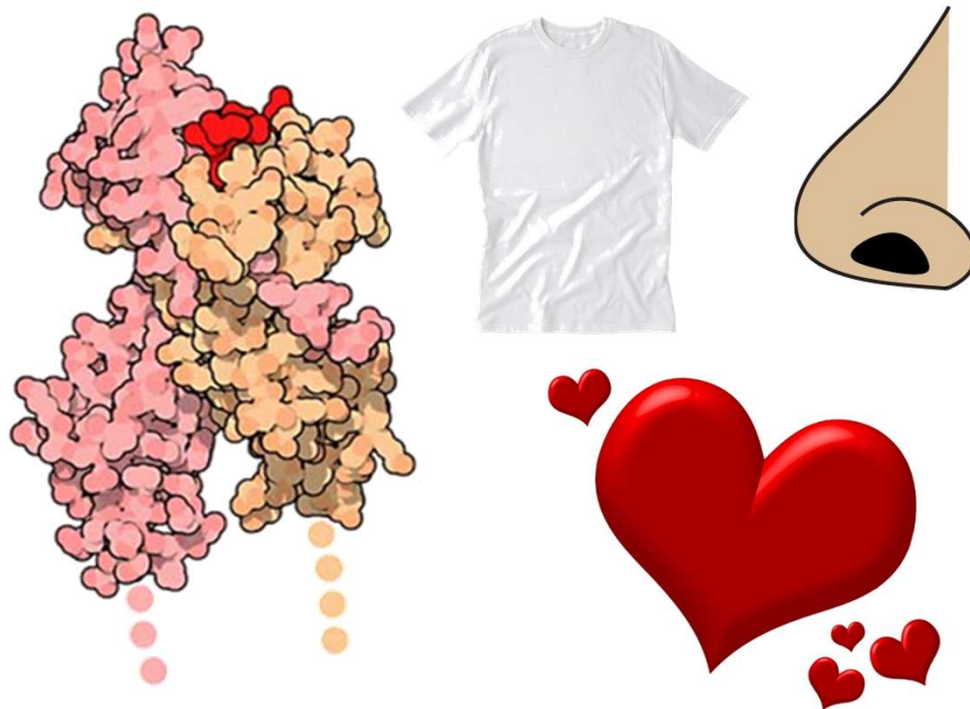
University of Texas

“opposites attract”

“birds of a feather flock together”

“you complete me/my better half”

Major Histocompatibility Complex (MHC)



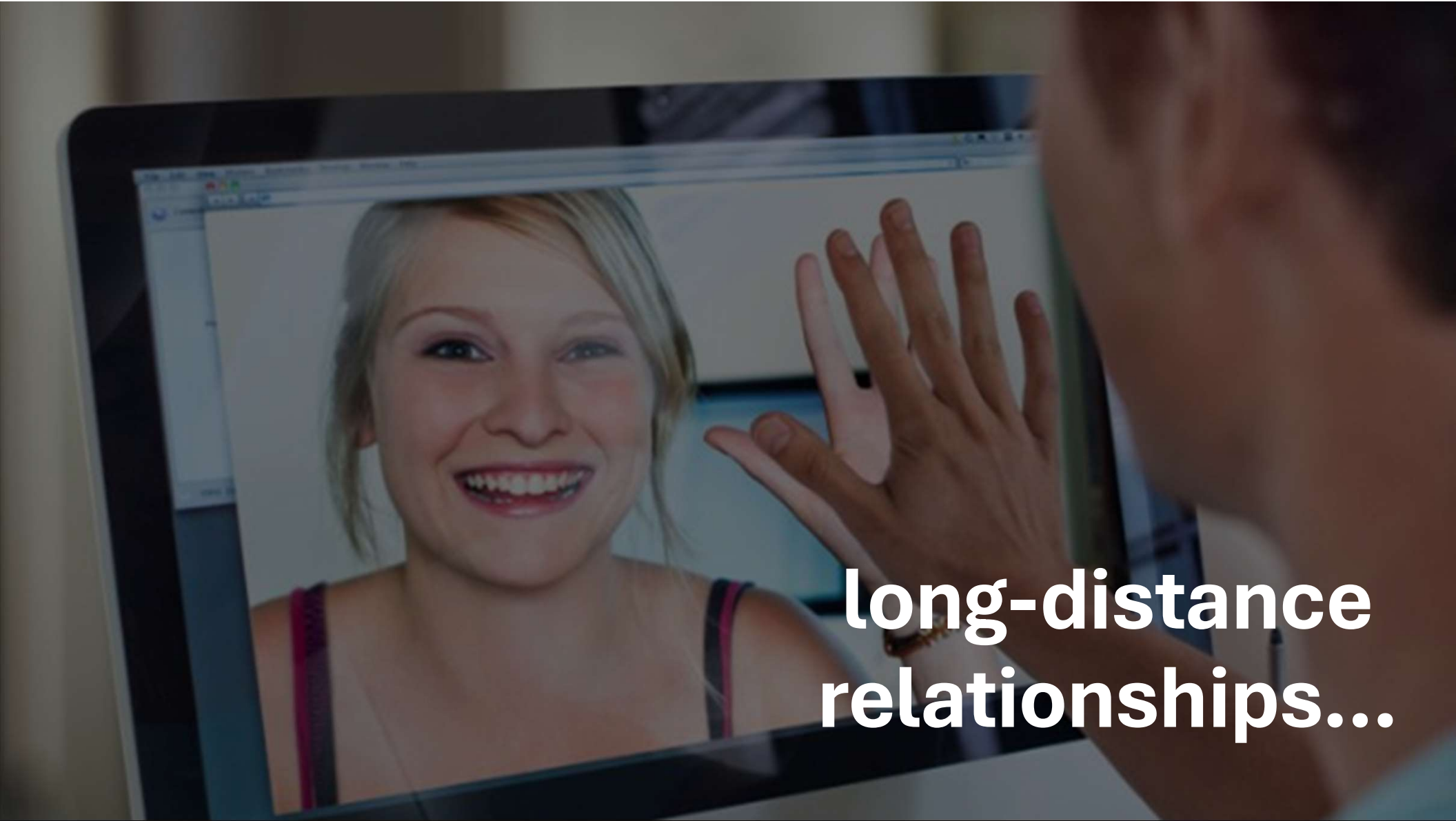
Become closer to your partner.

