Social Psychological and Personality Science

My Better Half : Partner Enhancement as Self-Enhancement

Jonathon D. Brown and Albert Han

The online version of this article can be found at:
http://spp.sagepub.com/content/3/4/479

Additional services and information for *Social Psychological and Personality Science* can be found at:

Email Alerts: http://spp.sagepub.com/cgi/alerts

Subscriptions: http://spp.sagepub.com/subscriptions

Reprints: http://www.sagepub.com/journalsReprints.nav

Permissions: http://www.sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav

Citations: http://spp.sagepub.com/content/3/4/479.refs.html

>> Version of Record - Jun 6, 2012

OnlineFirst Version of Record - Nov 22, 2011

What is This?

My Better Half: Partner Enhancement as Self-Enhancement

Jonathon D. Brown[1] and Albert Han[2]

Abstract: People define themselves in terms of their relationship partners and they incorporate their partners into their self-concepts. Consequently, partner enhancement—viewing one's partner in excessively positive terms—might constitute an indirect form of self-enhancement when feelings of self-worth are threatened. To test this hypothesis, the authors gave participants evaluative feedback (e.g., success and failure) and then asked them to appraise themselves, their current (or most recent) relationship partner and (in Study 2) most other people. The authors found that low self-esteem participants, but not high self-esteem participants, responded to failure by exaggerating the virtues of their romantic partners. These findings highlight the flexibility of self-enhancement strategies and provide further evidence that low self-esteem people pursue indirect forms of self-enhancement in their efforts to blunt the adverse impact of adverse feedback.

In an episode from the classic television show, *Candid Camera*, Pennsylvania motorists approaching the Delaware state line confront a sign announcing that Delaware is closed for the day. "Hmmm," one resourceful driver responds, "is Jersey open?"

In many ways, self-enhancement processes operate like a resourceful motorist. People are driven to protect, maintain, and promote their feelings of self-worth, and they travel a variety of routes to reach their destination (Steele, 1988). For example, after experiencing failure at an achievement task, they might question the validity of the test or dismiss its importance, attribute failure to factors other than their ability, or remind themselves that they have many other fine qualities (Brown, 2007). These routes are largely interchangeable, endowing individuals with a good deal of flexibility in their pursuit of self-enhancement (Tesser, 2001).

Indirect Routes to Self-Enhancement

Self-enhancement processes operate with such fungibility that they do not even need to explicitly involve oneself. Instead, as William James noted many years ago, individuals can counter personal threats to self-worth by embellishing the virtues of their ancestors, friends, or colleagues. These extracorporeal selves, as James (1890) called them, enhance self-worth indirectly: It makes people feel good about themselves to be associated with others who are somehow exemplary or meritorious, and individuals call these associations to mind or exaggerate their value when their feelings of self-worth are threatened.

Research on Basking in Reflected Glory (BIRGing) provides one example of this indirect form of self-enhancement (Cialdini et al., 1976). In one study, university students were more likely to use the pronoun "we" when relating the details of a football game their team had won than when describing a game their team had lost, and this tendency was especially strong when self-worth had recently been threatened. Insofar as individuals have played no direct role in attaining the outcome for which they are assuming credit, BIRGing represents an indirect form of self-enhancement, with individuals attempting to align themselves with successful others (and/or distance themselves from unsuccessful others; see also Cialdini & Richardson, 1980; Snyder, Lassegard, & Ford, 1986).

The Present Research

The present research was initiated to test two hypotheses: (a) individuals use their relationship partners to counter threats to self-worth and (b) this indirect form of self-enhancement is more characteristic of low self-esteem people than of high self-esteem people. With respect to our first hypothesis, numerous lines of

[1] Department of Psychology, University of Washington, Seattle, WA, USA
[2] Marshall School of Business, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA, USA

Corresponding Author:
Jonathon D. Brown, Department of Psychology, University of Washington, Box 351525, Seattle, WA 98195, USA
Email: jdb@uw.edu

research have shown that relationship partners are part of an individual's extracorporeal self. This assumption forms the heart of Aron and Aron's (1997) self-expansion theory and figures prominently in research on the relational self (Andersen & Chen, 2002), relationship enhancement processes (e.g., Murray, Holmes, MacDonald, & Ellsworth, 1998), and social inclusion (Slotter, Gardner, & Finkel, 2010).

There is also evidence that people use their relationship partners to enhance their feelings of self-worth. First, there is a general tendency for people to believe their personal relationships and relationship partners are "better than average" (Fletcher & Kerr, 2010; Gagné & Lydon, 2004). In addition, close, positive relationships function as self-affirmational resources, reducing stress and defensiveness (Kumashiro & Sedikides, 2005; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003; Murray, Bellavia, Feeney, Holmes, & Rose, 2001). Finally, people frequently turn to their loved ones during times of turmoil and uncertainty, in part because their relationship partners build their self-confidence and promote their feelings of self-worth (Katz, Beach, & Anderson, 1996).

