#### Relationship Concepts for Review

#### Characterizing Relationships

* Relationships occur when individuals depend on one another to help in meeting life's demands.

#### The Importance of Relationships

* There is a biologically based *need to belong*, evident in the evolutionary benefits and universality of different relationships and in the negative consequences that accompany the absence of relationships, as shown by the deficits in feral children.
* Social rejection activates a threat defense system and is associated with experiences of pain, defensive aggressive behavior, and the neural activation associated with actual pain. There may be no greater form of pain than social rejection.

#### The Origins of How We Relate to Others

* John Bowlby's *attachment theory* holds that early in development, children rely on their parents for a sense of security. Some children are luckier than others in these formative relationships. People having a *secure attachment style* are comfortable with intimacy and wish to be close to other people when they are stressed. People having an *avoidant attachment style* feel insecure in relationships and distance themselves from others. People who have an *anxious attachment style* are also insecure in relationships but respond to this insecurity by compulsively seeking closeness and by obsessing about the quality of their relations with others.
* Researchers have discovered that attachment styles are quite stable over the life span. Secure, anxious, and avoidant individuals live quite different lives, enjoying different levels of relationship satisfaction (securely attached individuals are the most satisfied and the least likely to break up) and suffering different kinds of difficulties (anxiously attached individuals are particularly prone to psychological problems).
* Relationships shape the sense of self and how social events are remembered and explained. People have certain *relational selves*, or beliefs, feelings, and expectations that derive from their relationships with particular other people. When one of these is activated by a particular person, the person is seen in the light of the relevant relational self.

#### Different Ways of Relating to Others

* Clark and Mills have contrasted *communal relationships* over the long term with *exchange relationships* of short duration that are governed by concerns of equity.
* Power is based in the sense of control and the freedom to act. It derives from interpersonal sources, such as a person's position of authority or expertise, as well as individual factors, in particular the ability to engage with others socially and build strong alliances. As an account of how power can lead to excesses and abuses, the *approach/inhibition theory* of power holds that elevated power makes people look at things in more simplistic fashion and act in more disinhibited ways.

#### Romantic Relationships

* The most mysterious and compelling relationship is the romantic bond. Romantic relationships are an important part of our social life, and they are important to our satisfaction with our lives and even our physical health. According to the triangular theory of love, romantic love is founded on passion, intimacy, and commitment.
* A useful approach to understanding the long-term course of romantic bonds is the investment model of relationships. According to this model, happy romantic relations are affected by *commitment*, which is a function of *rewards* in the relationship, *alternatives* to the relationship, and *investments* in the relationhip.
* Longitudinal research has identified several factors that predict romantic problems. Divorce and marital dissatisfaction are often caused by *marrying young*, *criticism*, *defensiveness*, *stonewalling*, *contempt*, *and blame*.
* Similar research has uncovered certain secrets to satisfied romantic relationships. Happy couples *capitalize* on the good events in their lives, have *fun*, *care*, *sacrifice*, and *forgive*, and they have more *positive illusions* about their partners.
* Many cultures do not link romantic love and marriage. Indeed, in many cultures, marriages are arranged by a couple's parents. Love—and not necessarily the romantic kind—is expected to follow marriage.

**Attraction Concepts for Review**

**Proximity**

* A major determinant of who we end up being attracted to is *proximity*, or sheer closeness of contact with potential targets of attraction. To a remarkable extent, the people we know and like and even love are those whom we come in contact with most frequently in neighborhoods, on the job, and in recreational settings.
* Three reasons for the power of proximity are: sheer *availability*: we have to come in contact with others to have a chance to know and like them; *anticipation of interaction*: we tend to put our best foot forward for those we know we will see again; and the *mere exposure effect*: simply encountering a person or object, even under negative circumstances, makes us like the target more.

**Similarity**

* A second major source of attraction is *similarity*. Engaged couples are more similar to each other than are randomly paired men and women. Studies using the *bogus stranger* paradigm invariably find that people like individuals who resemble them more than individuals who do not. There is scant evidence that "opposites attract."
* Four reasons for the effect of similarity on attraction are: similar others validate our beliefs and values; similarity facilitates smooth interactions; we expect similar others to like us (which is rewarding); and similar others have qualities we like.

**Physical Attractiveness**

* *Physical attractiveness* is another major source of attraction. Physically attractive people are much more popular with the opposite sex. Attractive people are given higher grades for their work. People who are physically attractive earn more money in the workplace, and they even receive lower sentences for crimes. In short, they benefit from a *halo effect* in that they are believed to have many positive qualities that go beyond their physical appearance.
* Attractiveness has an impact even in infancy and childhood: attractive infants receive more attention from their mothers, and attractive children are believed to be more intelligent by their teachers. People think a transgression by a child is less serious if the child is attractive. Moreover, even 3-month-olds will look longer at an attractive face than at an unattractive one.
* *Gender* is an important variable when it comes to attractiveness, with physical appearance affecting the lives of women more than the lives of men. Women deemed unattractive at work suffer worse outcomes than men who are considered unattractive.
* Physical attractiveness has such impact because: it has immediacy—you see it before any other virtues or faults; the attractiveness of our friends and partner affects our prestige; and biology plays a role—that is, we are wired to appreciate some kinds of physical appearance more than others.
* Evolutionary psychologists argue that our biology prompts an attraction to features that signify *reproductive fitness—*that is, the capacity to perpetuate our genes in future generations if we were to mate and have children with a person who possesses those features. These include physical characteristics that signal vitality, fertility, and likely reproductive success.
* Evolutionary psychologists also claim that there are biologically based differences between men and women in the importance placed on attractiveness and in the determinants of attractiveness.
* In species in which parental investment is greater for the female, the males must compete vigorously among themselves (*intrasex competition*) for access to choosy females. The males also must compete for the females' attention (*intersex attraction*) and so are typically the louder and gaudier of the species.
* In humans, say evolutionary psychologists, differential parental investment on the part of men and women leads women to prefer fewer sexual partners than men. It leads men to prefer women whose physical appearance gives the impression that they will be fertile—for example, features such as smooth skin and a waist that is narrow in relation to hips. Women are attracted to men who can be expected to provide for them and for their children—men who are strong, industrious, and have social status.
* Though much evidence from the animal kingdom and from the study of humans supports the hypotheses of evolutionary psychologists, most of the human findings can be explained without resorting to an evolutionary explanation. The strongest support for the evolutionary approach to attractiveness in humans comes from studies showing that women increase their preference for attractive (or at least symmetrical) and masculine men during the ovulatory phase of their menstrual cycles, when they have a higher probability of conceiving.
* The notion of *reward* can explain most of the reasons we like people—we tend to like those who provide us with the greatest rewards (broadly construed).
* Another way to understand attraction is in terms of *social exchange*. This theory holds that people pursue those interactions that provide the most favorable difference between rewards and costs.