Daily Relatedness Predicts Positive Shifts in World Beliefs: Implications for Psychological Well-Being and Affective Tendencies

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Primal world beliefs—beliefs about the general character of the world—are linked to psychological well-being, yet little is known about what drives changes in these beliefs. This study examined whether daily relatedness—rewarding, intimate, and responsive social interactions—predicts shifts in primal world beliefs over a year. In a dyadic study of romantic couples ($N = 235$ couples and 6,411 daily observations), daily relatedness predicted more positive world beliefs 1 year later. Specifically, positive interactions with close ties (i.e., familiar and close interaction partners), romantic relationship satisfaction, and perceived partner responsiveness contributed to these shifts. However, the quality of interactions with weak ties (i.e., unfamiliar or distant partners) did not predict changes in world beliefs. Moreover, positive changes in world beliefs partially explained the prospective effects of daily relatedness on greater well-being and lower depressed affect over the year. These findings provide novel support for retrospective models of world belief change, highlighting the role of everyday interpersonal experiences in shaping fundamental views of the world. They also suggest that more positive world beliefs may partially explain why relatedness promotes well-being.

Keywords: primal world beliefs, worldviews, interpersonal relationships, well-being, affect

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People often make sweeping statements about the world's attributes. Some describe the world as "horrible" (2024 tweet), "broken" (2024 tweet), "dying" (2024 tweet), and "cruel" (2024 tweet). Others adopt a more more charitable outlook, characterizing the world as "healing" (2024 tweet), "beautiful" (2024 tweet), and a "celebration" (2024 tweet). Research on primal world beliefs (or "primals")—beliefs about the world's basic character—suggests that such beliefs have a profound impact on psychological functioning (Clifton et al., 2019). However, little is known about the factors that drive changes in these beliefs over time.

In the current research, we expand on world belief research by examining how interpersonal interactions and relationships predict

changes in world beliefs. Further, we investigate whether such changes help explain the prospective effects of social connections on psychological well-being and negative affect. We propose that high-quality interactions and relationships in daily life lead people to attribute more positive qualities to the world, and that adopting more positive world beliefs partly explains the psychological benefits of high-quality social connections. In other words, high-quality social experiences may foster psychological adjustment and lower negative affect partly through shaping more positive world beliefs.

Primal World Beliefs, Psychological Well-Being, and Affective Tendencies

Several theorists have emphasized the significance of people's world beliefs. Beck (1979, Beck & Bredemeier, 2016) proposed that beliefs about the world (e.g., friendly vs. hostile, accepting vs. rejecting) play a role in the development of depression and anxiety. Beck and Haigh's (2014) cognitive model further suggests that distortions in these beliefs lead to biased information processing, which fuels maladaptive behaviors and psychological distress. Other scholars, including Parkes (1975), Janoff-Bulman (1989a), and Bowlby (1980), argued that people form expectations and assumptions about the world that shape their ability to set and pursue everyday goals. Koltko-Rivera (2004) extended this idea, proposing that worldviews influence how people interpret experiences and guide their decisions and actions. Stevens and Fiske (1995) identified the motive to see the world as good as one of five core social motives.

One of the most widely studied world beliefs is the belief in a just world—the idea that good things happen to good people and bad things happen to bad people (Furnham, 2003; Lerner, 1980).

Holding this belief is linked to greater life satisfaction and lower levels of depression and stress (Lipkusa et al., 1996; Ritter et al., 1990). However, people hold beliefs about many other characteristics of the world beyond its level of justice.

Research on primal world beliefs—beliefs about the world's basic character (Clifton et al., 2019; Clifton & Yaden, 2021)—has identified many world beliefs that are organized into a three-tiered taxonomy. At the most specific "tertiary" level, there are 22 distinct dimensions (e.g., believing the world is just vs. unjust or interesting vs. boring). Seventeen of these dimensions cluster into three broader secondary beliefs, which, in turn, form a superordinate "primary" belief that the world is *good* (vs. bad). Referred to as the "Big Three," the secondary primals include beliefs that the world is *safe* (vs. dangerous), *enticing* (vs. dull), and *alive* (vs. mechanistic). These three beliefs are thought to contribute to the belief that the world is *good*, with *alive* being the least influential (Clifton & Yaden, 2021).

Primal world beliefs appear to play a significant role in psychological functioning. For instance, beliefs that the world is *good*, *safe*, *enticing*, and *alive* are associated with lower levels of depression, anxiety, and negative emotion, as well as higher positive emotion, engagement, meaning, happiness, grit, and life satisfaction (Clifton et al., 2019; Clifton & Yaden, 2021). Additionally, primal world beliefs are linked to satisfaction and responsiveness in romantic relationships as well as to loneliness and the quality of social interactions (Lemay & Cutri, 2025; Lemay et al., in press; Lemay, Cutri, Or, & Davis, 2024). These findings suggest that world beliefs exert a broad influence on behavior, well-being, and affective experiences.

Relationships and Social Interactions as Predictors of Changes in Primal World Beliefs

Although world beliefs are generally stable over time (Clifton et al., 2019), some research suggests that they may change. For instance, a study on older adults found that beliefs about the world being just and governed by external forces changed over a 27-week period (Kim et al., 2009). Another study demonstrated that beliefs in the world's benevolence fluctuated over 2 years, with greater instability linked to more negative life events (Poulin & Silver, 2019). Specifically, experiencing violence or major negative relationship events (e.g., forced separation from family, divorce) predicted declines in benevolence beliefs, whereas community-wide disasters were associated with increases in these beliefs. Additional research suggests that major adverse experiences, such as the death of a loved one, childhood maltreatment, sexual assault, and interpersonal violence, are associated with shifts in world beliefs (e.g., Janoff-Bulman, 1989a; Ornduff, 2000; Park et al., 2012; Prager & Solomon, 1995; Pyevich et al., 2003; Solomon et al., 1997).

Beyond these major life events, more routine interpersonal experiences may also shape world beliefs. We expect that repeated positive social interactions that satisfy a person's need for relatedness—the sense of feeling connected, supported, and cared for (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000)—can foster positive shifts in primal world beliefs. As highly social beings, people form strong attachments, seek belonging, and rely on their relationship partners for emotional and practical support (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Reis & Arriaga, 2015; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Consequently,

everyday interpersonal experiences may play a crucial role in shaping people's beliefs about the world (Parkes, 1975).

For instance, frequent experiences of relatedness may strengthen the belief that the world is *safe*. High-quality relationships typically involve mutual care and responsiveness to needs, which are key components of intimacy (Clark & Lemay, 2010; Reis & Gable, 2015). Supportive partners may enhance a sense of safety by providing a secure space to express negative emotions, helping people reframe difficulties as less threatening, aiding in the development of coping skills, or offering instrumental aid to reduce stress (Collins & Feeney, 2000; Feeney & Collins, 2015). Over time, repeated interactions with such caring partners may foster a generalized sense of benevolence and security, reinforcing the belief that the world is *safe*.

