# HELPING THE SEXUALLY OPPRESSED

Harvey L. Gochros Jean S. Gochros Joel Fischer

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Hermon J. Jonashi Burton E. George Joel Frogress

## CHAPTER 18

## THE UNATTRACTIVE Elaine Hatfield

Once research on the impact of physical attractiveness on love, sex, and intimacy was virtually taboo. A decade ago, when Dr. Ellen Berscheid and this author (1974) reviewed research done by psychologists, we could ferret out only a few such articles. This year in a second review (Hatfield & Sprecher, 1986), we easily retrieved more than a thousand relevant articles. Let us review what social psychologists have discovered in the last decade about the importance of appearance in people's most intimate of relationships.

#### THE PROBLEM

#### **Definition**

Webster's New World Dictionary (Guralnik, 1982) defines beauty this way:

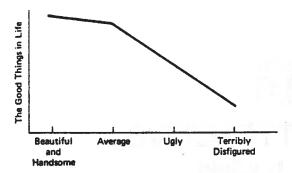
Beauty: (1) the quality attributed to whatever pleases or satisfies the senses or mind, as by line, color, form, texture, proportion, rhythmic motion, tone, etc., or by behavior, attitude, etc.; (2) a thing having this quality; (3) good looks; (4) a very good-looking woman; (5) any very attractive feature. (p. 124)

Scientists' conceptual definition is much the same:

Physical Attractiveness: That which represents one's conception of the ideal in appearance; that which gives the greatest degree of pleasure to the senses. (Hatfield, in press)

#### **Existing Research**

Good looking men and women have an advantage in life; the unattractive encounter enormous obstacles. People assume that



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FIGURE
18-1. The relationship between physical attractiveness and assumed success in school, work, relationships, and in life.

good looking men and women are special, they treat them that way and the reverse is often true for the "unattractive." As a consequence the attractive/unattractive may well develop very different personalities.

There is considerable evidence that people do assume that "what is beautiful is good; what is ugly is bad." For example, Dion, Berscheid, and Walster (1972) asked men and women to examine photographs of good looking, average, or homely men and women. Most people assumed that the good looking must possess nearly all the good traits known to humanity. The good looking were assumed to be more sexually responsive, warmer, more sensitive, kind, interesting, strong, poised, sociable, and outgoing . . . to be more "exciting dates," more "nurturant," and have better characters than were the unattractive. A multitude of studies document the fact that people do assume "What is ugly is bad" (See Cash, 1984; or Hatfield & Sprecher, 1986.)

Not only do people think that the attractive are special, they treat them that way. Some examples: teachers take it for granted that beauty and brains go together—and they grade accordingly (Clifford & Walster, 1973). In the job market, too, beauty pays. Good-looking people are more likely to be hired, get paid more, and are more likely to be promoted. Psychiatrists try harder... and are more successful with good-looking clients. The handsome and the beautiful have a friend in court. Good-looking

defendants are rarely found guilty; and even if they are, they are likely to be given unusually lenient sentences.

Once again, as a consequence of their different experiences, the good looking and the ugly may develop different personalities and characters.

An observation: the evidence then makes it clear that two basic societal suppositions are at work here—that what is beautiful is good; and that what is ugly is bad. Both phrases are true. But a more careful analysis of the data we have cited, as well as other research (Dermer & Thiel, 1975), makes it clear that the emphasis should be on the latter. If we look carefully at the relationship between appearance and a host of other variables-self-esteem, job opportunities, dating popularity, happiness—we soon discover that things look like Figure 18-1. The data made it clear that only a small advantage is offered in being beautiful or handsome rather than average. Stunningly good-looking people have only a slight advantage over their more ordinary peers. What is really important is to be at least average. The average-looking have a real advantage over the homely or the disfigured.

### Appearance: Its Impact on Love, Sex, and Intimacy

Society's biases ensure that good-looking men and women have a marked advantage at every stage of an intimate relationship:

- The attractive have an easier time meeting potential dates and mates.
- 2. They have an advantage in trying to sustain a relationship.
- 3. They find it easier to attract the kind of dates and mates in which they are interested.
- 4. If things go wrong, they find it easier to start anew.

Let us review some of the research documenting these four contentions.

Romantic beginnings. Appearances are extraordinarily important in romantic beginnings. In the 1960s, this author and colleagues (Walster [Hatfield] et al., 1966) organized a dance for University of Minnesota freshmen. Men and women were led to believe that a computer would match them up with a blind date. In truth, couples were randomly matched with their partners. Then we set out to find out all that we could about the couples. We assessed their physical attractiveness, intelligence, personalities, and social skills.