In sum, prior research supports our first hypothesis that people will enhance their relationship partners when their own feelings of self-worth are threatened. With respect to our second hypothesis, previous research suggests that indirect forms of self-enhancement of this type are especially characteristic of low self-esteem people. To illustrate, Brown, Collins, and Schmidt (1988, Study 2) gave participants success or failure feedback before asking them to rate the quality of a task they had personally helped complete or the quality of a task fellow group members had completed. Whereas high self-esteem participants responded to failure by lauding their own work, low self-esteem participants responded to failure by lauding the creativity of their fellow group members, not themselves (see also, Brown, Novick, Lord, & Richards, 1992).

Why do low self-esteem people enhance their self-worth indirectly rather than directly proclaiming their excellence? The most likely explanation is that direct forms of self-enhancement fall outside their "latitude of acceptance" (in the words of Sherif & Hovland, 1961). Even though people are motivated to feel good about themselves, they must satisfy this need in ways that are believable (to oneself) and defensible (to others) (Brown, 1993a, 1993b, 2007; Brown & Gallagher, 1992; Schlenker, 1975; Sedikides & Strube, 1997). By hitching their wagon to the accomplishments of others, low self-esteem people can enhance their feelings of self-worth without exposing themselves to personal disappointment or public humiliation.

Study 1

Study 1 provided an initial test of our hypotheses. Before evaluating themselves and a relationship partner on a variety of trait adjectives, some participants were given negative feedback regarding their performance at an intellectual task. (Participants in the control condition were not given negative feedback.) We anticipated that low self-esteem participants would respond to negative feedback by appraising their relationship partners in overly positive terms.

Method

Participants

Sixty-eight undergraduates (36 females and 32 males) attending the University of Washington (UW) participated in exchange for extra credit in lower division psychology courses.[1] All had completed the Rosenberg's (1965) Self-Esteem scale at an earlier time. The mean age of the sample was 19.69 ($SD = 3.74$); 43% of the participants identified themselves as Asian Americans, 41% of the participants identified themselves as European Americans, and the remaining participants were of other racial groups or mixed. Three additional participants failed to complete all of the experimental materials and their data were discarded.

Materials and Procedure

At the start of the experiment, each participant was greeted and led into a small room equipped with a computer. The experimenter then left participants alone, instructing them to indicate when they were through. Thereafter, all instructions and materials were presented on the computer, assuring participants of privacy during the remainder of the experiment.

Experimental manipulations. At this point, participants were randomly assigned to one of the two conditions: A control condition or a failure condition. Participants assigned to the control condition began completing the dependent variables (described below), whereas those assigned to the failure condition learned they would be taking a test that measured an important cognitive ability, called integrative orientation. Integrative orientation was described as the ability to find creative and unusual solutions to problems and was linked to success in various aspects of life. The ability was (allegedly) measured using the remote associates test. With this task, participants are shown three words (e.g., car—swimming—cue) and asked to find a fourth word that relates to the other three (pool). Working interactively with the computer, participants completed three sample problems to ensure that they understood how the problems were solved.

The experimental task was then administered. All participants who took the test received a set of difficult problems. (Difficulty was based on published norms and prior research.) When the allotted time for working on the test had expired, the computer paused for several seconds and informed the participants that they had scored in the bottom 23% of all UW students.

At the end of the experiment, all participants (including those in the control condition) evaluated themselves and their current (or most recent) relationship partner on eight traits (attractive, competent, good-looking, interesting, honest, kind, responsible, and warm), using 5-point Likert-type scales (1 = *not at all*; 5 = *very much*).[2] The traits were presented in a random order, and the two targets were counterbalanced across conditions. When they had finished making their ratings, participants informed the experimenter and they were debriefed, thanked, and excused.

Results and Discussion

Preliminary analyses. Gender did not qualify any of the hypotheses we tested and is ignored in all analyses.

Main analyses. After averaging the traits for each target (self or relationship partner), we analyzed the scores using a mixed-design regression model, with one between-subjects predictor (experimental condition: $-1 = control$, $1 = failure$), one repeated measure (Target [self vs. relationship partner]), and one continuous predictor (self-esteem, centered around its mean). Interactions were assessed by calculating cross-product terms between all of the variables.[3]

We anticipated that low self-esteem participants would respond to a threat to self-worth by glorifying the virtues of their relationship partners. Formally, this prediction translates into a three-way (Condition × Target × Self-Esteem) interaction. The hypothesized interaction was significant, $F(1, 64) = 5.77$, $p < .025$, $\eta_p^2 = .08$, and Figure 1, which displays predicted values for participants scoring 1 SD above and below the mean on self-esteem, shows strong support for our experimental predictions. Follow-up analyses confirmed that the simple Condition × Target interaction was significant among low self-esteem participants, $F(1, 64) = 4.93$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .07$, but not among high self-esteem participants, $F(1, 64) = 1.51$, ns, and that, among low self-esteem participants, self-ratings did not differ across conditions ($t < 1$), but relationship partners were evaluated more favorably among those in the failure condition than among those in the control condition, $t(64) = 2.89$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .12$.

