Intimacy, Friendship, and Love

Chapter 5

Chapter Outline

- The Need for Intimacy
- Gender and Intimacy: Men and Women as Friends and Lovers
- Showing Love: Affection and Sexuality
- But What Is This “Crazy Little Thing Called Love?”
- Finding Love and Choosing Partners

The Need for Intimacy

- Humans require other humans with whom we feel close and to whom we can commit.
- In psychologist Abraham Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, after the meeting of our physiological needs and needs for safety, our social needs—for intimacy and love—are the most fundamental of human needs.
**The Need for Intimacy**

- **Intimacy**
  - Closeness between two people
  - Intimacy consists of four key features:
    - Love and/or affection
    - Personal validation
    - Trust
    - Self-disclosure

**The Intimacy of Friendship and Love**

- Friendship and love are the two most important sources of intimacy people have.
- Friends may be deemed desirable on the basis of their specific combination of unique attributes.
- Romantic partners are more carefully selected, and their desirability is more carefully evaluated.
  - Commitment to the relationship
  - Reproductive success
  - Eventual attachment to offspring
Why It Matters: The Importance of Love
- Love is essential to our lives.
- Popular films reflect how much American popular culture emphasizes romantic love.

The Culture of Love
- Neither “falling in love” nor the experience of romantic love are unique to Americans.
- Romantic love is functional in industrial societies.
  - Validates the importance of individual autonomy and freedom from parental control
  - Establishes the relative independence of the *conjugal family* from the extended family
  - Fits with the wider social freedoms granted to adolescents and young adults

Gender and Intimacy: Men and Women as Friends and Lovers
- There is a gender bias in our cultural constructions of love that distorts our understanding of how both men and women love.
- Expressions of love can consist of *instrumental displays* associated with nurturing and caregiving more than *expressive displays*.
Gender and Friendship

- There are gender differences in disclosure in same-sex friendships.
- This gender difference is accentuated in adolescence and persists into and through adulthood.

“True friendships” give emotional support and self-disclosure for females. Men tend to express friendship through group physical activities with little self disclosure.

Unique cross-sex friendships known as “friends with benefits” give sexual intimacy without greater commitment. Friends with benefits relationships may be most common on college campuses.
Gender and Love

- With regard to love, the genders differ in a number of ways.
  - For example, men see sex as a means of expressing or showing love, while for women, to feel loved requires more than sexual expression.
- Gender differences
  - In heterosexual relationships, males say “I love you” before their partners.
  - Males say “I love you” in part to increase the likelihood that their partner will agree to have sex.

Showing Love: Affection and Sexuality

- Although love and sex are separate phenomena, recent research shows that for both men and women, sex often includes intimacy and caring.
- A key aspect of love is most often expected to include sexual desire.
- Gender differences have been observed in the relationship between love and sex.

Sexual Orientation and Love

- Love is equally important for heterosexuals, gay men, lesbians, and bisexuals.
- For lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals, love has special significance in the formation and acceptance of their identities.
But What Is This “Crazy Little Thing Called Love”?  

• Despite centuries of discussion, debate, and complaint by philosophers and lovers, no one has succeeded in finding a single definition of love on which all can agree.  
• We may not so much have formal definitions of love as we do prototypes of love.

But What Is This “Crazy Little Thing Called Love”?

• In order, the 12 central attributes of love listed are as follows:  
  • Trust  
  • Caring  
  • Honesty  
  • Friendship  
  • Respect  
  • Concern for the other’s well-being  
  • Loyalty  
  • Commitment  
  • Acceptance of the other the way he or she is  
  • Supportiveness  
  • Wanting to be with the other  
  • Interest in the other

Studying Love

• Hendrick and Hendrick’s Love Attitude Scale is a 42-item instrument based on and designed to measure sociologist John Lee’s (1973, 1988) six styles of love:  
  • Eros: Romantic or passionate love  
  • Ludus: Playful or game-playing love  
  • Storge: Love between companions  
  • Mania: Obsessive love (eros + ludus)  
  • Agape: Altruistic love (eros + storge)  
  •Pragma: Practical love (ludus + storge)
Studying Love