At the dance, the 400 couples talked, danced, and got to know one another. Then, during the 10:30 P.M. intermission, we swept through the buildings, rounding up couples from the dance floor, lavatories, fire escapes—even adjoining buildings. We asked them to tell us frankly what they thought of their dates. This study was the first to discover the inordinate importance of good looks in romantic beginnings. (See also Brislin & Lewis, 1968; Brodie, 1971.) We found that:

Everyone (including the homeliest men and women) insisted on being matched-up with a good-looking blind date.

Everyone, good-looking or not, insisted that their dates be exceptionally charming, bright, and socially skilled.

If fate paired up men or women with a goodlooking date, they tried hard to see their matches again. When we contacted couples six months after the dance, we found that daters—regardless of what they looked like themselves—had asked out the good-looking men and women; they'd not given the unattractive a second chance.

Every effort to find any other characteristics that mattered failed. Men and women with exceptional IQ's and social skills, for example, were not liked any better than those who were less endowed.

Finally, both men and women cared equally about their dates' looks. (See also Curran & Lippold, 1975.)

A variety of studies document that attractive men and women are more popular and have more dates than do their homely peers (Berscheid & Walster [Hatfield], 1974; Cash, 1983). Moreover, when it comes to the relationship between appearance and sexual activity, handsome men and beautiful women do seem to get more "offers they can't refuse." Kaats and Davis (1970) were the first to investigate whether attractive people are more sexually permissive than others.

Traditionally it was assumed that most men would be inclined to press their dates for sex, but only the most appealing men would be successful; handsome men were expected to have far more sexual success than homely ones-the "James Bond v. Woody Allen" phenomenon. Traditionally women were supposed to be coy-to engage in sex was seen as evidence, not of desire, but of desperation (Symons, 1979). Thus, early researchers were uncertain whether to predict that beautiful women would be unusually sexually experienced (because they had an unusual number of enticing opportunities) or unusually chaste (because they didn't have to "put out" in order to get dates). When push came to shove-when researchers were forced to settle on a hypothesis-they predicted that beautiful women would be more sexually experienced than their less attractive counterparts. And that's just what they found.

In a study at the University of Colorado, Kaats and Davis (1970) found that 56 percent of the attractive women were non-

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virgins. Only 31 percent of the average and 37 percent of the homely women were sexually experienced. Attractive women were experienced, but they were not "promiscuous." Attractive versus homely women (who had had sexual intercourse) did not differ on the number of times they had tried sex, or on the number of men they'd experimented with. Kaats and Davis concluded that attractive women were more likely to have premarital intercourse because they had more opportunities and more pressure to experiment. The attractive women had been in love more often, dated more often, and had petted more often.

Other studies support the contention that attractive men and women have unusually permissive sexual attitudes and behaviors. Kelley (1978) interviewed a sample of 668 students at the University of California. They found attractive men and women to be more permissive in their premarital sexual attitudes. For example, attractive men and women did not want to be virgins, nor did they want to marry inexperienced mates. Good-looking men and women were more liberal in their activities as well. For example, they were more likely to be having intercourse regularly with a steady date, and occasionally with other partners, than were their peers.

Finally, Curran (1975) found that attractive men and women had more sexual experience than anyone else on every item of the Heterosexual Behavior Scale: they were more likely to have kissed, french kissed, engaged in oral sex, and had intercourse, than their peers.

So, overall, the results are clear. Attractive men and women tend to have more social and sexual experience.

Maintaining an intimate relationship: attractiveness and social skills. People expect the good-looking to be socially appealing, and treat them that way. But what are the good-looking/homely really like? The evidence suggests that a sort of "self-fulfilling"

prophecy generally operates. People expect the good-looking to be charming, treat them that way, and as a consequence, they do become more skilled.

That there is a self-fulfilling nature to the physical attractiveness stereotype was demonstrated in an intriguing study by Snyder, Tanke, and Berscheid (1977). Men and women at the University of Minnesota were scheduled to participate in a study on the processes by which men and women get to know each other. When a couple arrived they were directed to different rooms. They had to use the telephone to become acquainted. Before the telephone conversation began, men were given a snapshot of their partner, along with some biographical information. In truth, the snapshot was not of their actual partner, but of a (fictitious) beautiful or homely woman. The man was asked his initial impressions of his partner. Men who thought they would soon be talking to a beautiful woman, expected her to be sociable, poised, humorous, and socially skilled. Those who thought she would be homely, expected her to be unsociable, awkward, serious, and socially inept. Those were the men's expectations, but they really aren't so surprising—we already know that goodlooking people receive more positive first impressions than homely ones.

