

HES 3523 Human Sexuality

Class Notes: Building Good Relationships; Love, Intimacy, & Communication

(This outline covers the next 2 class periods; handouts for both are posted.)

Part I: Dating & Courtship; Setting Priorities, Phenomenology, Attribution Theory, Communication; & Conflict Resolution (tentative)

Dating & Courtship –

Compatibility – What is this about?

Thinking About My Relationship Needs: deciding what you want and don't want in a relationship / setting priorities / making assumptions

Optional notes from learning activity:

Constructive Elements in a relationship vs Destructive Elements in a relationship:

Theories that are useful in navigating intimate relationships: Phenomenology & Attribution Theories

The fable known around the world....

Phenomenology: "We don't see things as they are; we see them as we are." Anais Nin

- Two of the biggest challenges in building and maintaining good relationships include:
 - Fully understanding how our partner sees and experiences things
 - Helping our partner to understand how we see and experience things

Not getting this "right" can lead to a lot of trouble and heartache....

Attribution Theory (sometimes referred to as *Attribution Styles*; see work by Weiner, Kelley, and/or Ainsworth)

As humans, we have a need to explain why people do what they do. This is especially important in our relationships.

What does "attribution" do?

What is it all about?

- Dispositional attribution:
- Situational attribution:

We evaluate behavior to explain qualities, and we use qualities to explain behavior.

→ *Behaviors shape our perceptions*

Examples from research:

Dispositional or Situational explanations for a partner's behavior (examples of attribution):

- When presented with a positive occurrence, happy couples credit their partners'

- When presented with a positive occurrence, stressed-out couples credit

- When presented with a negative occurrence, happy couples credit

- When presented with a negative occurrence, stressed-out couples credit their partners'

	Internal	External
Stable	Ability	Task Difficulty
Unstable	Effort	Luck