Interpersonal Attraction and Personal Relationships

Chapters 8 & 9

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The Need to Belong

- We want people around us!
- Loneliness: experienced when our social relations are inadequate (≠ aloneness)
- Emotional loneliness – absence of an intimate relationship
- Social loneliness – absence of social integration or community involvement

The Need to Belong

- I lack companionship.
- There are people who really understand me*
- I am no longer close to anyone.
- There is no one I can turn to.
- I feel part of a group of friends*
- My social relationships are superficial.

The Need to Belong

- Social rejection
  - Punishment ("go to your room!")
  - "Silent treatment"
  - Ostracism: experience of being ignored or rejected by others
    - E.g., catching and throwing a virtual ball on a computer game!

Attachment

- Strong emotional bond to a significant other person

- An infant:
  - Responds positively to specific people (e.g., mom)
  - Feels better when close
  - Seeks them out when frightened

Attachment styles

- Secure attachment: parent is generally available and responsive.

- Avoidant attachment: parent is cool, unresponsive, rejecting.

- Anxious/ambivalent attachment: parent is anxious, inconsistently responsive

- Our early attachment styles influence our later romantic attachment styles

Attachment styles

Description	Attachment style	% of population
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 often worry about getting abandoned or about someone getting too close to me.	**SECURE**	59%

Attachment styles

Description	Attachment style	% of population
I am somewhat uncomfortable being too 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 often, love partners want me to be more intimate than I feel comfortable being.	**AVOIDANT**	25%

Attachment styles

Description	Attachment style	% of population
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 stay with me. I want to merge completely with another person, and this desire sometimes scares people away.	ANXIOUS / AMBIVALENT	11%

Attachment styles

- Adult versus infant attachment:
  - Reciprocal
  - Between peers
  - Sexual
- <u>Securely attached</u> people have more satisfying happy relationships that last.
- Seeking support from partner during times of distress.

Liking

In general:

- we like those who like us

- we like those who satisfy our needs

- we like those when our interactions are profitable: rewards > costs

  - **"Social exchange theory"**

Liking

- Proximity
  - We like those who are nearby
- Familiarity
  - We like those who we see often
  - Mere exposure effect
- Similarity
  - We like those who're like us
  - "matching principle"
- Warmth and competence

Physical Attractiveness

- Other things being equal, we tend to like attractive people more.

Physical Attractiveness

- "What is beautiful is good" stereotype
  - May be more socially skilled
  - Also believed to be more intelligent, dominant & mentally healthy
  - Receive help, job recommendations, and more lenient punishments
  - <u>Let's watch</u>

Physical Attractiveness

- Who is attractive?
- Cultural stereotypes
- Some commonalities as well:
  - Statistically "average" faces
  - Symmetrical or balanced faces

If a man (woman) had all the other qualities you desired, would you marry this person if you were not in love with him (her) ?

QUESTION:

Answer by US youth:

	1967		1976		1984	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
YES	11.7	4.0	1.7	4.6	1.7	3.6
UNDECIDED	23.7	71.7	12.1	15.4	12.7	11.5
NO	64.6	24.3	86.2	80.0	85.6	84.9

Association of romantic love
with marriage is very recent

Romantic Love

Passionate Love

- Wildly emotional
- Uncontrollable
- Physiological arousal
- Preoccupation with other
- Idealization of other
- Strikes suddenly, fades quickly

Companionate Love

- Affection we feel for those w/whom our lives are intertwined
- Trust
- Caring
- Tolerance
- Develops slowly, basis for enduring relationship

Gender & Love

- Women more likely to feel sexually attracted to someone after feeling romantically attracted to them.
- Women emphasize emotional intimacy more than men.
- Also applies to homosexual population.
- Men focused more on sexual mating aspect, women on attachment aspect.
- Women generally more picky in choosing partners.
- Yet how do men have a more romantic view of love? (Fall in love quickly and fall out of love slowly)

Mate Selection: Sex differences

- For both sexes: dependability, maturity, and pleasantness are most important.

- Men rank physical attractiveness higher.

- Women rank financial resources higher.

- Men prefer younger partners, while women prefer older partners.