The impact of supportive partners on threat responses is evident at the neural level. Social contact with close partners, particularly when they are perceived as supportive, reduces activation of neural systems involved in emotional and behavioral responses to threat (Coan et al., 2006, 2017). Similarly, intimate relationships characterized by mutual self-disclosure (Coan et al., 2013) and providing support to close others (Inagaki & Eisenberger, 2012) predict lower threat-related neural activity. Conversely, a lack of supportive social relationships may heighten threat sensitivity. For instance, lonely people are more likely to attend to and expect negative social events, and they display negative biases in their perceptions of their close relationship partners' regard and care (Cacioppo & Hawkley, 2009; Lemay, Cutri, & Teneva, 2024; Teneva & Lemay, 2020). Likewise, insecure attachment, which reflects chronic difficulties in maintaining mutually caring and supportive relationships, is associated with perceiving the world as dangerous and uncaring (Weber & Federico, 2007). These findings suggest that recurring interpersonal interactions characterized by warmth and support may help people see the world as safer, whereas chronic social dissatisfaction may reinforce the perception of the world as dangerous.

Recurring experiences of relatedness may also engender an *enticing* world belief—the belief that the world is full of beauty, meaning, humor, and rewarding opportunities (Clifton et al., 2019). This may occur, in part, because close relationships and intimate social interactions are typically pleasurable. Indeed, marital satisfaction (Acevedo et al., 2012), friendships (Güroğlu, 2022), self-disclosure with friends (Wagner et al., 2015), and providing support to close partners (Inagaki & Eisenberger, 2012) are linked to neural activity in brain regions associated with reward processing and motivation. As people repeatedly engage in rewarding interpersonal interactions, they may begin to generalize these experiences, shaping their perception of the world as *enticing*.

Furthermore, the support dynamics characterizing close relationships may reinforce the belief that the world is *enticing*. Close partners often amplify positive experiences by sharing good news with each other and responding enthusiastically (Gable et al., 2006; Reis et al., 2010). Over time, these repeated interactions may strengthen the belief that the world is meaningful, worthwhile, and pleasurable, core aspects of the *enticing* world belief. Supportive partners also validate each other's aspirations, identify growth opportunities, and provide resources that facilitate goal pursuit (Feeney, 2004; Feeney & Collins, 2015). This support can make personal goals feel more attainable and inspire exploration of the environment (Davis et al., 2021; Feeney, 2004, 2007; Schnall et al., 2008; Shah, 2003), reinforcing the belief that the world is full of rewarding opportunities that are worth exploring.

Given that *enticing* and *safe* world beliefs are primary contributors to the broader belief that the world is *good* (Clifton et al., 2019), frequent supportive and rewarding interpersonal experiences may ultimately enhance belief in the world's general goodness.

Repeated social experiences may play a particularly influential role in shaping world beliefs, especially when compared to isolated events. Models of belief change suggest that greater frequency of message exposure increases the likelihood of belief revision (Fazio et al., 2022). Furthermore, research indicates that the frequency of positive experiences strongly predicts well-being (Diener et al., 2009; Podber & Gruenewald, 2023). Although world beliefs tend to be stable (Clifton et al., 2019) and individuals often process information in ways that reinforce preexisting beliefs (Nickerson, 1998), a consistent accumulation of interpersonal experiences that contradict existing world beliefs may, over time, lead to belief revision.

Explaining the Impact of Interpersonal Relationships and Interactions on Well-Being

It is well established that high-quality close relationships and social interactions contribute to better psychological well-being and more positive affective experiences. Relative to unhappy individuals, happy people report having better relationships and spending more time with close friends, family members, and romantic partners (Diener & Seligman, 2002). They also express greater confidence that others will support them when needed (Chu et al., 2010; Diener et al., 2018). According to self-determination theory, people have an innate need for relatedness—to feel connected to and cared for by others—in addition to needs for competence and autonomy. Satisfying these needs is essential for maintaining mental health and psychological well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Meta-analyses indicate that fulfillment of the relatedness need is associated with greater psychological well-being and lower negative affect (Ryan et al., 2022). Additionally, having supportive relationship partners who help meet autonomy, competence, and relatedness needs is linked to greater subjective well-being (Slemp et al., 2024).

The need for mutual caring relationships has also been emphasized by Baumeister and Leary (1995), who argued that frustration of this need leads to maladjustment, stress, and psychopathology. Similarly, attachment theory and cognitive-experiential self-theory posit that people require supportive close relationships to maintain well-being (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Bowlby, 1969; Epstein, 2003). Consistent with these perspectives, a lack of social support and experiences of loneliness predict poor mental health outcomes, including depression and anxiety (Lim et al., 2016; Wang et al., 2018). Furthermore, the quality of romantic relationships predicts greater personal well-being over time (Gustavson et al., 2016; Proulx et al., 2007). However, relatedness appears to be beneficial beyond close relationships. Interactions with both strong ties (e.g., close partners) and weak ties (e.g., acquaintances and strangers) contribute to feelings of belonging and positive affect (Sandstrom & Dunn, 2014a, 2014b).

Prior research also suggests that people need to believe in the world's goodness (Beck & Bredemeier, 2016; Epstein, 2003; Janoff-Bulman, 1989b; Lerner & Miller, 1978; Stevens & Fiske, 1995), and empirical findings indicate that viewing the world as good is associated with higher well-being and lower negative affect (Clifton et al., 2019; Feist et al., 1995; Furnham, 2003; Poulin & Cohen Silver, 2008). We propose that daily experiences of relatedness promote well-being not only because they fulfill well-documented needs for belonging, but also because they help satisfy the need to see the world positively. Frequent experiences of satisfying, intimate, and supportive connections in day-to-day life may foster beliefs that the world is *safe*, *enticing*, and ultimately *good*. These beliefs, in turn, may contribute to greater psychological well-being and reduced negative affect, helping to explain the prospective effects of relatedness on well-being.

The Current Research

The current research examines whether daily interpersonal experiences predict changes in primal world beliefs over a year, as well as the implications of these changes for well-being and affective tendencies. Our conceptual model is depicted in Figure 1.

We hypothesize that daily relatedness—interpersonal experiences characterized by intimacy, satisfaction, and responsiveness—at the start of the study (i.e., T1) predicts more positive world beliefs a year later (i.e., T2), particularly *safe*, *enticing*, and *good* world beliefs (Path a_1 in Figure 1). We also anticipated significant stability in world beliefs, consistent with prior research (Path a_2 in Figure 1). Furthermore, we expect that positive changes in world beliefs predict improved psychological functioning, including greater well-being and lower levels of depressed and anxious affect (Path b in Figure 1), controlling for daily relatedness, world beliefs, and psychological functioning at T1 (Paths c'_1, c'_2, and d in Figure 1).

Additionally, we predict that positive shifts in world beliefs statistically mediate the effects of daily relatedness on later psychological functioning. Specifically, we hypothesize that the participants who experience greater daily relatedness report higher psychological well-being and lower depressed and anxious affect a year later, with these effects explained by positive changes in *safe*, *enticing*, or *good* world beliefs (the indirect a_1b effect in Figure 1).

We did not make strong predictions regarding the impact of daily relatedness on *alive* world beliefs, which refer to beliefs that the world is interactive, intentional, and dependent on oneself.

