

---

# Implicit Theories of Relationships: Who Cares If Romantic Partners Are Less Than Ideal?

C. Raymond Knee  
Aruni Nanayakkara  
Nathaniel A. Vietor  
Clayton Neighbors  
Heather Patrick  
University of Houston

---

*Perceived discrepancy between one's ideal and actual partner has been shown to predict relationship satisfaction. The goal of two studies was to examine whether implicit theories of relationships moderate this association. In Study 1, data from 177 undergraduates in romantic relationships showed that the perception that one's partner falls short of one's ideal was generally linked to lower satisfaction, except under cultivation (high growth/low destiny). In Study 2, data from 61 couples showed (a) viewing one's partner favorably was associated with more satisfaction but less so among those who were higher in growth belief; and (b) cultivation predicted increased positivity, whereas evaluation (high destiny/low growth) predicted increased hostility when discussing discrepancies in how they and their partner view the relationship. Results are discussed in terms of the controversy over idealization and authenticity in romantic relationships.*

---

To be without some of the things you want is an indispensable part of happiness.

—Bertrand Russell

To want more from one's romantic partner is often considered a bad sign. Perhaps it is a sign that the relationship was not meant to be or that partners are not able to satisfy each other's needs. However, as the quotation above suggests, wanting more in a romantic partner may not be so detrimental after all. We would argue that the consequences depend on a person's beliefs about intimate relationships. What individuals believe about relationships can have profound consequences for their romantic lives (Eidelson & Epstein, 1982; Fletcher & Kininmonth, 1992; Hendrick, Hendrick, & Adler, 1988;

Knee, 1996, 1998a, 1998b). For example, what people believe can affect their goals in seeking a partner influence how they cope with challenges to the relationship and predict whether they will tend to remain with or leave a relatively unsatisfying partner (Knee, 1998a).

People seem to hold different mental models or implicit theories about what makes for a good relationship. These rarely discussed and poorly articulated beliefs in part determine one's goals and motivations in relationships (Knee, 1998a), much as implicit theories in other domains determine goals and motivations in other contexts (see Dweck, Chiu, & Hong, 1995, for review). The present research, in two studies, examined whether implicit theories of relationships (ITRs) distinguish those who are concerned about having a less-than-ideal partner from those who are not.

Drawing from a broad literature, Knee (1998a) distinguished between two implicit beliefs about relationships.

---

**Authors' Note:** This research was supported by a Research Initiation Grant and a Program to Enhance External Research grant from the University of Houston. Portions of this research were presented at the International Conference on Personal Relationships in Saratoga Springs, New York, in June 1998 and the International Network on Personal Relationships conference in Louisville, Kentucky, in June 1999. We thank Emily Wallen, Stephen Mueller, and Stephanie Caraway for their assistance with data collection for Study 1. Caroline Sorensen, Leslie Ribeiro, Michael Read, and Sarah Ali coded the videotaped interactions. Finally, Linda K. Acitelli and Suzanne C. Kieffer provided helpful comments on earlier drafts. Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to C. Raymond Knee, Department of Psychology, University of Houston, Houston, TX 77204-5341; e-mail: knee@uh.edu.

*PSPB*, Vol. 27 No. 7, July 2001 808-819

© 2001 by the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, Inc.

A belief in destiny holds that potential relationship partners are either meant for each other or they are not and emphasizes initial impressions. In this way, this dimension captures the tendency to diagnose and evaluate relationships. An independent belief in growth holds that successful relationships are cultivated and developed by conquering obstacles and growing closer. Thus, belief in growth addresses the tendency to maintain the relationship and work through problems.

Those who believe in destiny place heavy emphasis on evaluating whether a relationship is meant to be, and once they believe this, their relationships last particularly long. Initial research (Knee, 1998a) has demonstrated that belief in destiny is associated with disengaging from relationships when problems arise, shorter relationships when initial satisfaction is low, and longer relationships when initial satisfaction is high. Whereas these individuals attempt to diagnose, those who believe in growth attempt to maintain. In this way, those who believe in growth attempt to improve and strengthen the relationship. Indeed, belief in growth is associated with fewer one-night stands during the 1st month of college, more time spent dating the same person, and more attempts to maintain relationships when problems arise (Knee, 1998a). They are concerned with developing the relationship and believe that relationships grow not despite obstacles but rather because of them.

An elaboration of this conceptual framework is provided in Figure 1. Although we do not recommend classifying or grouping people based on continuous scales, the figure provides a conceptual heuristic for understanding the independence of destiny and growth beliefs and how they can be jointly useful in predicting relationship cognition and behavior. Figure 1 shows that the independent dimensions of destiny and growth can be crossed to produce four cells. Individuals' relative location on these dimensions will influence their motivational and cognitive orientations toward their partner and relationship events. Those with a higher growth belief and lower destiny belief (cultivation orientation) believe that relationships evolve through development, confrontation, and efforts to maintain and improve the relationship and are less interested in evaluating and diagnosing relationships. When cultivating, one's goal becomes the development and maintenance of the relationship without diagnosing or inferring grand meaning from otherwise minor incompatibilities. Those with a higher destiny belief and a lower growth belief (evaluation orientation) believe that relationships can be easily diagnosed and evaluated and that they cannot be considerably improved beyond that point. When evaluating, one's goal becomes the diagnosis of one's partner and relationship in an effort to determine whether the relationship would seem to have immediate promise.

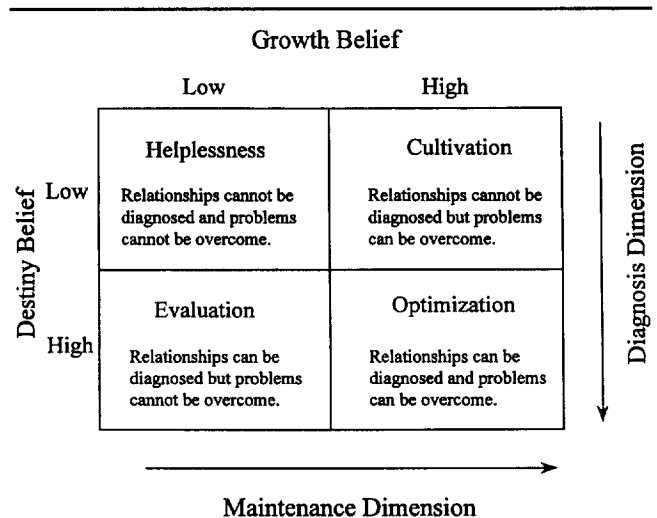


Figure 1 The independence of destiny and growth beliefs.

The other two cells in Figure 1 represent helplessness and optimization orientations in this framework. Those who are low on both beliefs are helpless in that they do not believe that relationships are destined or that relationships can be developed and improved. When helpless, one feels pessimistic or uninterested in both the diagnosis and maintenance of relationships, rejecting the notions that relationships are uniquely determined and that relationships can evolve and improve with effort. Finally, optimization is based on a tendency to diagnose the relationship and attempt to overcome problems and difficulties. When optimizing, one may hold an optimistic view of the relationship by believing both that the relationship is meant to be and that overcoming conflicts and challenges can further improve the relationship. However, optimizing may also lead one to search for potential problems to fix them and improve the relationship.

