

# Love and communication in intimate relationships



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Love, according to Fletcher and Kerr is the science of relationship and apparently seems to be both blind and firmly rooted in the real world (p. 628). Interpersonal form of communication is defined as communication that transpires amid individuals who have acknowledged each other for fairly a long period. Essentially, these people see each other as exceptional persons, not as individuals who are basically dramatizing social state of affairs. A relationship is a state of connectedness between people especially an emotional connection, whereas an intimate association is an interpersonal affiliation where there is an immense emotional or physical intimacy. It is categorized by passionate or romantic affection, adoration and attachment.

In the journal, *Through the Eyes of Love: Reality and Illusion in Intimate Relationships* by Fletcher and Kerr, they review the research literature and theory concerned with accuracy of judgments in romantic relationships. Reported therein, is a meta-analysis that goes some way toward solving this puzzle, establishing that people can apparently be both positively biased and accurate in judging their partners and relationships. They also propose that romantic love is an evolved commitment device designed to lead men and women to substantially invest for long periods in one another and their offspring, (p. 628). They initially propose a model of cognition in romantic relationships that distinguishes between 2 forms of accuracy: mean-level bias and tracking accuracy.

Subsequently, they report the results of meta-analyses of study on heterosexual, romantic relationships, which employed exterior benchmarks and reported levels of tracking accuracy in 98 studies and mean-level bias in 48 studies. The results revealed robust overall effect sizes for both tracking

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accuracy ( $r = .47$ ) and positive mean-level bias ( $r = .09$ ), (p. 646). As usual, the effects were considerable and positive for tracking exactness across 6 condemnatory categories, whereas signed mean-level bias was negative for the interface attributions like love and communication. The results showed, as expected, that these two types of precision were self-sufficient with the two varieties of consequence extent derived from the same set of 38 studies were uncorrelated. As expected, gender, relationship length, and relationship evaluations moderated mean-level bias across studies but erratically not for tracking exactness.

However, one marked exception to this trend was studies investigating judgments of the interaction traits, either positive like love or negative like criticism. Remarkably, as predicted, signed mean-level bias in both cases was negative. These results are constant with inaccuracy management theory. These outcomes are commonly steady with those of other, significantly more purposeful and partial qualitative literature reviews, but they present the first substantiation from a methodical meta-analysis of work across numerous domains in the field, and a variety of original outcomes were also created. Moreover, there was no proof that the results were a function of the technique adopted to compute tracking correctness within-couple indices or qualities across samples (p. 653).

Furthermore the research continues to disclose that people are more accurate at recalling the ancient times in romantic relationships than predicting the future. Based on the results on both Table 3 and Figure 3, (p. 642), the pattern of findings across categories was also quite variable for positive mean-level bias across categories, with moderate levels of positive

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bias produced for personality traits, memories, and predictions, but with negative mean-level bias obtained for judgments of the partners' beliefs, attitudes, or behaviours directed to the partner or relationship the interaction traits. Nevertheless, it seems likely that certain stages of the relationship might major the need for more accurate predictions of the future of the relationship. Fletcher and Thomas initially projected that the goals of producing realistic minimal positive bias and correct excellent tracking exactness predictions and evaluations concerning the relationship might be especially significant when essential decisions regarding changes in promise are being made, for instance, when people are deciding whether to leave the relationship, move in together, and get married. On the contrary, once important decisions have been made concerning relationship investment, the goal of maintaining relationship satisfaction should dominate, leading to positively biased processing once again taking centre stage, (p. 646).

In the Relationship stage, they discover that simply being in a happy, romantic relationship seems to automatically generate a positive bias. However, as our model postulates, various moderating factors can prime and increase the power of different goals including the need to maintain relationship satisfaction. The stage of the relationship is one such important moderating variable. Overall amounts of positive mean-level bias did not significantly decline according to the length of the relationship. However, as noted, the link between positive mean-level bias and relationship satisfaction markedly decreased as the mean length of the relationship increased across studies.

Our interpretation of this finding is that passion and romantic love strongly push judgments into the rose-tinted realm. This interpretation is consistent with an evolutionary account of romantic love as a device to encourage long-term bonding in mates and with the developing neuropsychological evidence concerning how cognitions and emotions associated with romantic love are associated with specific neuro-peptides, neural networks, and regions of the brain. On this account, as romantic love and obsession cool and change to a companionate form of love marked by contentment and commitment, the motivation that produces positive mean-level bias also weakens, (p. 647). Fletcher and Kerr go ahead and analyse the early stages of mate selection, what people want and whether they know when they get what they want as well as rationality, bias, and motivated cognition in intimate relationships. They ultimately conclude that in intimate relationships, reality and illusion go hand in hand in the furtherance of goals that have a long evolutionary history and where the outcomes, for good or ill, have profound personal consequences (p. 650).

In another journal by Fletcher, Simpson and Thomas, *Ideals in Intimate Relationships*, the authors conduct a research that observes lay affiliations and spouse principles in romantic affairs from both a social-cognitive and an evolutionary viewpoint. Their initial and second studies exposed that the merits of a perfect spouse were symbolized by three factors being partner warmth-trustworthiness, vitality-attractiveness, and status-resources, whereas the qualities of an ideal relationship were represented by two factors: relationship intimacy-loyalty and passion. A confirmatory factor analysis in the third study replicated these factor structures but found

considerable overlap across the partner and relationship dimensions. Furthermore, the fourth and fifth studies produced convergent and discriminate validity evidence for all five factors. Study 6 indicated that the higher the consistency between the ideals and related assessments of the current partner and relationship, the more positively the current relationship was evaluated (p. 76).