We used five indicators to assess daily interpersonal relatedness. First, we examined general relationship quality, reflecting the overall quality of social connection across interaction partners.

Figure 1
Conceptual Model Tested in Current Research
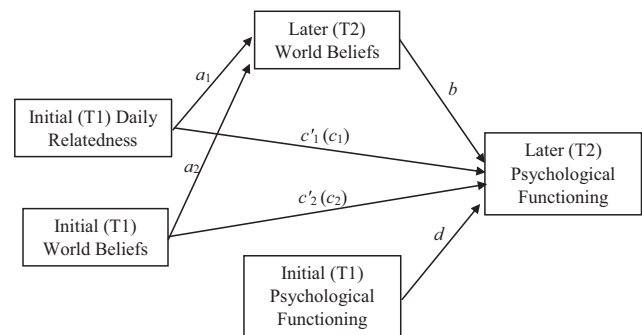
Note. Labels in parentheses represent the effects of T1 relatedness and world beliefs without controlling for the T2 world beliefs mediator. T = time.

Second, we assessed daily quality of interactions with both strong-tie and weak-tie interaction partners, based on prior research suggesting their independent contributions to well-being (Sandstrom & Dunn, 2014a, 2014b). Finally, given the importance of romantic relationships for well-being (Braithwaite & Holt-Lunstad, 2017; Proulx et al., 2007), we examined daily romantic relationship satisfaction and perceptions of romantic partners' responsiveness (i.e., understanding, validation, and care; Reis & Gable, 2015).

Method

Participants

Both members of 236 romantic couples ($N = 472$; 241 women, 226 men, five nonbinary or another gender; $M_{age} = 35.78$, $SD = 12.08$) participated in the study in exchange for payment. The sample size was determined by funding constraints. Regarding racial and ethnic identities, participants identified as 73.1% White, 15.5% Asian, 9.5% Black/African American, 9.7% Hispanic/Latino/a/x, 1.3% Native American, and 4.9% another racial/ethnic identity. Sexual orientation identities included 81.4% heterosexual/straight, 10% bisexual, 3.2% queer, 1.7% lesbian, 1.3% gay, and 2.5% another sexual identity. Participants described their relationships as dating (36.7%), engaged (8.5%), married (52.8%), or in a committed partnership (2.1%). On average, couples had been romantically involved for 9.29 years ($SD = 9.29$) at the start of the study. The sample included 93.2% different-gender couples, 3.8% same-gender couples involving women, 0.8% same-gender couples involving men, and 2.1% couples in which at least one partner identified as nonbinary.

Participants were recruited through various methods, including digital advertisements (e.g., electronic newspapers, bulletin boards, social media, research recruitment websites), printed flyers (e.g., on a college campus, in local businesses), and email outreach (e.g., listservs, local residents, businesses). To be eligible, individuals had to be at least 18 years old, fluent in English, and involved in a committed dating relationship or marriage for at least 3 months. They were also required to provide contact information for two friends and have access to the necessary technology for a video-conference with research staff.

Participants were invited to complete a follow-up questionnaire (T2) approximately 1 year after completing the initial questionnaire (T1). A total of 373 participants (162 complete dyads) responded to the follow-up. Monte Carlo simulations of dyadic structural equation models indicated that this T2 sample size provided 81% power to detect an effect of $\beta = .2$ or greater ($\alpha = .05$).[1]

Procedure

Data were collected in 2023 and 2024. At both T1 and T2, participants completed online questionnaires containing the measures described below. Following these assessments, and after completing tasks unrelated to the present investigation, participants were asked to complete daily reports each evening between 7 p.m. and midnight for 14 consecutive days. These reports included the daily measures detailed below. Only measures relevant to this investigation are described below. Participants received an email reminder and a link to the questionnaire each evening during the daily diary phase. To minimize potential biases, participants were instructed not to discuss the measures or their responses with their romantic partner during data collection.

After excluding 198 invalid reports (i.e., those completed outside the designated timeframe or more than once per day), a total of 6,411 daily reports were included in analyses ($M = 13.58$ reports per person). Participants completed between 1 and 27 daily reports, with 83% completing between 12 and 14 reports. To promote compliance, payment was contingent on completing at least 12 daily questionnaires, with a bonus offered for completing all 14 days. Participants who missed reports were given the opportunity to complete makeups on subsequent days.

T1 and T2 Measures

World Beliefs

At both T1 and T2, participants completed the Primals Inventory (PI-99) to assess their beliefs about the world (Clifton et al., 2019). The 99 items were rated on a 6-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 6 = *strongly agree*) and measured 22 tertiary beliefs, 17 of which are nested within three secondary beliefs: *safe* (T1 $\alpha = .93$, T2 $\alpha = .94$), *enticing* (T1 $\alpha = .93$, T2 $\alpha = .94$), and *alive* (T1 $\alpha = .88$, T2 $\alpha = .87$). These secondary beliefs, along with responses to nine additional items, were averaged to create an index of the primary *good* world belief (T1 $\alpha = .96$, T2 $\alpha = .96$). Example items include: "Most things and situations are harmless and totally safe" (*safe*); "the world is an abundant place with tons and tons to offer" (*enticing*); and "much of what happens around me feels like it is because of me or related to me somehow" (*alive*).

Depressed and Anxious Affect

At both time points (T1 and T2), participants reported how often they experienced eight depression-related states (e.g., feeling worth-less, helpless, hopeless, sad, and like a failure) and seven anxiety-related states (e.g., feeling anxious, fearful, tense, and unable to focus due to anxiety). Items were drawn from the Patient-Reported Outcomes Measurement Information System measures (Pilkonis et al., 2011) and rated on a 5-point scale (1 = *never*; 5 = *always*). Internal consistency was high for depression (T1 $\alpha = .91$; T2 $\alpha = .92$) and anxiety (T1 $\alpha = .91$; T2 $\alpha = .91$).

Psychological Well-Being

At both time points (T1 and T2), participants completed five items from the Flourishing Scale (Diener et al., 2010) using a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 7 = *strongly agree*). These items assessed meaning and purpose, optimism, life satisfaction, engagement, and mastery (e.g., "I lead a purposeful and meaningful life"; "I am engaged and interested in my daily activities"). Internal consistency was high (T1 $\alpha = .87$; T2 $\alpha = .85$). Items related to relationship quality were excluded due to conceptual overlap with the relationship quality predictors described below.

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[1] We compared participants who completed the T2 questionnaire with participants who did not on all study variables described in the measures section. Participants who did not complete the T2 questionnaire scored significantly lower on daily weak-tie interaction quality, $b = -.15$, $p = .049$. They did not significantly differ on any of the other study variables.

Daily Measures Completed by Romantic Partners

Daily General Relationship Quality

Participants completed a three-item measure assessing daily general relationship quality (i.e., "I felt connected to others"; "I felt that my conversations with others were meaningful and rewarding"; "I experienced warm and trusting interactions with others"), which was based on prior research (Diener et al., 2010; Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Items were completed using 7-point response scales (1 = *strongly disagree*; 7 = *strongly agree*; α = .98).

