

Attraction and Rejection (Part 4)

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3.0 Attraction

Attraction is the attraction between people which leads to friendships and romantic relationships. The study of attraction is a major area of research in social psychology. Attraction is related to how much we like, love, dislike, or hate someone. It can be viewed as a force acting between two people that tends to draw them together and resist their separation. When measuring attraction, one must refer to the qualities of the attracted as well as the qualities of the attractor to achieve predictive accuracy. It is suggested that to determine interpersonal attraction, personality and situation must be taken into account. Repulsion is also a factor in the process of interpersonal attraction, one's conception of "attraction" to another can vary from extreme attraction to extreme repulsion.

Many factors leading to attraction have been studied. The most frequently studied are: physical attractiveness, propinquity, familiarity, similarity, complementarity, reciprocal liking, and reinforcement (rewardingness).

3.1 Similarity

The notion of "birds of a feather flock together" points out that similarity is a crucial determinant of attraction. According to Morry's attraction-similarity model (2007), there is a lay belief that people with actual similarity produce initial interpersonal attraction. Perceived similarity develops for someone to rate others as similar to themselves in on-going relationship. Such perception is either self-serving (friendship) or relationship-serving (romantic relationship). Newcomb (1963) pointed out that people tend to change perceived similarity to obtain balance in a relationship. Additionally, perceived similarity was found to be greater than actual similarity in predicting interpersonal attraction.

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