Learn about yourself.

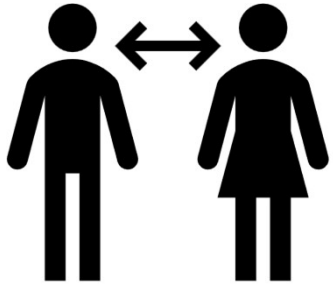
[Order Relationship Kit](#)

[Order Single DNA Personality Test](#)

Major Histocompatibility Complex (MHC)



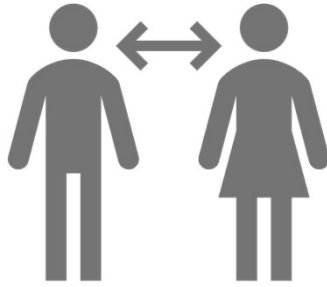
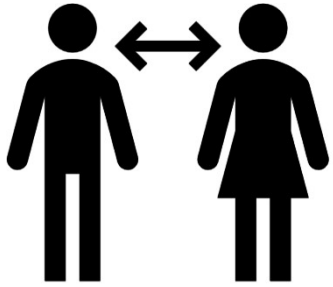
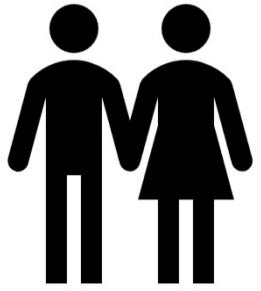
**long-distance
relationships...**



Time 1



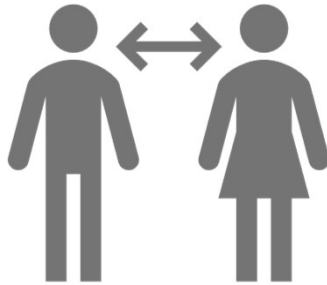
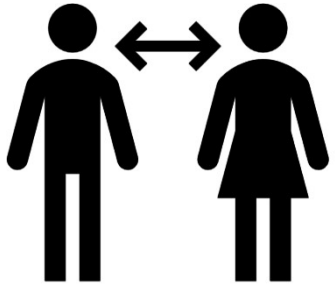
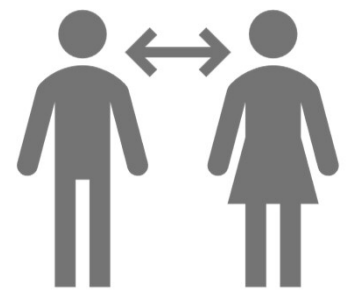
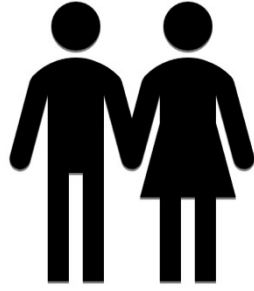
Time 2