What is startling is that men's expectations had a dramatic impact on the women's behavior in the short space of the telephone call. Men thought their partners were either beautiful or homely, with no midground. In fact, of course, the women on the other end of the line varied greatly in appearancesome were attractive, some average, some homely. Nonetheless, within the space of a telephone conversation women became what men expected them to be. The psychologists recorded (separately) the men's and the women's portions of the telephone conversation. Then they asked judges to listen to the women's voices and say what they seemed to be like. If men thought they were talking to a beauty, the woman unconsciously began to

sound like one. If men thought she was homely, she soon sensed that too, and began acting that way. Women who had been depicted as attractive, became more animated, confident, and adept; women who had been depicted as homely acted just the opposite way. As the authors put it, "What had initially been reality in the minds of the men had now become reality in the behavior of the women with whom they had interacted." The men expected certain women (those who had been randomly assigned to be attractive) to be more sociable, and indeed they became so.

What happened to transfer the reality in the minds of the men into the reality in the behavior of the women? When the men's sides of the conversations were analyzed, it was found that the men who thought they were talking to a beautiful woman were more sociable, sexually warm, interesting, independent, sexually permissive, bold, outgoing, humorous, obvious, and socially adept then were men who thought they were talking to a homely woman. The men assigned to an "attractive woman" were also judged to be more comfortable, to enjoy themselves more, and to use their voices more effectively. In a nutshell, the men who thought they had an attractive partner tried harder.

If the stereotypes held by the men formed their own social reality within only ten minutes of a telephone conversation, one can imagine what happens over several years. If year after year, attractive people are given more opportunities and encouragement in social interaction than unattractive people, undoubtedly attractive and unattractive people become different social beings.

What would happen if a study similar to the above one were conducted, only this time men were not biased? This time they hadn't a clue as to what their partners looked like? This time would the women's real appearance shine through? In reality, do attractive men and women display more social skill over the phone? Such a study was conducted (Goldman & Lewis, 1977), and it was

found that attractive men and women were judged by their telephone partners to be more socially skilled than unattractive men and women. Apparently, the physical attractiveness stereotype does contain a kernel of truth.

In general, researchers have concluded that attractive people have different everyday social interactions from homely people. In one study, for example, (Reis, Nezlek & Wheeler, 1980), freshmen men and women at the University of Rochester kept records of their social experiences for 40 days. Researchers found that handsome men had more interactions, longer interactions, and with more women, than did homely men. Attractive people tended to spend more of their interaction time conversing or partying, while less attractive people spent more time at work. Attractive men and women were more satisfied with their encounters with the opposite sex than were less appealing people. Over time, physically attractive people became more and more satisfied with their relationships.

Other researchers (Reis et al., 1982) support the contention that attractive men and women have the most satisfying social interactions. They found that attractive men and women report that their relationships are more intimate and disclosing than dougly men and women.

In the end, attractive people end up with better dating and marital relationships. There is considerable evidence that people do generally end up with mates who are about as attractive and who have as much to offer overall as they do. (See Walster [Hatfield] et al., 1966.) Studies in the United States, Canada, Germany, and Japan find that people generally end up dating and marrying someone who is similar to themselves in appearance (Cavior & Boblette, 1972; White, 1980; Brislin & Lewis, 1968; Tessler & Brodie, 1971; Berscheid, Dion,

In a typical study (Silverman, 1971; Murs-

Walster [Hatfield] & Walster, 1971.)

tein, 1972), couples were observed in several natural settings—in movie theater lines, in singles bars, and at assorted social events. A team of researchers rated the daters' looks. Most couples turned out to be remarkably similar in attractiveness. A handsome man was most likely to have a beautiful woman on his arm. A homely man was likely to be spotted buying a drink for a homely woman.

It was also found in this study that "similarity breeds content." The more similar the couples were in physical appeal, the more delighted they seemed to be with one another, as reflected in intimate touching. Sixty percent of the couples who were similar in attractiveness were engaged in some type of touching. Only 22 percent of those couples who were mismatched were touching.

