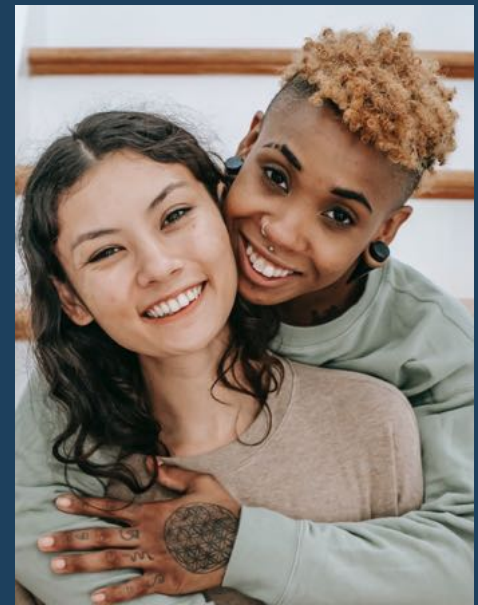




Psychology of Close Relationships!



February 6, 2024



How Do We Do Relationship Research?

(a)

*Josh's impulsivity -----> Josh's reduced marital satisfaction with Heidi

(a)

*Heidi's impulsivity-----> Heidi's reduced marital satisfaction with Josh

(p)

*Josh's impulsivity-----> Heidi's reduced marital satisfaction with Josh

(p)

*Heidi's impulsivity-----> Josh's reduced marital satisfaction with Heidi

Ethics in Relationship Research

- Informed Consent

Participants understand what they're agreeing to do

Purpose of the research

Privacy rights

Possible benefits and risks

- Potential Long-Term Impacts

When people critically examine their own and their partner's thoughts and feelings, relationships have the potential to be strengthened or weakened.

- Researchers aren't therapists, and that line needs to be clear.

The image features three heart-shaped slices of wood hanging vertically from thin wires. The wood has a natural, textured appearance with visible grain and some darker, possibly charred or stained, edges. The background is a soft, out-of-focus blend of warm yellow and green tones, suggesting a natural or outdoor setting. The text "Interpersonal Attraction and Liking" is centered over the middle heart in a white, serif font.

Interpersonal Attraction and Liking

OK, let's start at the ground floor of relationships and start with just noticing someone...

Noticing Someone

To meet someone, you have to see them first!

Some people are more likely to catch your attention than others.

Proximity: We notice people who are close by.



Noticing Someone

Novelty: From an evolutionary perspective, this reflects awareness that a person could help or harm us. We make quick judgments about a person.

Importance: Some people seem more important than others. Looking for those who seem like they can meet our needs.



But attention is not enough. Someone may catch your attention, but you may not be attracted to that person.

Do you know what you find attractive in another person?

Do you know what influences what you find attractive?

What qualities would you look for in a friend?



What qualities would you look for in a short-term sexual partner (a one-night stand)?



What qualities would you look for in a long-term partner (marriage/lifelong commitment)?



Did the qualities differ across each context?

If you were to write a personals ad looking for a romantic partner, what would it say?

What would you say you're looking for in a partner?

How would you describe yourself?

What would be the title of your ad?

But what is attraction exactly?

Attraction



Emerged in 1500's

Medical term

Body's capacity to take in liquids and food

Later referred to an object's power to pull other objects near it; this later extended to people.

Regardless of how you define it, attraction involves a positive reaction.

Attraction

Tripartite Model

Affective
Behavioral
Cognitive

Newer version collapsed into two components:

Affective: Emotional reaction (e.g., physiological and psychological)

Behavioral: How one person chooses to behave toward another (e.g., move closer)

So, what influences whether you will be attracted to another person?

Physical Attractiveness

We're hardwired to notice "good looks."

fMRI

Left anterior frontal cortex

Self-referential evaluations (e.g., "I think ____ is attractive.")

Right middle occipital gyrus

Evaluating reward (e.g., "This face is rewarding to look at.")

Right middle temporal gyrus

Highly attractive faces versus less attractive faces

Visual perception; integrating multiple senses

No difference between males and females in neural response

Facial Averageness and Symmetry

Average is beautiful/handsome, but why?