Time 1



Time 2



Time 1



Time 2



When long-distance dating partners become geographically close

Laura Stafford, Andy J. Merolla, & Janessa D. Castle

Ohio State University

ABSTRACT

This study explored long-distance dating relationships' (LDDRs) transition to geographic proximity. About half of LDDR partners experience this transition, whereas the other half end their relationships during separation. Among reunited relationships, one-third terminate within 3 months of reunion. Participants' open-ended responses highlight changes associated with reunion, including the loss of autonomy; increased positive and negative knowledge; time management difficulties; and heightened conflict and jealousy. Desirable features of LDDRs (e.g., autonomy and novelty) appear to be lost, and missed, upon reunion. Individuals whose relationships terminated upon reunion were more likely to report missing aspects of LDDRs. Overall, we propose reunions facilitate relational and partner knowledge acquisition, the dissipation of quixotic ideals, and increased partner interdependence.

KEY WORDS: dating relationships • dialectics • long-distance relationships • reunions • turning points

“I know what I want in a partner...”

attractiveness

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attractiveness = averageness?

5 faces



attractiveness = averageness?

10 faces



attractiveness = averageness?

25 faces



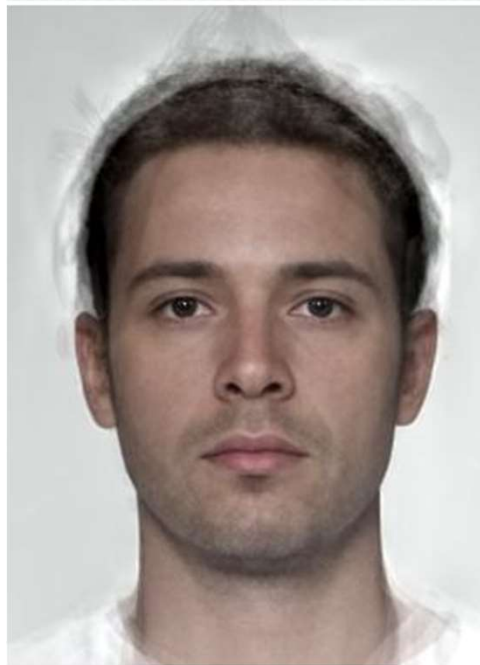
attractiveness = averageness?

5 faces



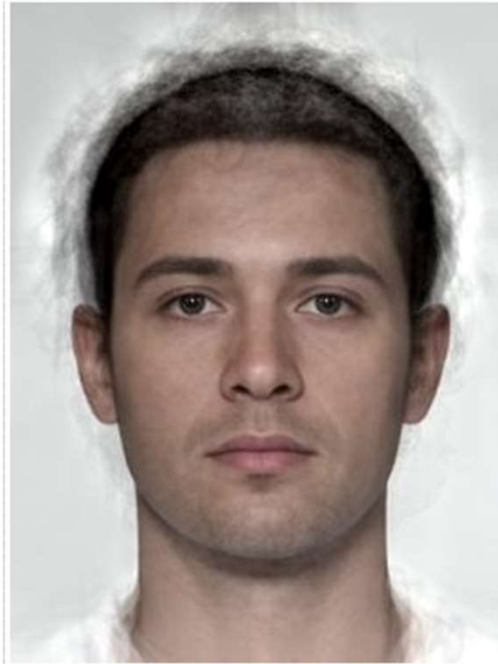
attractiveness = averageness?

10 faces



attractiveness = averageness?

25 faces



“I know what I want in a partner...”

fidelity

“Please think of a serious committed relationship that you are or were involved in, and you discover your partner has become interested in someone else...”

Which would upset you more?

- A. Imagining your partner forming a deep emotional attachment to that person
- B. Imagining your partner enjoying passionate sex with that person

fidelity

PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCE

Research Article

SEXUAL AND ROMANTIC JEALOUSY IN HETEROSEXUAL AND HOMOSEXUAL ADULTS

Christine R. Harris
University of California, San Diego

“I know what I want in a partner...”

INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS AND GROUP PROCESSES

Sex Differences in Mate Preferences Revisited: Do People Know What They Initially Desire in a Romantic Partner?