#### AUTHENTICITY OR IDEALIZATION?

Many psychologists believe that lasting satisfaction requires an understanding of the true strengths and weaknesses of one's partner (e.g., Brickman, 1987; Swann, De La Ronde, & Hixon, 1994). Proponents of this view argue that acceptance of one's partner's faults and limitations is necessary for relationships to succeed beyond the dating phase. In other words, lasting, satisfying relationships require an element of authenticity. A strong foundation is built when intimates come to understand and accept each other authentically, fully aware of their limitations and weaknesses. Some research has found strong support for the importance of authenticity in marital relationships. In particular, Swann et al. (1994) found that married partners were

most intimate with spouses whose evaluations verified their self-views. Thus, married persons seemed to want their partners to see them as they saw themselves. However, this was not the case among dating partners, who felt most intimate with partners who viewed them favorably. Swann et al. interpreted these results in terms of a "marriage shift" in which marriage precipitates a shift from a desire for positive evaluations to a desire for authentic or self-verifying evaluations.

On the other hand, there has also been considerable evidence for the importance of viewing one's partner (and being viewed by one's partner) favorably. Compelling research has suggested that idealistic rather than realistic perceptions of one's partner are associated with satisfaction in both dating and marital relationships, to some degree bringing the marriage shift into question (Murray, Holmes, & Griffin, 1996a). According to this literature, the allure of a partner's virtues draws potential partners together (Brehm, 1988; Brickman, 1987) and fuels their hopes for the success of the relationship (Holmes & Boon, 1990; Weiss, 1980). These idealized perceptions of one's partner are maintained as the relationship develops by embellishing the partner's virtues and mentally weaving negative events into a favorable story (Murray & Holmes, 1994). Generally, the farther a relationship partner is from one's ideal image, the less happy one will be (Fletcher, Simpson, Thomas, & Giles, 1999). For some individuals, this realization may be all that is needed for them to abandon the relationship. For others, this may be an opportunity to learn more about their partner, become closer, and build the relationship. How couples deal with the threatening reality that their newfound partner is not perfect is central to the success of the relationship (Holmes & Boon, 1990).

ITRs may play a role in the controversy over whether idealization or authenticity is beneficial in romantic relationships and marriages. A cultivation orientation eschews the notion of diagnosing and evaluating the relationship yet embraces the notion of overcoming limitations and problems as they arise and maintaining the relationship. Thus, a cultivation orientation may make one particularly likely to accept a partner's faults and weaknesses without using those attributes to diagnose the potential of the relationship. In other words, satisfaction should depend less on illusory views of one's partner when one is oriented toward cultivation.

Implicit theories of personality have recently been linked to relationships in a manner similar to ITRs (Kamins, Morris, & Dweck, 1996; Morris, 1996; Ruvolo & Rotondo, 1998). For example, Ruvolo and Rotondo (1998) found that implicit theories of personality moderate the relation between views of one's partner and relationship well-being. Specifically, the relation between views of the partner and well-being in the rela-

tionship was weaker among those higher in malleability beliefs, for example, those who endorsed items such as "My partner can change himself or herself to be more like he or she wants to be." In a different vein, Kamins et al. (1996) found that believing that personality is fixed (i.e., an entity theory) was associated with seeking partners who made them look good and validated their worth, whereas believing that personality is malleable (i.e., an incremental theory) was associated with seeking partners who helped them learn about themselves and challenged them to grow. Thus, it is important in the present research to examine whether ITRs moderate the effects of partner seeking more strongly than do implicit theories of personality.

#### STUDY 1 HYPOTHESES

*Hypothesis 1.* Based on previous research (e.g., Fletcher et al., 1999; Ruvolo & Veroff, 1997; Sternberg & Barnes, 1985), perceiving more discrepancy between one's ideal and actual partner would be associated with less satisfaction in the relationship.

*Hypothesis 2.* This general tendency would be moderated by ITRs. Those oriented toward cultivation would be less affected by perceived discrepancy because they believe both that the discrepancy can be addressed by working through the problem and that the discrepancy is not necessarily indicative of a fatal flaw in the relationship.<sup>1</sup>

*Hypothesis 3.* The effects of implicit theories of relationships would remain controlling for Dweck et al.'s (1995) implicit theories of personality, given that previous research has shown that implicit theories of personality moderate the relation between partner perceptions and quality (Ruvolo & Rotondo, 1998).

#### STUDY 1 METHOD

##### *Participants*

Participants were 177 undergraduates (112 women and 65 men) from introductory psychology courses at the University of Houston who were currently in a romantic relationship and who participated for extra credit. The sample was ethnically diverse: 21% Caucasian, 36% Asian, 22% Hispanic, 15% African American, and 6% other. Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 40 years ( $M = 20$ ). Length of relationship varied from a few days to 24 years ( $M = 1.67$  years,  $SD = 2.4$  years). Most participants were single and not living with their romantic partner (77%), with 10% who were single and living with their partner, 5% who were married, and 9% who reported other arrangements. Of participants, 48% reported that they were exclusively dating, followed by 23% who were nearly engaged, 15% who were dating

casually, 6% who were engaged, and 3% who were in the breakup phase.

#### Procedure

Participants completed a battery of questionnaires in small group sessions. Measures were administered according to a Latin square design.

#### Measures

*ITRs.* A 15-item version of the ITR Scale (Knee, 1998a) was incorporated.<sup>2</sup> Same-factor loadings ranged from .32 to .79 ( $M = .60$ ), with cross-factor loadings ranging from  $-.15$  to  $.14$  ( $M = .02$ ). In addition, we conducted a confirmatory factor analysis specifying two uncorrelated factors with one factor consisting of seven growth items and a second factor consisting of eight destiny items. As expected, our a priori model fit the data reasonably well ( $\chi^2/df = 2.21$ , GFI = .87, AGFI = .83, RMSEA = .08), and importantly, it fit the data better than a one-factor model ( $\chi^2/df = 3.81$ , GFI = .79, AGFI = .71, RMSEA = .13).

Internal reliabilities were .73 and .68 for destiny and growth, respectively. Destiny and growth beliefs are not significantly correlated with each other ( $r = -.08$ ) or with sex ( $r_s = .13$  and  $-.06$  for destiny and growth, respectively). People do, however, tend to endorse growth belief ( $M = 5.39$ ) more strongly than destiny belief ( $M = 4.06$ ),  $F(1, 176) = 169.59$ ,  $p < .001$ .

*Relationship quality.* To measure satisfaction, the Quality of Relationship Index (QRI) was adapted from the Quality of Marriage Index (Norton, 1983), which has been shown to predict the similarity of partners' attitudes and their nonverbal behavior over time (Noller & Feeney, 1994). The QRI consists of six Likert-type items that assess the extent to which individuals are satisfied and happy with their relationship (e.g., "My relationship with my partner makes me happy"). Responses on the six items were averaged. Internal reliability was .94 in this study.

