

**FIGURE 11.17****Marital Satisfaction and Marital Status**

The data come from a 13-year study of marital stability. Beginning two months after their wedding and continuing throughout the first two years of marriage, 152 couples reported how much love and affection they expressed and received when interacting with their partner. These reports were then used to predict marital outcomes 11 years later. The data show five effects of interest: (1) all groups experienced declines in love and affection during the first two years of marriage; (2) couples who divorced experienced steeper declines in love and affection across the first two years of marriage than did those who remained married; (3) among couples who stayed married, initial levels of love and affection were higher among those who were happily married than among those who were unhappily married, and this effect remained constant throughout the first two years of marriage; (4) compared to couples who divorced early, couples who divorced late began with higher levels of love and affection; and (5) couples who divorced late started out with levels of affection that were at least as high as couples who stayed together.

Source: Huston, Caughlin, Houts, Smith, and George (2001).