Paul W. Eastwick and Eli J. Finkel
Northwestern University

In paradigms in which participants state their ideal romantic-partner preferences or examine vignettes and photographs, men value physical attractiveness more than women do, and women value earning prospects more than men do. Yet it remains unclear if these preferences remain sex differentiated in predicting desire for real-life potential partners (i.e., individuals whom one has actually met). In the present study, the authors explored this possibility using speed dating and longitudinal follow-up procedures. Replicating previous research, participants exhibited traditional sex differences when stating the importance of physical attractiveness and earning prospects in an ideal partner and ideal speed date. However, data revealed no sex differences in the associations between participants' romantic interest in real-life potential partners (met during and outside of speed dating) and the attractiveness and earning prospects of those partners. Furthermore, participants' ideal preferences, assessed before the speed-dating event, failed to predict what inspired their actual desire at the event. Results are discussed within the context of R. E. Nisbett and T. D. Wilson's (1977) seminal article: Even regarding such a consequential aspect of mental life as romantic-partner preferences, people may lack introspective awareness of what influences their judgments and behavior.

Keywords: sex differences, mate preferences, speed dating, empathy gap, a priori theories

we study relationships because...

the data don't
always match
our intuition

long-term perspective



we study relationships because...

**they've been
around forever.**

keeping up with the times...

a (badly) simulated “modern-day” text conversation...

R u 2 a couple?

Huh? Nah..

but ur dating, rite?

eh.. idk if I'd say that

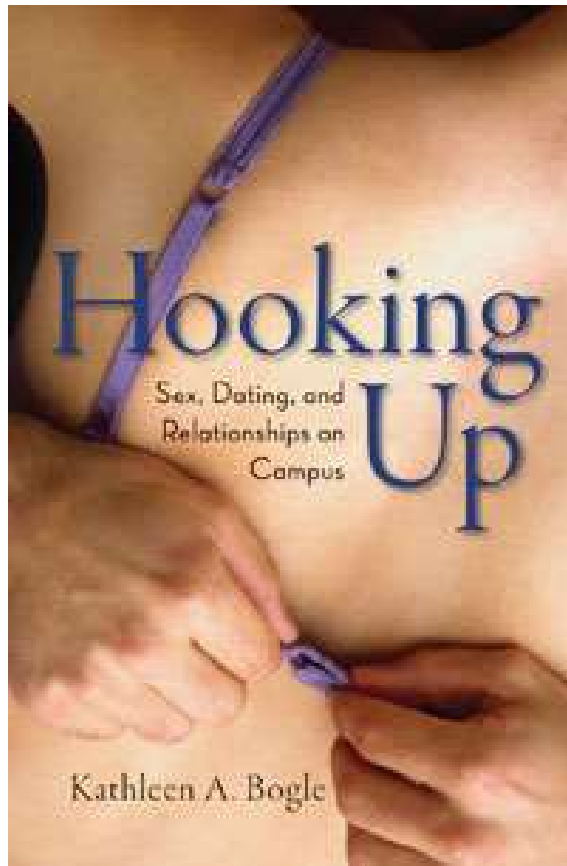
but u r friends, rite?

4 sure, more than...

so what are you??

we're “talking”

keeping up with the times...



A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding a white tablet computer. The tablet screen displays a vibrant, colorful meal, likely a salad or a bowl of food, which is also visible in the background. The background is slightly blurred, showing a wooden table with various dishes and a person's hand holding a fork. The overall scene suggests a social dining experience where food is being documented or shared.