Daily Quality of Interactions With Weak Ties and Strong Ties

On days when participants interacted with either a weak tie (i.e., someone they were not well acquainted with) or a strong tie (i.e., someone they knew well or felt close to), they selected a single interaction partner from that category and rated the quality of the interaction on four items (1 = *not at all*; 5 = *extremely*). These items assessed engagement, interest, acceptance, connectedness, and enjoyment, with high internal consistency (weak-tie α = .92; strong-tie α = .96). On average, participants reported a weak-tie interaction on 51% of daily assessments (range = 0%–100%) and a strong-tie interaction on 91% of daily assessments (range = 7%–100%).

Daily Romantic Relationship Satisfaction

Participants completed a single-item measure of daily romantic relationship satisfaction ("Today, how satisfied did you feel in your relationship with [partner name]?") using a 5-point scale (1 = *very slightly or not at all;* 5 = *extremely*).

Daily Perceived Partner Responsiveness

Participants completed single-item measures assessing their daily perception of their romantic partner's regard (i.e., "Today, how did [partner name] view you"; 1 = *negatively*; 5 = *positively*), care (i.e., "Today, to what extent did [partner name] care about your needs"; 1 = *very slightly or not at all*; 5 = *extremely*), and understanding (i.e., "Today, to what extent did [partner name] understand you"; 1 = *very slightly or not at all*; 5 = *extremely*). Based on research suggesting that perceived partner responsiveness involves understanding, validation, and care (Reis & Gable, 2015), responses to these items were averaged to create an index of perceived partner responsiveness (α = .91).

Transparency and Openness

We report our sample size determination, data exclusions, manipulations, missing data handling, and all relevant measures in accordance with the Journal Article Reporting Standards (Kazak, 2018). Copies of the data, syntax, and study materials are available on the Open Science Framework at https://osf.io/kjb5f/?view_only= b517a6be95c249adb8420b5348e6ad8b.

Results

Analysis Strategy

Predictions were tested using structural equation models for interchangeable dyads (Olsen & Kenny, 2006) in Mplus (Muthen &

Muthen, 2017). A dyad-level data structure was used, with one record per dyad and separate variables for each partner. Daily variables were aggregated to create person-level indices, and predictors and residuals were modeled as correlated across dyad members. Following Olsen and Kenny's (2006) recommendation, we constrained key parameters (i.e., means, intercepts, variances, covariances, and path coefficients) to be equal across partners and adjusted model fit statistics for any misfit caused by these constraints. While we report the chi-square exact fit test, we do not interpret it as an indicator of model fit due to its sensitivity to sample size, which often leads to model rejection even when the model closely approximates the data (West et al., 2012). Instead, model fit was evaluated using the χ^2/df ratio (values <5 indicate acceptable fit; Wheaton et al., 1977), the root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA, values <.10 indicate acceptable fit; Browne & Cudeck, 1993), and the comparative fit index (CFI, values ≥.90 indicate acceptable fit; Bentler & Bonett, 1980). The results that are most relevant to our hypothesis tests— those involving path coefficients—are presented below. Additional results for each model, including intercepts, means, variances, and covariances, are presented in Supplemental Materials.

The conceptual model presented in Figure 1 guided model specification. As shown in Table 1, indicators of daily relatedness were strongly correlated ($M_r = .50$). Therefore, primary analyses treated daily relatedness as a latent variable capturing the shared variance across the five observed indicators, though ancillary models explored the predictive effects of individual indicators.

Mediation predictions were tested using a combination of joint significance and indirect effect tests (Yzerbyt et al., 2018). Confidence intervals for all effects were bias-corrected 95% intervals based on 1,000 bootstrap samples (MacKinnon et al., 2002). Separate models examined world beliefs both as a global good–bad dimension and as distinct secondary beliefs (*safe, enticing,* and *alive*).

Consistent with prior research (Clifton et al., 2019), test-retest correlations indicated that world beliefs were stable over time (*good*: $r = .75$, $p < .001$; *safe* $r = .77$, $p < .001$; *enticing* $r = .69$, $p < .001$; *alive* $r = .80$, $p < .001$). Correlations among T1 variables are presented in Table 1, and correlations among T2 variables are presented in Table 2. Descriptive statistics and histograms depicting individual change in world beliefs are presented in Supplemental Materials. Changes in world beliefs appeared approximately normally distributed with means around zero. Most participants experienced change between −1 and 1 units, with 97% falling within this range for *good*, 95% for *safe* and *enticing*, and 94% for *alive*.

Effects of Daily Relatedness on Later World Beliefs

The first set of models examined the effects of daily relatedness on T2 world beliefs while controlling T1 world beliefs. Hence, these models controlled for the contemporaneous association between daily relatedness and world beliefs while testing the prospective effect of daily relatedness on later world beliefs.

The first model assessed the effects of latent daily relatedness on T2 *good* world belief. The five indicators of daily relatedness were specified as loading on a latent daily relatedness variable, with general daily relatedness serving as the scaling indicator. In this and all subsequent models using this latent variable, residual covariances were estimated between the two indicators assessing romantic-specific relatedness (i.e., relationship satisfaction and perceived responsiveness) within and across partners, as responses to romantic-specific

Table 1
Correlations Among T1 Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Good world beliefs	.23***	.90***	.89***	.42***	.47***	.22**	.23***	.22***	.25***	.61***	-.50***	-.37***
2. Safe world beliefs	.21***	.23***	.64***	.24***	.41***	.13**	.14**	.14**	.20***	.51***	-.45***	-.34***
3. Enticing world beliefs	.17**	.23***	.15*	.36***	.42***	.25***	.25***	.24***	.25***	.57***	-.43***	-.29***
4. Alive world beliefs	.12*	.14**	.09	.28***	.26***	.19***	.25***	.12*	.15***	.30***	-.13**	-.02
5. Daily general relationship qual.	.18***	.19***	.13*	.09	.25***	.39***	.61***	.46***	.53***	.45***	-.36***	-.21***
6. Daily quality of weak tie int.	.07	.03	.09	.10*	.03	.10	.43***	.21***	.22***	.23***	-.23***	-.16***
7. Daily quality of strong tie int.	.13**	.10*	.10*	.11*	.13*	.05	.06	.48***	.49***	.29***	-.20***	-.09
8. Daily romantic relationship sat.	.13**	.08	.15**	.11*	.26***	.11*	.22***	.46***	.88***	.24***	-.22***	-.08
9. Daily perceived partner resp.	.14**	.08	.16**	.14**	.26***	.08	.25***	.48***	.51***	.25***	-.21***	-.10*
10. Psychological well-being	.20***	.18***	.16**	.10*	.18***	.07	.06	.20***	.19***	.14*	-.62***	-.35***
11. Depressed affect	-.18***	-.16**	-.14**	-.11*	-.16***	-.04	-.05	-.12**	-.12*	-.15**	.18**	.66***
12. Anxious affect	-.22***	-.19***	-.17***	-.18***	-.16**	.01	-.09	-.07	-.08	-.16**	.16**	.13*

Note. Correlations on and below the diagonal are across-partner correlations. Correlations above the diagonal are within-partner correlations. T = time; qual. = quality; int. = interaction; sat. = satisfaction; resp. = responsiveness.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

questions may exhibit unique within-partner and between-partner covariance. Additionally, intra-partner residual covariances were estimated between these romantic indicators and the strong-tie interaction quality indicator given that many participants may have reported on romantic partners when responding about strong ties.

