



Lecture 11

Love and Romantic Relationships

Outline

The Defining Features of Love

The Goals of Romantic Relationships

Obtaining Sexual Satisfaction

Establishing Family Bonds

Gaining Resources and Social Status

Breaking Up (and Staying Together)

Defining Love and Romantic Attraction

The Defining Features of Love

Focus on Methods: Uncovering the Different Factors of Love

Are There Different Varieties of Love?

The Goals of Romantic Relationships

Defining Features of Love

Beverly Fehr asked Canadian students to list as many features of love as they could in 3 minutes.

Students' lists commonly included:

Caring

Friendship

Trust

Euphoria

Heartrate increases

Happiness

Warmth

Commitment

Sexual passion

Etc.

The long list could be reduced to three essential components:

PASSION

physiological arousal,
longing to be with

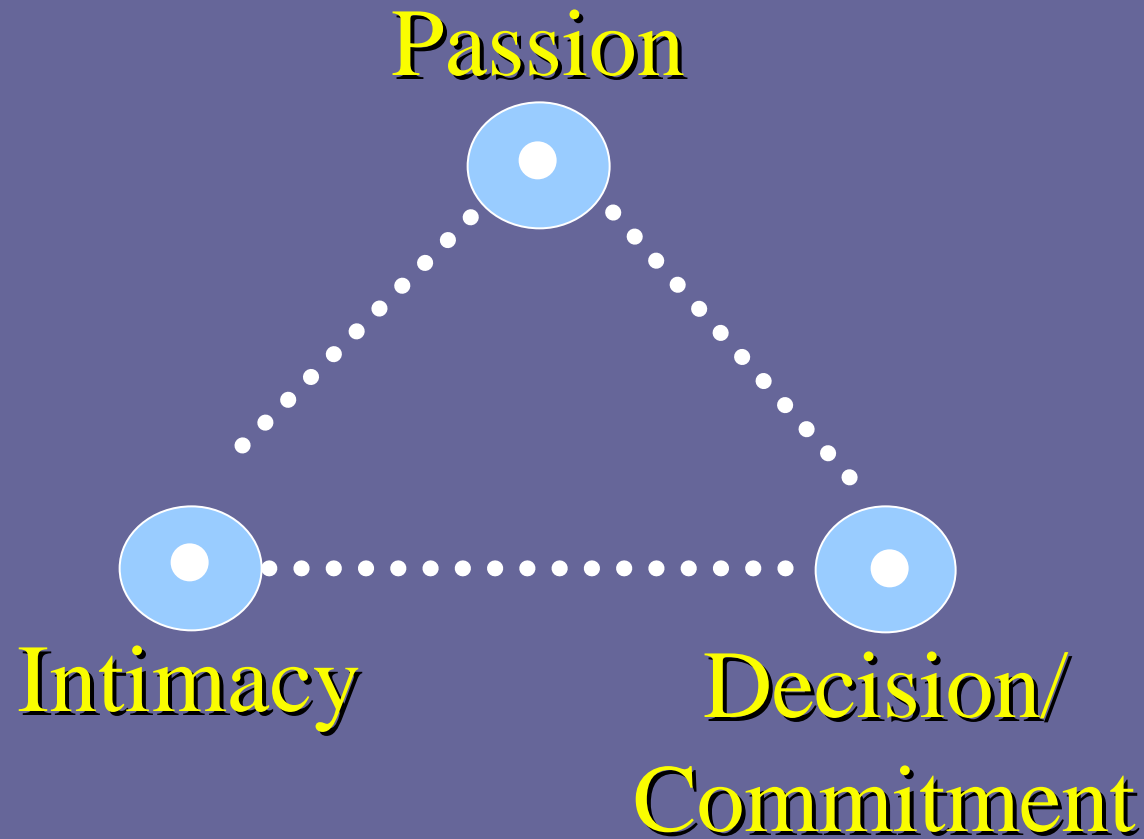
INTIMACY

close bond, sharing,
support

COMMITMENT

willing to define as love,
commitment to long term

Sternberg's Triangular Theory of Love



Are There Different Varieties of Love?

Not all types of “love” involve same mix of passion, intimacy, and commitment.

Passionate love –

a state of intense longing for union with another

Companionate love –

affection and tenderness for those whose lives are entwined with our own.

Sternberg's Triangular Theory of Love

Liking = Intimacy Alone
(true friendship without
passion or long-term
commitment)

**Romantic Love =
Intimacy + Passion**

(lovers physically and emotionally
attracted to each other but
without commitment,
as in a summer romance)

**Companionate Love =
Intimacy + Commitment**

(long-term committed friendship
such as a marriage in which
the passion has faded)

**Consummate Love =
Intimacy + Passion +
Commitment**

(a complete love
consisting of all three
components—an ideal
difficult to attain)

Infatuation = Passion Alone

(passionate, obsessive love
at first sight without intimacy
or commitment)

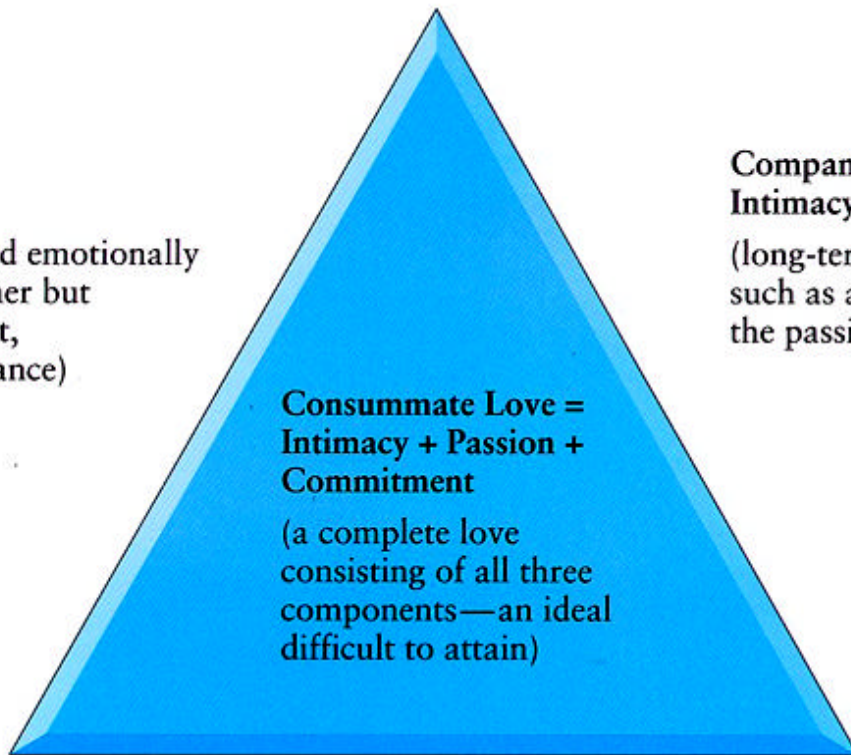
Empty Love =

Decision/Commitment Alone

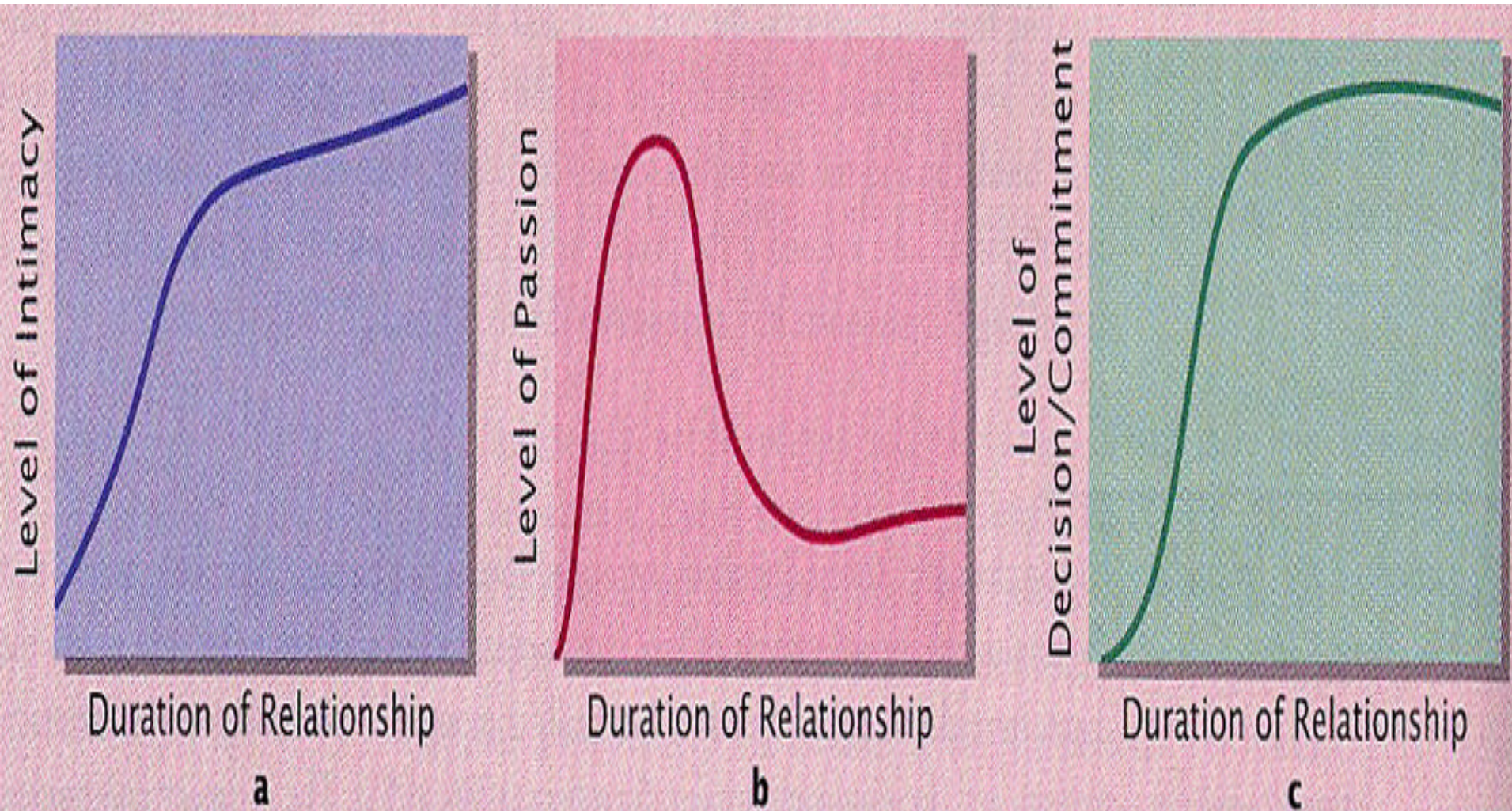
(decision to love another
without intimacy or passion)

Fatuous Love = Passion + Commitment

(commitment based on passion but
without time for intimacy to
develop—shallow relationship such
as a whirlwind courtship)



The components of the model change in level over time, accounting for the changing nature of love in most long-term relationships.



