

PSYC 325

Discussion Questions

Week 15 (Wednesday) - Proposals/Weddings/Transitions to Marriage Discussion Questions

1. Many of the studies we've read on proposals and marriage have surveyed college students, but the mean age of marriage for both men and women is now in the late 20s. Do you think expectations for proposals and weddings change with age? Is it a good idea to use college students in these studies? Why or why not?
2. Schweingruber, Cast & Anahita (2008) show that proposals affect others' perception of the engaged couple's relationship (such that the more traditional the proposal is, the better perceptions of the relationship)- what other factors do you think play into others' view of relationship strength? Is it fair for people to judge others' relationships on a single event like a proposal? Is it important to know who the people are to understand what kind of proposal they would have before judging their relationship strength (is there any instances where a non-traditional proposal would actually indicate a stronger relationship?)
3. Do the gender norms that arise in proposals (getting down on one knee, having a ring, etc.) have any ties to evolutionary theory? Would attachment dimensions affect the type of proposals each partner would want? How does the investment model apply to different aspects of proposals?
4. Kalmijn claims, "By celebrating the marriage, the bride and groom show their friends and relatives the kind of spouse they have chosen and they show others that they have chosen to go through life as a married couple." What is the role of the social network(s) in weddings? Who is the wedding for? Who is the honeymoon for? How can these differences be explained with respect to the theories we've studied in class?
5. Kalmijn finds that cohabiting couples and those who are in their second marriage have less lavish weddings and less frequent church weddings. What are the implications of these findings for non-traditional marrying couples (divorced, widowed, homosexual, elopement, older)?
6. Do you think that the wedding vows are the most important emotional aspect of a wedding as Joel (2013) implied? What do you think vows should be based on (Joel (2013) used evidence from the field of close relationships, does that make the most sense?) What makes wedding vows so important, and what is the significance of married couples renewing their wedding vows later in life?