Chapter 8 - Attraction

I. Attraction
- Interpersonal Attraction: The strength and positivity of one's attitude regarding another individual.
  - Measured with ratings and gaze

II. Physical Attractiveness
A. What determines physical attractiveness?
1. Faces
- Neotony = cuteness
  - we like what is child-like (large eyes, small nose and mouth, disproportionately large head)
  - Women's Make-Up - eye shadow = big eye, blush de-emphasize the nose, poofy hair = big head
- Average of all faces
  - schema matching
  - This does not work for dog or bird composites
- Innate Preference for Symmetry
  - Symmetry as a signal of health/reproductive fitness
  - though composites are preferred even when symmetry is controlled for.
  - Symmetry is poorly correlated with actual health
- Feminine Faces make men attractive
  - http://www.uni-regensburg.de/Fakultaeten/phil_Fak_II/Psychologie/Psy_Ii/beautycheck/english/index.htm

2. Weight
- Stereotypes (Anti-Fat Attitudes)
  - Overweight people have no self-control or willpower
  - They they caused themselves to be fat
  - They are untrustworthy
  - they are less competent
- Larger women are rated as less feminine and less sexual.
- Women in our culture are Weight obsessed.
  - Weight is a not a good predictor of health status - can be independent of cardiovascular health.
3. The Attractiveness stereotype: What is Beautiful is Good

-People rate Attractive males and females as:

Smarter     Sexually warm and responsive
Kind        Strong     Modest     Outgoing
Nurturing   Sensitive   Interesting Poised
Sociable    Exciting Dates Better Character

-People also expect attractive people to:

Have Lives of prestige
Have More social and Professional success
Have more fulfilling lives.
Have Happier marriages
Be more competent in marriage

- There is truth in these stereotypes
  - happier and more sociable
  - make more money in their jobs
    - highly attractive people make approximately 2,000 more a year
      than people rated as less attractive (on a 1-5 scale)
  - Attractiveness is the number 1 predictor of self-esteem
  - Attractiveness is associated with peer popularity

- Explanation for this?
  - Behavioral Confirmation Effects (self-fulfilling prophesy)

- Limitations?
  - The Matching Hypothesis
    - We may have more positive ratings of attractive people, but we prefer to have relationships with people who are equally attractive to themselves.
III Similarity
A. Do Birds of a Feather Flock together?

B. The Matching Hypothesis
- people have relationships with people similar in physical attractiveness
- people tend to prefer others who are similar in IQ

C. Attitude Similarity
- Most of the literature focuses on Similarity in Attitudes.

- Byrne & Nelson (1965) - As the proportion of similar attitudes increases, so do ratings of attraction
D. Rosenbaum’s Repulsion Hypothesis
- we are not attracted by similarity, but repulsed by dissimilarity:
- tested with
  - Control Group - no attitude information
  - Similar Group - given just similar attitude info
  - Dissimilar Group - given just dissimilar att. info.

- Similar and Control rated equally highly attractive
- Dissimilar rated very low.
- Interpreted as Similarity is irrelevant to our evaluations.

Rosenbaum (1986)
E. Smeaton, Byrne, & Murnen (1989)
- ruled out the possibility that Rosenbaum’s control group really represented a 100% similarity group (the false consensus effect - when we know nothing about a person we overestimate their similarity to us).

Test-
- Group 1 = 8 dissimilar attitudes / 0 Similar
- Group 2 = 8 dissimilar attitudes / 28 Similar
- Group 3 = 8 dissimilar attitudes / 62 Similar

Hypothesis = if Rosenbaum is right, then none of the groups should differ.
Results- Group 1 and Group 3 were significantly different, suggests that similarity does have an effect.

Smeaton, Byrne, & Murne
F. Current State of the Field
  - Dissimilarity information has a greater impact that on attraction than similarity information.

- The moral of the Story?
  - Be vague – let people think what they want and they will love you.
  - Politicians
  - *Being There* – Jerzy Kosinski

IV. Proximity & Familiarity
- Friendship and liking are influenced by how much time we spend together and how often.

A. Proximity - best predictor of friendship formation is how close to each other two people live.
  a. Festinger, Schachter, & Back (1950) - Westgate West Apartment study
    - residents reported how often they interacted socially with other residents.
    - people most likely to interact with/be friends with people who were next door, compared to other residents. People two-doors down were interacted with more than people on other floors.
2. Familiarity - The more often we see people, the more we like them

a. Zajonc (1968) - The Mere Exposure Effect
   - Show Ps faces, some are repeated. People liked the repeated faces more.
   - If you initially dislike the face, exposure only increases disliking.

b. People like their mirror face more than their actual face – mere exposure
   - People choose reflected photos (the way you see yourself in the mirror) more than regular photos (the way others see you).

- Morland & Beach (1982)
  - Confederates attended a class either 0, 5, 10, or 15 times during a semester.
  - Student attractiveness of confederates. Frequently attending confederates rated higher than less frequent confederates.

Moreland & Beach (1992)