*Discrepancy from ideal partner.* Both direct and indirect measures of perceived discrepancy between one's current partner and one's ideal partner were incorporated. The direct measure asked the participant to consider all of the qualities that are really important to him or her and then complete the following sentence: "My current partner is \_\_\_\_ % of what I would ideally want in a partner." Scores were reversed so that higher percentages reflected higher perceived discrepancy. Reversed scores for perceived discrepancy between one's current and ideal partners ranged from 0% to 85% ( $SD = 20.4\%$ ).

In addition, two less direct measures of perceived discrepancy assessed the extent to which one's current partner differed from one's ideal partner on attributes adapted from the five-factor model of personality

(McCrae & Costa, 1987). Participants were asked to imagine what their ideal relationship partner would be like and then to rate this ideal partner on 10 traits. Each of the Big Five dimensions of personality was tapped by one positive and one negative trait, on scales from 1 (*not at all characteristic*) to 7 (*very characteristic*). Partners rated their ideal partner and then their current partner on the same traits.

The first indirect index of perceived discrepancy was created by reverse-scoring responses to the negative traits and summing the difference between responses for one's ideal and actual partners on each trait. Higher scores reflected greater perceived discrepancy between one's actual and ideal partners. To better understand the effects of the components of the discrepancy (Griffin, Murray, & Gonzales, 1999), a second discrepancy index was calculated that does not confound the current partner and ideal partner components. This residual discrepancy consisted of (a) averaging the ratings of one's ideal partner (after reverse-scoring negative items), (b) averaging the ratings of one's current partner (after reverse scoring negative items), and (c) examining current partner ratings controlling for ideal partner ratings, thus resulting in a residualized variable that reflected what one sees in one's partner that is not part of one's ideal partner.

*Implicit theories of personality.* Implicit theories of personality were assessed by three items (Dweck et al., 1995), for example, "Everyone is a certain kind of person and there is not much that can be done to change that." Items were administered on 6-point Likert-type scales from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 6 (*strongly disagree*). The score is unidimensional, unlike ITRs, with entity theorists having higher scores and incremental theorists having lower scores. Internal reliability in this study was .84.

#### STUDY 1 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 provides zero-order correlations, means, and standard deviations for the main variables of interest. As shown, being satisfied in the relationship was generally predicted by rating one's partner more highly, perceiving less discrepancy between one's current partner and one's ideal partner, and having a stronger growth belief. Interestingly, having higher ideals for a romantic partner went along with rating one's current partner more highly, consistent with the notion that people generally project their ideals onto their current partner (Murray et al., 1996a). Analogously, rating one's partner more highly was related to perceiving less discrepancy from one's ideal partner. Direct and indirect measures of perceived discrepancy from ideal were related, as expected. Finally, although an entity theory of personality was associated with greater belief in destiny and less belief in

TABLE 1: Zero-Order Correlations Among Primary Measures in Study 1

Measure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	M	SD
1. Destiny	—	-.09	.14*	-.15*	.01	.08	.10	.02	.22***	4.06	0.98
2. Growth		—	-.06	.20***	.03	.07	-.17**	.06	-.17**	5.39	0.85
3. Sex			—	.02	-.08	-.09	.10	.01	.05	1.37	0.48
4. Satisfaction				—	.48****	.05	-.70****	-.45****	-.06	5.54	1.33
5. Rating of partner					—	.45****	-.53****	-.71****	-.01	8.94	3.79
6. Rating of ideal						—	.08	.29****	-.02	5.93	2.52
7. Direct discrepancy							—	.51****	-.05	20.22	17.65
8. Indirect discrepancy								—	.00	5.65	7.94
9. Implicit theories of personality									—	4.00	1.32

NOTE: *n*s ranged from 166 to 177, depending on completeness of data. Sex was coded with women as 1 and men as 2. Higher scores on destiny, growth, satisfaction, and direct and indirect discrepancy reflect more of each variable. Higher ratings of one's partner and one's ideal reflect more positive perceptions. Higher scores on implicit theories of personality reflect an entity theory.

\* $p < .10$ . \*\* $p < .05$ . \*\*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\*\* $p < .001$ .

growth, the associations were small, suggesting that implicit theories are relatively domain specific.

We begin with the direct measure of discrepancy in which responses were a percentage of how far one's current partner was from one's ideal. A hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted with relationship satisfaction as the criterion. The discrepancy index was entered at Step 1, along with destiny and growth beliefs. The two-way product terms were entered at Step 2, followed by the three-way product term at Step 3. Consistent with Hypothesis 1, perceiving more discrepancy was associated with less satisfaction,  $F(1, 174) = 163.74$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $pr = -.70$ . More important, this relation was moderated by ITRs, in support of Hypothesis 2. First, a Growth  $\times$  Discrepancy interaction revealed that the relation between perceived discrepancy and satisfaction was weaker with belief in growth,  $F(1, 171) = 6.24$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $pr = .19$ . Furthermore, a significant Discrepancy  $\times$  Growth  $\times$  Destiny interaction revealed that the relation between perceived discrepancy and satisfaction was weaker with a cultivation orientation,  $F(1, 170) = 5.38$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $pr = -.18$ .

Table 2 provides correlations between perceived discrepancy and relationship satisfaction as a function of destiny and growth beliefs. As shown, the association between the perception that one's partner approaches one's ideal and satisfaction was strong except when oriented toward cultivation. Fisher's *Z* tests were conducted to compare the correlation within each cell against that of cultivation orientation and indicated that the correlation between perceived discrepancy and satisfaction was significantly weaker when cultivating, in every case ( $Z_s > 2.53$ ,  $ps < .05$ ). Thus, when oriented toward cultivation, satisfaction was less influenced by the perception of whether one's current partner fit one's ideal.

Turning to the first indirect measure of discrepancy, a hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted in a similar manner. Again, consistent with Hypothesis 1, perceiving more discrepancy between one's current

TABLE 2: Correlations Between Perceived Discrepancy From Ideal and Relationship Satisfaction as a Function of Destiny and Growth Beliefs

Destiny	Growth	
	Low	High
Directly perceived discrepancy		
Low	-.81****	-.29
High	-.69****	-.73****
Indirectly perceived discrepancy		
Low	-.67****/.64****	-.03/.07
High	-.48***/.53****	-.38**/.40***

NOTE: Higher scores on the directly perceived discrepancy index meant that one's partner was farther from one's ideal (a larger discrepancy). Higher scores on the first index of indirect discrepancy meant that one's partner was farther from one's ideal (a larger discrepancy). Numbers after the slash are for residualized discrepancy in which higher scores reflected that one's partner was viewed more favorably. \*\* $p < .05$ . \*\*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\*\* $p < .001$ .

partner and one's ideal partner was associated with less satisfaction,  $F(1, 164) = 48.03$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $pr = -.48$ . In addition, belief in growth was associated with higher satisfaction,  $F(1, 164) = 9.11$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $pr = .23$ . The Growth  $\times$  Discrepancy interaction was marginal but in the expected direction,  $F(1, 161) = 3.37$ ,  $p < .07$ ,  $pr = .14$ . Table 2 provides correlations between perceived discrepancy and relationship satisfaction as a function of destiny and growth beliefs. As shown, the association between perceived discrepancy and satisfaction was weaker with belief in growth. Although the three-way interaction was not significant, the same synergistic pattern was evident. Specifically, Fisher's *Z* tests indicated, as before, that the correlation between perceived discrepancy and satisfaction was weaker when oriented toward cultivation in each case ( $Z_s > 1.95$ ,  $ps < .05$ ).

