

Attraction

- Includes a wide range of situations:
 - People we find appealing to work with
 - People we enjoy hanging out with
 - Friends
 - Serious love attachments

Being liked

- Americans are deeply concerned about being liked and making a good impression
- High school students report that their #1 concern is the way others react to them and their overwhelming desire is to be liked

Research results

- We like people with pleasant characteristics more than unpleasant characteristics
- We like people who agree with us more than people who disagree with us
- We like people who like us more than people who dislike us
- We like people who cooperative with us more than people who compete with us
- We like people who praise us more than people who criticize us

Reward theory

- **We like people whose behavior provides us with maximum reward at minimum cost**
- We can predict that we will like people with opinions similar to ours because, when we run into such people, they reward us by providing us with consensual validation for our beliefs—helping us believe our opinions are correct
- Cooperation leads to attraction
 - Sherif's summer camp
- This theory explains a lot of human attraction, but it does not explain all the dynamics of liking and loving

Effects of praise

- We like people who evaluate us positively more than those who evaluate us negatively
 - There are, however, situations in which criticism might be more useful than praise
 - Although praise is rewarding, disagreement that leads to improvement may carry its own rewards
- However, the dynamic is complicated
- We trust negative evaluations more than positive ones, as long as we're not the ones being evaluated
- Although people like to be praised and tend to like the praiser, they don't like being manipulated
 - Praise that's too lavish
 - Praise that seems unwarranted
 - If the praiser is in a position to benefit from the ingratiating behavior, then they are not liked much
- "Flattery will get you nowhere" → "Flattery will get you somewhere, but not everywhere"

The effects of favors

- We like people who do us favors (favors can be considered rewards)
- Even more, we like people who we do favors for
- We don't like people who do us favors if there are "strings attached"
 - Boss receives a gift just before performance evaluation is to be completed

Rewards aren't always transsituational

- Some rewards are perceived as rewards across all situations, such as food to a starving person
- The perception of some rewards is influenced by minor situational variables
- If you want someone to like you, instead of doing them a favor, try to get them to do **you** a favor
 - Remember justification of cruelty? If you cause harm to someone, you will attempt to justify the behavior by derogating the victim
 - The opposite is true also. If you do someone a favor, you will try to justify it by convincing yourself that the recipient of the favor is an attractive, likable, deserving person

Key personal attributes

- Competence
- Physical attractiveness
- Do we like people who have pleasant attributes or do we convince ourselves that our friends have pleasant attributes?
- Causality likely flows in both directions

Competence

- We like competent people
- However, in many situations, we feel threatened by competence
- Although we like to be around competent people, a person with a lot of ability can make us uncomfortable
 - They may seem unapproachable, distant, superhuman and may make us look bad by comparison

The “pratfall effect”

- Although a high degree of competence makes us appear more attractive, some evidence of fallibility increases our attractiveness still further
 - Competent people who show some fallibility (like taking responsibility for a major blunder) may cause a person to look more human and, therefore, be more likable
- The “pratfall effect” holds most clearly when, in the mind of the observer, there is an implicit threat of competition with the stimulus person
 - This is especially true for males; females are more likely to respond positively to highly competent people who did not make a mistake
 - Males with a moderate degree of self-esteem are most likely to prefer the highly competent person who commits a blunder, while males with low self-esteem (apparently feeling little competitiveness with the stimulus person) prefer the highly competent person who doesn't blunder
- No sizable proportion of people preferred the mediocre person

Physical attractiveness

- We want to believe that we value other characteristics more than physical beauty (which is beyond a person's control)
- Consistent research evidence shows that physical characteristics are the key to all forms of attraction
 - In one study (Walster), the **one** determinant of whether or not a couple liked each other and actually repeated their date was their physical attractiveness
 - In another study (White), it was the **similarity** of attractiveness of the couple that was crucial in determining whether or not the relationship continued