Obtaining Sexual Satisfaction

Did you think about sex even for a moment during the last 5 min?

When men and women under the age of twenty-five were asked this question, half of the men and 40% of the women said “Yes.”

Among those 26-55: 1 in 4 men and 1 in 7 women said “Yes.”

College men and women report several sexual fantasies per day.



Who's Sexually Attractive?

Physically attractive individuals have more opportunities for sexual relationships.

College students in one study were willing to lie about themselves to win dates with physically attractive partners.



What is Considered Attractive?

High bodily symmetry

Women with

- Low waist-to-hip ratios

- Lustrous, shiny hair

- Large eyes and a small nose

Men with

- Masculine features

- A large jaw and a medium sized nose

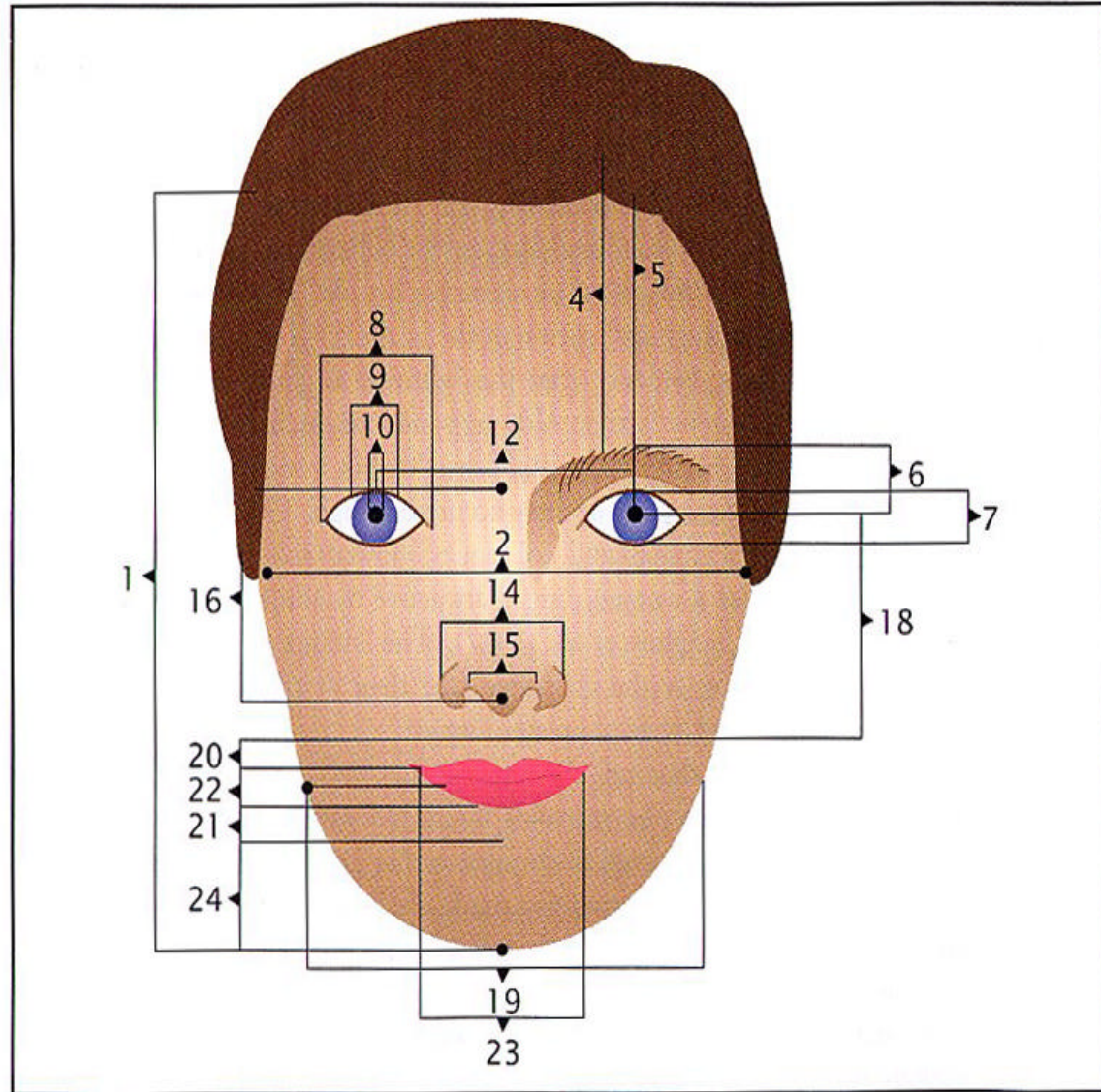
Physical Attractiveness

Physical attractiveness is one of the most powerful determinants of initial liking for another person.

Female attractiveness is more important for men than male attractiveness is for women.

Numerous facial measures are taken in an attempt to quantify facial attractiveness.

From facial measurement studies, people generally find certain kinds of faces to be more attractive.

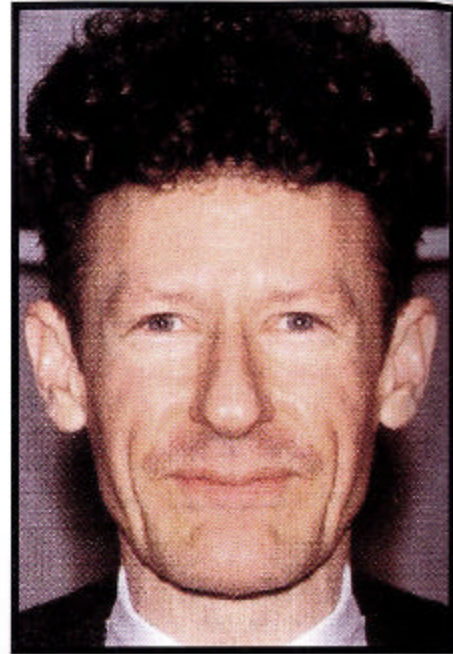


People generally find the following features attractive:

- 1.) Symmetry in facial features attractive. Unusually large or small features unattractive.
- 2.) Men's and women's faces differ in the size of the lower face. Largeness in the lower face is attractive in men's faces, whereas smallness is attractive in women's faces
- 3.) Females: Large-eyed “baby-faced” features that suggest non-dominance. Men: more dominant features



Which Lyle Lovett do you like the most?



More people
prefer the
one on the
right.

This one?

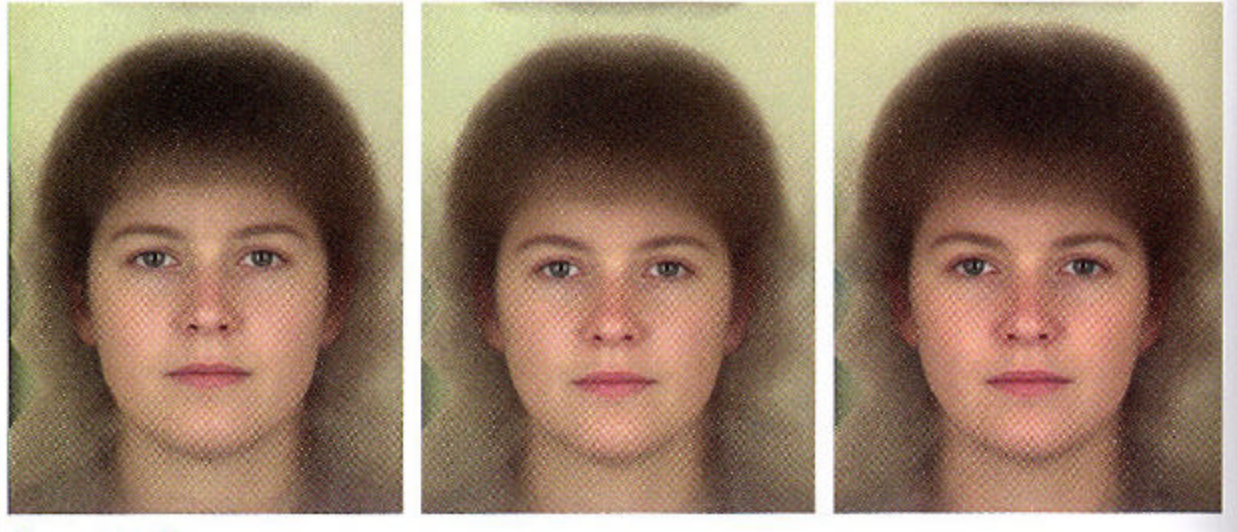
Or this one?

Which of these two faces do you prefer?



Most people prefer the one on the right, a composite of 30 individual faces. Why is an “average” face preferred?

Which of these three faces do you prefer?



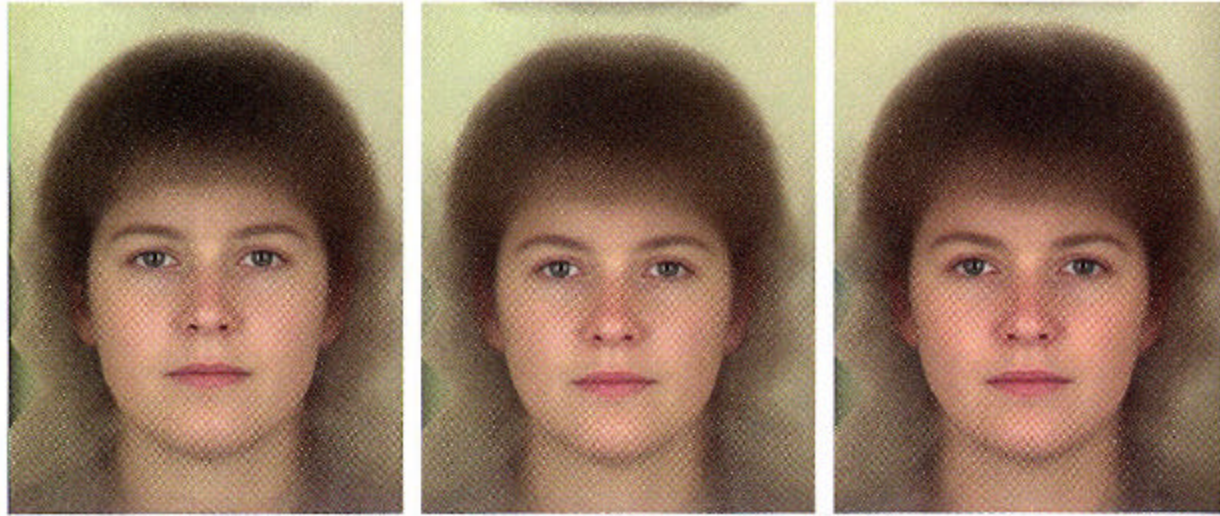
1

2

3

Face 1 is a composite of 30 individual faces. Most people find it to be attractive.

