

PSYC 325: Discussion Questions

Week 6

Self-Expansion / Mind, Body, & Relationships

1. Aron et al. (2000) found that participating in novel/exciting experiences led couples experience increased relationship quality. They demonstrated these results with both survey and experimental methods. The authors make many claims about the implications of their findings on clinical practice for couple's therapy, among other things, but clearly more investigation in this area is required. **What might be another, more ecologically valid way to test the relationship between arousal, excitement, boredom, and relationship quality?**
2. Aron et al (1995) found that after falling in love participants demonstrated greater change and increased diversity of self-concept domains and increased self-efficacy and self-esteem. They posit that this effect can be explained by self expansion theory such that "falling in love should lead to change in (a) the perceived content of the self, which might be characterized as an expansion in that perceived content, and (b) an increase in self-efficacy and self-esteem." **Where self-expansion theory deals with the expansion of self-concept to include another attachment theory deals with concept of the self and of others separately. What do you think is the relationship between these two theories? More specifically how might the relationship between love, self-concept domains, self-efficacy and self-esteem be mediated or moderated by attachment style?**
3. In his 1997 chapter on the self expansion motivation Aron discusses how the model plays into the habituation seen in longer relationships. He argues that if couples engage in self-expanding activities together, the model still is in effect because they are growing together. **How does this idea of habituation and self-expansion play into long distance relationships where couples cannot engage in self-expanding activities together, but satisfaction rates are still very high?** Do they simply never become habituated to each other due to the distance or would the time they are able to spend together automatically fall under a self expansion activity?
4. How would being engaged in multiple love relationships affect one's self expansion? Would people engaged in multiple relationships at one time experience greater or less self expansion under the model?
5. Would engaging in a secret relationship, which have already seen produce higher levels of obsession/infatuation, still work under the self expansion model. Can you really extend your view of yourself if the half that you are expanding must remain hidden to people? Does the fact that it is a secret play into the increased satisfaction that is derived from arousing activities that Aron et al. showed in the 2000 study?
6. Additionally in his 1997 chapter, Aron mentions metaphors of attachment and falling in love as bad models of relationships. However we have all heard metaphoric expressions like "in love with the job" or "married to the job"...would starting a new job or engaging a new hobby (individual or group) that you love also all a person to expand on their self views? **Would these types of relationships/love experiences show the same positive changes in self-concept, self-efficacy, and self-esteem as showed in the Aron et al. 1995 study?**

1. In the Nauts et al. discussion the researchers note that this research should be expanded upon to include other populations and cite gay men as a specific example. Given what we know about mating preferences in gay men from Buss/an evolutionary psychology perspective, how do you think this phenomena would be illustrated within the gay male population?
2. Nauts et al. (2012) found that men's (but not women's) cognitive performance declined if they were led to believe that they interacted with a person of the opposite sex via a computer, or even when they anticipated interacting with a person of the opposite sex via a computer. They posit that this gender difference may occur because men have a higher sex drive and thus are likely to perceive relatively neutral situations in sexualized terms. Do you buy this explanation? Why, or why not?
3. Kille et al. (2013) claim that their results demonstrate that embodied cues can effect motivation, however their manipulation was fairly contrived. How may the limited ecological validity of their experiment effect the generalizability of their results?