Finally, to better understand the components of perceived discrepancy, we examined a second indirect

measure—residual discrepancy. Finding a similar pattern of results with an index that separates the current partner and ideal partner components of the discrepancy would enhance our confidence in the results (Griffin et al., 1999). Results were largely consistent. First, rating one's ideal partner more highly was associated with being less satisfied in the relationship,  $F(1, 163) = 8.91$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $pr = -.23$ . Once this was held constant, viewing one's current partner more favorably was associated with being more satisfied in the relationship,  $F(1, 163) = 56.81$ ,  $p < .0001$ ,  $pr = .51$ . The interaction between growth belief and perceptions of current partner was not significant. In addition, although the three-way interaction between destiny, growth, and perceptions of one's current partner was not significant, the same pattern of correlations emerged, as shown in Table 2. Fisher's  $Z$  tests comparing each correlation against that of those who were oriented toward cultivation indicated that the relation between residualized discrepancy and satisfaction was significantly weaker when oriented toward cultivation versus all other cells ( $Zs > 2.36$ ,  $ps < .05$ ) but marginal for optimization ( $Z = 1.54$ ,  $p = .06$ ).<sup>3</sup>

Hypothesis 3 examined whether the moderating effects of destiny and growth are unique to ITRs. Thus, the key results in Hypothesis 2 were reanalyzed controlling for the parallel effects of Dweck et al.'s (1995) implicit theories of personality by including this variable as both a main effect and as a potential moderator of the effect of perceived discrepancy on satisfaction. For each measure of discrepancy, the effects of destiny and growth beliefs remained significant, whereas the parallel effects of implicit theories of personality were not significant ( $ps > .13$ ).

It is possible that when cultivating, one merely perceives less discrepancy in the first place and thus still remains satisfied. Accordingly, we conducted a hierarchical multiple regression analysis on each measure of discrepancy, with sex, destiny, and growth as predictors at Step 1, their two-way products at Step 2, and the three-way product at Step 3. The Destiny  $\times$  Growth interaction was not significant in any analysis,  $Fs < 1$ . However, when tested directly, those oriented toward cultivation did perceive less discrepancy than all others on the direct measure of discrepancy,  $F(1, 175) = 7.05$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $pr = .20$ . Thus, the weaker relation between perceived discrepancy and satisfaction when cultivating can only partly be explained by the fact that one perceives less discrepancy. The direct measure of perceived discrepancy is more highly correlated with satisfaction ( $r = -.71$ ) than is the indirect measure of perceived discrepancy ( $r = -.46$ ). Thus, when considering a less confounded measure of discrepancy, those oriented toward cultivation do not perceive less discrepancy; it seems they are merely less

influenced by it when considering how happy they are in the relationship.<sup>4</sup>

It is also possible that when cultivating, one perceives one's partner's qualities more positively or has generally lower relationship ideals. To test this, a hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted with perceptions of current partner as the criterion and destiny, growth (Step 1), and their interaction (Step 2) as predictors. The interaction was not significant, indicating that cultivators do not automatically view their partner more positively. A parallel analysis was conducted on ratings of one's ideal partner and revealed no significant interaction as well. Thus, it is also not the case that an orientation toward cultivation results in having lower ideals for one's partner. Instead, it seems that cultivation allows one to acknowledge a partner's flaws and limitations while still remaining satisfied with one's partner. It is even possible that when oriented toward cultivation, one's satisfaction depends on one's ability to accept a partner warts and all, feeling that one understands, accepts, and cares for him or her in part because of such acknowledged limitations.

#### STUDY 2

In Study 2, we wanted to examine whether ITRs moderate the relation between perceptions of one's partner and current satisfaction in the context of the Murray et al. (1996a) positive illusions paradigm. One strength of this paradigm is that positive illusions were defined as seeing virtues in one's partner that one's partner does not see in himself or herself. Thus, one's partner's self-view becomes a reasonable baseline of reality with which to define illusion. Second, we wanted to examine emotions as a function of discussing discrepancies in how partners view the relationship. Thus, we videotaped partners in a series of semistructured interviews designed to emphasize differences in how partners view the relationship and measured their positive and negative emotion before and after the interview.

Viewing one's partner more positively than one's partner views himself or herself has been shown to predict satisfaction in a series of recent investigations (Murray et al., 1996a; Murray & Holmes, 1997; Murray, Holmes, & Griffin, 1996b). In the present research, we were primarily interested in the projected illusions hypothesis (Murray et al., 1996a), which has shown that individuals are happier when they perceive their partners in an even more positive light than their partner's self-perceptions justify. This tendency has been observed over a variety of samples, both married and dating, and longitudinally. However, as argued earlier, overlooking or reinterpreting one's partner's deficits may be more important to satisfaction when operating under certain relationship beliefs. Are people ever able to acknowledge their part-

ner's faults and weaknesses and still remain happy, or are we always so consumed by the implications of a partner's warts that we reflexively reinterpret them as beauty marks?

We set out to explore whether ITRs moderate the important relation between idealizing one's partner and being satisfied with the relationship. In addition, we predicted that one reason that one's happiness seems relatively immune to one's partner's attributes when oriented toward cultivation is because such limitations are viewed as challenges to be overcome rather than threats to the future of the relationship. For example, if John sees qualities in Jane that are less than ideal, then he might infer that the existence of these attributes reflects a fatal problem for the relationship and that there is little hope for its future. On the other hand, if the implicit theories John holds about relationships orient him toward cultivation (higher growth and lower destiny beliefs), then he might view Jane's less-than-perfect qualities as an opportunity to better understand and appreciate her, thus attempting to maintain the relationship rather than destroy it.

The process of idealization may be reflected not only through the perception of one's partner's attributes but also through partners' differing perspectives of the relationship. For example, if John learns that his partner Jane views the relationship very differently than he does, then he might infer that their differing perspectives reflect fundamental differences in how they relate and thus that there is little hope for the future of their relationship. However, if John is oriented toward cultivation, then he might view Jane's different perspective as an opportunity to develop the relationship further. In addition, one would expect that the cultivating John would feel more happiness and generally positive feelings while discussing differences in how he and Jane view the relationship, whereas the evaluating John would feel more hostility and generally negative feelings.

#### *Study 2 Hypotheses*

*Hypothesis 1.* Perceiving one's partner positively would predict higher satisfaction with the relationship, controlling for perceptions of oneself, one's perceptions of the ideal partner, one's partner's perception of himself or herself, and one's partner's perception of oneself. This path is what Murray et al. (1996a) referred to as projected illusions in the sense that it taps whether one's illusions predict one's satisfaction controlling for the reality of the partners' self-perceived attributes.