Which of these three faces do you prefer?



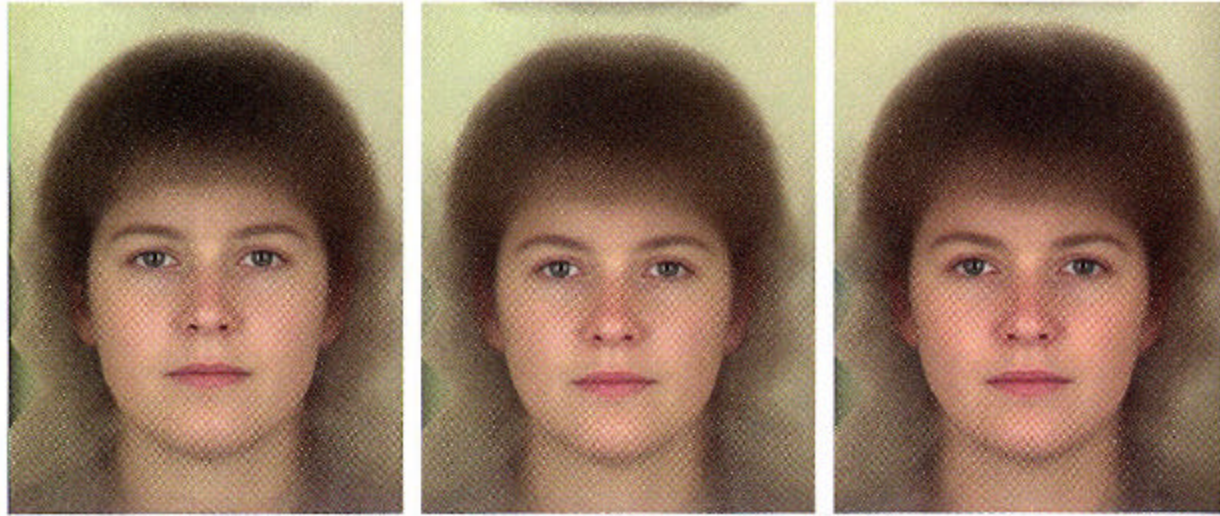
1

2

3

Face 2 is a composite of the 15 most attractive faces contained in Face 1. Most people find it more attractive than Face 1.

Which of these three faces do you prefer?



1

2

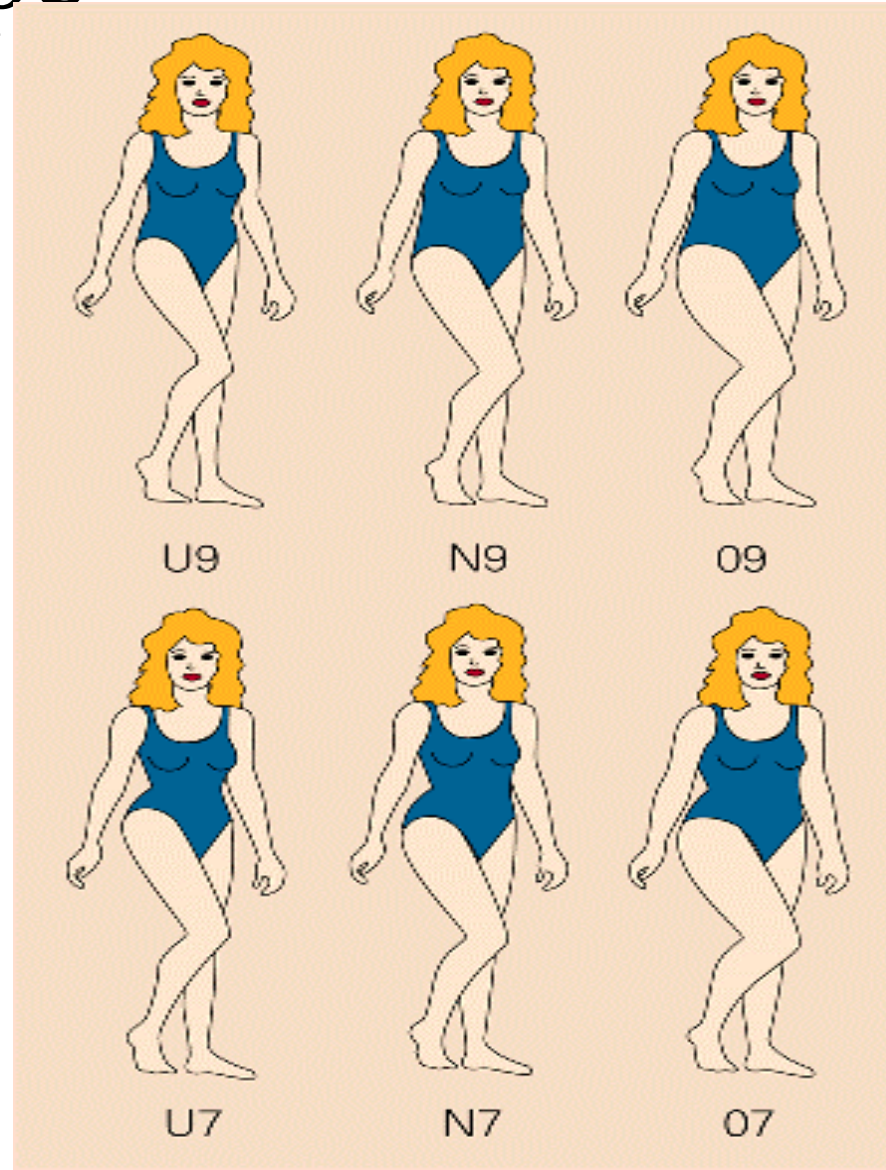
3

Face 3 exaggerates the difference between Faces 1 and 2. Most people find it to be the most attractive.

Attractiveness and Body Shape

What makes a woman's body attractive?

Previous work has been interpreted as suggesting that a low WHR (i.e. a curvaceous body) corresponds to the optimal fat distribution for high fertility and therefore should be highly attractive.



Attractiveness varies by culture . . .



But youthful features (possibly suggesting health and fertility) are considered attractive throughout the world

Beauty Across the decades . . .



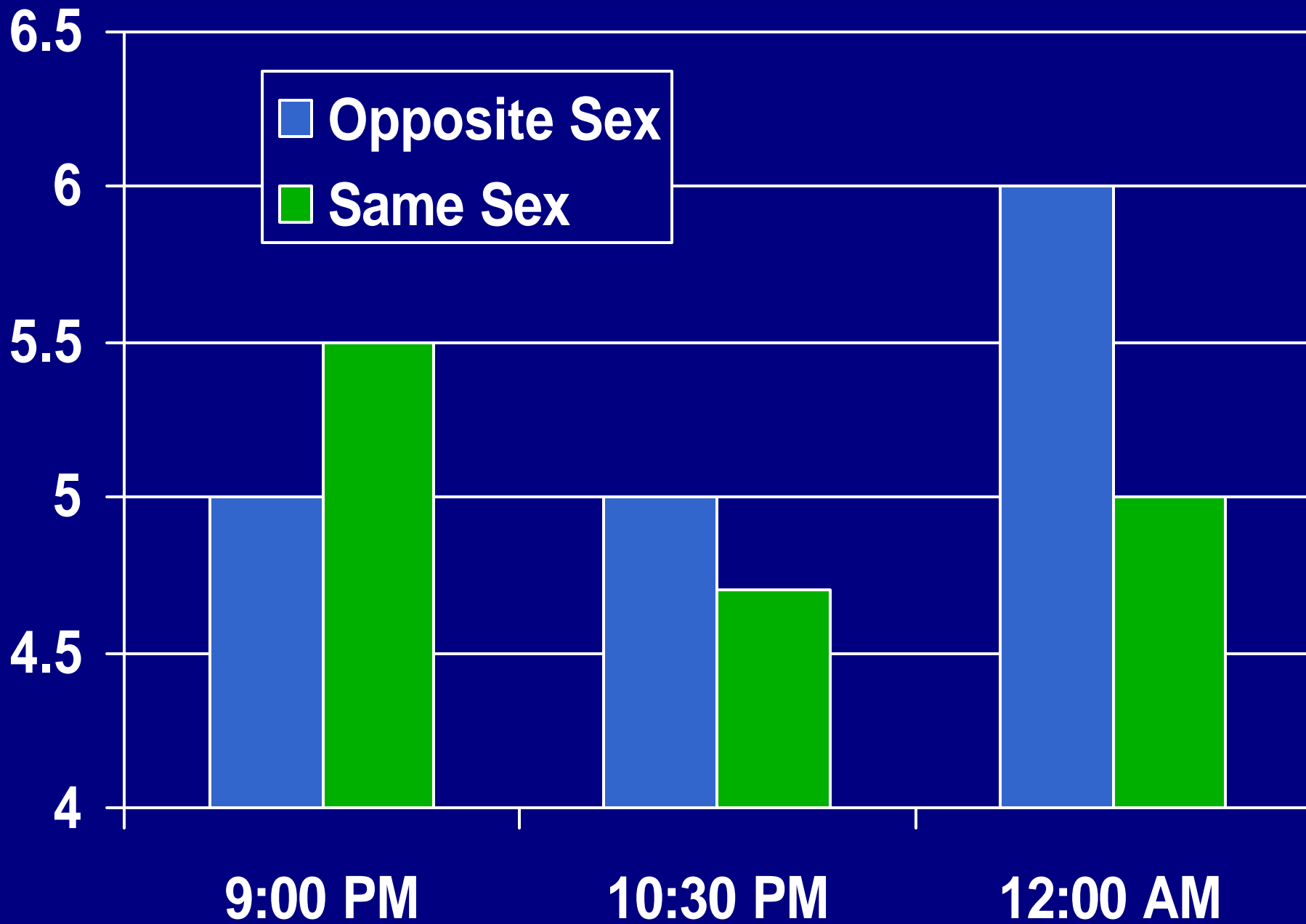
Composite of Bette Davis, Audrey Hepburn, Grace Kelly, Sophia Loren, and Marilyn Monroe.

Composite of Jane Fonda, Jacqueline Bisset, Diane Keaton, Brooke Shields, and Meryl Streep.



Attractiveness also Situationally Determined

Researcher interviewed the patrons of bars at different times during the evening and asked them to rate the attractiveness of same sex and opposite sex people in the bar at the time.



Explanation ?

As the night wears on, it may lead to greater ratings of attractiveness in an attempt to restore feelings of control and freedom:

“There may be fewer choices available, but the best choices are still here.”

Alcohol?