They use a social-cognitive approach whereby from its standpoint, partner and relationship ideals will include chronically accessible knowledge structures that are likely to predate-and be causally related to-judgments and decisions made in ongoing relationships. They also point out that there are several reasons why ideals should play a prominent role in ongoing relationships. First, intimate relationships are very important in many people's lives. Second, there is no scarcity of issues from which individuals can build up their ideal standards. Third, ideals are appropriate knowledge structures to serve as standards against which perceptions of the relationship and partner can be gauged, subsequently influencing relationship evaluations. Fourth, ideals are located in the right kind of cognitive " niche" to exert considerable influence over current relationship cognition and behaviour. This last proposition is based on the notion that stored relationship-relevant knowledge constructs tend to involve three interlocking domains: the self, the partner, and the relationship, (p. 72).

They also use an evolutionary perspective whereby results from research show that two or three relatively stable, semi-independent dimensions should underlie conceptions of ideal partners. The authors had people rate the extent to which 15 common mate attributes like physical attractiveness, <https://assignbuster.com/love-and-communication-in-intimate-relationships/>

kindness, loyalty, and social status affected their selection of a prospective romantic partner. Factor analyses revealed two factors within both sexes. The first factor was composed of attributes known to foster relationship closeness and intimacy like kindness, responsibility, loyalty, and qualities of a good parent while the second factor contained attributes pertaining to the partner's attractiveness and social visibility like physical attractiveness, financial resources, and social status, (p. 73).

In studying the functions of ideals, specifically links among ideals, relationship perceptions, and relationship evaluations, they had to find a way to predict the probable connections among ideals, perceptions, and relationship evaluations; it is helpful to consider the functions that ideals might play. Relationship ideals serve two basic kinds of function: evaluative and regulatory. As applied to relationship contexts, the proposed pivotal causal factor is the consistency (or discrepancy) between chronically accessible ideals and perceptions “ of the relationship or partner. The magnitude of the consistency between ideals and perceptions, in turn, gives the individual valuable information that can be used to primarily evaluate the relationship and partner like assess the appropriateness of a potential or current mate or relationship and subsequently regulate the relationship like predicting and controlling the relationship and the partner). If individuals use the consistency between their ideals and perceptions to evaluate the partner or relationship (the evaluative function), then it follows that, to the extent that perceptions of current partners and relationships are more consistent with ideals, evaluations of partners and relationships should be more positive (p. 74).

Their research offers some provisional answers to fundamental questions regarding the configuration, substance, and purpose of spouse and liaison principles, and it has produced reliable and valid scales that measure these ideals. It is critical to recognize that evolutionary approaches do not discount the influence of culture or learning on cognition and behaviour in relationships. Indeed, evolutionary forces are responsible for producing the human mind, which possesses remarkable cognitive flexibility and a tremendous capacity for learning (p. 88). They finally conclude that research and theory that integrate social cognition with evolutionary principles can improve understanding of both the origins of relationship knowledge structures and how they are causally related to cognition and behaviour in relationships.

In an interpersonal relations and group processes study conducted by Impett, Gable and Peplau, featured in the journal, *Giving Up and Giving In: The Costs and Benefits of Daily Sacrifice in Intimate Relationships*, studies presented the primary practical analysis of the way approach and evasion intentions for forfeit in intimate affairs are connected with individual happiness and affiliation excellence. In the first study (p. 331), the nature of everyday sacrifices made by dating partners was observed, and an evaluation of approach and avoidance intentions for sacrifice was made. In the second 14days study, which was a daily practice study of university students in dating relationships, specific predictions from the theoretical model were tested and both longitudinal and dyadic components were included. While approach intentions for sacrifice were optimistically linked with individual happiness and relationship worth, evasion intentions for



sacrifice were pessimistically allied with individual happiness and relationship worth. Letting go for evasion motives was predominantly harmful to the upholding of affiliations in due course (p. 332). Perceptions of a partner's motives for sacrifice were also associated with well-being and relationship quality. Implications for the conceptualization of relationship maintenance processes along these two dimensions are discussed in the journal.

They employ an Approach-Avoidance Analysis of Sacrifice to explore Effects on the Person Who Sacrifices (p. 329), whereby in terms of personal well-being, people may have different emotional experiences if they sacrifice for a partner in pursuit of different motives. For instance, gratifying a partner's wishes to make him or her happy (an approach motive) may lead to increased pleasure and positive emotions through the process of empathic identification. However, sacrificing to prevent conflict (an avoidance motive) may at best lead to relief and at worst produce the very anxiety and tension that an individual was trying to avoid. Effects on the Recipient of Sacrifice (p. 330), whereby when one person makes a sacrifice, his or her partner may be motivated to figure out why as well as Individual Differences (p. 330) where there may be strong dispositional tendencies to construe social situations in approach or avoidance terms. Individuals who are high in the hope for affiliation expect their interpersonal interactions to be relatively rewarding while those who are high in fear of rejection generally expect punishment.

Feminist clinicians and researchers have long voiced strong concerns about the dangers of giving up one's own wishes and desires in relationships (p. 340). Social psychologists, however, have emphasized the positive aspects

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of sacrifice and have argued that sacrifice not only reflects but also promotes healthy couple functioning. This research thus sought to reconcile these contradictory views by presenting and testing a new theoretical perspective on sacrifice. Two studies demonstrated the utility of an approach-avoidance model of intimate sacrifice: *The Positive Side of Sacrifice* and *The Darker Side of Sacrifice*. Sometimes people sacrifice to promote a partner's satisfaction or enhance intimacy in their relationship. At other times, they do so to prevent tension, conflict, or a partner's loss of interest (p. 342). They ultimately conclude that the central idea guiding sacrifice in relationships is these two very different motives: first focusing on obtaining positive outcomes and the second focusing on avoiding negative outcomes and both have important and unique implications for understanding both personal well-being and the quality of intimate relationships.