

more general theory of how and why "people need people"

3. To combine relationship research with spiritual strivings of people which seem to rise steeply in the last decade.

What advances in relationship research do you think will enable researchers in our field to make important contributions to science (basic or applied) in the 21st century?

1. Major advancement in measurements.
2. Offering broad more encompassing conceptualizations which still take into account what we have learned so far about relationships.
3. Try not to study the trivial or more expected outcomes (e.g., intimacy is good for you).

Comments by Elaine Hatfield (Department of Psychology, University of Hawaii)

Deep down, when thoughts of mortality arise, we all think: "If only it were possible to fly back 500 years from now to find out how X came out" . . . (Fill in any great debate in relationship research.) If only we could come back and find the answer to the scientific questions that have plagued us. Well, in *Social Psychology*, I think we are about to be given that chance—or its near equivalent. There are times when technological change allows scientists to take giant strides forward. This is certainly one of those times. You can see answers to long debated questions hovering there on the skyline.

Let me give you some examples from my own field—research into passionate love and sexual desire.

When Ellen Berscheid and I wrote *Interpersonal Attraction* (in 1969), we discovered that almost nothing on passionate love existed. It was pathetic. We had to speculate about the nature

of love with little or no data . . . and precious little experience of our own . . . to guide us.

What a change has occurred in 30+ years! Today, scholars from a variety of theoretical disciplines—social psychologists, anthropologists, evolutionary psychologists, neuroendocrinologists—are addressing the same issues we have struggled with. They are employing an impressive array of new techniques as well: they are studying primates in the wild and in captivity and pouring over fMRIs. Historians are now studying history from the "bottom up" rather than the "top down." Studying the lives of not kings and queens but the lives of the majority, utilizing demographic data (marriage records, birth and death records, records of divorce, architecture, medical manuals, church edits, legal records, songs...

In the very near future, I suspect that relationship researchers will be well on the way to answering questions such as these:

- Is passionate love, in fact, a cultural universal?
- When in the phylogenetic scale did passionate love begin?
- What is passionate love? A cognition? An emotion? A behavior? All three?
- Why are people in the throes of love so crazed, not being able to think of anything else? Why are their feelings so tumultuous—traveling from elation to blackest despair in a matter of seconds? Why are they willing to take such stunning risks for love?
- Do men and women love with equal passion? In the same way? Are such differences genetic or cultural?
- Are passionate love and sex the same thing? Kissing cousins? Or totally different constructs? The Christian troubadours and

Arab singers, for example, make a sharp distinction between romantic love and sex.

- Are there some people who never love? Who are love blind? Or are they just unaware of their feelings?
- How long can love last?

Today's relationship research is truly revolutionary and the answers we are getting just at this moment are stunning. Not surprisingly, I suspect that we will walk away from hearing of this research filled with new ideas and exciting questions. It was ever thus.

Comments by Sue Johnson (Psychology and Psychiatry, Ottawa University)

I am a clinician first so my thoughts on the future of relationship research have a bias - I think there will be more and more integration between basic research and clinical interventions - developmental, social and clinical will come together - that attachment research will be a major major part in this integration - and that clinical studies will begin to feedback into basic research - for example in the studies on EFT (www.eft.ca) we are looking at a concept we call attachment injuries - moments of abandonment at times of high need - when we help couples resolve them - trust and relationship satisfaction goes up - forgiveness goes up - attachment anxiety goes down - and now we are going to look at exactly how the therapist helps couples do this.

The "hot" topic of the next century will be adult attachment

- understanding it and USING it to intervene in distressed families and couples and in promoting individual growth in individual therapy - integrating basic research into clinical practice is the big challenge

- having a theory of adult love offers the couple and family therapist a map and a clear goal for change
- have to be able to measure attachment behaviors more accurately and easily

Lots of challenges

- putting individual disorders into a relational context
- showing that changing relationship quality impacts individual depression and PTSD for example

**Comments by Holly Latty-Mann, Ph.D.
President, The Leadership Trust
Former Executive Professor of Leadership
Development, Wake Forest Babcock
Graduate School of Management**

An area of research that has been sorely neglected yet takes prominence in the news (having affected so many lives) is leadership and ethics. What characterizes our most effective leaders? What is it that they are doing that their ineffectual counterparts are not doing?

As for ethics, that will be a more challenging construct to measure. Furthermore, given we can no longer employ Milgram-type experiments, this will demand tremendous methodological creativity.

Finally, there is tremendous work going on in the applied world without the benefits of research. For one, the leadership industry has changed dramatically in the last generation because what used to work no longer does. Interviewing those who have worked with hundreds/thousands of leaders could offer a nice starting place for those who have an interest in this important yet neglected area of study.

**Comments by Elizabeth A. Suter
(Communication Studies, University of
Nebraska-Lincoln)**