

Attraction

(Social Psychology -6)

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Attraction

- Attraction
- **Interpersonal attraction** refers to positive feelings about another person.
- It can take many forms, including **liking, love, friendship, lust, and admiration.**
- ***Influences***
- Many factors influence whom people are attracted to.
- They include
 - **physical attractiveness,**
 - **proximity,**
 - **similarity, and**
 - **reciprocity:**

Influences for attraction

- **Physical attractiveness:** Research shows that romantic attraction is primarily determined by physical attractiveness.
 - In the early stages of dating, people are more attracted to partners whom they consider to be physically attractive.
 - **Men are more likely to value physical attractiveness than are women.**
- People's perception of their own physical attractiveness also plays a role in romantic love.
 - **The matching hypothesis** proposes that people tend to pick partners who are about equal in level of attractiveness to themselves.
- **Proximity:** People are more likely to become friends with people who are geographically close.
 - One explanation for this is the mere exposure effect.
 - **The mere exposure effect** refers to people's tendency to like novel stimuli more if they encounter them repeatedly.
- **Similarity:** People also tend to pick partners who are similar to themselves in characteristics such as **age, race, religion, social class, personality, education, intelligence, and attitude.**

Influences for attraction

- **Similarity:** People also tend to education, intelligence, and attitude.
- This similarity is seen not only between romantic partners but also between friends.
 - Some researchers have suggested that similarity causes attraction.
 - Others acknowledge that people may be more likely to have friends and partners who are similar to themselves simply because of accessibility:
 - **people are more likely to associate with people who are similar to themselves.**
- **Reciprocity:** People tend to like others who reciprocate their liking. **(See presentation on Reciprocity)**

Romantic Love

- Many researchers focus on one particular form of attraction: **romantic love**.
- **Kinds of Romantic Love**
- Researchers have proposed that romantic love includes two kinds of love:
 - **passionate love** and
 - **compassionate love**.
- These two kinds of love may occur together, but they do not always go hand in hand in a relationship:
- **Passionate love:** Involves absorption in another person, sexual desire, tenderness, and intense emotion.
- **Compassionate love:** Involves warmth, trust, and tolerance of another person.
 - Compassionate love is sometimes considered to have two components:
 - **intimacy** and
 - **commitment**.
 - **Intimacy** is the warm, close, sharing aspect of a relationship.
 - **Commitment** is the intent to continue the relationship even in the face of difficulties.

Romantic Love

- **Researchers believe commitment is a good predictor of the stability of a relationship.**
- **Attachment Styles**
- Some researchers study the influence of childhood attachment styles on adult relationships.
 - Many researchers believe that **as adults, people relate to their partners in the same way that they related to their caretakers in infancy.**
- **Cultural Similarities and Differences**
- There are both similarities and differences among cultures in romantic attraction.
 - Researchers have found that people in many different cultures **place a high value on mutual attraction between partners and the kindness, intelligence, emotional stability, dependability, and good health of partners.**
- However, people in different cultures place a different value on romantic love within a marriage.
 - **People in individualistic cultures often believe romantic love is a prerequisite for marriage.**

Romantic Love

- **Evolutionary Perspectives**

- Evolutionary psychologists speculate that **the tendency to be attracted to physically attractive people is adaptive.**

- **Many cultures value particular aspects of physical attractiveness, such as facial symmetry and a small waist-to-hip ratio.**

- Evolutionary psychologists point out that **facial symmetry can be an indicator of good health, since many developmental abnormalities tend to produce facial asymmetries.**

- **A small waist-to-hip ratio, which produces an “hourglass” figure, indicates high reproductive potential.**

- As predicted by the parental investment theory **men tend to be more interested in their partners’ youthfulness and physical attractiveness.**

- Evolutionary psychologists think that this is **because these characteristics indicate that women will be able to reproduce successfully.**

- **Women, on the other hand, tend to value partners’ social status, wealth, and ambition, because these are characteristics of men who can successfully provide for offspring.**