As shown in the upper section of Table 3, latent daily relatedness significantly predicted greater *good* world belief at T2 (path a_1 in Figure 1). T1 *good* world belief also predicted T2 *good* world belief, indicating temporal stability in this belief (path a_2 in Figure 1). Model fit indices (Table 3) indicated that this model provided an acceptable fit to the data.

The second model examined the effects of latent daily relatedness on T2 *safe*, *enticing*, and *alive* secondary world beliefs, all within the same model. Intra-partner and cross-partner covariances were estimated for these beliefs at each assessment wave. The results are presented in the lower section of Table 3. Latent daily relatedness significantly predicted greater *safe* and *enticing* world belief at T2 (Path a_1 in Figure 1). Additionally, T1 world beliefs predicted analogous T2 world beliefs, suggesting temporal stability (Path a_2 in Figure 1). This model provided an acceptable fit to the data (Table 3).[2]

To investigate the effects of individual indicators of daily relatedness on world beliefs, we retested the models using one of the indicators in place of the latent relatedness factor. Results for models predicting changes in *good* world belief are presented in Table 4. Daily general relationship quality, strong-tie interaction quality, and perceived romantic partner responsiveness predicted greater *good* world belief at T2, controlling for the T1 belief. However, daily weak-tie interaction quality and romantic relationship satisfaction did not significantly predict T2 *good* world belief. Fit statistics suggested that these models fit the data well (Table 4).

Results of models predicting T2 *safe*, *enticing*, and *alive* world beliefs from specific indicators of daily relatedness controlling for the corresponding T1 belief are presented in Table 5. These beliefs were again examined in the same model. Daily general relationship quality and strong-tie interaction quality predicted greater *safe* belief at T2. Additionally, daily general relationship quality, strong-tie interaction quality, romantic relationship satisfaction, and perceived romantic partner responsiveness predicted greater *enticing* belief at T2. Daily weak-tie interaction quality did not predict later world beliefs, and no indicator of daily relatedness predicted later *alive* world belief. Fit statistics suggested that these models fit the data well (Table 5).

These results provide support for Path a_1 in Figure 1; daily relatedness and many of its specific indicators predicted greater *good, safe,* and *enticing* world beliefs later in time.

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[2] In additional analyses, we tested whether participants' partner's experiences of daily relatedness predicted participants' subsequent world beliefs. The partner effect of latent daily relatedness was not a significant predictor of T2 *good* world belief ($b = .01$, $p = .86$), T2 *safe* world belief ($b = .03$, $p = .48$), T2 *enticing* world belief ($b = -.01$, $p = .87$), or T2 *alive* world belief ($b = -.02$, $p = .59$). In these analyses, the actor effects (effect of participants' own relatedness experiences) on world beliefs remained virtually identical to the effects described above for predicting T2 *good* world belief ($b = .14$, $p < .001$), T2 *safe* world belief ($b = .11$, $p = .009$), T2 *enticing* world belief ($b = .23$, $p < .001$), and T2 *alive* world belief ($b = 0$, $p = .93$). Hence, participants' own interpersonal experiences, and not their partner's experiences, predicted later world beliefs.

Table 2

Correlations Among T2 Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Good world beliefs	.22**	.91***	.90***	.43***	.56***	−.48***	−.32***
2. Safe world beliefs	.19*	.18*	.66***	.30***	.49***	−.45***	−.33***
3. Enticing world beliefs	.22**	.18**	.23**	.35***	.50***	−.39***	−.22***
4. Alive world beliefs	.07	.02	.04	.20**	.26***	−.09	.02
5. Psychological well-being	.17**	.16*	.15*	.08	.21**	−.62***	−.42***
6. Depressed affect	−.20**	−.20***	−.16**	−.07	−.15*	.22**	.62***
7. Anxious affect	−.18**	.15*	−.17**	−.16**	−.16**	.18**	.12

Note. Correlations on and below the diagonal are across-partner correlations. Correlations above the diagonal are within-partner correlations. T = time.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Effects of T2 World Beliefs on Psychological Well-Being and Affective Tendencies

Next, we examined the effects of T2 world beliefs on T2 psychological functioning (psychological well-being and depressed and anxious affective tendencies; Path *b* in Figure 1). As outlined in Figure 1, this model estimated paths linking T1 latent daily relatedness and world beliefs to T2 world beliefs (Paths a_1 and a_2 in Figure 1). The model also controlled for the direct effects of T1 latent daily relatedness (Path c'_1 in Figure 1) and T1 world beliefs (Path c'_2 in Figure 1) on T2 psychological functioning, as well as the effect of the analogous T1 assessment of psychological functioning (Path *d* in Figure 1). All three indicators of psychological functioning were examined in the same model and were modeled as correlated both within and across partners. In the model estimating effects of secondary world beliefs, we estimated these effects within a single model and continued to treat these beliefs as correlated within and across partners.

Results for the effects of T2 *good* world belief are presented in the upper section of Table 6. T2 *good* world belief significantly predicted greater T2 well-being and lower T2 depressed affect. In the lower section of Table 6, results for the effects of T2 *safe*, *enticing*, and *alive* secondary world beliefs are shown. T2 *safe* world belief significantly predicted greater T2 well-being and lower T2 depressed and anxious

affect. Unexpectedly, T2 *Alive* belief predicted greater T2 anxious affect. T2 *enticing* belief did not significantly predict psychological functioning in this model. These results provide support for Path *b* in Figure 1, showing that T2 world beliefs predicted T2 psychological well-being, depressed affect, and anxious affect.

Partitioning the Effects of Daily Relatedness

Table 7 presents decomposition of the longitudinal effects of latent daily relatedness on T2 psychological functioning (i.e., well-being and affective tendencies) within the context of the longitudinal models described in the prior section. Latent daily relatedness had significant total and direct effects on T2 psychological well-being (positive effects) and depressed affect (inverse effects). These results indicate that participants who experienced greater daily relatedness reported higher psychological well-being and lower depressed affect a year later, controlling for their initial well-being and affect. The significant direct effects indicate that these effects of latent daily relatedness on later well-being and depressed affect were not fully explained by later world beliefs.