Personal Relationships

- essential feature: interdependence
- three basic characteristics:
  - frequent interaction, long period of time
  - many different type of activities
  - strong mutual influence

Social Exchange Theory

- reward: anything gained from interaction
  - e.g., love, smile, expensive gifts
- cost: any negative consequence
  - e.g., time, energy, effort, conflict, disapproval, opportunity cost...
- Outcome = Rewards - Costs
- keep track of R & C (aware at *some* level)

Romantic Equity

- happiest in a relationship when it feels fair
- perceived fairness:
  - **equity principle:**
  $$\frac{P's\ outcome}{P's\ contributions} = \frac{O's\ outcome}{O's\ contributions}$$
- but, equity less important than overall rewards received

Interdependence Theory

- distinction between exchange and communal relationships
  - expectation of a "return"
  - caring for other's well-being, feeling responsible
  - "we-ness": inclusion of other in the self

Inclusion of the other in the self
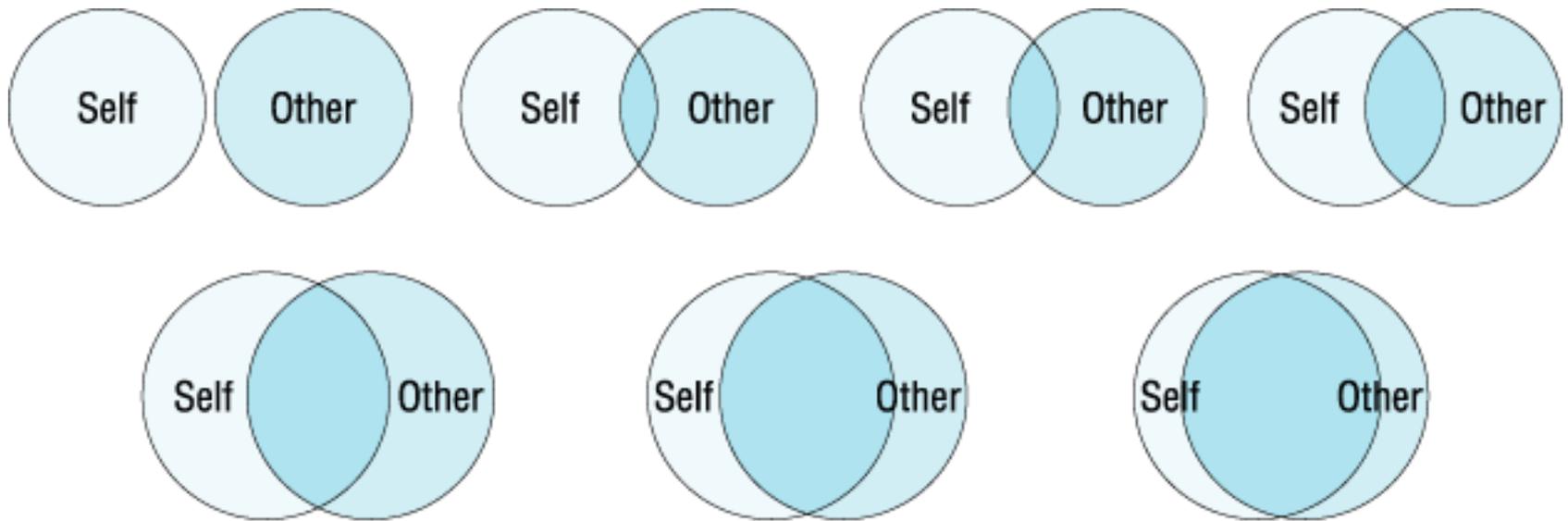
DIRECTIONS: Please circle the picture which best describes your relationship.

Self-Disclosure

- share intimate information and feelings with s.o.
- strongly related to liking, but:
  - needs to be reciprocal and gradual
  - roommate vs. stranger in lecture hall
- also includes dangers: indifference, rejection, loss of control, betrayal

Intimacy

- As a result of self-disclosure, when we feel:
  – understood,

  – validated,

  – cared for
- psychological experience of closeness
- depends on the responses of the other

Balance of Power

- social power: ability to deliberately influence s.o. else

- sometimes equal power in both partners, other times one has more power

- heterosexual couples in USA:
  - 64% equal; 27% male-dom; 9% fem-dom

Balance of Power

- Three determinants of power:
- social norms and attitudes
- relative resources
  - especially if the man has more resources such as income
- principle of least interest
  - least dependent on relationship
    -> more power

Conflict

- actions of one person interferes with the other's
- increased likelihood as interdependence increases
- mostly studied in heterosexual dating and married couples
- couples fight about…?

