

FMST 314: CH. 1- The Building Blocks of Relationships:

It's generally held that intimate relationships differ from more casual associations in at least seven specific ways: knowledge, interdependence, caring, trust, responsiveness, mutuality, and commitment.

Intimate partners have extensive personal knowledge about each other, they share information about their histories, preferences, feelings, and desires that they don't reveal to others.

Interdependence between intimates—the extent to which they need and influence each other—is frequent (they often affect each other), strong (they have meaningful impacts on each other), diverse (they influence each other in many different ways), and enduring (they influence each other over long periods of time).

Intimate partners care about each other; they feel more affection for one another than they do for most others. They also trust one another, expecting to be treated fairly and honorably intimacy increases when people believe that their partners understand, respect, and appreciate them, being attentively and effectively responsive to their needs and concerned for their welfare.

They exhibit a high degree of mutuality, which means that they recognize their close connection and think of themselves as “us” instead of “me” and “her” (or “him”)

The Inclusion of Other in the Self Scale is a straightforward measure of mutuality that does a remarkably good job of distinguishing between intimate and more casual relationships.

Finally, intimate partners are ordinarily committed to their relationships. That is, they expect their partnerships to continue indefinitely, and they invest the time, effort, and resources that are needed to realize that goal.

In general, our most satisfying and meaningful intimate relationships include all seven of these defining characteristics.

According to theorists Roy Baumeister and Mark Leary (1995), we need frequent, pleasant interactions with intimate partners in lasting, caring relationships if we're to function normally. There is a human need to belong in close relationships, and if the need is not met, a variety of problems follows.

People who lacked close ties to others were 2 to 3 times more likely to die over a 9-year span.

It does appear that a lack of intimacy can both cause such problems and make them worse.

Some Stats in the USA:

- Fewer people are marrying than ever before.
- People are waiting longer to marry.
- Cohabitation
- People often have babies even when they're not married.
- Almost one-half of all marriages end in divorce,
- Most preschool children have mothers who work outside the home.

Singlism: refers to prejudice and discrimination against those who choose to remain single and opt not to devote themselves to a primary romantic relationship.

Cohabitation increases a couple's risk that they will later divorce

Couples who are engaged to marry when they move in together typically do not suffer the same ill effects.

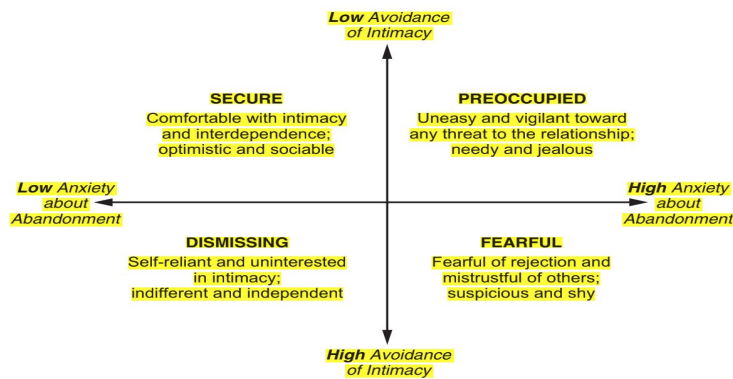
Thus, the remarkable changes in the norms for U.S. relationships since 1960 may be due, in part, to dramatic fluctuations in U.S. sex ratios.

- Suggests that a low male to female ratio (more females) means girls are less conservative
- A high male to female ratio (more males) suggests girls are more conservative

There exist global orientations toward relationships known as **attachment styles**.

- A secure style of attachment: They happily bonded with others and relied on them comfortably, and the children readily developed relationships characterized by relaxed trust.
- Anxious-ambivalent attachments: Being uncertain of when (or if) a departing caregiver would return, such children became
- An avoidant style of attachment: Avoidant children were often suspicious of and angry at others, and they did not easily form trusting, close relationships.
- Cindy Hazan and Phillip Shaver (1987) demonstrated that similar orientations toward close relationships could also be observed among adults.
- Bartholomew (1990) proposed four general categories of attachment style:
 - The first, a secure style, remained the same as the secure style identified in children.
 - The second, a preoccupied style, was a new name for anxious ambivalence.
 - Fearful people avoided intimacy with others because of their fears of rejection. Although they wanted others to like them, they worried about the risks of relying on others.
 - In contrast, people with a dismissing style felt that intimacy with others just wasn't worth the trouble. Dismissing people rejected interdependency with others because they felt self-sufficient, and they didn't care much whether others liked them or not.
 - It's also now generally accepted that two broad themes underlie and distinguish these four styles of attachment (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2013b). First, people differ in their avoidance of intimacy, which affects the ease and trust with which they accept interdependent intimacy with others. People also differ in their anxiety about abandonment, the dread that others will find them unworthy and leave them. Secure people take great comfort in closeness with others and do not worry that others will mistreat them; as a result, they gladly seek intimate interdependency with others.
- The important point is that attachment styles appear to be orientations toward relationships that are largely learned from our experiences with others.
- Thus, the quality of parenting a baby receives can depend, in part, on the child's own personality and behavior; in this way, people's attachment styles are influenced by the traits with which they were born, and our genes shape our styles
- Being learned, attachment styles can be unlearned, and over time, attachment styles can change