Comparisons within target conditions are also of interest. A main effect of self-esteem was the only significant predictor of self-ratings, $F(1, 64) = 27.34$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .30$. Across experimental conditions, high self-esteem participants evaluated themselves more favorably ($M = 4.25$) than did low self-esteem participants ($M = 3.74$). This pattern also characterized ratings of romantic partners, $F(1, 64) = 17.23$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .21$ ($Ms = 4.16$ and 3.51, for high self-esteem and low self-esteem participants, respectively), but was qualified by a Condition × Self-Esteem interaction, $F(1, 64) = 5.46$, $p < .025$, $\eta_p^2 = .08$. The interaction reflects the fact that self-esteem differences were more pronounced in the control condition, $t(64) = 4.12$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .21$, than in the failure condition, $t(64) = 1.47$, ns.

Summary. Previous research has shown that people deal with threats to self-worth in a variety of largely interchangeable ways (Tesser, 2001). In Study 1, we tested whether low self-esteem participants cope with threats to self-worth by enhancing the virtues of their current (or most recent) romantic partner. The data supported our experimental predictions. In comparison with a control condition, failure led low self-esteem participants (but not high self-esteem participants) to appraise their romantic partners in highly favorable terms.

Study 2

Although we believe the data from Study 1 support our predictions, we acknowledge some potential limitations. First,
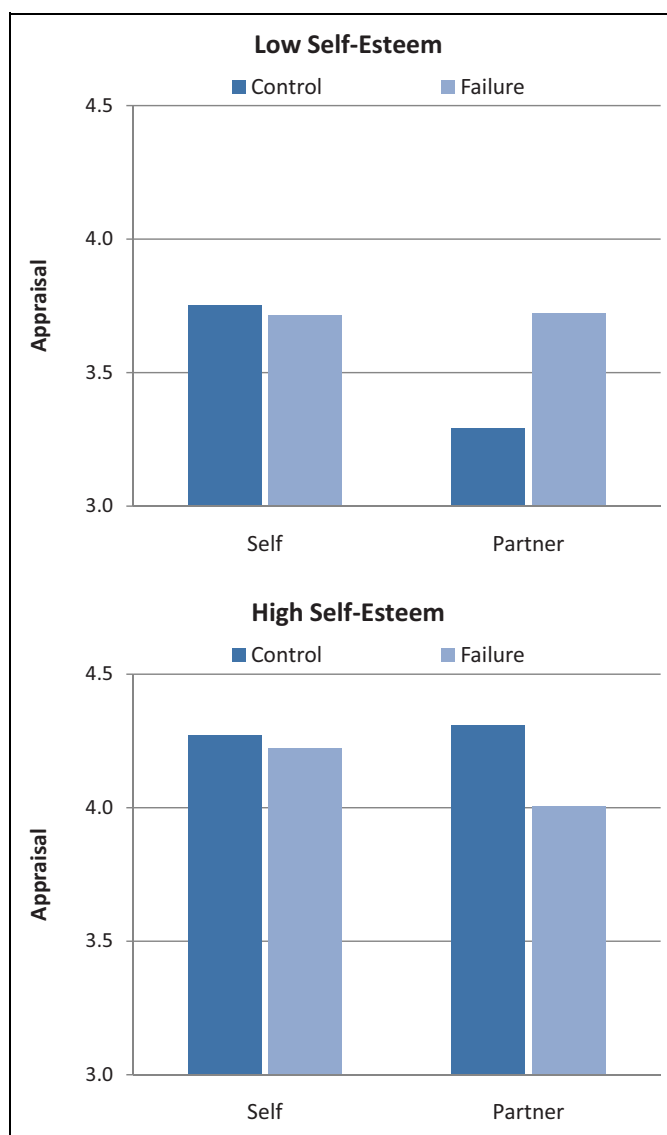

Figure 1. Appraisals of self and romantic partners as a function of experimental condition and self-esteem: Study 1. (Displayed values are the predicted scores for participants scoring 1 SD above and below the mean in self-esteem.)

because only participants in the failure condition worked on an experimental task before evaluating themselves and their relationship partners, it is possible that the mere act of working on a task, rather than failure itself, drove our effect. To examine this possibility, we conducted a second study in which all participants worked on an experimental task and all received experimental feedback (either positive or negative).