Research results

Physically attractive people

- Are given the benefit of the doubt when they misbehave
- Are perceived as having positive personality characteristics
- Are liked more
- Earn more money

Attraction and self-fulfilling prophecy

- In ambiguous situations involving trouble and turmoil, beautiful people tend to be given the benefit of the doubt and receive more favorable treatment than less attractive people
- The way people are treated affects the way they come to think of themselves
- People may begin to behave in a way that is consistent with this self-concept—a way that is consistent with how they were treated to begin with

Similarity and attraction

- If all you know about a person are their opinions, the more similar the opinions, the more you like the person
- Why is this agreement attractive?
 1. People who share our attitudes and opinions on important issues are intelligent, thoughtful individuals
 - It's rewarding and interesting to hang out with and chat with intelligent and thoughtful people
 2. They provide us with a social validation for our beliefs—feeling that we are right
 - This is rewarding and so we like those who agree with us
- If you like a person, you assume their opinions match yours

Being liked

- A major determinant of whether we like someone is whether the person has indicated that they like us
- Believing someone likes you increases your liking for them and increases your pleasant behavior toward them
 - This then influences the other person who, in turn, is likely to respond back similarly which increases your liking for them

The role of self-esteem

- The lower our self-esteem, the more we respond to someone who likes us
- People who are secure about themselves are less “needy”
 - Just as a starving person will accept almost any food and a well-fed person can be more selective, an insecure person will accept almost anyone who expresses interest, while a secure person will be more selective
- Low self-esteem leads to seeking out less attractive people in order to reduce the chances of rejection

Fear of social rejection

- Rejection produces an increase in aggression and is likely one of the root causes of the Columbine school shootings
- Research has shown that fear of social rejection leads to:
 - Lower intellectual performance
 - Poorer eating choices
 - Poor decision-making
 - Procrastination

Gain-loss theory

- We have looked at how being liked by another person increases the likelihood that we will like them (reward-cost theory)
- Gain-loss theory makes a different prediction
 - Increases in rewarding behavior have more impact on liking than constant positive behavior
 - Losses in rewarding behavior have more impact than constant negative behavior

Necessary conditions for gain-loss effect

- Two necessary conditions for gain-loss effect
 1. Integrated sequence of statements that makes a change of heart explicit
 2. The change must be gradual
 - A sudden change can look suspicious

Types of relationships

1. Exchange
2. Communal

Exchange relationship

- People involved are concerned about equity--the fair distribution of costs and rewards
- An imbalance causes unhappiness
 - The person on the short end usually feels angry or depressed and the person on the long end usually feels guilty

Communal relationship

- Partners expect a rough equity, but neither partner is keeping score
- The partners have faith that some semblance of equity will occur
- Each partner gives in response to the needs of the other

Key factors in love

- Proximity is the major factor that facilitates people falling in love
 - Someone we work with, live near, etc.
- Similarity is the second most important factor
 - Look like us and have similar values, attitudes, beliefs, and personalities

Defining love

- Not just intense liking
 - Liking is marked by admiration and friendly affection
 - Loving generally includes feelings of strong attachment, intimacy, and a deep concern for the other person's welfare
- Not a unitary, one-dimensional state
- Complex and multifaceted
- Experienced in a variety of relationships

Types of love

- Passionate love
- Companionate love
- Consummate love

Passionate love

- Strong emotions
- Sexual desire
- Intense preoccupation with beloved
- Rapid onset and tends to cool over time
- May be a prelude to the eventual development of companionate love

Companionate love

- Milder, but more stable feelings
- Mutual trust
- Dependability
- Warmth
- Tends to last longer and deepens over time

Consummate love

- Combines the characteristics of passionate and companionate love
- Sternberg's triangle of love—the 3 parts are
 - Passion
 - Euphoria and sexual excitement
 - Intimacy
 - Feeling free to talk about anything
 - Feeling close to and understood by the loved one
 - Commitment
 - Needing to be with the other person
 - Feeling loyal
- Love can consist of one component alone or any combination of the 3 parts
- Sternberg believes that as the relationship develops, it often moves from pure passion into a combination of passion and intimacy that he calls romantic love
- As the relationship matures more, it becomes companionate with a combination of intimacy and commitment—without a lot of passion
- The ultimate goal is consummate love—the blending of all 3 components, but this is rarely achieved

Gain-loss theory: implications for close rels.