BEERSIGHTEDNESS

(beer' site ed ness)

n. The eye condition singles develop after “last call” in a bar, which makes members of the opposite sex more attractive than they were three hours earlier.

**SATURDAY
FEBRUARY**

1

**Groundhog Day
SUNDAY
FEBRUARY**

2

SNIGLETS®

Physical Attractiveness Stereotypes

People often hold powerful stereotypes about attractive people.

Does Beauty = Goodness?

Generally, the assumed positive features of attractive people are incorrect. The few valid assumptions are that attractive people are more popular and have better social skills. Why then does the attractiveness stereotype persist?

Stereotype Experiment

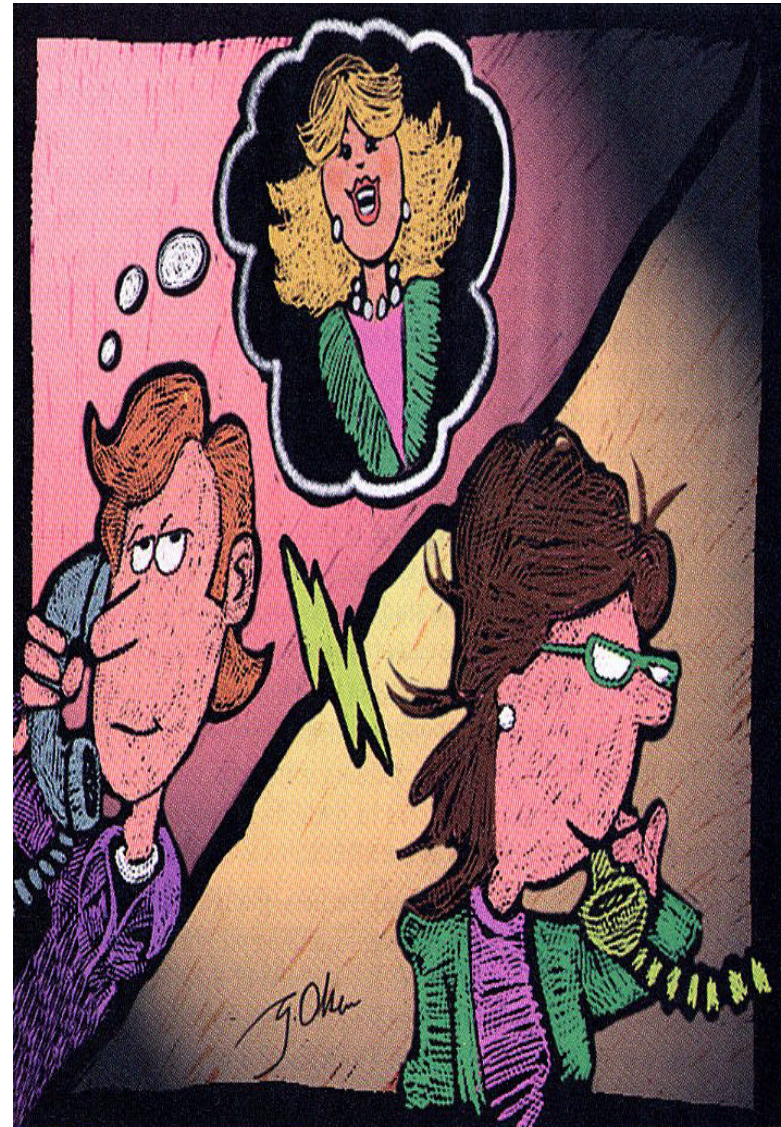
College undergraduates participated in a “getting acquainted” study.

Men and women were kept physically apart and told to get to know one another via an intercom.

The men were shown photographs, allegedly of their interaction partners.

Men were shown photographs of other physically attractive or physically unattractive women.

Before interacting with their partners, men rated them based only on the photographs.



Results

Consistent with the “beauty is good” stereotype, the supposedly attractive partners were rated as sociable, poised, humorous, and socially skilled.

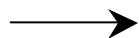
The supposedly unattractive partners were rated as awkward, serious, and socially inept.

Results cont.

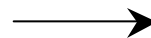
The partners then interacted over the intercom. Independent judges, blind to the photograph conditions, rated the behavior of the men who were given attractive photographs. The men with attractive photographs were rated as more sociable, interesting, independent, sexually warm, outgoing, and humorous.

Other independent judges, blind to the photograph conditions, rated the behavior of the women. Regardless of their actual attractiveness, women in the attractive photograph condition were rated as more sociable, poised, humorous, and socially adept.

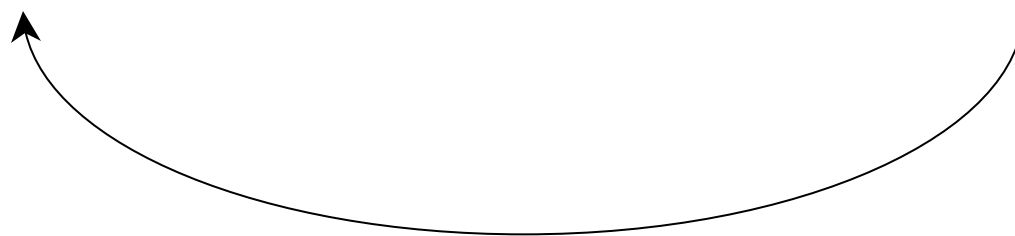
Male's
Expectations



Male's
Behavior



Female's
Behavior

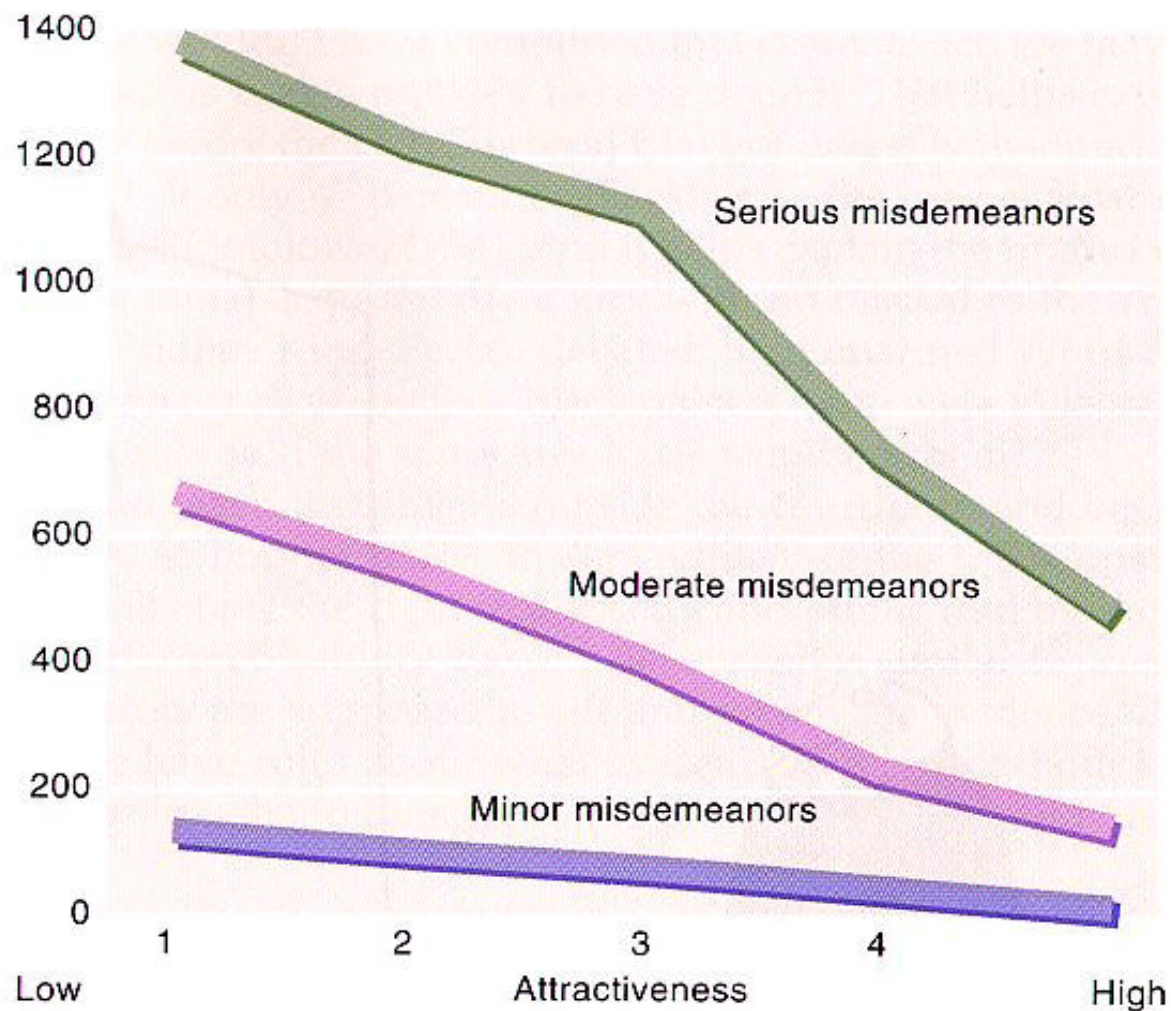


Study of Court Trial Outcomes

Attractive defendants were convicted 46% of the time and unattractive defendants were convicted 77% of the time. The difference is smaller the more serious the crime.



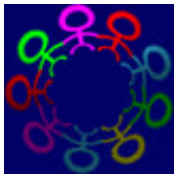
Bail/Fine amounts, in dollars



■ FIGURE 10-4

Attractiveness and legal judgments. Texas Gulf Coast judges set higher bails and fines for less attractive defendants.

(Data from Downs & Lyons, 1991.)

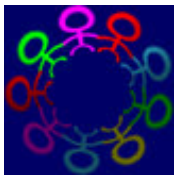


Arousing Settings

Settings that increase physiological arousal often fuel feelings of passion.

Why?

Several theories have been advanced to explain this phenomenon.