In a related vein, we provided no evidence that participants in the failure condition evaluated their performance poorly. Perhaps, high self-esteem participants were less convinced they had failed than were low self-esteem participants. If so, this might explain why they did not feel a need to counteract a threat to self-worth by enhancing their relationship partner. To address this issue, we asked all the participants in Study 2 to evaluate their test performance.

Finally, it is important to show that the positive appraisals low self-esteem participants made of their relationship partner following failure do not extend to people in general. After all, if low self-esteem people think everyone else is especially wonderful after they have failed, their evaluations would indicate self-effacement rather than self-enhancement. To assess this potentiality, we asked participants in Study 2 to evaluate most other people, in addition to rating themselves and their relationship partner.

Method

Participants

One hundred and two UW undergraduates (65 females and 37 males) participated in exchange for extra credit in lower division psychology courses. All were drawn from a larger pool of students who had completed the Rosenberg's (1965) Self-Esteem scale at an earlier time. The mean age of the sample was 19.63 ($SD = 3.84$); 40% of the participants identified themselves as Asian Americans, 43% of the participants identified themselves as European Americans, and the remaining participants were of other racial groups or mixed. Four additional participants failed to complete all of the experimental materials and their data were discarded.

Materials and Procedure

With only a few exceptions, the materials and procedures for this experiment were the same as in Study 1.

First, the control condition in Study 1 was replaced by a positive feedback (success) condition in Study 2. Participants randomly assigned to experience success were given a set of easy RAT problems and were told when they had finished that they had scored in the top 87% of all UW students who had taken the test. Participants randomly assigned to experience failure were given the same problems used in Study 1 and again received feedback that they had scored in the bottom 23% of UW students.

After receiving their test feedback, all participants evaluated their test performance on a 9-point Likert-type scale (1 = *very poor*; 9 = *excellent*). Finally, all participants rated themselves, most other people, and their current (or most recent) relationship partner on the same adjectives used in Study 1. As before, the adjectives were presented in a random order within each rating task, and target order was counterbalanced across participants.

Results and Discussion

As in Study 1, gender did not qualify any of the findings to be reported below, and will not be discussed further.

Preliminary analyses. We conducted a multiple regression analysis on participants' evaluations of their test performance, using experimental condition ($-1 = success$; $1 = failure$) and self-esteem (centered around its mean) as predictors. A cross-product term was entered to model the interaction. The only effect to achieve significance was the main effect of task performance, $F(1, 98) = 142.22$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .59$. Independent of their self-esteem level, participants who received success feedback judged their performance more favorably ($M = 6.00$) than did those who received failure feedback ($M = 2.35$).

Main analyses. After averaging the descriptors within each target condition, we analyzed the scores using a mixed-design regression analysis, with experimental condition as a between-subjects variable, target as a repeated measure, and mean-centered self-esteem as a continuous predictor.

Several lower-order effects reached significance. First, a main effect of target, $F(2, 98) = 116.41$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .54$, revealed that evaluations of oneself ($M = 3.89$) and one's relationship partner ($M = 3.85$) were more favorable than were evaluations of most other people ($M = 3.02$). This effect, known as the better than average effect, has been documented extensively elsewhere (Alicke, 1985; Brown, in press). The Target × Self-Esteem interaction also achieved significance, $F(2, 98) = 3.46$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$. Consistent with prior research (Brown, 1986; Kobayashi & Brown, 2003), the target effect was stronger among high self-esteem participants, $F(2, 98) = 64.64$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .40$, than among low self-esteem participants, $F(2, 94) = 53.68$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .35$.

Of greater relevance to the present research is the presence of a higher-order, Feedback × Target × Self-Esteem interaction, $F(2, 98) = 5.61$, $p < .005$, $\eta_p^2 = .05$. Follow-up analyses comparing partner ratings against ratings of self and most other people showed a significant Feedback × Target × Self-Esteem interaction contrast, $F(1, 98) = 7.42$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .07$.[4] Figure 2 presents the predicted values for participants scoring 1 SD above and below the mean on self-esteem. As can be seen, mirroring the results from Study 1, the Feedback × Target interaction was significant when self-esteem was low, $F(2, 94) = 4.28$, $p < .025$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$, but not when self-esteem was high ($p > .15$), and a more focused interaction contrast comparing ratings of partner versus self and others revealed a significant simple effect for low self-esteem participants, $F(1, 98) = 5.95$, $p < .025$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$, but not for high self-esteem participants ($p > .15$). Additional analyses confirmed that, among low self-esteem participants, ratings of relationship partners were greater following failure than following success, $t(94) = 3.24$, $p < .005$, $\eta_p^2 = .10$, whereas ratings of self and most other people did not differ across the two feedback conditions (both $ps > .20$). Furthermore, among low self-esteem participants, the tendency to view one's partner more favorably than one views most other people was stronger following failure, $t(94) = 7.31$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .41$, than following success, $t(94) = 4.99$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .20$.