Conflict

- specific behaviors
  - "don't squeeze the toothpaste from the middle!"
- norms and roles
  - "you always forget important dates"
- personal dispositions
  - "you're so lazy and inconsiderate"

Conflict

- can help or hurt
- the key: how is it resolved?
- → defensiveness, threat, violence
- → clarification, depth of feelings, renew efforts for a satisfying relationship

Satisfaction

- subjective evaluation of the quality of relationship
- when R > C (profitable)
- <u>costs</u> versus <u>sacrifices</u>
- perception of fairness important

Commitment

- all the forces that act to keep a person in a relationship
- + (attractions) or – (barriers)
- "personal commitment"
  - e.g., relationship satisfaction (+)
- "moral commitment"
  - e.g., obligation, duty (+)
- "constraint commitment"
  - e.g., alternatives and investments (–)

Commitment

Satisfaction with Relationship

Quality of Alternatives

Investment in Relationship

Commitment

Stay versus Leave Relationship
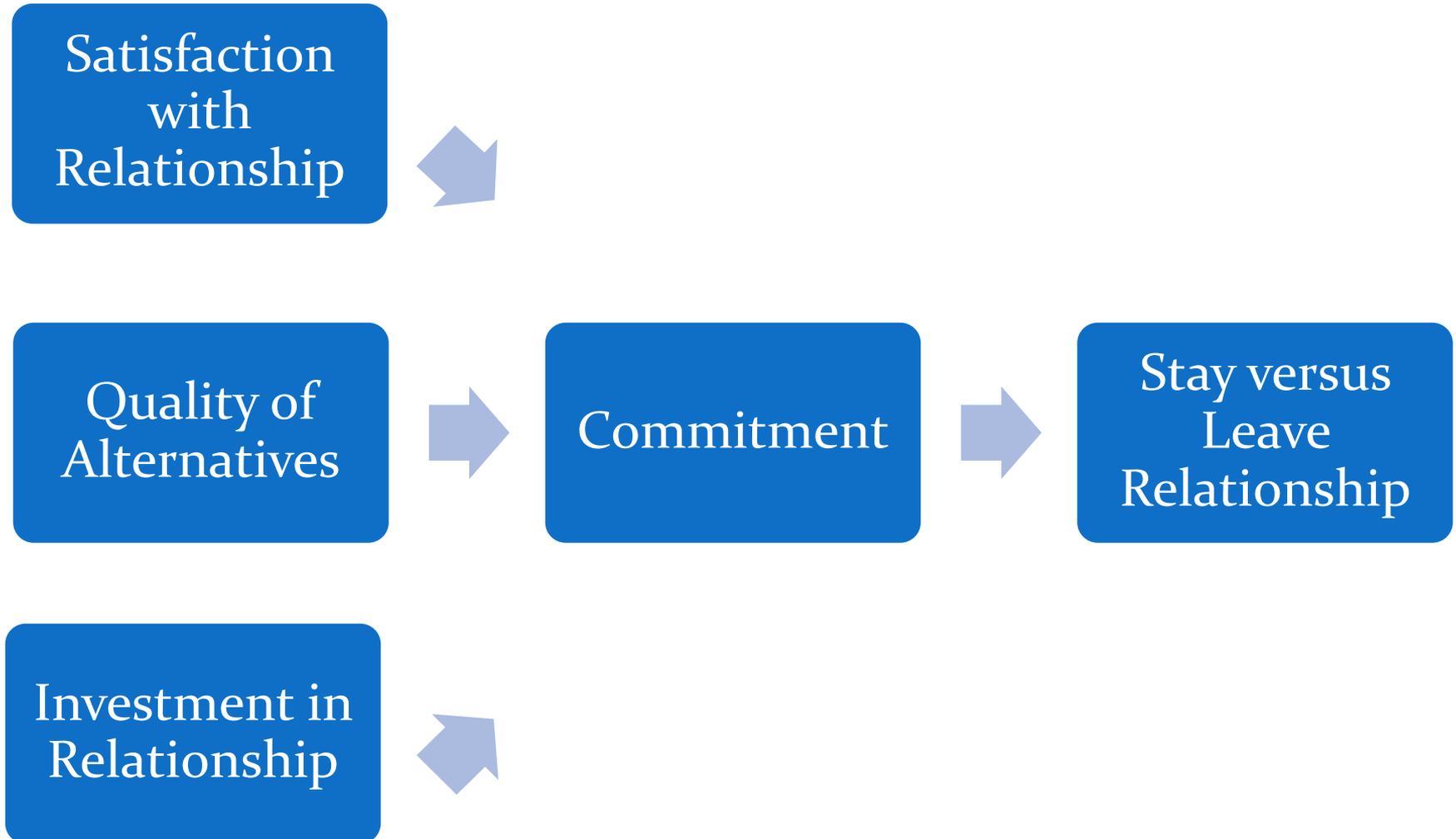
Responses to dissatisfaction

	ACTIVE	PASSIVE
+ Constructive	Voice	Loyalty
- Destructive	Exit	Neglect