Relationships
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Self-Disclosure

Self-Disclosure is when a person reveals intimate information about themselves to another person.

Sprecher – Key Study:

- **Procedure:** 156 US undergrads were paired in 2 person dyads. 2/3rds of these dyads were female – female, and 1/3rd male – female. They all engaged in a self-disclosure task on skype. There were two conditions:
  - **Reciprocal:** Dyad members took it in turns to ask questions and disclose personal information.
  - **Non – Reciprocal:** One person asked questions and the other disclosed. They then switched roles (extended reciprocity)

- **Findings:** In the reciprocal condition, dyads reported more liking, closeness and perceived similarity and tended to enjoy the interaction. Those in the non-reciprocal condition did not report the same enjoyment and liking. This remained this way even after they switched disclosure roles

- **Conclusions:** Reciprocal self-disclosure is more likely to lead to positive interpersonal outcomes than extended reciprocity.

Types of Self Disclosure: Self disclosure takes many different forms so there is not a straight forward relationship between self-disclosure and relationship satisfaction. Eg. Disclosing one’s taste in music and disclosing one’s inner fears are quite different. The type of self-disclosure is therefore important in determining relationship satisfaction.

Norms of Self Disclosure: There is the norm that people should engage in only a moderately personal level of self-disclosure in the early stages of the relationship. Derelk and Grzelak – shouldn’t be too personal that the discloser seems indiscriminate nor so impersonal that the listener doesn’t know the person better.

- **Research Support:** Collins and Miller carried out a meta-analysis that supports the central role of self-disclosure. People who engage in intimate disclosures tend to be liked more than people who engage at lower levels and people like others as a result of having disclosed to them.

- **Boom and Bust – Internet:** Relationships found on the internet involve higher levels of self-disclosure and attraction than in face-to-face relationships. Cooper suggests the boom and bust phenomenon; relationships get very intense very quickly as people reveal more online than they would in person (boom) but because there is a lack of underlying trust and true knowledge of the person, the relationship becomes difficult to sustain (bust)

- **May be greater face to face than on the internet:** Knop challenges assumption that people disclose more online than offline. Due to the relative lack of intimacy, members of social groups are less likely to disclose information online. There is also a lack of non-verbal cues (eg. eye contact).

- **Cultural Differences:** In the West (eg. Americans), people engage in more intimate self-disclosure than those from the East (eg. Chinese). Furthermore, Japanese women prefer lower levels of personal conversations that Japanese men, but American women disclose more than American men.
Equity Theory

Claims that people are most comfortable when what they get out of a relationship (benefits) is roughly equal to what they put in (costs)