Easier to process

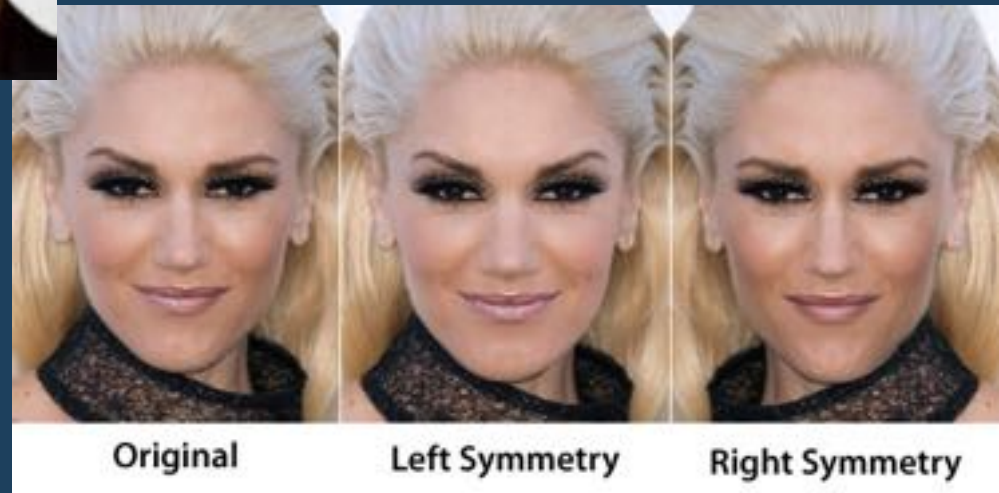
Very attractive and averaged faces categorized faster than less attractive faces



Facial Averageness and Symmetry

Symmetry independently linked to attractiveness

Signal of health (strong immunity and “good genes”)



Smiling 😊

How intensely people smile affects how much others find them attractive.

A less attractive but happy face is viewed as equally or more appealing than an attractive but less happy face.

Smiling intensity is also linked with beliefs about trustworthiness.

Smiling is linked with perceptions of health.



Body Type Preference

Associated with a number of factors

Hunger level

Race and ethnicity

Culture

Gender

Sexual orientation

Waist-hip ratio (for women)

Waist-chest ratio (for men)

Volume-height index (related to BMI)

Self-perceived attractiveness

Sociosexuality

Partner Qualities in the Abstract

Men and women value an attractive partner, but men seemed to value it a bit more.

Argument: Men can father more children with more women.
Preference for attractiveness (a signal of fertility)

1939-2012: Men have reliably rated three characteristics as more valuable than women rated them: 1) “Good health,” 2) “Good cook/housekeeper,” 3) “Good looks”

Partner Qualities in the Abstract

Women seemed to value partners with more resources.

Argument: Women cannot bear as many children and put greater investment in offspring.

1939-2012: Women have reliably rated two characteristics as more valuable than men rated them: 1) “Ambitious/industrious,” 2) “Good financial prospect.”

Partner Qualities in the Abstract

More similarities than differences in what men and women say they want in a long-term partner.

1939-2012:

- 1) “Mutual attraction/love”
- 2) “Dependable character”
- 3) “Emotional stability/maturity”
- 4) “Pleasing disposition”

Partner Qualities in “Real Life”

Meta-analysis

A person someone is currently attracted to or in a relationship with...

No differences between men and women in preference for physical attractiveness or earning potential.

People with non-sexist views less likely to follow gender “typical” preference.