Two-factor theory

According to this theory, feelings of love consist of:

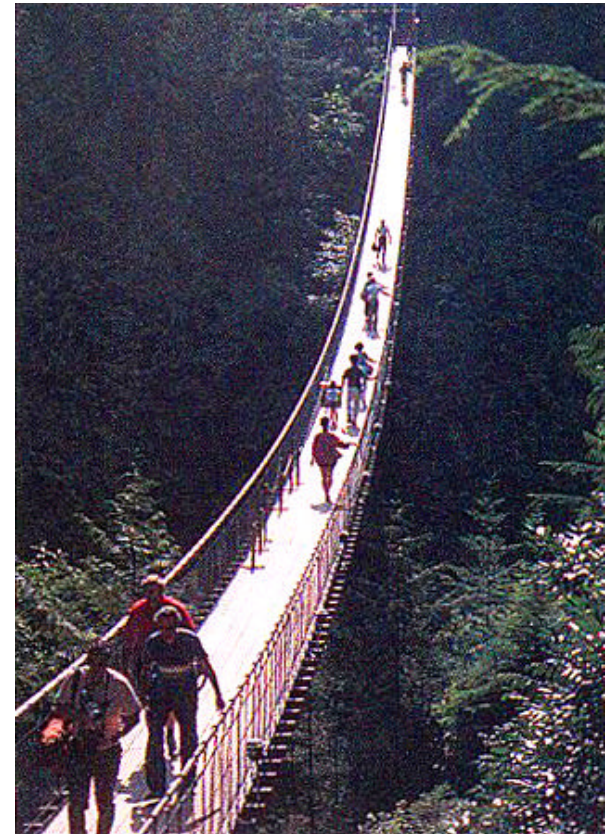
General Physiological Arousal

+

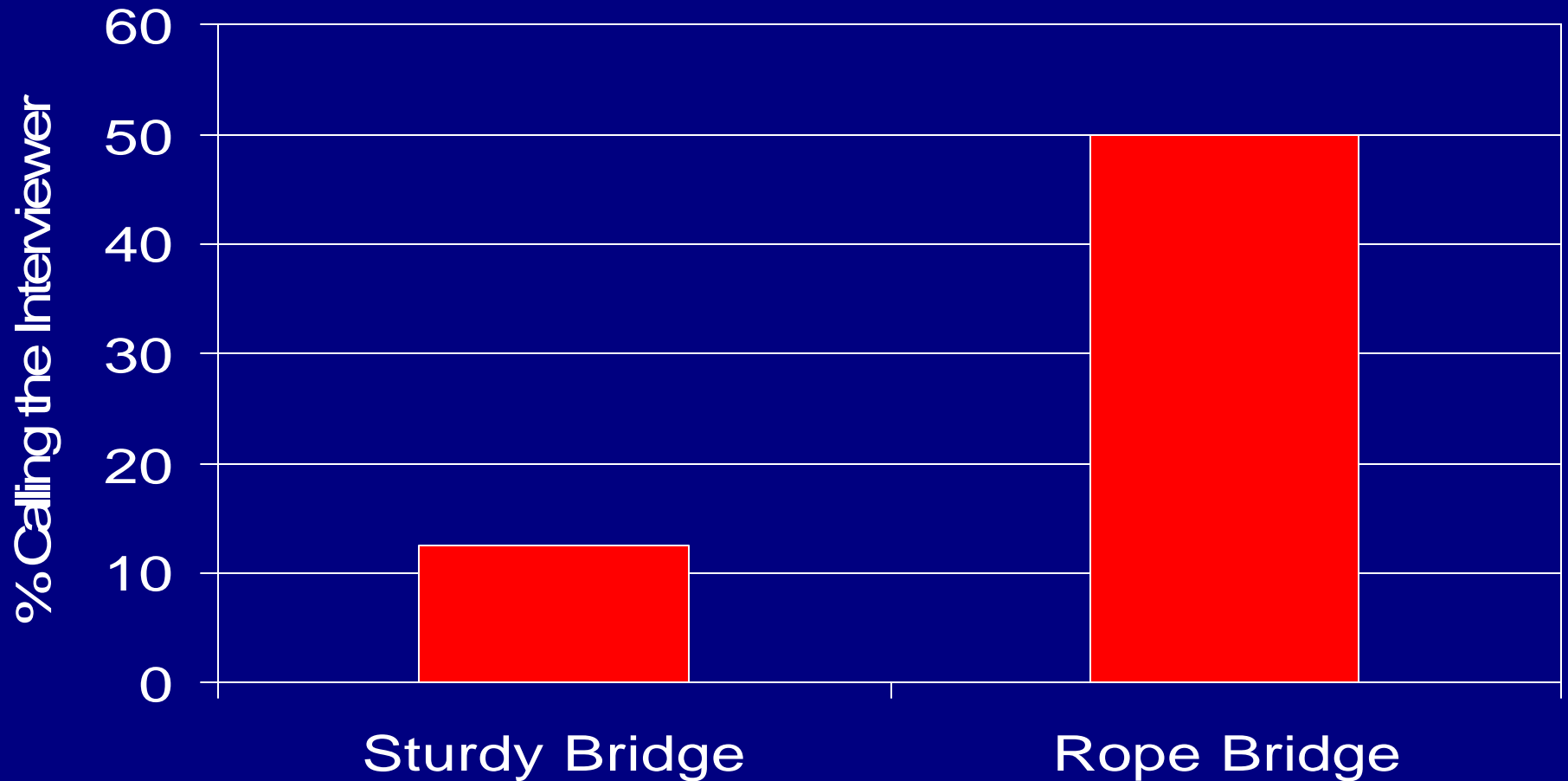
A Label For That Arousal

The theory posits that we can confuse the specific cause of our arousal, and we may mistake fear or anxiety for “love.”

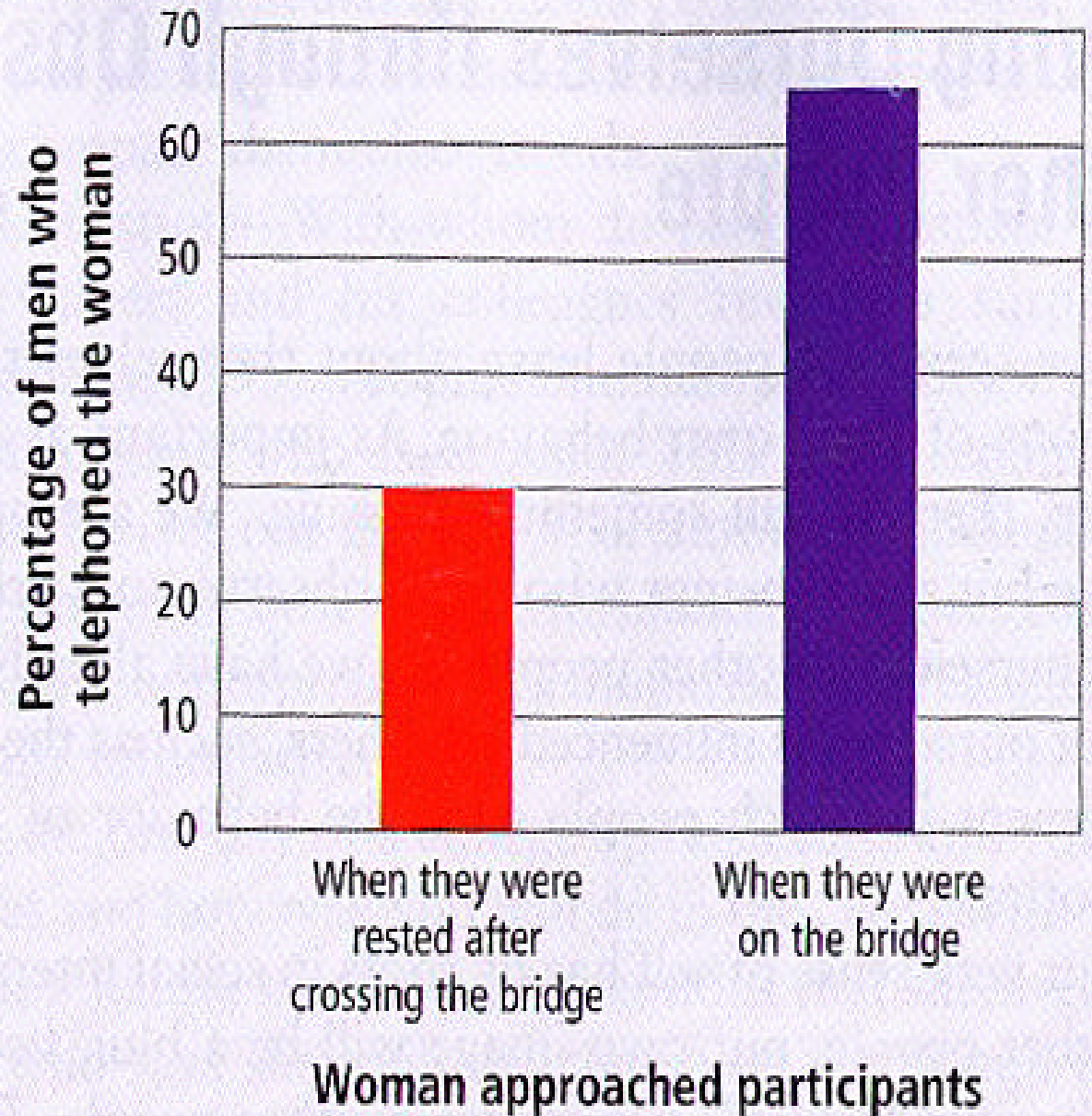
Dutton and Aron (1974) had attractive female interviewers stop men in a park and ask them to complete a brief survey. Some were stopped while crossing a sturdy wooden bridge that rose **10 feet** over a creek bed. Others were stopped while crossing a rope bridge suspended **230 feet** over the same creek.



After completing the survey the interviewer gave each respondent her phone number with instructions to call if any questions arose.

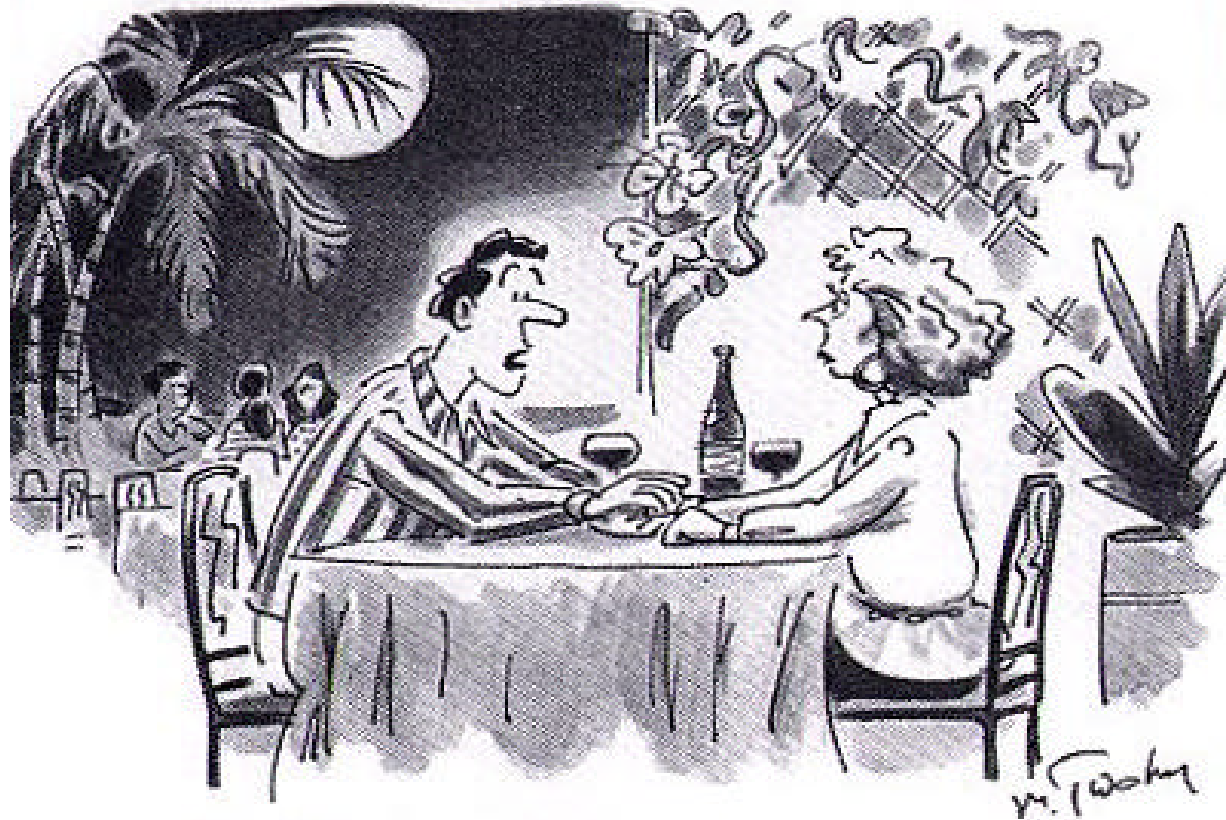


The results are not obtained if the respondents were asked to complete the survey 10 minutes after they had crossed the bridge.