#### **Matching: More Complex Cases**

Of course couples can be "well matched" in a variety of ways. For example, the beautiful Jacqueline Kennedy chose Aristotle Onassis, who was not particularly good-looking but who was unusually bright, charming... and rich. We probably all know of similar cases closer to home.

Murstein et al. (1974) provide a description of the way such complex matching operates: A handsome man is seen with a woman of mediocre attractiveness. "I wonder what he sees in her?" may be the quizzical question of a bystander. Quite possibly she possesses compensating qualities, such as greater intelligence, interpersonal competence, and wealth than he possesses, of which the bystander knows nothing.

Another case of compensatory exchange might be indicated if an aged statesman proposed marriage to a young beautiful woman. He would probably be trading his prestige and power for her physical attractiveness and youth (pp. 3-4).

The evidence supports the contention that people do engage in such complicated balancing and counterbalancing in selecting mates. The better looking the man or woman, the more loving, kinder, richer, more socially powerful partners he or she is likely to attract (Elder, 1969; Holmes & Hatch, 1938; Udry & Eckland, 1972; Taylor & Glenn, 1976; Udry, 1977).

In sum the evidence makes it clear that the good looking have a real advantage and the unattractive, a real hardship in life. Once again, two basic factors operate: (1) People assume that "What is beautiful is good; what is ugly is bad." The good looking are assumed to possess nearly all the good traits known to humanity. (2) Not only do people think that the attractive are special, they treat them that way. Teachers give good-looking students better grades; the good looking are the first hired, the last fired; the handsome and beautiful "have a friend in court." And (3) as a consequence the good looking and ugly develop different personalities and characters. The good looking are more socially poised as a result of the opportunities they have for just the sort of intimate relationship they wish.

#### INTERVENTIONS

We have seen that the unattractive are at a real disadvantage in intimate encounters. What can they and we do about this? Since the author is a family therapist (at King Kalakaua Clinic in Honolulu) and an experimental social psychologist (at the University of Hawaii at Manoa), the suggestions offered here will necessarily be drawn from her experience with individuals having trouble initiating, maintaining, or dealing with broken relationships. Social workers may well have other suggestions as to how society, in general, could be restructured so that such problems could be minimized.

In any case, in this chapter, we will review what advice professionals can give to the unattractive—who should they look for, for a mate? Where should they look? Once they are involved in a relationship, how can they move it toward ever increasing intimacy?

#### Looking for a Mate

Who. One would think that the best way to find a romantic partner would be to focus all of one's energies on just that. The author and a colleague, Dr. Richard Rapson, are therapists in private practice in Honolulu. Many of our clients are desperately eager to find mates. They are extraordinarily calculating; they simply can't "waste their time" on someone who's not a real possibility. Such a single-minded strategy rarely works. If they finally do find Mr./Ms. Right (and they rarely do) things go badly. They have so much riding on a single encounter that everyone freezes.

What does work then? Men and women should assume that they will have to meet and date 50 serious contenders before they find a relationship that "works." These 50 encounters give them an invaluable chance to practice; a chance to allow them and their partners to get to know one another. Thinking of these dates as practice gives people an advantage—they don't care too much. They can perfect their social skills without worrying that they may do something wrong.

What if they can't find any dates . . . much less 50? Research indicates that if one is looking for a lover, one should search for a friend (Peplau & Perlman, 1982; Cutrona, 1982). Scientists set out to learn which of two alternative strategies worked best: (1) looking single-mindedly for a mate-most lonely people automatically follow this strategy; (2) concentrating for six months on meeting people—without worrying about whether or not they are just right. Scientists find that the people who follow strategy 1 end up worse off than those who follow strategy 2, taking time off to make a few good friends along the way. In fact, the most effective strategy for finding a lover appears to be to concentrate, at first, on finding good friends. They are easier to find . . . and they are likely to introduce the person to someone who's just right for him or her (Cutrona, 1978; Rubenstein & Shaver, 1982).

Where. The evidence is clear (Festinger,

1951; Hatfield & Walster, 1982). Men and women generally meet their romantic partners by bumping into them in the normal course of events. They are most likely to meet their future mates in their neighborhood, in classes, at work.

We should probably not encourage clients to attend mixers, singles bars, and so on, in the hope of meeting eligible partners. Looks may be too much of a handicap in such places (Murstein, 1971). Instead, we should encourage them to look in other locations such as museums, supermarkets, and so on (see Novak, 1983; Hatfield & Walster, 1982; Hatfield & Sprecher, 1985).