Comparisons within each target condition are also informative. The only significant effect for self-ratings and for ratings of most other people was a main effect of self-esteem (both $ps < .05$); in contrast, the only significant effect for romantic partners was the predicted Feedback × Self-Esteem interaction, $F(1, 94) = 12.04$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .11$.
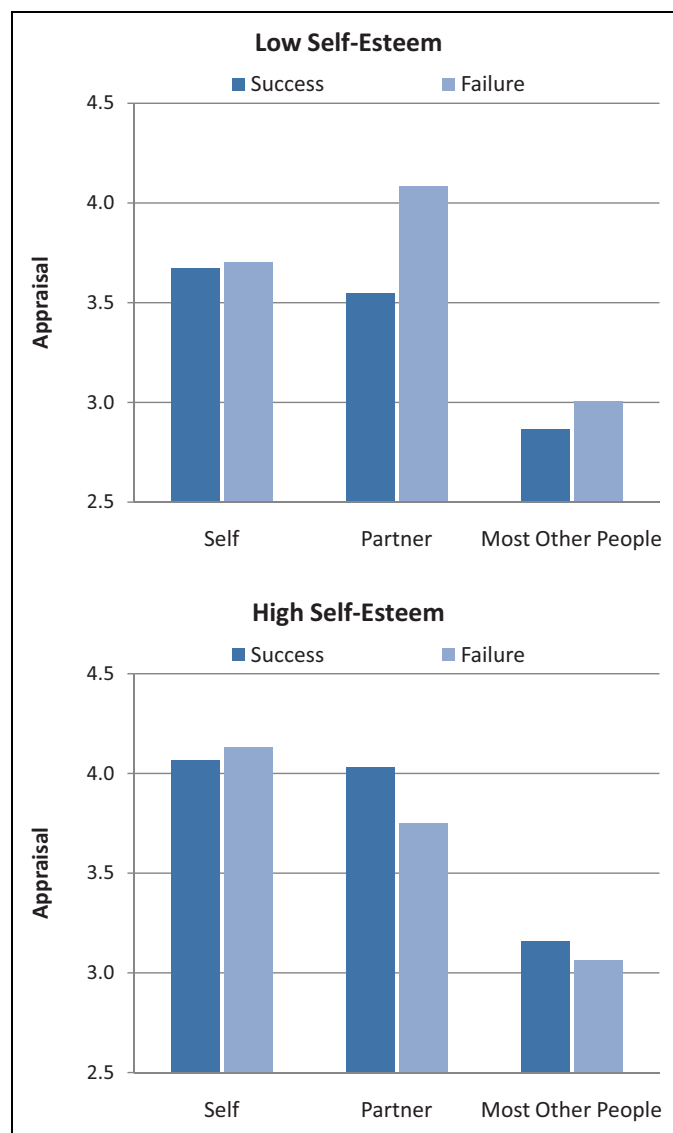
Figure 2. Appraisals of self, romantic partners, and most other people as a function of experimental condition and self-esteem: Study 2. (Displayed values are the predicted scores for participants scoring 1 *SD* above and below the mean in self-esteem.)

General Discussion

People frequently define themselves in terms of their relationship partners (e.g., I want to be Bobby's girl) and incorporate their romantic partners into their self-concept (Andersen & Chen, 2002; Aron & Aron, 1997; Slotter et al., 2010). In this article, we tested whether some individuals use their relationship partners to offset threats to self-worth. We found that they did. In both studies, low self-esteem participants responded to failure by exaggerating the worth of their current (or most recent) relationship partner. This effect did not extend to self-evaluations or evaluations of "most other people," and was found when failure was compared to success and a control condition. These findings suggest that partner enhancement is undertaken to offset the impact of a negative, personal experience.

Our results appear inconsistent with previous evidence that low self-esteem people are less likely than high self-esteem people to use their romantic relationships as a self-affirmational resource (e.g., Murray et al., 2001; Murray et al., 1998). Murray, Holmes, MacDonald, and Ellsworth (1998; Study 4) gave participants success, failure, or no feedback on the same experimental test used in the present research. All participants were then asked questions about their current romantic relationship. Among other things, the results showed that low self-esteem participants responded to failure by doubting their partner's commitment toward them and by denigrating their partner's qualities. This pattern contrasts with our findings (see also Murray et al., 2001).