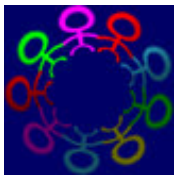


This misattribution process may account for the phenomenon of “love at first sight.”

It may also help explain why passionate love is often short in duration.



*“Don't you understand? I love you! I need you!
I want to spend the rest of my vacation with you!”*



Cultural Norms About Sexuality

Cultures vary in acceptance of premarital sex, extramarital sex, and appropriateness of sex without love.

Americans, on average,

Begin kissing at around age 14 or 15

Begin having intercourse around age 17.

Japanese begin kissing at around age 20.

Have intercourse at age 22 or 23.

Establishing Family Bonds

Establishing Family Bonds

Passionate sexual attraction fades with time.

But feelings of intimacy and commitment increase.

The loss of a spouse is one of the most stressful of life events.

The Importance of Attachment

Need to belong –

the human need to form and maintain strong, stable interpersonal relationships

The same feeling that keeps a romantic couple bonded may be what keeps them attached to their children.

The Importance of Attachment

Three-stage pattern of separation

distress –

reaction sequence shown by infants or adults when separated from those to whom they are intimately attached

The Three-stage Pattern of Separation Distress

PROTEST

attempts to re-establish contact

DESPAIR

inactivity and helplessness

DETACHMENT

lack of concern and coolness towards parent or lover

Secure Base

Secure base –
comfort provided by
attachment figure

A secure base allows
the person to venture
forth more
confidently to explore
the environment.





Attachment Style

Choose the description that best fits your own affectionate relationships:

1. 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 being abandoned or about someone getting close to me.



Attachment Style

2. I am somewhat uncomfortable being 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.



Attachment Style

3. 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.



Attachment Styles

SECURE



Attachments marked by trust that the other will continue to provide love and support

ANXIOUS/
AMBIVALENT



Fear of abandonment; feeling that one's needs are not being met

AVOIDANT



Defensive detachment from the other

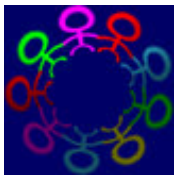


Exchange/Communal Orientation

Those who adopt an “exchange” orientation calculate costs and benefits in relationships.

Those who adopt a “communal” orientation pay more attention to partner’s needs.

Those with an exchange orientation are less satisfied with marriages.

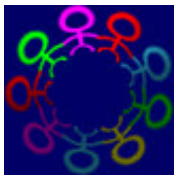


Jealousy and Same-Sex Competitors

Imagine you discover that the person with whom you've been seriously involved has become interested in someone else.

What would distress you more?

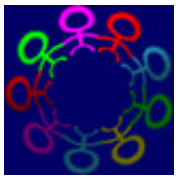
1. Imagining your partner falling in love and forming a deep emotional attachment to that person.
2. Imagining your partner having sexual intercourse with that person.



Jealousy and Same-Sex Competitors

The majority of men reported more distress to the sexual infidelity.

About 80 percent of the women were more distressed over emotional attachment.



Social Exchange In Committed Relationships

Equity rule –

each person's benefits and costs in a social relationship should match the other's benefits and costs

Relationships characterized by very positive feelings follow a need-based rule.



When Dominance Matters

Although women are initially attracted to sex-typed dominant males, over time less sex-typed men are easier to get along with (Ickes, 1993).

To be attractive to a woman, dominance must be accompanied by agreeableness (Jensen-Campbell, Graziano, & West, 1995).



When Dominance Matters

Women in one study read about a man who was either

Dominant or

Non-dominant

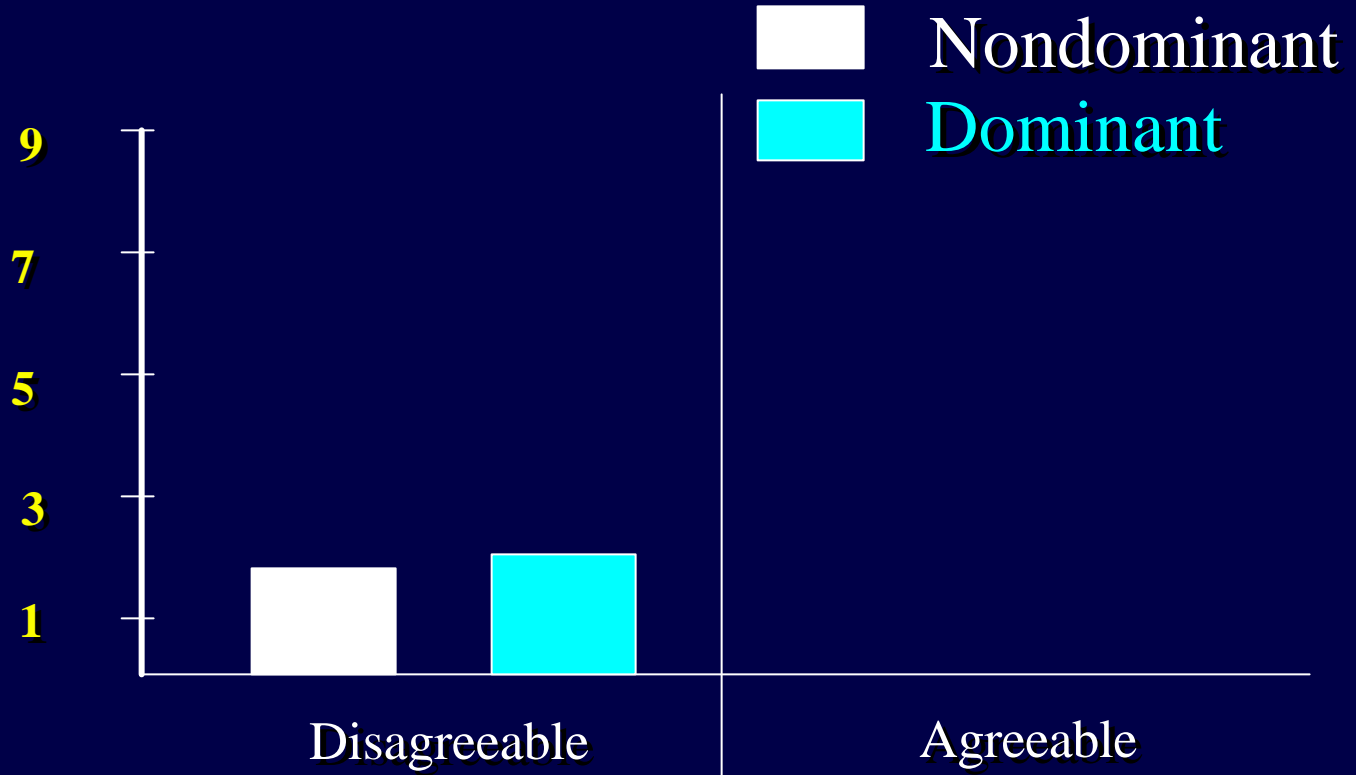
And either

Agreeable or

Disagreeable.



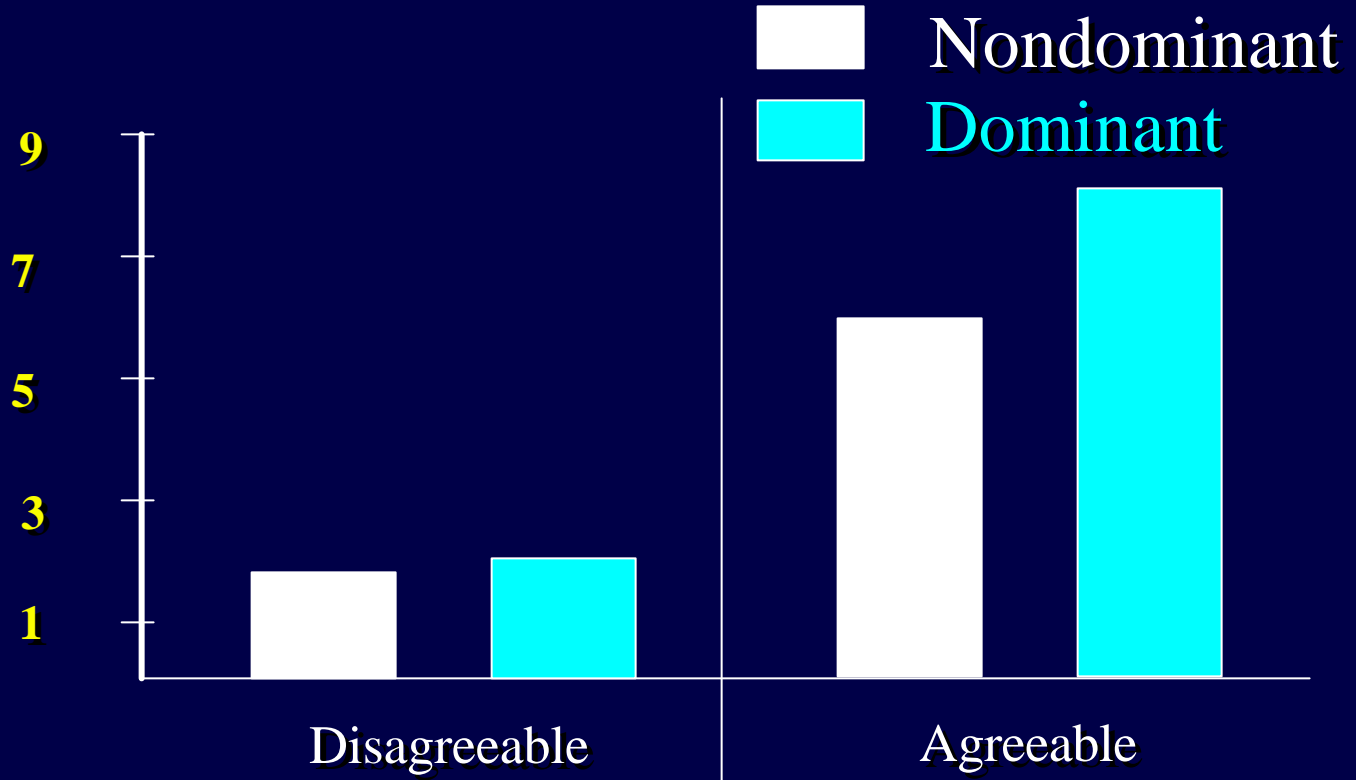
Desirability
as a Date



When the man was disagreeable, women found him undesirable as a date, regardless of whether he was dominant or nondominant.