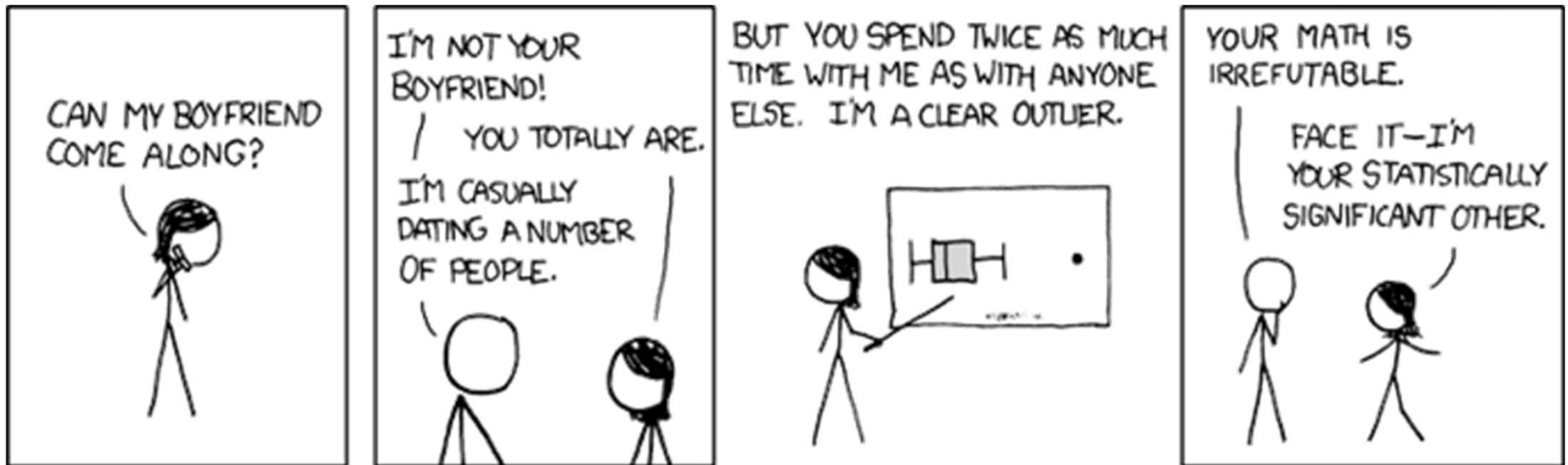
“soft launch”?

we study relationships because...

**they're constantly
changing.**

how do we study relationships?

how do we study relationships?





Me trying to be charming



how do we study relationships?

making things realistic*?



Fig. 1. Participant wearing a head-mounted display (HMD), and a screen shot of the virtual world with an attentive partner shown.

experiments with partners?

“list all the current problems
in your relationship”

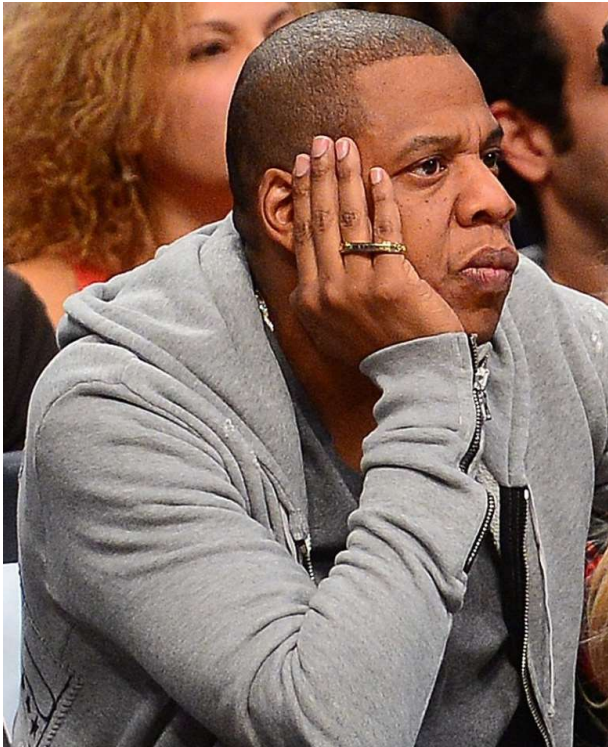


“list all the items currently
in your bedroom”



experiments with partners?

“list all the current problems
in your relationship”



“list all the items currently
in your bedroom”



want to learn more?

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AS.200.317: Interpersonal Relations

AS.200.323: Psychology and Social Media

AS.200.333: Advanced Social Psychology

AS.200.374: Happiness and Psychological Well-Being

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The Psychology of Close Relationships: Fourteen Core Principles

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Keywords

relationship science, core principles, attachment theory, interdependence theory, culinary approach

Abstract

Relationship science is a theory-rich discipline, but there have been no attempts to articulate the broader themes or principles that cut across the theories themselves. We have sought to fill that void by reviewing the psychological literature on close relationships, particularly romantic relationships, to extract its core principles. This review reveals 14 principles, which collectively address four central questions: (a) What is a relationship? (b) How do relationships operate? (c) What tendencies do people bring to their relationships? (d) How does the context affect relationships? The 14 principles paint a cohesive and unified picture of romantic relationships that reflects a strong and maturing discipline. However, the principles afford few of the sorts of conflicting predictions that can be especially helpful in fostering novel theory development. We conclude that relationship science is likely to benefit from simultaneous pushes toward both greater integration across theories (to reduce redundancy) and greater emphasis on the circumstances under which existing (or not-yet-developed) principles conflict with one another.

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thanks!