Differences in the two research procedures might explain this inconsistency. Unlike the present research, participants in Murray's research reflected on their partner's love for them before rating their partner's qualities. Low self-esteem people generally feel less loved and valued by their partners than do high self-esteem people, and these insecurities are heightened when self-worth is threatened (Murray, Griffin, Rose, & Bellavia, 2006). Quite possibly, activating these perceptions in low self-esteem people led them to appraise their partner less positively. Had the participants been given the opportunity to first evaluate their partner, they might have shown the pattern we reported in this article. Future research should examine this possibility.

Relationship factors might also explain why our findings diverge from Murray's. Murray et al. (1998) studied only participants who had been in a relatively long-term dating relationship (approximately 18 months on average); we did not select participants for relationship length, and even included those who were no longer in a current relationship. Conceivably, these differences could explain why our low self-esteem participants responded to failure with elevated ratings of a romantic partner. Future research should also examine this possibility.

We should also note a point of convergence between the two research projects. As did Murray, Bellavia, Feeney, Holmes, and Rose (2001), we found that high self-esteem participants generally evaluated their relationship partners more favorably than did low self-esteem participants. There are at least two possible explanations for this finding. First, high self-esteem people may be able to attract "better" relationship partners than low self-esteem people. Alternatively (or additionally), people might use their own self-evaluations as an evaluative base when judging others (Dunning, 1993; Gramzow & Gaertner, 2005).

Neither of the preceding explanations can explain the more dynamic aspects of our data, however. For low self-esteem participants, we found that partner evaluations rose following a threat to self-worth. These shifting appraisals bespeak of a fluid process in which individuals adjust their evaluations to protect or maintain their feelings of self-worth (Brown, Dutton, & Cook, 2001). Lacking confidence in their own abilities to offset threats to self-worth, low self-esteem people seek refuge in the accomplishments of their intimates and associates, thereby

satisfying their self-enhancement needs without setting themselves up for personal disappointment and shame.

The indirect manner in which low self-esteem people countered a blow to self-worth underscores that self-enhancement maneuvers must be believable in order to be effective (Brown, 1993a; Brown et al., 1988; Brown & Gallagher, 1992; Schlenker, 1985; Sedikides & Strube, 1997). Although blowing one's own horn might be more expedient, if one doubts one's ability to defend grandiose self-assessments against scrutiny then direct self-aggrandizement poses an additional threat to self-worth rather than a strategy for restoring it. By exaggerating the worth of their relationship partners, low self-esteem people circumvent the risks that attend more direct forms of self-enhancement.

If exalting the virtues of their relationship partners allowed low self-esteem people to fend off threatening self-relevant feedback and preserve their momentary feelings of self-worth, why did not high self-esteem participants do this as well? Although ceiling effects might be implicated, we suspect the high self-esteem participants simply did not feel the need to engage in indirect forms of self-enhancement. In previous research, we have shown that high self-esteem people are less bothered by negative feedback than are low self-esteem people (Brown, 2007, 2010; Brown & Dutton, 1995; Brown & Marshall, 2001, 2006). If their feelings of self-worth were not sufficiently threatened by the negative feedback they received, our high self-esteem participants might not have felt the need to bolster them by extolling their partner's virtues. Future research should assess this possibility.

The effects we observed are consistent with other research showing self-esteem differences in self-enhancement processes. For example, Tice and associates have argued that low self-esteem people adopt a prevention focus that emphasizes self-protection, whereas high self-esteem people embrace a promotion focus that emphasizes self-enhancement (Baumeister, Tice, & Hutton, 1989; Tice, 1991). Our findings fit well with this framework, adding that low self-esteem people do engage in indirect forms of self-enhancement (i.e., partner glorification).

Our findings also share similarities with research by Heatherton and Vohs (2000; Vohs & Heatherton, 2001). In a series of studies, these investigators found that self-threatening feedback led low self-esteem participants to exhibit heightened concerns with social inclusion and greater likability. Our findings extend this research by showing that low self-esteem people are also more benevolent toward their romantic partners when their self-worth has recently been threatened.

Future research should examine whether partner enhancement actually offsets the pain of a negative, personal outcome. Although self-aggrandizing social comparisons have been shown to promote feelings of self-worth (Brown, 1986, 2007, in press), we did not provide any direct evidence that this occurred in the present research. One way to test this assumption would be to use partner evaluations as a self-affirmational resource. If people who are given a chance to evaluate their partner favorably are less defensive than are those who are not given the opportunity, we would have evidence that partner enhancement provides self-protective benefits (Kumashiro & Sedikides, 2005; Sherman & Cohen, 2006).

