

# CHAPTER 9: INTERPERSONAL ATTRACTION AND CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS

## 1. THE ABCS OF ATTRACTION AND CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS

- A. Affective: emotions and motivations
  - i. Attraction, interest, love, contentment, resentment, anger, jealousy, hatred
- B. Cognitive: knowledge and expectations
  - i. About yourself, your partner, and other relationships (real or fiction)
- C. Behavior: initiating, maintaining, and discontinuing relationships
  - i. Flirting, dating, intimacy, touching, sex, marriage, arguing, cheating, divorce

## 2. WHAT BRINGS PEOPLE TOGETHER? INTERPERSONAL ATTRACTION

- A. How people come together
  - i. Proximity breeds liking
    - 1. *We are into those who live or work near us*
  - ii. Familiarity breeds liking
    - 1. *We are into those who are more familiar to us*
    - 2. **The Mere Exposure Effect**: *we like stimuli the more we are exposed to them; we like our own mirror image, others prefer the original*
      - a. *We prefer how we look in the mirror rather than pictures of us*
  - iii. Reciprocity breeds liking
    - 1. *We like people who like us*
  - iv. Selectivity breeds liking
    - 1. *We are into those who are hard to get... to a point*
      - a. *People who are moderately selective about who they like*
  - v. "Hotness" breeds liking
    - 1. *We are into those who are physically attractive*
      - a. *What is beautiful is good stereotype*

- i. We assume that attractive people have positive personality traits
    - ii. Self-fulfilling prophecy
  - b. *It feels good to be with aesthetically pleasing others*
    - i. Emotional rewards
  - c. *Others see us more favorably (hot by association)*
    - i. Social rewards
- vi. Similarity breeds liking... in particular...
  - 1. *Demographic*
    - a. *Age, race, education, SES, religion*
  - 2. *Attitudes*
    - a. *Opinions, interests, values*
  - 3. *Attractiveness*
    - a. *Matching hypothesis*
  - 4. *Does it really?*
    - a. *Birds of a feather flock together*
    - b. *Opposites attract*
    - c. *Two-Stage Model of Attraction*
      - i. Dissimilarity breeds repulsion

### 3. FIELD STUDIES IN ATTRACTION

#### A. Arousal + Label = Emotion

- i. Label is based on ATTRIBUTION, or the perceived source of arousal
- ii. Ex: heart pounding can be fear or love depending on the perceived source

#### B. (Mis)attribution of arousal

- i. Excitation transfer
  - 1. *Attribution of arousal from one source to another person can explain passionate feelings towards that person*

#### C. Bridge Study 1

- i. Design and procedure
  - 1. *Unaccompanied male participants approached by an experimenter (interviewer) with a survey after crossing a bridge*
  - 2. *2 X 2 between subjects design*
  - 3. *IV1: Arousal Condition – rickety or stable*
    - a. *No random assignment*
  - 4. *IV2: Gender of interviewer – male or female*
  - 5. *DV1: Sexual Imagery (TAT)*

- a. *Thematic Apperception Test*
  - i. Shown ambiguous illustrations
  - ii. Write a brief dramatic story of a photograph
  - iii. Focused on sexual imagery in the story
  - iv. Coded 1-5, with 5 being high sexual content
- 6. *DV2: Sexual Attraction (Phone Call)*
  - a. Interviewer tears corner from sheet of paper and writes down number and name
  - b. Females: Gloria (rickety bridge), Donna (stable bridge)
  - c. Males: names not reported
- 7. *Results*
  - a. Those who called were more likely to do so when rickety bridge and female interviewer and also stable bridge with female interviewer
  - b. Inferred physical arousal from rickety bridge into attraction to interviewer
- 8. *Conclusions*
  - a. Physiological arousal labeled as physical attraction, which led to
    - i. Greater sexual imagery
    - ii. Increased attempts to contact interviewer
  - b. Potential problems → internal validity
    - i. Confounds based on use of different bridges (no random assignment)
      - 1. Tourists vs. residents
      - 2. Thrill seekers vs. non-thrill seekers

#### D. Bridge Study 2

- i. Design and procedure
  - 1. Same procedure as study 1
  - 2. Female experimenter only
  - 3. IV: Time approached
    - a. Immediately after crossing the rickety bridge or
    - b. Less than ten minutes after crossing the rickety bridge
  - 4. Findings supported study 1
  - 5. Potential problems: internal validity
    - a. Confound based on quality of bridge
    - b. Rickety bridge is not just arousing, but distressing; maybe distress is necessary for excitation transfer
  - 6. Excitation Transfer Conclusions
    - a. Misattribution of arousal happens and can explain attraction