predicted by declines in affection rather than the amount of affection present at the
start of a marriage, whereas the reverse is true when predicting satisfaction in intact
marriages.

Although not shown in Figure 11.17, Huston et al. (2001) also found that positive
relationship factors, such as love and affection, were greater predictors of marital
status and satisfaction than were negative relationship factors, such as the presence of
arguments or conflict. The authors conjectured that couples who have a warm, loving
relationship are better able to handle conflict and strife than are those whose relation-
ship is cold and uncaring. For this reason, having romantic dinners, exchanging
special favors and gifts, and sharing exciting, mutually enjoyable activities are impor-
tant aspects of a happy marriage (Aron, Norman, Aron, McKenna, & Heyman, 2000).
The warmth and affection these activities create enable couples to withstand threats
to their relationship.