Desirability
as a Date

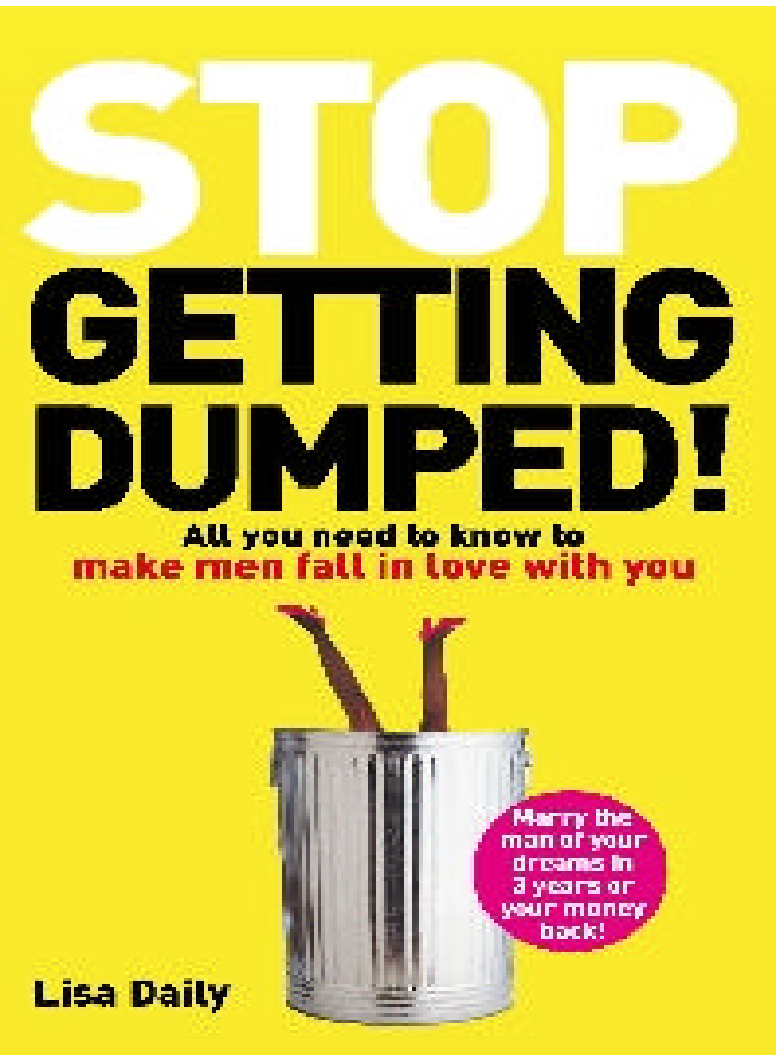


When he was agreeable, women found him desirable as a date

And his desirability was enhanced if he was also dominant.

Ending Relationships

Nearly everyone will experience a failed relationship. In some ways, this should not surprise us and there are good psychological reasons why relationships do fail despite our best initial intentions.



Most relationships experience difficulty . . .

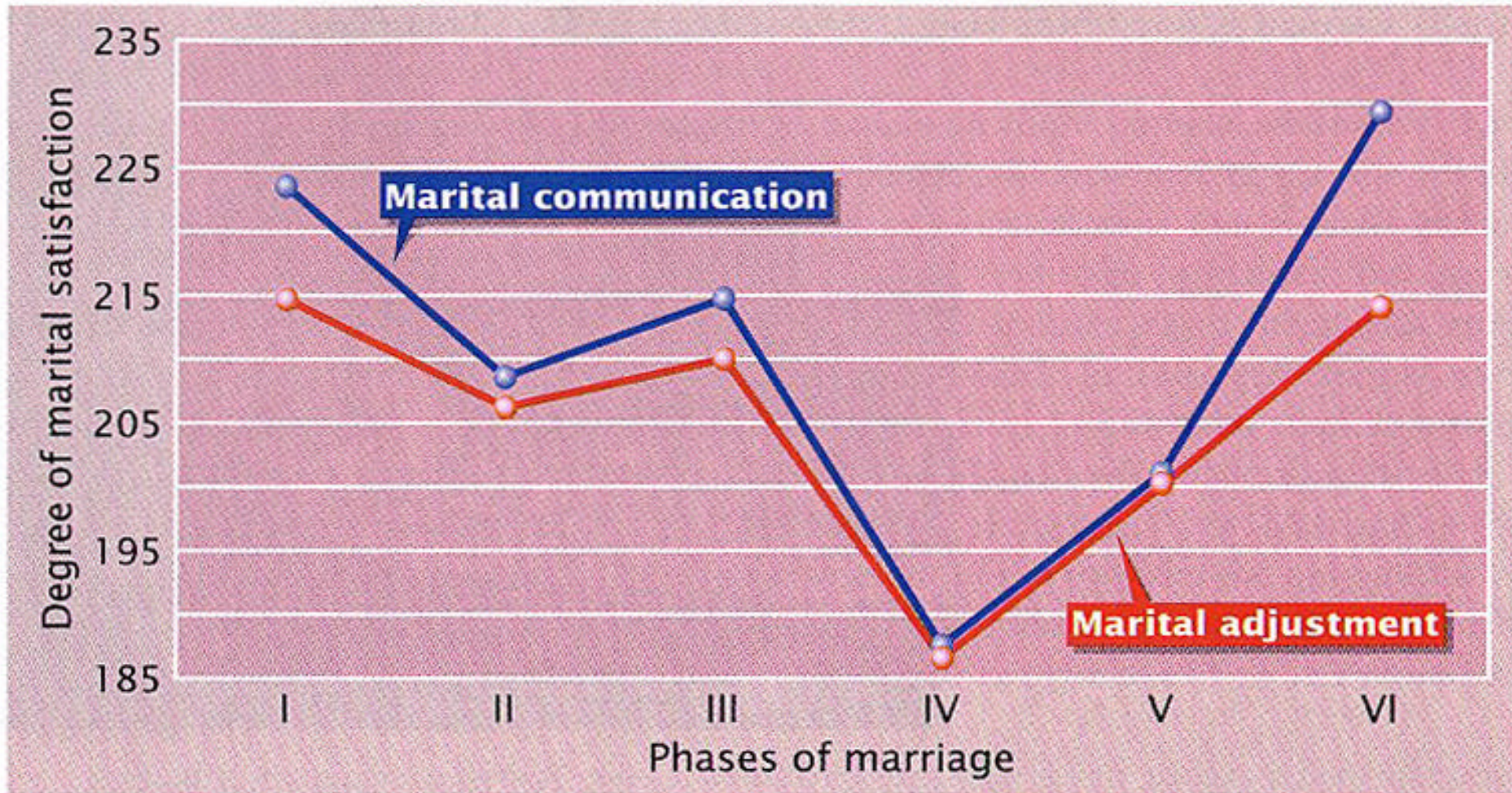
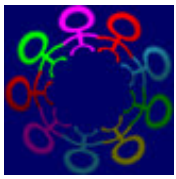


FIGURE 7-12. The Patterns of Marriage Marital satisfaction for many couples falls and rises in a U-shaped configuration. It begins to decline after the wedding and continues to fall until it reaches its lowest ebb following the births of the couple's children. Satisfaction doesn't begin to increase until the youngest child leaves home. (Source: Figley, 1973.)



Some Situations Pull Couples Apart

Economic problems often stress marriages.

When there is surplus of women to men, men are less likely to commit to marriage.

Rusbult's Investment Model

Commitment (C) to a relationship is determined by *satisfaction* (S) with the current relationship, *investment* (I) in the current relationship, and the availability of attractive *alternatives* (A) to the current relationship.