Table 7 also presents tests of indirect effects of T1 latent daily relatedness on T2 psychological functioning via T2 world beliefs (i.e., Path a_1b in Figure 1). Latent daily relatedness indirectly

Table 3

Predicting T2 World Beliefs From Latent Daily Relatedness and T1 World Beliefs

T1 predictor	T2 world belief criterion	Unstandardized *b*	95% CI	Standardized β	Z	p
Primary world belief model						
Daily relatedness (latent)	Good	.14	[.06, .24]	.16	3.69	<.001
Good world belief	Good	.69	[.60, .78]	.68	17.24	<.001
Model fit: $\chi^2(31) = 80.95$, $\chi^2/df = 2.6$, CFI = .95, RMSEA = .08						
Secondary world belief model						
Daily relatedness (latent)	Safe	.12	[.03, .22]	.12	2.96	.003
Safe world belief	Safe	.71	[.64, .78]	.71	22.19	<.001
Daily relatedness (latent)	Enticing	.23	[.10, .36]	.25	5.44	<.001
Enticing world belief	Enticing	.60	[.51, .70]	.59	16.75	<.001
Daily relatedness (latent)	Alive	−.01	[−.11, .09]	−.01	−.17	.865
Alive world belief	Alive	.75	[.70, .80]	.80	25.31	<.001
Model fit: $\chi^2(79) = 143.87$, $\chi^2/df = 1.82$, CFI = .95, RMSEA = .06						

Note. Latent daily relatedness represents the shared variance among the five indicators of daily relatedness. The secondary belief model examined *safe*, *enticing*, and *alive* world beliefs in the same model and modeled each belief at T2 as a function of the same belief at T1 and latent daily relatedness. CI = confidence interval; CFI = comparative fit index; RMSEA = root-mean-square error of approximation; T = time.

Table 4

Predicting T2 Good World Belief From Specific Indicators of Daily Relatedness Controlling for T1 Good World Belief

T1 daily predictor	Unstandardized b	95% CI	Standardized β	Z	p
Model 1					
General relationship quality	.10	[.03, .18]	.13	3.41	.001
Model fit: $\chi^2(2) = .20$, $\chi^2/df = .10$, CFI = 1, RMSEA = 0					
Model 2					
Weak-tie interaction quality	.03	[−.04, .09]	.03	.72	.469
Strong-tie interaction quality	.14	[.05, .23]	.13	3.37	<.001
Model fit: $\chi^2(3) = .81$, $\chi^2/df = .27$, CFI = .99, RMSEA = 0					
Model 3					
Romantic satisfaction	.06	[−.01, .12]	.06	1.72	.086
Model fit: $\chi^2(2) = .83$, $\chi^2/df = .41$, CFI = .98, RMSEA = 0					
Model 4					
Perceived partner responsiveness	.07	[−.001, .14]	.07	2.07	.039
Model fit: $\chi^2(2) = .81$, $\chi^2/df = .41$, CFI = .98, RMSEA = 0					

Note. Each section of this table reports a separate model. Except for effects of weak-tie and strong-tie interaction quality, which were estimated in the same model, effects of the T1 daily predictors were estimated in separate models given their conceptual overlap. The effect of T1 *good* world belief on T2 *good* world belief was controlled in each model. CI = confidence interval; CFI = comparative fit index; RMSEA = root-mean-square error of approximation; T = time.

predicted greater T2 well-being and lower T2 depressed affect through greater T2 *good* and *safe* world beliefs. Additionally, latent daily relatedness indirectly predicted lower T2 anxious affect through greater T2 *safe* world belief. These results support our

prediction that positive shifts in world beliefs—specifically *good* and *safe* world beliefs—partially explain the effects of daily relatedness on improved psychological well-being and reduced negative affect over time.

Table 5

Predicting T2 Secondary World Beliefs From Specific Indicators of Daily Relatedness Controlling for Corresponding T1 World Beliefs

T1 daily predictor	T2 world belief criterion	Unstandardized b	95% CI	Standardized β	Z	p
Model 1						
General relationship quality	Safe	.08	[.002, .17]	.09	2.54	.011
General relationship quality	Enticing	.17	[.06, .26]	.20	5.30	<.001
General relationship quality	Alive	−.01	[−.10, .07]	−.01	−.39	.693
Model fit: $\chi^2(18) = 11.20$, $\chi^2/df = .62$, CFI = .99, RMSEA = 0						
Model 2						
Weak-tie interaction quality	Safe	.05	[−.03, .13]	.05	1.34	.181
Strong-tie interaction quality	Safe	.10	[−.01, .20]	.08	1.99	.046
Weak-tie interaction quality	Enticing	.05	[−.03, .13]	.05	1.16	.244
Strong-tie interaction quality	Enticing	.20	[.08, .30]	.16	4.02	<.001
Weak-tie interaction quality	Alive	.04	[−.06, .12]	.03	.81	.418
Strong-tie interaction quality	Alive	0	[−.11, .14]	0	.07	.945
Model fit: $\chi^2(21) = 20.55$, $\chi^2/df = .98$, CFI = .98, RMSEA = 0						
Model 3						
Relationship satisfaction	Safe	.04	[−.03, .11]	.04	1.05	.293
Relationship satisfaction	Enticing	.10	[.02, .19]	.11	2.80	.005
Relationship satisfaction	Alive	−.01	[−.09. 07]	−.01	−.14	.888
Model fit: $\chi^2(18) = 18.51$, $\chi^2/df = 1.03$, CFI = .98, RMSEA = .01						
Model 4						
Perceived partner responsiveness	Safe	.05	[−.03, .13]	.05	1.42	.154
Perceived partner responsiveness	Enticing	.13	[.04, .20]	.12	3.23	.001
Perceived partner responsiveness	Alive	0	[−.08, .08]	0	.08	.938
Model fit: $\chi^2(18) = 18.39$, $\chi^2/df = 1.02$, CFI = .98, RMSEA = .01						

Note. Each section of this table reports a separate model. Except for effects of weak-tie and strong-tie interaction quality, which were estimated in the same model, effects of the T1 daily predictors were estimated in separate models given their conceptual overlap. *safe*, *enticing*, and *alive* world beliefs were examined in the same model, and each belief at T2 was modeled as a function of the same belief at T1 and the daily predictor(s). CI = confidence interval; CFI = comparative fit index; RMSEA = root-mean-square error of approximation; T = time.

Table 6

Effects of T2 World Beliefs on T2 Psychological Well-Being and Affect

T2 world belief predictor	T2 criterion	Unstandardized b	95% CI	Standardized β	Z	p
Primary world belief model						
Good	Well-being	.30	[.12, .48]	.22	3.70	<.001
Good	Depressed affect	−.24	[−.38, −.08]	−.21	−3.76	<.001
Good	Anxious affect	−.13	[−.31, .06]	−.11	−1.78	.075
Model fit: $\chi^2(106) = 216.81$, $\chi^2/df = 2.05$, CFI = .95, RMSEA = .067.						
Secondary world belief model						
Safe	Well-being	.19	[.03, .35]	.17	2.36	.018
Safe	Depressed affect	−.25	[−.42, −.12]	−.26	−3.93	<.001
Safe	Anxious affect	−.21	[−.36, −.06]	−.20	−2.85	.004
Enticing	Well-being	.03	[−.20, .24]	.02	.28	.777
Enticing	Depressed affect	0	[−.16, .17]	0	−.01	.99
Enticing	Anxious affect	−.01	[−.19, .17]	−.01	−.14	.886
Alive	Well-being	.07	[−.07, .22]	.07	1.05	.294
Alive	Depressed affect	.06	[−.05, .19]	.08	1.26	.207
Alive	Anxious affect	.17	[.04, .30]	.19	2.79	.005
Model fit: $\chi^2(172) = 310.86$, $\chi^2/df = 1.81$, CFI = .95, RMSEA = .059.						