Assuming such evidence is found, partner enhancement would join other behaviors that have been shown to promote feelings of self-worth. The list of such behaviors is already long, confirming that self-enhancement is pursued in a great variety of generally substitutable ways (e.g., Tesser, 2001). Much as an accomplished motorist skillfully adjusts the wheel to remain on course, so, too, do people deftly adjust their perceptions to protect, maintain, and restore their feelings of self-worth; sometimes, it seems, they even rely on their passengers to take the wheel.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

Funding

Notes

1. For two reasons, we did not preselect participants on the basis of whether they were or had ever been in a romantic relationship: (a) pilot data indicated that over 90% of the participants in a comparable sample indicated that they were now or had previously been involved in a romantic relationship and (b) the present series of studies was part of a larger investigation of self-enhancement processes among high self-esteem and low self-esteem people, and we wanted to retain as large a sample as possible. Finally, participants were informed at the start of the experiment that they could omit answering questions that did not pertain to them, and the data were discarded from participants who did so.

2. Preliminary analyses indicated that the effects to be reported in this article were not specific to any of the eight traits we assessed. Consequently, we collapsed across the traits in the analyses we report. Readers wishing to see the analyses separated by trait can contact the first author.

3. Mixed-design regression models, which involve a combination of between-subjects and within-subjects factors, can be implemented in statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS) using the generalized linear model (GLM) function. The following syntax was used for Study 1: GLM PARTNER SELF BY CONDITION WITH MEANROSE/WSFACT TARGET 2/DESIGN CONDITION MEANROSE CONDITION*MEANROSE/PRINT ETASQ.

4. The GLM function in SPSS is also well suited for performing specific contrasts. In Study 2, we used the following syntax to calculate main effect terms and a specific interaction contrast comparing Partner ratings against ratings of self and most other people. GLM PARTNER SELF OTHERS BY FEEDBACK WITH MEANROSE/WSFACT TARGET 3/DESIGN FEEDBACK MEANROSE FEEDBACK*MEANROSE/LMATRIX FEEDBACK*MEANROSE -1 1/MMATRIX PARTNER -2 SELF 1 OTHERS 1.

References

Alicke, M. D. (1985). Global self-evaluation as determined by the desirability and controllability of trait adjectives. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *49*, 1621-1630.

Andersen, S. M., & Chen, S. (2002). The relational self: An interpersonal social-cognitive theory. *Psychological Review*, *109*, 619-645.

Aron, A., & Aron, E. N. (1997). Self-expansion motivation as including the other in the self. In S. Duck (Ed.), *Handbook of personal relationships: Theory, research, and interventions* (2nd ed., pp. 251-270). New York, NY: John Wiley.

Baumeister, R. F., Tice, D. M., & Hutton, D. G. (1989). Self-presentational motivations and personality differences in self-esteem. *Journal of Personality*, *57*, 547-579.

Brown, J. D. (1986). Evaluations of self and others: Self-enhancement biases in social judgments. *Social Cognition*, *4*, 353-376.

Brown, J. D. (1993a). Motivational conflict and the self: The double-bind of low self-esteem. In R. F. Baumeister (Ed.), *Self-esteem: The puzzle of low self-regard* (pp. 117-130). New York, NY: Plenum.

Brown, J. D. (1993b). Self-esteem and self-evaluation: Feeling is believing. In J. Suls (Ed.), *Psychological perspectives on the self* (Vol. 4, pp. 27-58). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Brown, J. D. (2007). *The self*. New York, NY: Psychology Press.

Brown, J. D. (2010). High self-esteem buffers negative feedback: Once more with feeling. *Cognition and Emotion*, *24*, 1389-1404.

Brown, J. D. (in press). Understanding the "Better than Average" effect: Motives matter. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*.

Brown, J. D., Collins, R. L., & Schmidt, G. W. (1988). Self-esteem and direct versus indirect forms of self-enhancement. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *55*, 445-453.

Brown, J. D., & Dutton, K. A. (1995). The thrill of victory, the complexity of defeat: Self-esteem and people's emotional reactions to success and failure. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *68*, 712-722.

Brown, J. D., Dutton, K. A., & Cook, K. E. (2001). From the top down: Self-esteem and self-evaluation. *Cognition and Emotion*, *15*, 615-631.

Brown, J. D., & Gallagher, F. M. (1992). Coming to terms with failure: Private self-enhancement and public self-effacement. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *28*, 3-22.

Brown, J. D., & Marshall, M. A. (2001). Self-esteem and emotion: Some thoughts about feelings. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *27*, 575-584.

Brown, J. D., & Marshall, M. A. (2006). The three faces of self-esteem. In M. Kernis (Ed.), *Self-esteem: Issues and answers* (pp. 4-9). New York, NY: Psychology Press.

Brown, J. D., Novick, N. J., Lord, K. A., & Richards, J. M. (1992). When Gulliver travels: Social context, psychological closeness, and self-appraisals. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *60*, 717-727.

Cialdini, R. B., Borden, R. J., Thorne, A., Walker, M. R., Freeman, S., & Sloan, L. R. (1976). Basking in reflected glory: Three (football) field studies. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *34*, 366-375.