*Hypothesis 2.* The projected illusions path described in Hypothesis 1 would be moderated by ITRs such that the relation between viewing one's partner favorably and being satisfied would be weaker with a cultivation orientation (higher growth and lower destiny beliefs).

*Hypothesis 3.* Cultivation would be associated with more positive emotion as a function of discussing discrepant views of the relationship with one's partner. In addition, evaluation would be associated with more negative emotion over time.

#### STUDY 2 METHOD

##### *Participants*

Participants were 61 heterosexual couples ranging in age from 18 to 40 ( $M = 21$ ,  $SD = 3.91$ ). Partners had been in the relationship between 14 days and 12 years ( $M = 2$  years,  $SD = 2.2$  years). The sample was ethnically diverse, with 46% Caucasian, 20% Asian, 16% Hispanic, 8% African American, and 10% other. The average annual household income was between \$40,000 and \$49,999, and the majority of couples were single and not living together (70%). Couples were paid a sum of \$40 (\$20 per partner) for participation.

##### *Procedure*

The 2-hour session was divided into two phases. In Phase 1, partners completed a battery of questionnaires in a Latin square design to measure their perceptions of themselves and their partner, their ITRs, and their satisfaction in the relationship. In Phase 2, participants were videotaped during a sequence of semistructured interviews about their relationship. Each participant was first videotaped individually for 5 minutes and then together with his or her partner for 10 minutes. The interviews were designed to emphasize discrepancies in how partners view their relationship.

##### *Measures*

*ITRs.* An extended 22-item ITR Scale was included and is available from the first author. Internal reliabilities were .85 and .80 for destiny and growth beliefs, respectively. As with the original scale, the beliefs were not significantly correlated with each other or with gender ( $p$ s > .40).

*Perceptions of self and partner.* The Interpersonal Qualities Scale (Murray et al., 1996a) consisted of 21 positive and negative attributes that reflect virtues (e.g., understanding) and faults (e.g., critical and judgmental). Participants rated how well each of the traits described themselves, their current partner, and their ideal partner on 9-point scales (1 = *not at all characteristic*, 9 = *completely characteristic*). The order of the attribute ratings for the different targets was counterbalanced across participants to distribute potential order effects. Scores were derived for the total index (reversing the negative items). Reliabilities were .77, .79, and .77 for ratings of self, ideal, and current partner, respectively.

*Relationship satisfaction.* Satisfaction was measured with the same instrument described in Study 1. Internal reliability was .87 and .92 for men and women, respectively.

*Videotaped interview.* After both partners had completed a battery of questionnaires, they began the interview portion of the study. The interview proceeded in two phases: two individual interviews and a couple interview. The first phase involved a 5-minute videotaped interview with each individual partner. One member of the couple was escorted into the hallway to wait while the other member was interviewed. For half of the couples, the male partner was interviewed first. The purpose of the individual interviews was to acquire information about how each partner perceived the relationship. This information was then used in preparing the questions for Phase 2, the couple interview.

During the individual interview, each participant was asked to respond to the same series of questions, for example, "At what point in knowing your partner did you consider yourself part of a couple?" and "How long did you think the relationship would last when you first started dating?" Participants were prompted for specific answers where appropriate. After both partners had completed the individual interview, they were reunited for Phase 2, the couple interview.

The interviewer began by informing the couple that there were discrepancies in the answers they had given and that "we would like you to discuss these differences and attempt to come to some agreement, if possible, before your answers are recorded as final." For each question in which there was a discrepancy in the individual responses, the interviewer repeated the answers given earlier and asked the couple to discuss their answers with each other and attempt to resolve the discrepancy. The couple interview lasted 10 minutes.

*Postinterview measures.* Upon completion of the couple interview, participants completed a subset of the initial questionnaire packet focusing on their current emotions about their relationship. Current emotion was thus measured both before and after the interview using a brief version of the Multiple Affect Adjective Checklist (MAACL) (Zuckerman & Lubin, 1965) with instructions explicitly asking participants how they "feel about their relationship at this very moment." The shortened MAACL consisted of 32 adjectives, with 8 adjectives tapping each of four emotions: anxiety (e.g., fearful), depression (e.g., lost), hostility (e.g., angry), and positivity (e.g., happy). Reliabilities were .88, .93, .89, and .92 for anxiety, depression, hostility, and positivity, respectively, before the interview and .88, .92, .83, and .87 after the interview. In addition, a series of questions

assessed the degree to which they felt comfortable during the interview.<sup>5</sup>

#### STUDY 2 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

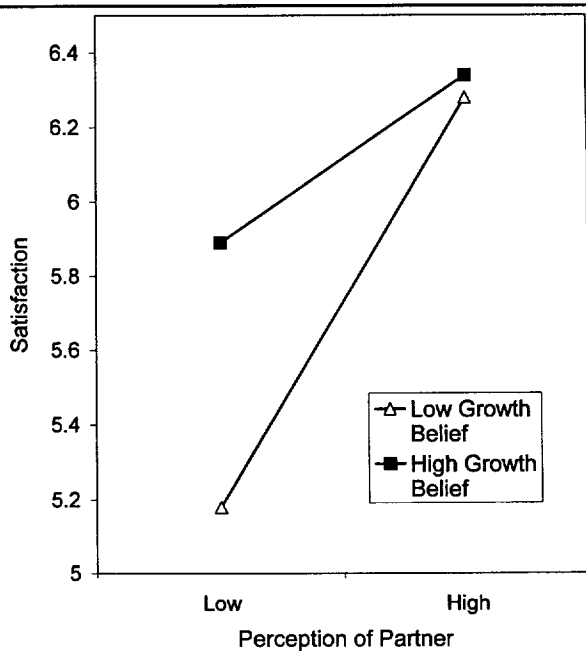
A series of multilevel hierarchical multiple regressions were conducted using the PROC MIXED routine in SAS (Littell, Milliken, Stroup, & Wolfinger, 1996; Singer, 1998). The advantages of multilevel modeling in the analysis of couple data have been described elsewhere (Gonzales & Griffin, 1999; Karney & Bradbury, 1997; Kenny, Kashy, & Bolger, 1998). The analyses controlled for the nonindependence of romantic partners' data by incorporating variance due to couple and employed maximum likelihood estimation. The analysis proceeded with satisfaction as the criterion. Destiny and growth beliefs were entered at Step 1, along with view of one's current partner, view of one's ideal partner, view of oneself, and one's partner's self-view. At Step 2, the products of Destiny  $\times$  View of Partner, Growth  $\times$  View of Partner, and Destiny  $\times$  Growth Belief were entered. The view of Partner  $\times$  Destiny  $\times$  Growth product was entered at Step 3.