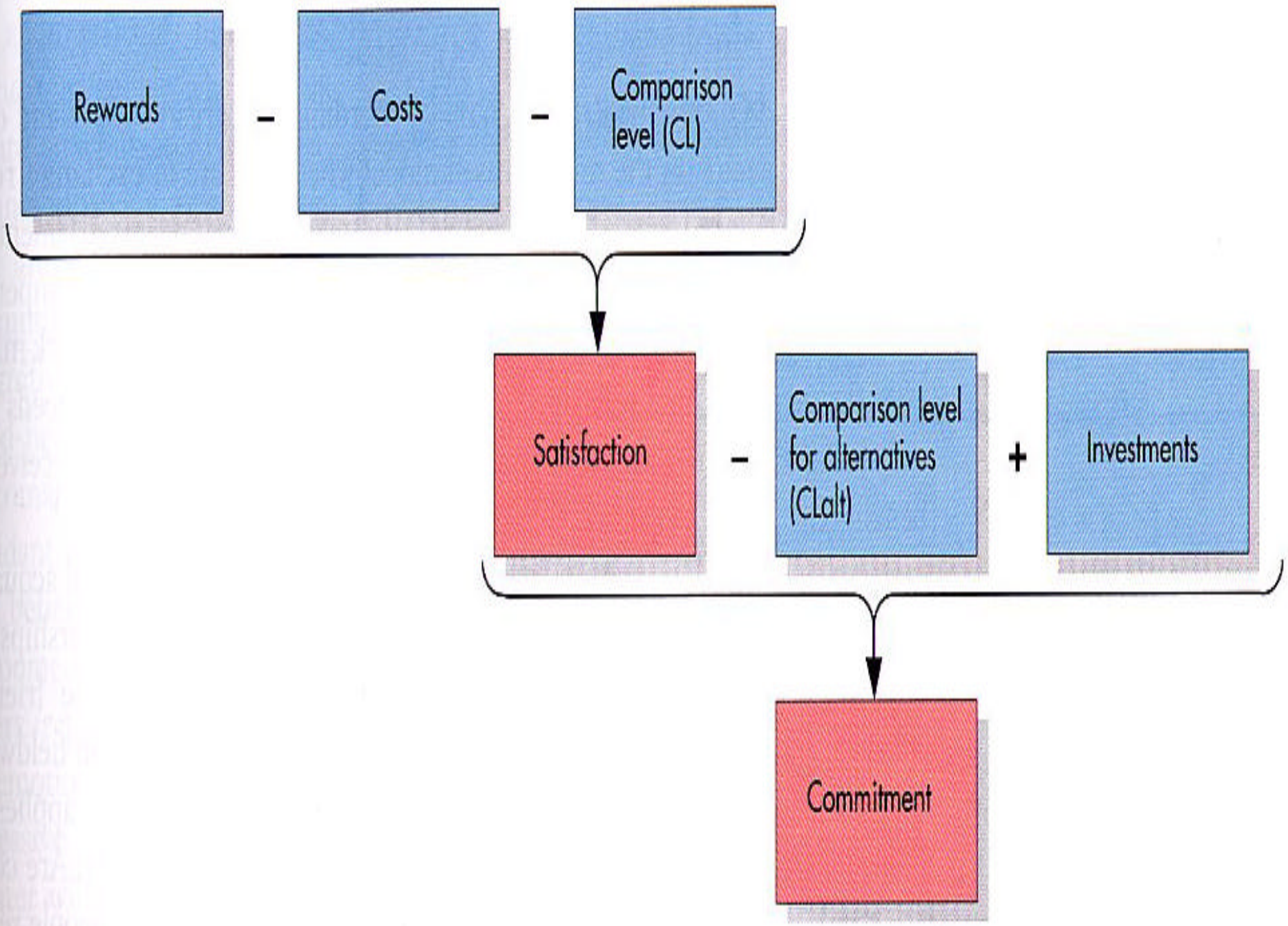
$$C = S + I - A$$

$$C = S + I - A$$

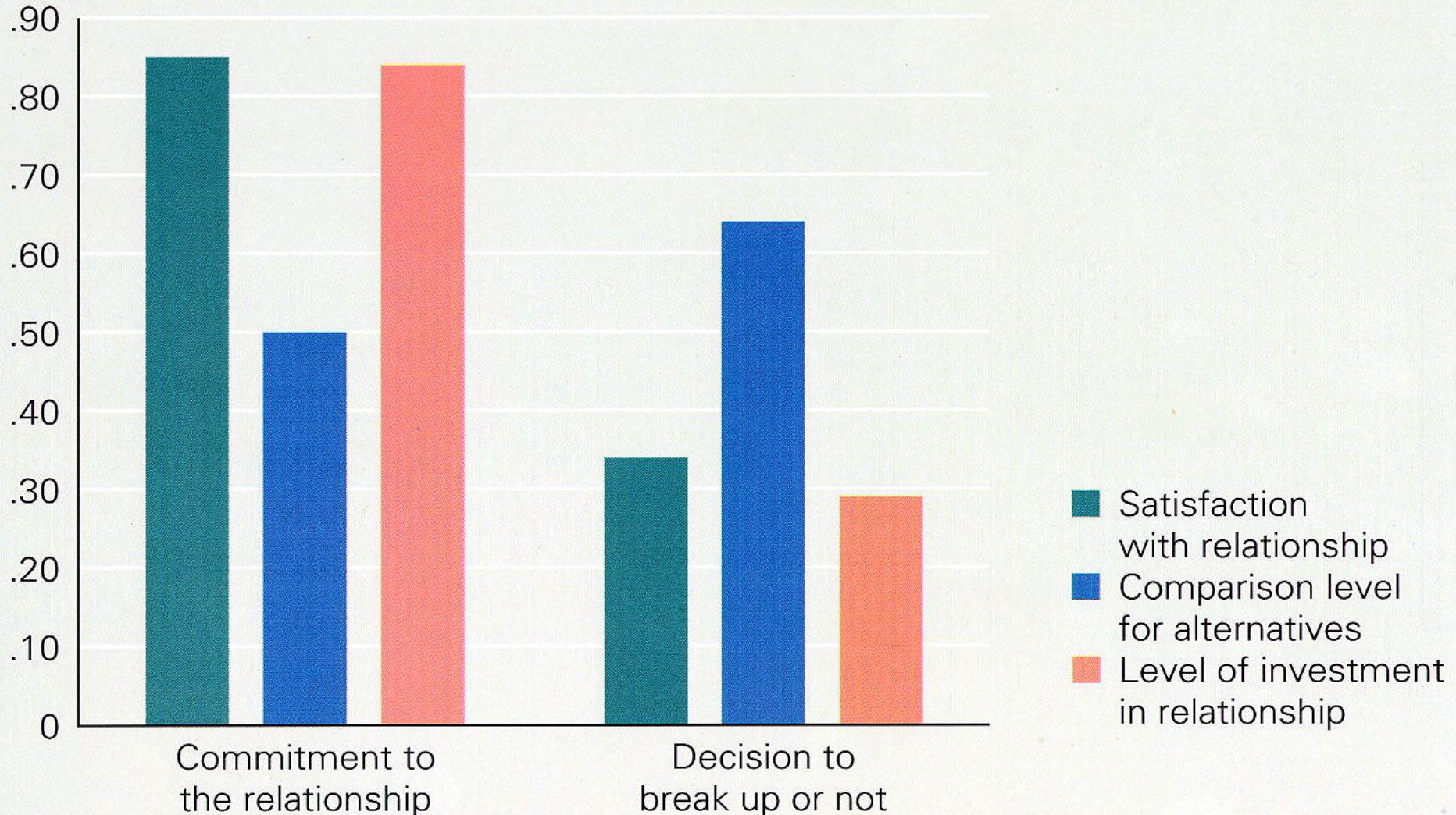
Satisfaction (S) is determined by the comparison of the current rewards and costs to those that are expected--the comparison level.

Investments (I) represent the time, effort, money and emotion that is put into the relationship. Investments are lost if the relationship fails.

Alternatives (A) to the relationship are judged by the anticipated rewards and costs compared to the current relationship.



The decision to break up or not by college students can be predicted by Rusbult's model . . .



Explains why people will sometimes remain (High C) in unhappy (Low S) relationships.

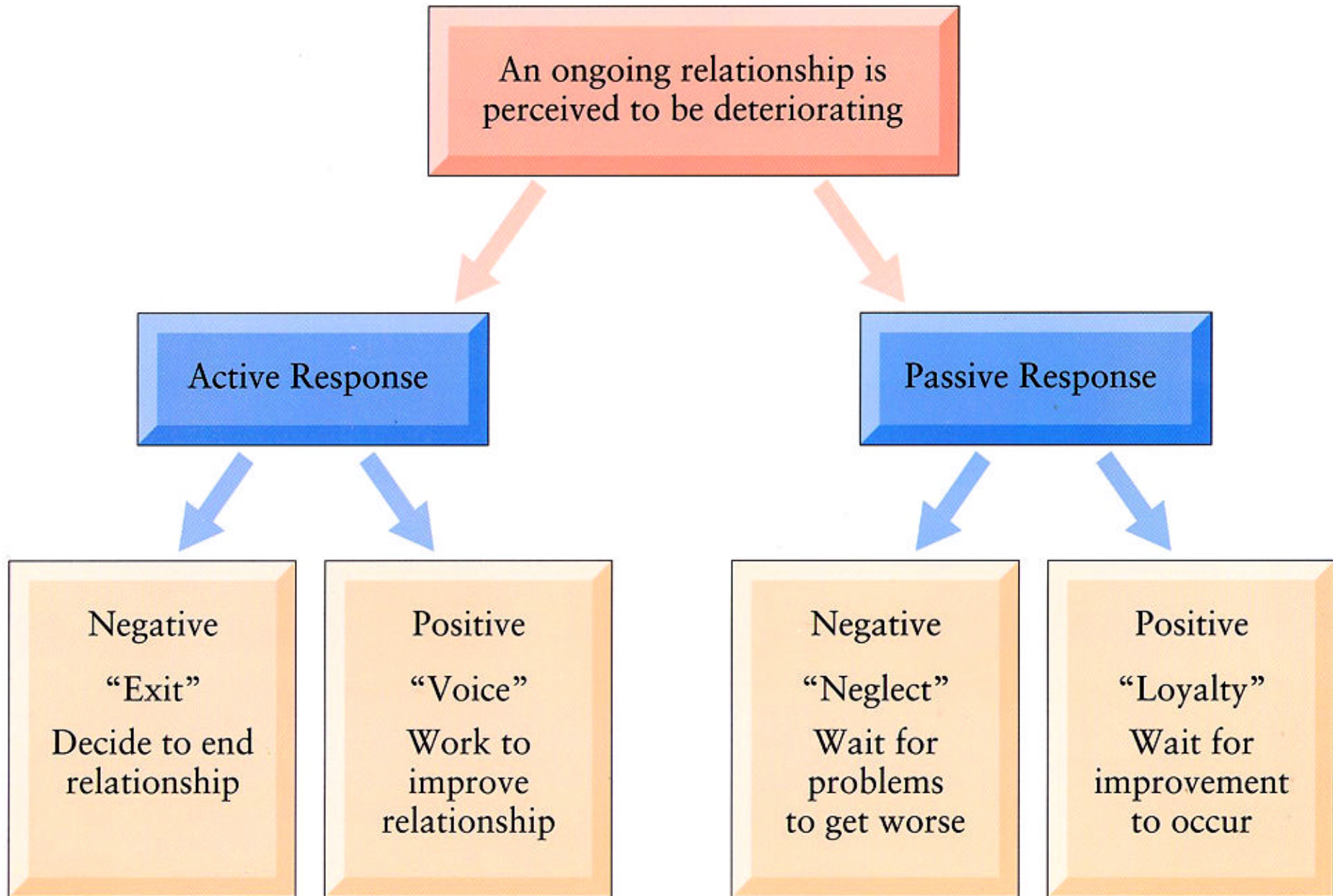
1.) High investments create a situation of *psychological entrapment* where person stays to justify the past investments. Investing more to make it better only escalates the need to remain to justify those investments.

2.) Low alternatives may keep a person in an unhappy relationship just because there is nowhere else to go

The investment model predicts different responses to relationship problems.

Depending on the levels of satisfaction, investment, and alternatives, troubled partners can choose responses that are *active* or *passive*, and, *constructive* or *destructive*.

Active and Passive Responses to a Troubled Relationship



The choice of a strategy depends on levels of satisfaction, investment, and alternatives.

	Satisfaction	Investment	Alternatives
Exit	<i>Low</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>
Voice	<i>High</i>	<i>High</i>	Low/High
Neglect	<i>Low</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>Low</i>
Loyalty	<i>High</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>Low</i>