FIGURE 1.5. The dimensions underlying attachment.



Consider four influential types of individual variation: sex differences, gender differences, personalities, and self-esteem:

- Sex Differences: men and women usually overlap so thoroughly that they are much more similar than different on most of the dimensions and topics of interest to relationship science
- Gender Differences: gender differences refer to social and psychological distinctions that are created by our cultures and upbringing. Gender roles: the patterns of behavior that are culturally expected of “normal” men and women. Instead of being just “masculine” or “feminine,” a sizable minority of people—about 35 percent—are both assertive and warm, sensitive and self-reliant. Such people possess both sets of the competencies that are stereotypically associated with being male and with being female, and are said to be **androgynous**. Relationship researchers often use alternatives, referring to the “masculine” task-oriented talents as **instrumental traits** and to the “feminine” social and emotional skills as **expressive traits**. When an androgynous man met a traditional woman, an androgynous woman met a traditional man, or two androgynous people got together, they got along much better than traditional men and women did. The upshot of all this is that both instrumentality and expressiveness are valuable traits, and the happiest, best-adjusted, most effective, mentally healthy people possess both sets of skills.

- Personalities:

<i>The Big Five Personality Traits</i>	
<p>A small cluster of fundamental traits does a good job of describing the broad themes in behavior, thoughts, and emotions that distinguish one person from another (McCrae & Costa, 2010). These key characteristics are called the Big Five traits by personality researchers, and they differ in their influence on our intimate relationships. Which of these traits do you think matter most?</p> <p><i>Openness to experience</i>—the degree to which people are imaginative, curious, unconventional, and artistic versus conforming, uncreative, and stodgy.</p> <p><i>Extraversion</i>—the extent to which people are outgoing, gregarious, assertive, and sociable versus cautious, reclusive, and shy.</p> <p><i>Conscientiousness</i>—the extent to which people are industrious, dependable, and orderly versus unreliable, disorganized, and careless.</p>	<p><i>Agreeableness</i>—the degree to which people are compassionate, cooperative, and trusting versus suspicious, selfish, and hostile.</p> <p><i>Neuroticism</i>—the degree to which people are prone to fluctuating moods and high levels of negative emotion such as worry, anxiety, and anger.</p> <p>The five traits are listed in order from the least important to the most influential (Malouff et al., 2010). People are happier when they have imaginative, adventurous, sociable partners, but what you <i>really</i> want is a lover who is responsible and reliable, generous and thoughtful, and optimistic and emotionally stable. And after you've been together for 30 years or so, you may find that conscientiousness becomes particularly important (Claxton et al., 2012); dependable partners who keep all their promises are satisfying companions.</p>

- Self-Esteem: Our evaluations of ourselves constitute our self-esteem, and when we hold favorable judgments of our skills and traits, our self-esteem is high; when we doubt ourselves, self-esteem is low. Because people with high self-esteem are generally happier and more successful than those with low self-regard, it's widely assumed that it's good to feel good about yourself. A provocative, leading theory argues that self-esteem is a subjective gauge, a sociometer, that measures the quality of our relationships with others. People with chronically low self-esteem have developed their negative self-evaluations through an unhappy history of failing to receive sufficient acceptance and appreciation from other people. And sometimes, this is very unfair. Some people are victimized by abusive relationships through no fault of their own, and, despite being likable people with fine social skills, they develop low self-esteem as a result of mistreatment from others.

Evolutionary psychology starts with three fundamental assumptions:

1. Natural selection acted on ppl who needed to belong, and this increased fitness.
2. Second, evolutionary psychology suggests that men and women should differ from one another only to the extent that they have historically faced different reproductive dilemmas.
3. Indeed, a third basic assumption of evolutionary psychology is that cultural influences determine whether evolved patterns of behavior are adaptive—and cultural change occurs faster than evolution does.