In support of Hypothesis 1 and replicating Murray et al.'s (1996a) path  $\tau$ , those who viewed their partner more favorably were generally more satisfied in the relationship,  $F(1, 54) = 18.67, p < .0001, \beta = .51$ . However, in support of Hypothesis 2, this path was moderated by growth belief,  $F(1, 51) = 5.93, p = .01, \beta = -.32$ . Figure 2 displays the predicted satisfaction scores as a function of perceptions of one's partner and growth belief, derived from the parameter estimates at Step 2. As shown, the relation between viewing one's partner positively and feeling satisfied in the relationship became weaker with growth belief.<sup>6, 7</sup>

Hypothesis 3 was that cultivation would be associated with increased positive emotion and that evaluation would be associated with increased negative emotion as a function of discussing discrepant views of the relationship. Accordingly, a series of multilevel hierarchical multiple regression analyses of residual change in each emotion index was conducted. As before, the analyses controlled for the nonindependence of couple data and employed maximum likelihood estimation. For a given analysis, the particular postinterview emotion index served as the criterion. The corresponding preinterview emotion index was entered along with sex, destiny, and growth beliefs, followed in Step 2 by the Destiny  $\times$  Growth product term.

Support for Hypothesis 3 was found on several emotion indices. Not surprisingly, preinterview emotion was strongly positively related to postinterview emotion for positivity,  $F(1, 57) = 68.16, p < .0001, \beta = .74$ ; depression,  $F(1, 57) = 22.29, p < .0001, \beta = .53$ ; hostility,  $F(1, 57) = 17.70, p < .0001, \beta = .49$ ; and anxiety,  $F(1, 57) = 61.22, p <$





**Figure 2** Relationship satisfaction as a function of perceptions of one's partner and growth belief.

NOTE: Higher scores reflect higher satisfaction with the relationship. The multilevel hierarchical regression analysis controlled for ratings of oneself, ideal partner, partner's ratings of oneself, and partner's self-report in accord with Murray, Holmes, and Griffin (1996a).

.0001,  $pr = .72$ . More important, growth belief significantly predicted increased positivity,  $F(1, 57) = 3.90$ ,  $p = .05$ ,  $pr = .25$ , and decreased depression,  $F(1, 57) = 5.28$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $pr = -.29$ . Furthermore, the effect of growth belief was moderated by destiny belief for both positivity,  $F(1, 56) = 4.19$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $pr = -.26$ , and hostility,  $F(1, 56) = 2.68$ ,  $p = .10$ ,  $pr = -.21$ . The left portion of Figure 3 provides positivity scores as a function of destiny and growth beliefs derived from the parameter estimates at Step 2. As shown, a cultivation orientation (higher growth and lower destiny) was associated with feeling relatively happier as a function of discussing discrepancies in how partners view their relationships. Whereas cultivation yielded positive feelings from the interview, evaluation yielded hostile feelings from the interview. The right portion of Figure 3 provides hostility scores as a function of destiny and growth beliefs derived from the parameter estimates at Step 3. As shown, an evaluation orientation was associated with feeling more hostile as a function of discussing discrepant views of the relationship with one's partner.

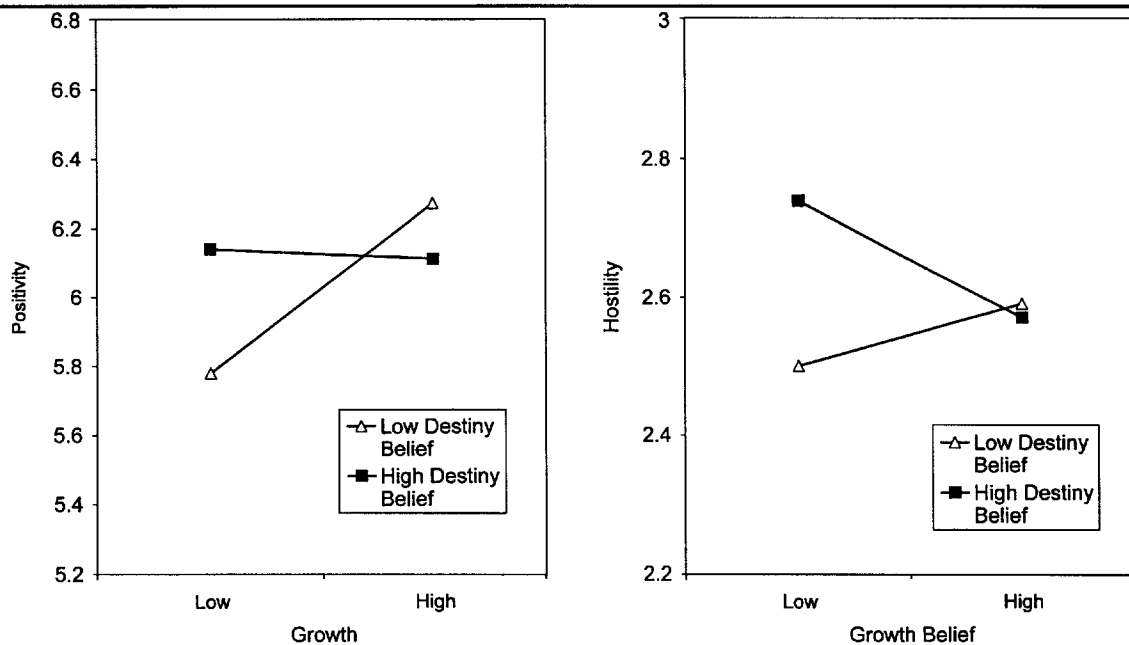
#### GENERAL DISCUSSION

We found support in two studies that ITRs moderate the relation between wanting more in one's partner and feeling satisfied in the relationship. Study 1 defined

wanting more in terms of perceiving a discrepancy between what one wants in an ideal partner and what one believes he or she has in a current partner. Furthermore, this discrepancy was measured in both direct and less direct ways. Across several indices of this type of discrepancy from an ideal, wanting more in one's partner was consistently and strongly related to feeling less happy with the relationship. However, this relation was moderated by destiny and growth beliefs such that wanting more was less strongly linked to one's satisfaction when one had a cultivation orientation (higher growth and lower destiny beliefs). With a cultivation orientation, people were able to acknowledge their partner's less positive attributes while still remaining relatively satisfied.

In Study 2, we examined whether ITRs moderate the projected illusions hypothesis (Murray et al., 1996a). It was found that viewing one's partner more favorably than one's partner views himself or herself was generally linked to feeling more satisfied with the relationship. However, again the relation was moderated by ITRs such that the relation between viewing one's partner favorably and feeling satisfied was weaker among those who believe in growth. ITRs also predicted affective reactions upon learning that one's partner views the relationship differently. Growth belief, by itself, predicted increased happiness and less depression after discussing discrepant views of the relationship. Thus, the value of believing that relationship limitations can be overcome should not be understated. However, the benefits of believing in growth became even more impressive when considered in combination with belief in destiny. Specifically, those oriented toward cultivation felt increased positivity, whereas those oriented toward evaluation felt increased hostility from discussing discrepant views of the relationship with their partner. When oriented toward cultivation, limitations and weaknesses become affordances for closeness and understanding without diagnosis or blame of the partner or the relationship. When oriented toward evaluation, small differences can take on strong meaning, possibly leading to stronger, more judgmental inferences about one's partner in combination with feelings that the differences are insurmountable.