- Hatfield and Sprecher’s Passionate and Companionate Love
  - Divides love into two types
    - Passionate – “an intense longing for union with another”
    - Companionate – the warm and tender affection we feel for close others

Studying Love

Sternberg’s Triangular Theory of Love

- According to the theory, love is composed of three elements that can be visualized as the points of a triangle:
  - Intimacy
  - Passion
  - Decision or commitment

Love and Attachment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attachment</th>
<th>Love</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attachment formation and quality depend on</td>
<td>Feelings of love are related to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attachment object’s responsiveness, interest,</td>
<td>lover’s feelings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and reciprocation.</td>
<td>When lover is present, person feels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When attachment object is present, infant</td>
<td>happy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>infant shares toys,</td>
<td>Lovers share experiences and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discoverers, and objects with attachment</td>
<td>goods and give gifts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>object.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infant cries, talks baby, and “Sing.”</td>
<td>Lovers connect, talk, baby talk, and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are feelings of oneness with attachment</td>
<td>sing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>object.</td>
<td>There are feelings of oneness with lover.</td>
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</table>
Bowlby’s Central Proposition

- Beginning in early infancy, an innate component of the human mind -- called the “attachment behavioral system” -- in effect asks the question: Is there an attachment figure sufficiently near, attentive and responsive?

Attachment Theory

- Attachment is governed by three important principles:
  - Alarm activates an attachment behavioral system that seeks out soothing from attachment figure.
  - Only physical contact with the attachment figure will terminate it.
  - When the system has been activated for a long time without soothing and termination, angry behavior appears.
  - If soothing and protection is not eventually found, the system can then become suppressed.

The Development of Attachment

The child becomes defensively avoidant of contact and appears indifferent about separation and reunion. Then the child feels security - reduced anxiety, safety and predictability. This results in the child being more effective, assertive, happy, exploration-oriented, and sociable.

The child becomes ambivalent with the attachment figure, clinging, and anxious about separation and exploration. A hierarchy of attachment behaviors develop due to increasing fear and anxiety.

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Strange Situation

- The "Strange Situation" is a laboratory procedure used to assess infant attachment style (see video links)
  - The procedure consists of eight episodes.
  - The parent and infant are introduced to the experimental room.
  - Then the parent and infant are left alone. Parent does not participate while infant explores.
  - The stranger enters, converses with parent, then approaches infant.
  - The parent leaves inconspicuously.
  - During the first separation episode the stranger's behavior is geared to that of infant.

- During the first reunion episode the parent greets and comforts infant, then leaves again.
- During the second separation episode the infant is alone.
- During the second separation episode the stranger enters and gears behavior to that of infant.
- At the second reunion episode the parent enters, greets infant, and picks up infant; and stranger leaves inconspicuously.
- The infant's behavior upon the parent's return is the basis for classifying the infant into one of three attachment categories.

Patterns of Attachment

- Secure infants (about 60%) become upset when the parent leaves the room, but, when he or she returns, they actively seek the parent and are easily comforted by him or her.
- Resistant children (about 20% or less) are ill-at-ease initially, and, upon separation, become extremely distressed. Importantly, when reunited with their parents, these children have a difficult time being soothed, and exhibit conflicting behaviors that suggest they want to be comforted, but that they also want to "punish" the parent for leaving.
Patterns of Attachment

- Avoidant children (about 20%) don't appear too distressed by the separation, and, upon reunion, actively avoid seeking contact with their parent, sometimes turning their attention to play objects on the laboratory floor.

Attachment disorganization (npr podcast)

- Originally researchers described three categories (secure, anxious-avoidant and anxious-resistant) and a final category termed “can not classify.” Main and Solomon looked more closely at these unclassifiable infants and found an interesting and consistent pattern that emerged. Some children were particularly ambivalent upon reunion with their attachment figure, both approaching and avoiding contact. Upon reunion some of these infants would walk toward their parent and then collapse on the floor. Others would go in circles and fall to the floor. Some would reach out while backing away.