Cialdini, R. B., & Richardson, K. D. (1980). Two indirect tactics of image management: Basking and blasting. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *39*, 406-415.

Dunning, Ds (1993). Words to live by: The self and definitions of social concepts and categories. In J. Suls (Ed.), *Psychological perspectives on the self* (Vol. 4, pp. 99-126). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Fletcher, G. J. O., & Kerr, P. S. G. (2010). Through the eyes of love: Reality and illusion in intimate relationships. *Psychological Bulletin*, *136*, 627-658.

Gagné, F. M., & Lydon, J. E. (2004). Bias and accuracy in close relationships: An integrative review. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, *8*, 322-338.

Gramzow, R. H., & Gaertner, L. (2005). Self-esteem and favoritism toward novel in-groups: The self as an evaluative base. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *88*, 801-815.

Heatherton, T. F., & Vohs, K. D. (2000). Interpersonal evaluations following threats to self: Role of self-esteem. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *78*, 725-736.

James, W. (1890). *The principles of psychology* (Vol. 1). New York, NY: Henry Holt.

Katz, J., Beach, S. R. H., & Anderson, P. (1996). Self-enhancement versus self-verification: Does spousal support always help? *Cognitive Therapy and Research*, *20*, 345-360.

Kobayashi, C., & Brown, J. D. (2003). Self-esteem and self-enhancement in Japan and America. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *34*, 567-580.

Kumashiro, M., & Sedikides, C. (2005). Taking on board liability-focused information: Close positive relationships as a self-bolstering resource. *Psychological Science*, *16*, 732-739.

Mednick, S. A. (1962). The associative basis of the creative process. *Psychological Review*, *26*, 220-232.

Mikulincer, M., & Shaver, P. R. (2003). The attachment behavioral system in adulthood: Activation, psychodynamics, and interpersonal processes. *Advances in experimental social psychology*, *35*, 53-152.

Murray, S. L., Bellavia, G., Feeney, B., Holmes, J., & Rose, P. (2001). The contingencies of interpersonal acceptance: When romantic relationships function as a self-affirmational resource. *Motivation and Emotion*, *25*, 163-189.

Murray, S. L., Holmes, J. G., MacDonald, G., & Ellsworth, P. C. (1998). Through the looking glass darkly? When self-doubt turns into relationship insecurities. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *75*, 1459-1480.

Murray, S. L., Griffin, D. W., Rose, P., & Bellavia, G. (2006). For better or worse? Self-esteem and the contingencies of acceptance in marriage. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *32*, 866-882.

Rosenberg, M. (1965). *Society and the adolescent self-image*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Schlenker, B. R. (1985). Identity and self-identification. In B. R. Schlenker (Ed.), *The self and social life* (pp. 65-99). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Sedikides, C., & Strube, M. J. (1997). Self-evaluation: To thine own self be good, to thine own self be sure, and to thine own self by true, and to thine own self be better. *Advances in experimental social psychology*, *29*, 209-269.

Sherif, M., & Hovland, C. I. (1961). *Social judgment: Assimilation and contrast effects in communication and attitude change*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Sherman, D. K., & Cohen, G. L. (2006). The psychology of self-defense: Self-affirmation theory. In M. P. Zanna (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 38, pp. 183-242). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

Slotter, E. B., Gardner, W. L., & Finkel, E. J. (2010). Who am I without you? The influence of romantic breakup on the self-concept. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *36*, 147-160.

Snyder, C. R., Lassegard, M., & Ford, C. E. (1986). Distancing after group success and failure: Basking in reflected glory and cutting off reflected failure. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *51*, 382-388.

Steele, C. M. (1988). The psychology of self-affirmation: Sustaining the integrity of the self. In L. Berkowitz (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 21, pp. 261-302). New York, NY: Academic Press.

Tesser, A. (2001). On the plasticity of self-defense. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, *10*, 66-69.

Tice, D. M. (1991). Esteem protection or enhancement? Self-handicapping motives and attributions differ by trait self-esteem. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *60*, 711-725.

Vohs, K. D., & Heatherton, T. F. (2001). Self-esteem and threats to self: Implications for self-construals and interpersonal perceptions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *81*, 1103-1118.

Bios

Jonathon D. Brown, PhD, is a social psychologist at the University of Washington. Since receiving his degree from UCLA in 1986, he has written two books, authored numerous journal articles and chapters, received a Presidential Young Investigator Award from the National Science Foundation, and been recognized as one of social psychology's most frequently-cited authors. Among his many pet peeves are self-promoting autobiographical statements written in the third person.

Albert Han received his BS in psychology from the University of Washington, and is currently a doctoral student at the USC Marshall School of Business.