#### **Enhancing Appearance**

At the same time that people are keeping an eye out for potential lovers and friends, people who are looking for a relationship can begin the never ending process of making themselves a "more appealing package"—improving their appearance and their intimacy skills.

We advise clients to spend some time improving their appearance. There are an unlimited number of guides which tell people how to do just that—how to fix their hair, use cosmetics, dress well, even alter their appearance via plastic surgery. The data make it clear that such efforts do work. People can alter their appearance, and such efforts do improve their social interactions (see Berscheid & Walster [Hatfield], 1974; Kurtzburg, Safar & Cavior, 1968; Graham, 1984; Roberts, 1984; Pertschuk, 1984; Orentreich, 1984).

So clients may want to spend some time on such self-improvement efforts—but, only some time. They don't want to spend enormous efforts. Conceivably, some people do spend all their time improving themselves and becoming more appealing, but such allout effort is probably counterproductive. A variety of factors—self-esteem, intelligence, an exciting personality, energy level, compassion—as well as physical characteristics. all have an impact on how good looking a

person appears to be. If we focus too much on basic appearance, we are likely to neglect other critically important things and end up impoverished, not just in appearance—but spiritually, personally, and socially.

#### **Working Toward Intimacy**

The word intimacy is derived from the Latin *intimus*, meaning "inner" or "innermost." We would define *intimacy* as:

A process in which we attempt to get close to another; to explore similarities (and differences) in the ways we both think, feel, and behave.

Everyone needs a warm intimate relationship. Yet many people have great trouble

pushing steadily forward into one.

A basic theoretical assumption provides the framework we use in teaching people how to be intimate with others. People must be capable of independence in order to be intimate with others, and, likewise, capable of intimacy if they are to be independent. Independence and intimacy are not opposite personality traits but interlocking skills. People who lack the ability to be independent or intimate can never really be either. They are never really with one another; never really separate.

What we set out to do, then, is to make people comfortable with the notion that they and the person with whom they are intimate are separate people, with separate ideas and feelings... who can sometimes come deeply

together with one another.

According to theorists, one of the most primitive tasks people face is to learn how to maintain their own identity and integrity, while yet engaging in deeply intimate relationships with others. (For a fuller discussion of this point, see Erikson, 1968; Fisher & Stricker, 1982; Freud, 1922; Hatfield, in press; Kantor & Lehr, 1975; Kaplan, 1978; Maslow, 1954; Pope et al., 1980.)

The unattractive often lack skills in intimate encounters. Once they attract romantic partners, they have trouble keeping them. Thus, at the same time we help clients find intimate partners, we have to teach them skills at pushing along an intimate encounter.

In therapy, we try to teach clients five sets of skills in a sort of "intimacy skills" training program.

1. Encouraging people to accept themselves as they are. It is a great temptation to dwell in the realm of absolutes. Many people are determined to be perfect; they can't settle for less. They see themselves as saints or sinners. Yet saintliness/evil are the least interesting of human conditions. Real life is lived in the middle zone. Real people inevitably have some strengths; yet everybody possesses small quirks.

The first step in learning to be independent/intimate then is to come to accept the fact that you are entitled to be what you are: to have the ideas you have, the feelings you feel, to do the best that you can do. And that

is good enough.

In therapy, we try to move people from the notion that one should come into the world perfect and continue that way, to a realization that one can only gain wisdom in small steps. People must pick one small goal and work to accomplish that. When that's accomplished, they can move on to another. That way, change is manageable... possible. One can never attain perfection, only work toward it. (For guides to developing such skills, see Watson & Tharp, 1981; Argyle, 1984; Zimbardo, 1977.)

2. Encouraging people to accept their intimates as they are. People may be hard on themselves, but they are generally even harder on their mates. Most people have the idea that everyone is entitled to a perfect partner, or at least one a little bit better than the one that's available (Hatfield et al., in press). If people are going to have an intimate relationship, they have to learn to enjoy others as they are, without hoping to fix them up.

It is extraordinarily difficult for people to accept that their friends are entitled to be the

people they are. From our own point of view, it seems so clear that things would be far better if our mate were only the people we want them to be. It would take so little for him or her to change their whole character structure. Why are they so stubborn?

Once we realize that our lover is the person who exists right now—not the person we wish she was, not the person he could be, but what he or she is—once that realization oc-

curs, intimacy becomes possible.

3. Encouraging people to express themselves. Next, intimates have to learn to be more comfortable about expressing their ideas and feelings. This is harder than one

might think.

