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CHAPTER 2

Emotions: A Trinity

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Recently, at the University of Iowa's summer program on social psychophysiology, I watched a demonstration. An undergraduate who worked in John Cacioppo's laboratory was wired up with electrodes designed to measure facial EMG, heart rate, breathing rate, and skin conductance. He was instructed to think about anything he wished. Some trainees watched the student on a television monitor. All they saw was a blank, relaxed, impassive face. Others of us watched the pens on a 10-channel Grass polygraph recorder. Now and then we would spot dramatic changes on the printout. For example, at one point, the electrodes connected to the corrugator supercilli muscle showed a sudden jump. "What are you thinking about?" we asked. "An argument with my roommate." Later there was a powerful movement around the orbicular oris. It was so powerful that it was interfering with all the other readings. We looked at the television monitor to see what the student was doing, but we could detect no sign of movement. "What is going on?", we asked. "I've just thought of a great argument," he answered. "Well, quit," we said. "Just imagine you are listening to what he has to say." He did, and the pens immediately quieted down. (Carlson & Hatfield, in press)

In chapter 1 of this book, B. F. Skinner argued that intimate conversations will go best if people speak the same emotional language—the language of behavior. We disagree. We believe that, in the light of abundant and remarkable new research, Skinner's concept of the nature of emotion is too simple. In this chapter, we review what scientists now know about emotion. In the process, it becomes clear

that emotional experiences leave complex cognitive and physiological, as well as behavioral tracings. To understand emotion, one must be prepared to speak many languages. Let us begin our discussion by defining what we mean by emotion.

DEFINING EMOTION

We, like many other theorists, view emotions as a *system* that activates cognitive, physiological, and behavioral components. For example, consider Izard and Buechler's (1986) definition:

> A fundamental emotion is defined as a complex motivational phenomenon, with characteristic neurophysiological, expressive, and experiential components. No single component of the three suffices as a description of an emotion; all three are essential to the concept. At the neurophysiological level, a fundamental emotion is defined as a particular, innately programmed pattern of electrochemical activity in the nervous system. The expressive component consists mainly of a characteristic pattern of facial activity, but may also include bodily responses (postural-gestural, visceral-glandular) and vocal expressions. At the experiential level, each fundamental emotion is a unique quality of consciousness. (p. 167.)

In the last 2 decades, scientists have learned a great deal about the nature of emotion. In this paper we are only able to present a scattering of this voluminous research. For a more complete review, see Carlson and Hatfield (in press). Scientific discoveries make it clear that: (a) people do, in part, speak a universal language of emotion. Many aspects of emotional experience and expression are genetically "hard-wired" into humans. (b) However, peoples' emotional socialization and emotional experiences are very different. The historical era in which people live, the cultural and social groups to which they belong, and the type of family in which they are raised, insure that, in part, the language of emotion that they speak must be their own.

THE NATURE OF EMOTION

Darwin (1872/1965) proposed an evolutionary model for understanding emotional expression. In prehistory, animals (including man) were confronted again and again with certain problems of survival. Those animals that best fitted their environments survived. In *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, Darwin proposed that, as a consequence of their shared evolutionary history, animals and man came to experience and express emotions in much the same way. The facial,

postural, physiological, and behavioral reactions associated with emotion evolved because they "worked", that is, they increased the species' chances of survival. In recent years, scientists have begun to make some impressive strides in detailing just how these basic inherited emotional systems operate.

Cognitive Aspects of Emotion

A variety of cognitive psychologists have attempted to spell out how cognitive factors shape intimates' emotional experiences. For example, Lazarus (Lazarus, Kanner, & Folkman, 1980) argued that the first step in an emotional sequence is a "cognitive appraisal." In the process of "primary appraisal," people try to decide what consequences impending events are likely to have for their well-being. Once they have assessed the situation they must proceed to a "secondary appraisal." What *should* they do about the situation? What *can* they do? Finally, "reappraisal" highlights the interactive nature of peoples' encounters with other persons and with the world. Individuals perceive and react; the environment counterreacts. Individuals, in turn, must appraise these reactions. People never stop making evaluative judgments about themselves and the world around them.

Cognitive theorists such as Lazarus attempt to provide a sort of universal framework, which outlines how all people at all times will analyze challenging situations. Theorists from a variety of related disciplines add complexity and variability to this picture.

For example, anthropologists (see Lutz & White, 1986), sociologists (see Kemper, 1986), and historians (see Degler, 1980; Gay, 1984; Stearns & Stearns, 1985; or Stone, 1979) have begun to document the profound impact of culture in shaping peoples' perceptions of how they are supposed to feel about various events and how they can legitimately express those feelings. This work makes it clear that the historical and cultural contexts play a mighty role in determining how emotions ultimately take shape and gain expression in real life.