Short window
when pregnancy
is possible

No clear signs when
that window is open



More physically
attractive
to others

Partner finds himself
more handsome



Picture 1

Picture 2



More attractive voice



More appealing scent



Match body language
and speech



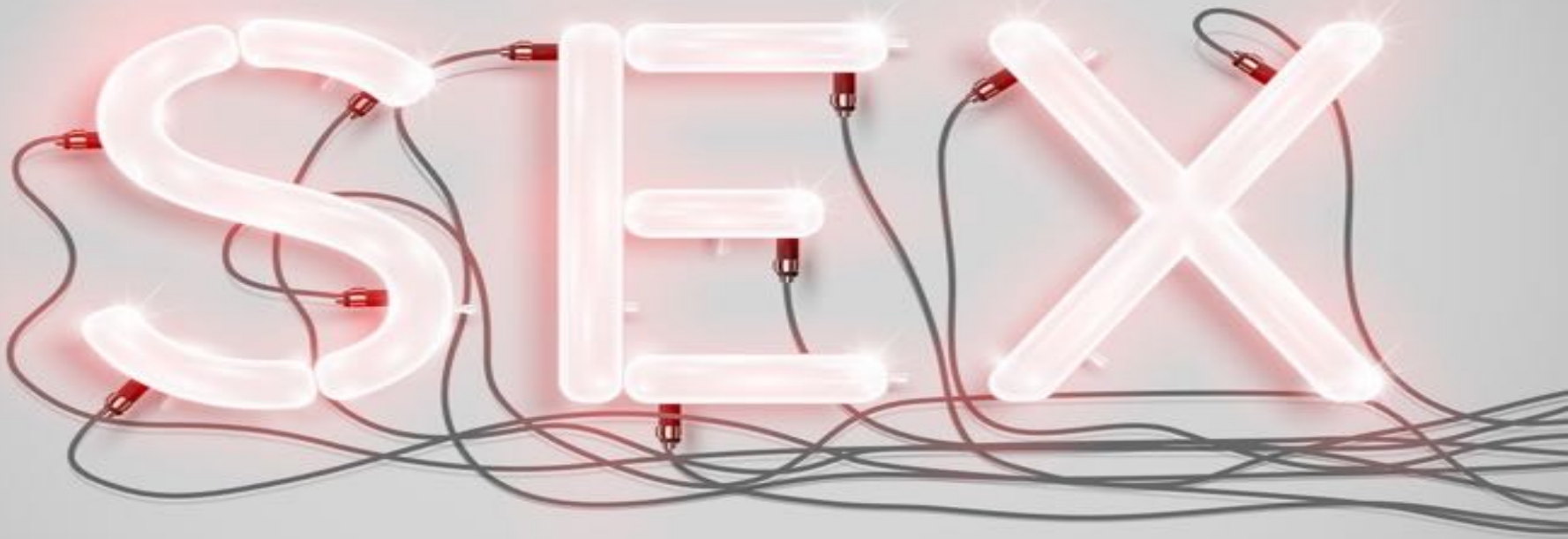




Enjoy time
together

Stronger
sexual
attraction

Want to go
out again



Prime

Relevant
information

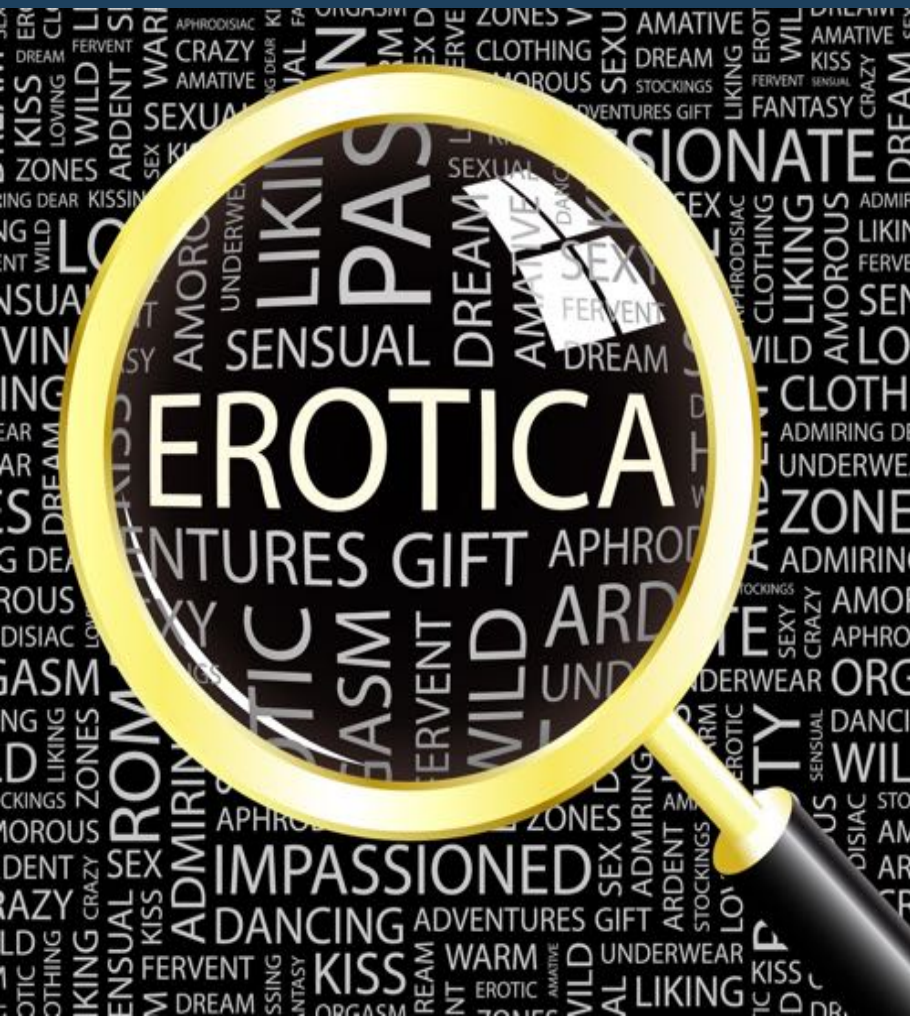
LUST

LAST

LIST

LOST

Sex...



(Dillman Carpentier, Parrot, et al., 2014; Dillman Carpentier, Northup, et al., 2014)

Sensual, alluring, and
attractive



Love and romance...



(Dillman Carpentier, Parrot, et al., 2014)

Nice, gentle,
and affectionate



What about whether you believe someone is attracted to you?

Liking People Who Like You



- Perceived receptivity

Women in red are viewed as more sexually receptive, which increases their attractiveness rating.



(Pazda et al., 2012)



Thank you for your time, and have a connected week!



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