Note. Models controlled for T1 latent daily relatedness, well-being, affect, and world beliefs. Well-being, depressed affect, and anxious affect were examined in the same model. The secondary belief model examined *safe*, *enticing*, and *alive* world beliefs in the same model. CI = confidence interval; CFI = comparative fit index; RMSEA = root-mean-square error of approximation; T = time.

Ancillary Analyses

Additional analyses presented in online Supplemental Materials partitioned the effects of T1 world beliefs on T2 psychological functioning. These analyses demonstrated a significant total effect of T1 *good* world belief on greater T2 well-being and lower T2 anxious affect. Additionally, some T1 world beliefs indirectly predicted T2 psychological outcomes via the maintenance of those beliefs at T2.

Safe and *enticing* beliefs were strongly correlated (T1 $r = .64$ and T2 $r = .66$), which may have reduced the statistical power of models that included them both as predictors. Therefore, additional analyses (see online Supplemental Materials) tested our predictions involving the three secondary world beliefs in separate models. In these analyses, T2 *safe* world belief retained the pattern of significant direct and indirect effects described above. However, T2 *enticing* world belief also predicted greater T2 well-being and lower T2 depressed affect, and T2 *alive* world belief predicted greater well-being. Furthermore, latent daily relatedness predicted

greater T2 well-being via T2 *enticing* world belief. These findings suggest that collinearity among the world beliefs may have diminished the apparent relevance of *enticing* world belief for predicting T2 well-being and affect in the models including all three secondary beliefs.

General Discussion

The current research is the first to demonstrate that the quality of interpersonal relationships and social interactions in everyday life predicts changes in primal world beliefs. Specifically, recurring experiences of rewarding and intimate social interactions in daily life were associated with greater endorsement of *good, safe,* and *enticing* world beliefs a year later. Notably, high-quality interactions with strong ties (i.e., close or familiar interaction partners) predicted these positive shifts, whereas interactions with weak ties (i.e., unfamiliar or distant partners) did not.

Table 7

Partitioning Effects of Latent Daily Relatedness on T2 Psychological Well-Being and Affect

Effect of latent daily relatedness	Predicting T2 psychological well-being		Predicting T2 depressed affect		Predicting T2 anxious affect	
	Unstandardized point estimate	95% CI	Unstandardized point estimate	95% CI	Unstandardized point estimate	95% CI
Total	**.18**	**[.06, .30]**	**−.12**	**[−.20, −.04]**	0	[−.07, .08]
Direct (independent of T2 world beliefs)	**.16**	**[.04, .28]**	**−.10**	**[−.19, −.02]**	.02	[−.05, .10]
Indirect via T2 good world beliefs	**.03**	**[.01, .05]**	**−.02**	**[−.05, −.005]**	−.01	[−.04, .003]
Indirect via T2 safe world beliefs	**.01**	**[.002, .04]**	**−.02**	**[−.04, −.003]**	**−.01**	**[−.04, −.001]**
Indirect via T2 enticing world beliefs	0	[−.03, .04]	0	[−.02, .03]	0	[−.03, .03]
Indirect via T2 alive world beliefs	0	[−.01, .01]	0	[−.01, .01]	0	[−.01, .01]

Note. Estimates of all effects controlled for T1 world beliefs and the T1 assessment of the criterion variable. Total and direct effects were estimated in a model controlling for secondary world beliefs. Bolded effects are statistically significant. CI = confidence interval; T = time.

Romantic relationships also played a role in predicting later world beliefs. Daily satisfaction in romantic relationships predicted more positive *enticing* world beliefs a year later, and daily experiences of perceived partner responsiveness (i.e., feeling understood, validated, and cared for) predicted more positive *good* and *enticing* world beliefs. The effects of daily relatedness on change in *safe* world belief were weaker than effects on other world beliefs, potentially due to the greater stability of this belief over time.

These findings are particularly noteworthy given prior research revealing high temporal stability of world beliefs (Clifton et al., 2019), even in the face of major global events such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Ludwig et al., 2023). Such stability has been interpreted as evidence that world beliefs are stable characteristics rather than states that adapt to the current context (Clifton et al., 2019; Ludwig et al., 2023). The strong 1-year test–retest correlations found in the present study align with these views about world belief stability.

However, other studies suggest that while world beliefs are typically stable, they can still change in response to people's experiences, albeit usually in small ways. For example, research has shown that major negative life events, such as violence victimization and major relationship disruptions (e.g., divorce, forced separation, unwanted pregnancy), can lead to small declines in beliefs about the world's benevolence over a span of several years (Poulin & Silver, 2019). The current research extends this understanding by suggesting that even ordinary interpersonal experiences in everyday life may lead to incremental changes in world beliefs over time.

Although these changes are typically small in magnitude, their importance should not be underestimated. Small effects can accumulate over time (Abelson, 1985; Funder & Ozer, 2019), with repeated interactions over years or decades potentially leading to more significant changes in world beliefs. Furthermore, minor shifts in world beliefs could have significant implications for people's experiences given that these beliefs are relevant to most situations people enter. These findings support and build on retrospective models of belief formation, which argue that beliefs evolve in response to lived experiences (Clifton, 2020; Janoff-Bulman, 1989a).

One question raised by these findings is why mundane interpersonal experiences can affect world beliefs, whereas more severe events, such as bereavement or discrimination, often do not (Poulin & Silver, 2019). The frequency of interpersonal experiences may explain their impact. Daily interactions are recurring events, and repeated exposures may facilitate belief change (Fazio et al., 2022). Moreover, severe events often trigger coping mechanisms that mitigate their effects, whereas minor experiences may bypass these defenses, allowing them to exert a prolonged psychological influence (Gilbert et al., 2004). Additionally, some interpersonal events may subjectively reduce access to social support, which could amplify their impact. For example, whereas people experiencing collective events like community disasters may seek assistance from their social networks (i.e., family, friends, and neighbors), which can buffer the effects on their world beliefs (Poulin & Silver, 2019), those experiencing interpersonal disconnection may be reluctant to reach out for support because they do not believe it is available to them (Larose et al., 2002; Lemay, Cutri, & Teneva, 2024). Future research should explore how frequency, coping efforts, and access to coping resources explain the effects of major versus mundane events on changes in world beliefs.

As noted above, the quality of interactions with strong ties was associated with later changes in world beliefs, whereas weak-tie interaction quality had no effect. This pattern may be explained by differences in social norms. Compared to strangers or acquaintances, close relationship partners often feel a responsibility to support each other's well-being (Clark & Mills, 2011). As a result, high-quality strong-tie interactions are more likely to involve supportive behaviors that foster perceptions of the world as *good* and *enticing*. These behaviors could include offering support to cope with perceived threats, celebrating positive experiences, and encouraging growth opportunities (Feeney & Collins, 2015). Given the different norms for weak-tie interactions, support behaviors may have been less frequent, even in satisfying weak-tie interactions.

