

DEBATING RELATIONSHIPS

1, Why do we view (good) relationships as important?

i) *Shared Life*

- Constant sharing of experiences- less effort in sharing and it is automatic (constantly telling my partner about my life and experiences- I know they care about me and I do not need to question myself when I do tell them of these experiences). As a result, I am able to be vulnerable whether I CHOOSE to share or not because they understand me and this makes me feel cared for. This gives me a SAFE SPACE to show and share negative things
- Physical sense of security and autonomy- I can trust them, more willing to take risks with them
- Being seen and understood- Psychological need- I have a place, I am worthy, I am not alone- legitimises what I feel and this is fulfilling. People have many different needs, my partner knows my unique needs and is able to fulfil them for me

ii) *Extent of commitment*

- Sense of importance- being someone else's go-to person
- Sense of security-

iii) *Physicality*

- For a lot of people, the need for human touch is inherent, ingrained in you from a very young age. Physical intimacy is not accepted in many scenarios, this is a strong physical connection that is often unique to relationships- can be sex but also stuff like literally a hug in the morning or holding hands

2. Why are (bad) relationships bad? (Using above 3 qualifiers)

i) *Shared life*

- Once some form of negativity happens, it is hard to take a step back- you are constantly together- this constant togetherness can lead to a negativity spiral where your close proximity just compounds negative feelings.
- Small things can also compound as a result of the constancy and proximity of two partners living together
- Lack of autonomy- I cannot make the decisions that are best for me because my decisions influence other people. (Nav note- see JS Mills harm principle in a sense, maybe a cool principled line here)

ii) *Extent of commitment*

- Burden of responsibility- I have to be there for my partner:

a) you often override calculi that are most beneficial to yourself

b) stronger weight to decisions and the ability to be there for partners- place higher weight on them/yourself

- Isolation- Easier to isolate yourself

iii) Physicality

- Can become an expectation or chore
- Need can be fulfilled or even exhausted- however, I am limited by the constraints of my “exclusive” relationship.

3. How is this helpful to debate?

- Debate is a game of trade-offs so break down what you’re trading off
- If you’re comparing relationships and other aspects of life (career v relationships)- what are the unique benefits of relationships, can I get those elsewhere? What unique bad am I getting, can I get these elsewhere?
- “Good” and “Bad” relationships- see characterizations above
 - i) Weigh within the same impact- what side do we get more positive/negative outcomes?
 - ii) Weigh between separate impacts- is feeling more understood and having a sense of self worth the isolation from other support systems?

4. Love

- Different conceptions of love- one conception is associating it with inherently positive impacts like making me feel good about myself and caring for my needs.
- Another concept is value-neutral i.e. stuff like people getting me, love is all-consuming etc- love can be a bad thing in these cases.
- Make sure the conception of love in the debate is uniform- this is especially important in proving that love can be bad.

i) Why do we fall in love?

- Good reasons- Safety and security, fulfilment of needs, shared values, positive influence on me as a person
- Bad reasons
 - a) Repetition compulsion- we are drawn to things that are familiar to us. For eg. If I had a verbally abusive or distant parent, I am drawn to partners that have similar traits INDEPENDENT of whether it is bad for me
 - b) Desire to “master” previous negative situations- I may have unconsciously put myself in bad

situations like above example but I am “winning” if I am able to change the other person.

- c) Delusions of grandeur- I want to be a saviour or that I am the good person because I saved them.
- d) Self-loathing- I fall in love with bad people because I’m inherently critical of myself/feel I am not worthy. This looks like past trauma and experiences but the outcome is I put myself in bad situations as a result.
- e) Boredom/loneliness and a desire for drama

Debate wise- does X motion/consequences of motion lead to “good” love or “bad” love?

ii) How does love impact relationships?

- a) Positively- overcome negative interactions, willingness to compromise, overcoming difficulty- I want to stay with you because I love/am in love with you
- b) Negatively- overlook negative interactions, sense of dependency- cannot imagine myself with anyone else, self-sacrifice

Debate wise- a) what is love in the first place?

b) Questioning what impacts love has for each “kind” (bad/good) of love?

c) How is love impacting relationships in the debate? Make sure you analyze a tipping point/quantify your specific side by making the trade-offs that are required- why more of one than another?

5. Entering/During/Leaving Relationships

i) Entering a relationship

- Change from the status quo
- Limited information in terms of other person a) acting and presentation b) lack of shared experiences
- Excitement- curiosity/novelty

What is the impact of this?

- a) Active choice that requires change and adjustment
- b) Amount of risk involved
- c) Judgement is impaired- because of excitement and desire to work out and the novelty of feelings

How is this useful?/Weighing

- a) Prioritisation- because of this requiring change vs the inertia at other points- it is easier to intervene before the fact and making sure people don’t enter bad relationships
- b) Critical/urgency- Judgement is impaired, hard to make good decisions so intervention is important
- c) Logical priority- No reason to sustain relationships unless they are good ones a) make it more

likely that relationships are successful b) prevent bad impacts of bad relationships

ii) During a relationship

- Emphasise the good things and mitigate the bad

Characteristics:

- Depth of interactions, shared experiences
- Inertia
- Routineness- security

Impacts:

- Extremity of impacts- can spiral into negativity or positivity
- Overcome larger obstacles and compromise
- Communication- can be harder but also necessary

How is this useful?/Weighing

- a) Cumulative effect of day-to-day impacts- you have the most impact on each other so making this part better is important
- b) Critical/urgency- Changes in routine/overhauling completely is extremely hard, spirals are extremely easy to fall into- intervention is important as communication/intervention can prevent the cumulative effect in a)
- c) Logical priority- You can't know if you're entering a good/bad relationships so all you can do is ensure people are behaving within relationships to make them better so you don't need to be as careful within relationships

iii) Ending Relationships

Emphasise the ability to exit bad relationships.

Characteristics:

- Inertia
- Sunk cost- sacrificed a lot so hard to leave the relationship
- Risk and fear
- Guilt, pain, anger

Impact:

- The fear is very large- the stronger the dependency and isolation the stronger the guilt and fear
- Societal judgement of breaking up- breaking up family/someone's heart
- Risk of security and loneliness requires support systems- hard to imagine your life without, routines develop

How is this useful?/Weighing

- a) Opportunity cost- difficult for people to view what they'd achieve by leaving relationships, you lose the opportunity to be in a good relationships
- b) Critical interference- need to intervene because it is so hard to take step
- c) Emphasise importance of harms of staying in bad relationships