- Passionate love is characterized by ups and downs while companionate love has steadier, predictable rewards of emotional security and being accepted by someone that knows your strengths and weaknesses
- There is a tendency to hurt the one you love

Rewarding behavior

- Once we have grown certain of the rewarding behavior of our long-term partner, that person may become less powerful as a source of reward than a stranger
- Intimate partner is at peak of ability to offer rewarding behavior and, therefore, can't provide us with much of a gain
- This can cause people to react more positively to rewarding behavior of strangers

Negative behavior

- At the same time, a loved one has great potential to hurt us
- The closer the relationship and the greater the past history of reward, the more devastating is the withdrawal of the person's esteem
- Friends or intimate partners can hurt us with criticism or withdrawal of approval
- Response tends to be attempt to reestablish the positive connection in the relationship

The role of authenticity

- A relationship grows and develops if both partners resolve conflicts through honest, authentic interactions
 - Authenticity relates to our ability to give up trying to make a good impression and begin to reveal things about ourselves that are honest, even if unsavory
- A close relationship in which the partners don't provide each other with gains in esteem is almost certain to be a relationship in which the partners aren't open and honest with each other

Conflict and marital satisfaction

- Marriage partners who use an intimate, nonaggressive, yet confrontational method of conflict resolution report highest levels of marital satisfaction
- Two people who are genuinely fond of each other will have a more satisfying and exciting relationship over a longer period of time if they are able to express both positive and negative feelings about each other as well as themselves

The role of disclosure

- We like someone better if we have disclosed something important about ourselves to that person—even if it is unsavory
- We like others who honor us by revealing something intimate, especially if it's negative

Benefits of self-revelation

- Feelings of interpersonal closeness
- Strong feelings of relief
- General feelings of well-being
- Reduction of symptoms of physical illness

Straight talk

- Clear statements of feelings and concerns without accusing, blaming, judging or ridiculing the other person
- Effective because the recipient can listen nondefensively
- It's not necessarily easy
- Growing up in our competitive society, we have learned to protect ourselves by making ourselves relatively invulnerable
–Attack rather than reveal

Effective communication

- Immediacy
- Feelings vs. judgment

Immediacy

- Feelings must be expressed directly and openly
- This facilitates immediate feedback regarding our behavior
- This immediate feedback helps us gain insight into the impact of our actions and statements and consider our options for meeting our own needs as well as our partner's
- If feelings aren't expressed, I may never become aware of something that I do or say that bothers others
- Once I receive the feedback, I have two options
 1. Continue to behave this way (meets my needs)
 2. Stop behaving this way (meets their needs)
 - Alternatively, there may be another option that meets both of our needs, but I don't have the option of exploring this unless I receive this feedback

Feelings vs. judgments

- Communication of judgment leads to defensiveness and escalation
- Effective communication requires openness, but openness can hurt people
 - It is possible to be open and, at the same time, express oneself in a manner that causes a minimum of pain and maximizes understanding
- A feeling is
 - Anger, sadness, fear, discomfort, hurt, excitement, etc.
- A judgment is
 - Interpreting behavior and judging it
 - A feeling that is inadequately understood or inadequately expressed
- Friends or intimate partners want to know our feelings
- It is easier to hear feedback that is expressed in feelings ("I'm upset") than feedback expressed as a judgment or accusation ("you're a jerk")
- A person's judgments about another person tend to take the form of dispositional attributions which are opinions