The moderating effects of destiny and growth beliefs found here may reflect both cognitive and motivational underlying mechanisms. The cognitive mechanism stems from the fact that the cultivation orientation is characterized by a belief in the potential of relationships to improve without diagnosis; perhaps the partner's negative qualities recede into the background or partners come to authentically understand and appreciate each other's faults and weaknesses. On the other hand, the motivational mechanism underlying cultivation may allow one to feel less threatened by conflict and discrep-



**Figure 3** Changes in positivity and hostility after discussing discrepant views of the relationship as a function of destiny and growth beliefs. The multilevel hierarchical regression analysis examined postinterview emotion controlling for preinterview emotion. Higher scores reflect more of that emotion.

ant qualities between oneself and one's partner, given that they view such attributes as latent and emergent rather than immediately evident. They may be motivated to maintain and improve the relationship, and acknowledging limitations and weaknesses would seem to be a key asset in this process. Our data suggest that ITRs reflect both cognitive and motivational processes (e.g., idealization and authenticity) that can influence one's relationship-relevant perceptions, emotions, and behavior in meaningful ways.

Similar motives have been examined in the achievement and motivation literatures, albeit with regard to different outcomes. For example, the literature on approach versus avoidance goals suggests that focusing on attainment of success promotes mastery and enjoyment, whereas attempting to avoid failure promotes helplessness (e.g., Elliot & Church, 1997). With regard to ITRs, growth and maintenance seem relevant to approaching a better relationship, whereas destiny and diagnosis seem relevant to avoiding what one perceives to be a challenging or impossible relationship. Also, a motivational orientation toward growth and improvement has been examined with regard to the self (Deci & Ryan, 1987, 1991). In particular, such studies have linked an orientation toward growth and improvement with fewer self-enhancement strategies, including the self-serving bias, self-handicapping, and defensive coping (Knee & Zuckerman, 1996, 1998). Thus, with regard to relationships, one might predict that cultivation would be associated with acknowledging challenges to the rela-

tionship and attempting to deal with them openly and directly rather than denying that they exist or giving up and abandoning the relationship altogether (Hodgins & Knee, in press).

The current results are also important in that they suggest a potential resolution to the controversy over whether strivings for idealization or strivings for authenticity characterize romantic relationships. Here we examined primarily dating relationships, and although we found support for the importance of idealization predicting satisfaction, we also found that this was less so when one endorsed a belief in growth. It would seem, then, that an orientation toward the maintenance of the relationship may have similar consequences as a more general commitment to marriage in that it may augment strivings for authenticity and buffer the otherwise threatening implications of the negative features of one's partner.

This study is not without limitations. First, it is based on college student samples in which romantic relationships may be relatively transitory. This can be a strength in the study of attraction processes and dating tendencies but also limits the generalizability to more established relationships and marriages. Whether ITRs operate in a similar manner in marriages is a question for future research. The current samples were also rather diverse in ethnicity. Although this is often a strength in behavioral research, it also limits generalizability to only populations of similar diversity. An important question for future research is whether relationship beliefs differ

with ethnicity and cultural values and whether the consequences of ITRs vary by race and culture. The current sample was not large enough to examine these hypotheses in detail. Large-scale research in which couples of various ethnicities and cultural backgrounds are sampled carefully would seem ideal in this respect. Finally, due to our cross-sectional data, we cannot infer the direction of causality between wanting more in one's partner and feeling satisfied. However, Murray and Holmes (1997) have provided some evidence that positive illusions predict increased relationship satisfaction over time but that relationship satisfaction does not predict increased idealization over time.

Despite these limitations, the current research is unique in several respects. Previous research has extended the theoretical framework of implicit theories from the achievement and social cognition literatures (see Dweck et al., 1995, for review) to the domain of relationships (Kamins et al., 1996; Knee, 1996, 1998a; Ruvolo & Rotondo, 1998). The present framework on destiny and growth beliefs assesses ITRs directly rather than relying on measures originally designed for studies on achievement. Thus, although the theoretical framework of implicit theories is shared across domains, assessing ITRs, specifically, broadens the nomological network and, inevitably, the construct itself. Indeed, in Study 1, implicit theories of personality were not able to account for the results.

In addition, considerable research has argued that satisfaction is often based on positive illusions, both within and beyond the realm of romantic relationships (Murray et al., 1996a, 1996b; Taylor & Brown, 1988; Van Lange & Rusbult, 1995). Our results suggest that not everyone's satisfaction in romantic relationships requires the perception that one has found the ideal partner. It depends on what one believes. When one believes that relationships are based on growth and understanding and that relationships are not destined from the beginning, knowing that one's partner falls short of one's ideal is largely irrelevant to one's current satisfaction. These individuals believe that relationships are not based on landing the perfect partner but rather on developing and strengthening a bond with someone. They may be able to maintain a favorable impression of their partner even after their partner's limitations and imperfections become apparent. When one views limitations and discrepancies as opportunities for closeness rather than portents of doom, these otherwise lethal experiences may lose their venom.

#### NOTES

1. It also seems possible that those oriented toward evaluation would yield the strongest link between perceived discrepancy and satisfaction. However, given the strong general relation between percep-

tions of one's partner and relationship satisfaction, it may be easier to demonstrate when it is less likely to occur than when it is even more likely to occur.

2. The Implicit Theories of Relationships Scale is available from the first author.

3. To understand the components of the discrepancy even more thoroughly, we examined whether the Destiny  $\times$  Growth  $\times$  Perceptions of Current Partner or the Destiny  $\times$  Growth  $\times$  Ratings of One's Ideal Partner interactions predicted satisfaction when analyzed separately. The interaction with perceptions of current partner did not significantly predict satisfaction, whereas the one with ratings of one's ideal partner was significant,  $F(1, 160) = 13.82, p < .001, \eta^2 = .28$ . However, examination of the predicted scores derived from the regression equation at Step 3 indicated that the interaction was largely driven by those who were low in both destiny and growth beliefs (helplessness orientation), such that when oriented toward helplessness, one felt less satisfied when one had higher ideals but considerably more satisfied when one had lower ideals. Thus, it seems that ideals predict satisfaction primarily for those lower in both destiny and growth beliefs.

4. In all analyses, the Sex  $\times$  Destiny  $\times$  Growth interaction was significant,  $F(1, 170) = 12.27, p < .001, \eta^2 = .26$ ;  $F(1, 160) = 4.89, p < .05, \eta^2 = .16$ , for direct and indirect measures of discrepancy, respectively. Examination of discrepancy scores derived from the regression equation at Step 3 indicated that for both direct and indirect measures, men oriented toward evaluation (high destiny/low growth) perceived more discrepancy, whereas women with the same beliefs perceived less discrepancy. First, this pattern suggests that those oriented toward cultivation do not perceive less discrepancy than others. However, it also suggests the interesting possibility that men who are oriented toward evaluation tend to compare their partner with alternatives, whereas this same view leads women to perceive that they have met Mr. Right. This question seems worthy of future research.

5. The interactions were also coded for positive and negative behaviors. However, no significant effects emerged as a function of implicit theories of relationships, so those methods and data are not reported here.