Attachment disorganization

- When researchers asked why these children were both seeking protection from their caregivers while at the same time pulling away, they discovered that a large percentage of these infants were experiencing abuse by their caregiver. In other words, the person who was supposed to be a haven of safety for the infant was also the source of fear. Main and Hesse wrote that these infants were experiencing “fear without solution.”
Attachment disorganization

Another subgroup of disorganized infants, however, were not experiencing abuse by their caregivers, which the researchers found to be a curious anomaly. It was discovered that these caregivers had experienced abuse by their parents, but that abuse was still unresolved. It was discovered that when the infant was in need of protection, the caregiver became frightened (may turn away or make subtle frightening faces at the infant). It is believed that attachment disorganization occurs when a parent acts either frightening or frightened in response to the infant's need for protection.

Attachment Terminology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child Terms</th>
<th>Adult Terms</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secure/Autonomous</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxious-Resistant</td>
<td>Preoccupied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxious-Avoidant</td>
<td>Dismissing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disorganized/Can not classify</td>
<td>Unresolved/Fearful/Can not classify</td>
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Is attachment a real and independent phenomenon?

- Attachment and temperament are separate phenomenon
- Different attachment to each parent
- Can be predicted pre-birth
- Discontinuity
- Intelligence
- Attachment status can not be predicted by IQ
- Disability
- Attachment can be assessed in autistic infants
- Culture
- Similar rates of secure/insecure for the most part
Adult Attachment

- Longitudinal studies of infants observed in the strange situation.
- Relationship between adult attachment and infant attachment.
- Social psychologists studying interpersonal relationships (loneliness, couples, family functioning, group bias, etc.)

Mary Ainsworth highlighted the function of the attachment behavior system in adult life, suggesting that a secure attachment relationship will facilitate functioning and competence outside of the relationship.

"There is a seeking to obtain an experience of security and comfort in the relationship with the partner. If and when such security and comfort are available, the individual is able to move off from the secure base provided by the partner, with the confidence to engage in other activities."
Secure Adult Patterns

- Highly invested in relationships
- Tend to have long, stable relationships
- Relationships characterized by trust and friendship
- Seek support when under stress
- Generally responsive to support
- Empathic and supportive to others
- Flexible in response to conflict
- High self-esteem

Adult Attachment Development

- Preoccupied: What begins with attempts to keep track of or hold onto an unreliable caretaker during infancy leads to an attempt to hold onto partners, but this is done in ways that frequently backfire and produce more hurt feelings, anger and insecurity.

Preoccupied Adult Patterns

- Obsessed with romantic partners.
- Suffer from extreme jealousy.
- High breakup and get-back-together rate.
- Worry about rejection.
- Can be intrusive and controlling.
- Assert their own need without regard for partner’s needs.
- May have a history of being victimized by bullies.
**Adult Attachment Development**

**Dismissing:** What begins with an attempt to regulate attachment behavior in relation to a primary caregiver who does not provide, contact, comfort or soothes distress, becomes defensive self-reliance, cool and distant relations with partners, and cool or hostile relationships with peers.

**Unresolved/Disorganized/Fearful:** What begins with conflicted, disorganized, disoriented behavior in relation to a frightening or frightened caregiver, may translate into desperate, ineffective attempts to regulate attachment anxiety through approach and avoidance.

**Disorganized Adult Patterns**

- Introverted
- Unassertive
- Tend to feel exploited.
- Lack self confidence and are self conscious.
- Feel more negative than positive about self.
- Anxious, depressed, hostile, violent.
- Self defeating and report physical illness.
- Fluctuates between neediness and withdrawing.
Finding Love and Choosing Partners

- People select each other in a kind of marketplace of relationships.

- Halo effect
  - The assumption that good-looking people possess more desirable social characteristics than unattractive people

Finding Love and Choosing Partners

- In mixing with and meeting people, one doesn’t necessarily gravitate to the most attractive person in the room, but rather to those about as attractive as oneself.