and relationship commitment. The model is made up of three constructs. The first, termed the **outcome level (OL)**, is a benefits/costs ratio comprised of the things we think we are getting out of a relationship relative to what we think are putting into the relationship. Benefits include love and affection, material goods, and status; costs include loss of freedom, disapproval from others, money, and the time and energy required to make a relationship work (Sedikides, Oliver, & Campbell, 1994). **Comparison level (CL)** is the second construct in the model. This term refers to the minimum outcome level we find satisfactory in a relationship. The final construct in the model is called one’s **comparison level of alternatives (CL_{alt})**. This term refers to the outcome value we think we could obtain in our best alternative relationship (including being in no relationship at all).

According to Kelley and Thibaut (1978), satisfaction with a relationship depends on the match between outcome level and comparison level. We are satisfied if our benefits/costs ratio meets or exceeds the minimum level we find satisfactory (OL ≥ CL), and dissatisfied if our benefits/costs ratio falls below the minimum level we find satisfactory (OL < CL). Commitment to a relationship depends on the match between our outcome level and our comparison level of alternatives. Commitment is high if we think our current outcomes meet or exceed the outcomes we could get in an alternative relationships (OL ≥ CL_{alt}) and low if we think our current outcome level is less than what we could get in alternative relationships (OL < CL_{alt}).