Furthermore, interactions with close relationship partners may have a greater impact than those with weak ties because people tend to create a shared reality with close partners, co-constructing their understanding of the world together (Rossignac-Milon et al., 2021). Close relationships are also characterized by high interdependence, including diverse, strong, frequent, and long-lasting mutual influence (Berscheid et al., 1989; Kelley et al., 1983). This general interdependence, combined with the specific interdependence involved in co-constructing reality, could grant close partners greater influence over world beliefs relative to weak ties. Further research is needed to explore the mechanisms that explain why strong-tie interactions seem to have a greater influence on changes in world beliefs than weak-tie interactions.

The current findings contribute to the growing body of evidence highlighting the importance of romantic relationships. Specifically, they suggest that perceiving the world as generally *good* and *enticing* is an outcome of satisfying and responsive romantic relationships. However, while romantic satisfaction and responsiveness predicted world beliefs, these effects were weaker compared to the broader influence of strong-tie interactions. This pattern suggests that a general sense of connection across multiple close relationships may have a stronger impact on world beliefs than experiences within a single relationship. Nonetheless, the ability of a single relationship to shape world beliefs highlights the profound role of romantic bonds in psychological functioning. This finding aligns with previous research demonstrating that romantic relationships have significant implications for well-being and mental health (e.g., Braithwaite & Holt-Lunstad, 2017; Gustavson et al., 2016; Proulx et al., 2007). Future research should explore the mechanisms underlying this effect. Prior work suggests that responsiveness reduces defensiveness, enhances social support, and fosters expectations that one's needs will be met (Lemay et al., 2015; Reis & Gable, 2015), all of which may contribute to more positive world beliefs.

A second key contribution of the current research lies in advancing our understanding of change in well-being and affective tendencies. The findings show that daily relatedness predicted greater well-being and lower depressed affect a year later. These results align with prior research suggesting that interpersonal experiences shape well-being and affective tendencies (e.g., Deci & Ryan, 2000; Feeney & Collins, 2015). Importantly, the current study also highlights the role of world beliefs in mediating these effects. Specifically, daily interpersonal relatedness predicted better psychological well-being and reduced depressed affect a year later partly because it fostered positive shifts in *good* and *safe* world beliefs. When considered independently, positive shifts in *enticing*

world belief also partially explained the impact of daily relatedness on later well-being.

These findings are significant because they suggest that world beliefs may help explain the well-documented psychological benefits of intimate, supportive, and responsive social interactions (e.g., Feeney & Collins, 2015; Gustavson et al., 2016; Ryan et al., 2022; Slemp et al., 2024). Beyond the well-established need to belong (Baumeister & Leary, 1995), some researchers have argued that people also have a need to perceive the world as a good place (e.g., Beck & Bredemeier, 2016; Epstein, 2003; Janoff-Bulman, 1989b; Lerner & Miller, 1978; Stevens & Fiske, 1995). Prior research supports this view, showing that belief in the world's goodness predicts human flourishing and reduced suffering (e.g., Clifton et al., 2019; Feist et al., 1995; Furnham, 2003; Poulin & Cohen Silver, 2008). The present study extends this perspective by demonstrating that world beliefs prospectively predict psychological well-being and affect. Furthermore, the present findings suggest that high-quality interactions in daily life have a positive psychological impact not only because they fulfill belonging needs, but also because they help satisfy a need to see the world as good. Future research should continue to explore the idea that interpersonal experiences shape well-being by fulfilling needs for positive world beliefs. For example, the common tendencies to feel happy in response to gains in belonging (e.g., marriage, the birth of a child, interpersonal acceptance) and distressed by belonging losses (e.g., rejection, divorce; Baumeister & Leary, 1995) may be due not only to experienced belonging but also, in part, to the impact of these events on beliefs about the world.

Several mechanisms may mediate the effect of world beliefs on well-being and affective experience. For instance, when people perceive the world more positively, they may place greater value on the resources available to them, leading to increased gratitude. They might also become more extraverted, build larger social networks, and approach goal pursuits with less fear, viewing them as more attainable and worthwhile, which could result in greater accomplishments. Additionally, a positive worldview may foster an optimistic outlook on the future (see Clifton et al., 2019). Future research should explore the role of these and potentially other mechanisms in explaining how world beliefs influence psychological well-being and affective tendencies.

Primal world beliefs are intended to represent beliefs about the whole world, but it is unclear whether they equally encompass all aspects of the world. If these beliefs are largely shaped by perceptions of the social world, then the impact of relatedness on primals may stem from a relatively straightforward tendency for people to positively evaluate attitude objects (i.e., people) based on positive experiences with those objects. However, if primals also involve beliefs about the impersonal world, then the influence of relatedness may involve more complex processes, such as receiving support that shifts perceptions of other physical objects or generalizing social experiences to nonsocial aspects of the world. Additionally, the degree to which world beliefs emphasize people and relationships may vary across people, much like individual variation in the importance of interpersonal relationships in self-construal (Singelis, 1994). Future research should explore these possibilities.

Future research should also explore additional outcomes of world beliefs beyond psychological well-being and affective tendencies. For instance, world beliefs may shape attachment insecurity, including anxious attachment (i.e., fears of abandonment) and avoidant attachment (i.e., discomfort with intimacy). Anxious attachment has been linked to perceiving the world as dangerous, whereas avoidant attachment is associated with the belief that the world is an uncaring and competitive jungle (Weber & Federico, 2007). In addition, because attachment insecurity can strain relationships through cognitive, emotional, and behavioral processes (Pietromonaco & Beck, 2015), it may indirectly shape world beliefs by influencing relatedness. Future research should examine the bidirectional relationships between relationship quality, world beliefs, and attachment insecurity over time.

Constraints on Generality

Although our sample included participants from diverse ethnic and sexual orientation backgrounds, it was predominantly White and heterosexual, which limits generalizability. Additionally, most participants were young or middle-aged adults. Given evidence of age-related differences in beliefs about the world's benevolence and their links to well-being (Poulin & Cohen Silver, 2008), primal world beliefs may relate to interpersonal experiences and well-being differently across age groups. Furthermore, our sample was recruited within the United States. In cultures that emphasize interdependence and relational aspects of self (Kitayama et al., 2022), interpersonal experiences may have a stronger influence on world beliefs. Hence, future research should test the generalizability of the current findings across ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, and culture. Furthermore, all participants were in romantic relationships, raising the question of whether similar effects would be observed among single people. Although single people may face stigma and loneliness (Adamczyk, 2016; Fisher & Sakaluk, 2020), which could foster negative world beliefs, many experience high-quality relationships (Walsh et al., 2022) that may serve as a source of positive world beliefs. Future research should explore how relationship status influences world beliefs.

Conclusion

This study provides evidence that social interactions in daily life predict changes in world beliefs over a year. Specifically, we found that general relatedness, high-quality interactions with strong ties (but not weak ties), and responsiveness within romantic relationships in daily life were associated with believing that the world is *good*, *safe*, and *enticing* a year later. Furthermore, these shifts in world beliefs help explain the psychological benefits of social connection, suggesting that interpersonal experiences shape well-being not only by fulfilling belonging needs but also by fostering more positive beliefs about the world.

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