People's intimate relations are usually their most important relationships. When passions are so intense, consequences so momentous, people are often hesitant to speak the truth. From moment to moment, they are tempted to present a consistent picture. If they're in love, they are hesitant to admit to their niggling doubts. (What if the person they love is hurt? What if their revelations destroy the relationship?) When they are angry, they don't want to speak about their love or their self-doubts, they want to lash out.

To be intimate, people have to push toward a more honest, graceful, complete, and patient communication—to understand that a person's ideas and feelings are necessarily complex, with many nuances, shadings, and inconsistencies. In love, there's time to clear

things up.

One interesting thing that people often discover is that their affection increases when they begin to admit their irritations. People are often surprised to discover that sometimes—when they think they have fallen out of love; that they are "bored" with their affair—as they begin to express their anger and ambivalence, they feel their love come back in a rush.

In The Family Crucible, Napier and Whitaker (1978) describe just such a confrontation.

What followed was a classic confrontation. If John's affair was a kind of reawakening, so now was this marital encounter, though of a very different sort. Eleanor was enraged, hurt, confused, and racked with a sense of failure. John was guilty, also confused, but not apologetic. The two partners fought and cried, talked and searched for an entire night. The next evening, more exhausting encounters. Feelings that had been hidden for years emerged; doubts and accusations that they had never expected to admit articulated.

Eleanor had to find out everything, and the more she discovered, the more insatiable her curiosity became. The more she heard, the guiltier her husband became and the angrier she grew, until he finally cried for a halt. It was his cry for mercy that finally led to a temporary reconciliation of the couple. They cried together for the first time either of them could remember.

For a while they were elated; they had achieved a breakthrough in their silent and dreary marriage. They felt alive together for the first time in years. Somewhat mysteriously, they found themselves going to bed together in the midst of a great tangle of emotions—continuing anger, and hurt, and guilt, and this new quality: abandon. The love-making was, they were to admit to each other, "the best it had ever been." How could they have moved through hatred into caring so quickly? (p. 153)

(A variety of guides describe how to clarify your feelings and to communicate them to your dates/mates. See Argyle, 1984; Gendlin, 1981; Rubenstein & Shaver, 1982; Derlega & Chaikin, 1975; Gottman, Notarius, Gonso, & Markman, 1976; Egan, 1977; or Zilbergeld, 1978.)

4. Encouraging people to listen to their intimates. It is hard to express yourself; it is even harder to listen to others. In therapy, we often try a trick designed to get couples to listen to their partners. We wait until a small issue comes up and then, in "slow motion," try to untangle the threads of the conversation. As we ask "What did you mean by that? What did you think she was really saying? What were you feeling?" clients begin to learn a great deal about one another. Major issues, deep feelings, quickly emerge. We are

always surprised to discover how, a few minutes before, in superficial conversation, we thought we knew what was being said. Further analysis often reveals that we missed the

point altogether.

By careful listening, it is possible to discover what our intimates are really thinking, feeling, doing. (For guides on how to improve your listening skills, see Argyle, 1984; or Gottman, Notarius, Gonso, & Markman, 1976.)

5. Teaching people to deal with their intimate's reactions. To say that you should communicate your ideas and feelings, must communicate if you are to have an intimate affair, does not mean your partner is going to like it. You can expect that sometimes when you try to express your deepest feeling it will hurt. Your lovers and friends may tell you frankly how deeply you have hurt them and that will make you feel extremely guilty. Or they may react with intense anger.

Intimates have to learn to stop responding in automatic fashion to such emotional outbursts—to quit backing up, apologizing for what they said, measuring their words. They have to learn to stay calm, remind themselves that they are entitled to say what they think, feel what they feel, listen to what their partner's think and feel, and keep on trying. Only then is there a chance of an intimate encounter. (For guides to developing such skills, see Watson & Tharp, 1981; Bach & Wyden, 1968; Tavris, 1982).

#### CONCLUSION

This chapter has reviewed a number of the social and sexual problems of people whom we have termed "unattractive." There has been a considerable increase in the literature on the unattractive in recent years, resulting in greater understanding of the problems this rather amorphously defined group of people face. However, increasing attention in the literature has resulted in an "opening

up" of the legitimacy of this topic, which in turn has produced a broad variety of strategies for dealing with problems faced by the unattractive. It is likely that the near future will see an even greater loosening of some of the social stigma and personal discomfort suffered by people who define themselves or are defined by others as unattractive.

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