6. A series of analyses that included the Destiny  $\times$  Sex, Growth  $\times$  Sex, and Destiny  $\times$  Growth  $\times$  Sex product terms yielded no significant effects for these terms and thus no evidence of sex as a moderator. Accordingly, these terms were dropped from the analyses reported here to preserve power.

7. Relationship length was also examined as a potential confounding variable. For example, perhaps people who have been in a relationship longer but hold more negative views of their partner may be less likely to believe in growth and may be less satisfied with the relationship. However, this does not seem likely given that length of relationship was not significantly associated with either destiny or growth or their interaction.

#### REFERENCES

- Brehm, S. S. (1988). Passionate love. In R. J. Sterberg & M. L. Barnes (Eds.), *The psychology of love* (pp. 232-263). New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Brickman, P. (1987). *Commitment, conflict, and caring*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1987). The support of autonomy and the control of behavior. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 53*, 1024-1037.
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1991). A motivational approach to self: Integration in personality. In R. Dienstbier (Ed.), *Nebraska Symposium on Motivation, 1990* (pp. 237-288). Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Dweck, C. S., Chiu, C., & Hong, Y. (1995). Implicit theories and their role in judgments and reactions: A world from two perspectives. *Psychological Inquiry, 6*, 267-285.
- Eidelson, R. J., & Epstein, N. (1982). Cognition and relationship maladjustment: Development of a measure of dysfunctional relationship beliefs. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 50*, 715-720.

- Elliot, A. E., & Church, M. A. (1997). A hierarchical model of approach and avoidance achievement motivation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 72(1), 218-232.
- Fletcher, G.J.O., & Kininmonth, L. (1992). Measuring relationship beliefs: An individual differences measure. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 26, 371-397.
- Fletcher, G.J.O., Simpson, J. A., Thomas, G., & Giles, L. (1999). Ideals in intimate relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 76, 72-89.
- Gonzales, R., & Griffin, D. (1999). The correlational analysis of dyad-level data in the distinguishable case. *Personal Relationships*, 6, 449-469.
- Griffin, D., Murray, S., & Gonzales, R. (1999). Difference score correlations in relationship research: A conceptual primer. *Personal Relationships*, 6, 505-518.
- Hendrick, S. S., Hendrick, C., & Adler, N. L. (1988). Romantic relationships: Love, satisfaction, and staying together. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 54, 980-988.
- Hodgins, H. S., & Knee, C. R. (in press). The integrating self and conscious experience. In E. L. Deci & R. M. Ryan (Eds.), *Handbook of self-determination research*. Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press.
- Holmes, J. G., & Boon, S. D. (1990). Developments in the field of close relationships: Creating foundations for intervention strategies. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 16, 23-41.
- Kamins, M. L., Morris, S. M., & Dweck, C. S. (1996). *Implicit theories as predictors of goals in dating relationships*. Paper presented at the meeting of the Eastern Psychological Association, Washington DC.
- Karney, B. R., & Bradbury, T. N. (1997). Neuroticism, marital interaction, and the trajectory of marital satisfaction. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 72(5), 1075-1092.
- Kenny, D. A., Kashy, D. A., & Bolger, N. (1998). Data analysis in social psychology. In D. Gilbert, S. Fiske, & G. Lindzey (Eds.), *Handbook of social psychology* (Vol. 1, 4th ed., pp. 233-265). Boston: McGraw-Hill.
- Knee, C. R. (1996). *Implicit theories of relationships: Assessment and prediction of romantic relationship initiation and longevity* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Rochester, 1996). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 57 (9-B): 5979. (University Microfilms No. AAM9704331)
- Knee, C. R. (1998a). *Implicit theories of relationships: Assessment and prediction of romantic relationship initiation, coping, and longevity*. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 74(2), 360-370.
- Knee, C. R. (1998b, June). *Implicit theories of relationships: Coping with relationship imperfections*. Paper presented at the 9th International Conference on Personal Relationships, Saratoga Springs, NY.
- Knee, C. R., & Zuckerman, M. (1996). Causality orientations and the disappearance of the self-serving bias. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 30, 76-87.
- Knee, C. R., & Zuckerman, M. (1998). A nondefensive personality: Autonomy and control as moderators of defensive coping and self-handicapping. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 32, 115-130.
- Littell, R. C., Milliken, G. A., Stroup, W. W., & Wolfinger, R. D. (1996). *SAS system for mixed models*. Cary, NC: SAS Institute Inc.
- McCrae, R. R., & Costa, P. T., Jr. (1987). Validation of the five-factor model of personality across instruments and observers. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 52, 81-90.
- Morris, S. (1996). *Implicit theories as predictors of goals in dating relationships*. Unpublished honors thesis, Columbia University, New York.
- Murray, S. L., & Holmes, J. G. (1994). Story-telling in close relationships: The construction of confidence. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 20, 663-676.
- Murray, S. L., & Holmes, J. G. (1997). A leap of faith: Positive illusions in romantic relationships. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 23(6), 586-604.
- Murray, S. L., Holmes, J. G., & Griffin, D. W. (1996a). The benefits of positive illusions: Idealization and the construction of satisfaction in close relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 70, 79-98.
- Murray, S. L., Holmes, J. G., & Griffin, D. W. (1996b). The self-fulfilling nature of positive illusions in romantic relationships: Love is not blind, but prescient. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 71, 1155-1180.
- Noller, P., & Feeney, J. A. (1994). Relationship satisfaction, attachment, and nonverbal accuracy in early marriage. *Journal of Nonverbal Behavior*, 18, 199-221.
- Norton, R. (1983). Measuring marital quality: A critical look at the dependent variable. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 45, 141-151.
- Ruvolo, A. P., & Rotondo, J. L. (1998). Diamonds in the rough: Implicit personality theories and views of partner and self. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 24(7), 750-758.
- Ruvolo, A. P., & Veroff, J. (1997). For better or for worse: Real-discrepancies and relationship quality in newlyweds. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 14, 223-242.
- Singer, J. D. (1998). Using SAS PROC MIXED to fit multilevel models, hierarchical models, and individual growth models. *Journal of Educational and Behavioral Statistics*, 24, 323-355.
- Sternberg, R. J., & Barnes, M. L. (1985). Real and ideal others in romantic relationships: Is four a crowd? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 49, 1586-1608.
- Swann, W. B., De La Ronde, C., & Hixon, J. G. (1994). Authenticity and positive strivings in marriage and courtship. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 66, 857-869.
- Taylor, S. E., & Brown, J. D. (1988). Illusion and well-being: A social psychological perspective on mental health. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 103(2), 193-210.
- Van Lange, P.A.M., & Rusbult, C. E. (1995). My relationship is better than—and not as bad as—yours is: The perception of superiority in close relationships. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 21, 32-44.
- Weiss, R. L. (1980). Strategic behavioral marital therapy: Toward a model for assessment and intervention. In J. P. Vincent (Ed.), *Advances in family intervention, assessment and theory* (Vol. 1, pp. 229-271). Greenwich, CT: JAI.
- Zuckerman, M., & Lubin, B. (1965). *Manual for the Multiple Affect Adjective Checklist*. San Diego, CA: Educational and Industrial Testing Service.

Received July 26, 1999

Revision accepted July 3, 2000