Social psychologists have also documented the impact that families have on family members' emotional experiences, and on: (a) their ability to express their emotions with clarity; (b) the intensity with which they express their emotions; and (c) their ability to read others' most subtle emotional expressions, (see, for example, Buck, 1979; Ekman & Friesen, 1969; Izard, 1971; or Jones, 1960). Obviously, people possess very different interests and skills in dealing with emotion. For example, someone with a literary, theatrical, artistic, or psychological bent may well find it rewarding to spend a great deal of

time in analyzing the minute details of their *own feelings*, and may also enjoy looking at portraits, watching Masterpiece Theater (where the dramatists are often deeply concerned with the subtleties and contradictions of character), and talking with friends and acquaintances about their personal problems. Such people are likely to know exactly what they feel in a given situation. Others, "macho men" for example, convinced that masculinity equals *lack* of emotional responsiveness, might find their rewards in insisting, in even the most trying of situations, that for them it is "no sweat." They may indeed turn things off to such an extent that they are totally unaware of their feelings. The same holds true with regard to emotional *expression*. Some of my colleagues try very hard to convey, in measured, precise, verbal expression, the nuances of their inner lives. Others think that to express emotions means to shout, cry, pound pillows, and hit one another over the head with batakas (or worse). Finally, people have learned to be differentially attentive to others' emotional displays. Some people are sharply attuned to the tiniest movement of another's eyebrow. The most minute change in facial expression throws them into a panic. "Is he angry?" "Have they hurt her feelings; is she going to cry?" Social psychologists have begun to explore the ways in which families socialize children in these areas. For example, some social psychologists find a strong correlation between parental expressiveness and the expressiveness of infants as young as 3 months old. (Malatesta & Haviland, 1982). Lanzetta and Kleck, 1970, proposed that individuals who have been punished by socializing agents for engaging in overt displays of emotionality learn to inhibit their own emotional expression. At the same time, however, they become unusually sensitive to the displays of others. Halberstadt (1986) observed: "When the family environment is low in expressiveness, individuals must become sensitive to the most subtle displays of emotion in order to relate effectively with other family members." (p. 827).

Interestingly, then, some researchers have proposed that often there is a negative relationship between peoples' sending and receiving skills: The people who send the clearest, most intense emotional messages themselves are often the poorest at recognizing other, more subtle, forms of expression. Those whose own emotional responses are muted and difficult to fathom are often expert readers of the emotions of others (Buck, 1979; Halberstadt, 1986; Izard, 1971; Morency & Krauss, 1982; Zuckerman, Hall, DeFrank, & Rosenthal, 1976). Obviously, there is no reason a person would have to be either a poor sender or receiver. It would seem that people who are taught to be comfortable with a variety of forms of emotional expression—to carefully analyze emotion-laden situations, sometimes; to be spontaneous, sometimes; to express emotions softly when that is appropriate and more fiercely when that is necessary; and to be capable of reading subtle and powerful expressions of emotion—would do best in close relationships.

The research of historians, anthropologists, sociologists, social psychologists, and developmentalists, then, makes it clear that there will be both universality and idiosyncracy in emotional expression.

Biological Aspects of Emotion

From evolutionary biology, we are learning *when* the various layers of the brain evolved. From neuroanatomy, we are discovering how the brain is structured. From neurophysiology, we are beginning to understand how the brain functions chemically.

The Anatomy of Emotion

MacLean (1986) argued that, in the course of evolution, humans have ended up with a brain that has a triune structure. In a sense, the brain consists of three different types of brains, with different anatomical structures and chemical processes layered one upon the other. The oldest type of brain is basically reptilian. The second is inherited from the early mammals. The third is from the late mammals/primates. MacLean pointed out that the reptilian brain was primarily concerned with preservation of self and species. Its primitive structures were designed to guide the reptile in the processes required for obtaining food (search, angry attacks, self-defense, feeding, and mates).

In the neo-mammalian brain three new patterns of behavior, which were primarily designed to facilitate mother–child relationships, emerged through evolution. These included nursing of the young, "audiovocal communication" for facilitating mother–child contact, and play behavior. MacLean contended that such affects as desire, fear, anger, dejection and depression, ecstasy and affection, all derive from activities in the limbic system.

It was not until the neo-cortex evolved in the late mammalian/primate period that symbolic or verbal information became important in shaping primate emotional experience and expression. MacLean (1986) reviewed over 40 years of clinical and experimental findings in support of his contention that it is not cognition alone, but emotions, that guide the behavior required for self-preservation and preservation of the species.

The Physiology of Emotion

Psychologists are beginning to learn more about the chemistry of emotions and the way various emotions interact. Liebowitz (1983), for example, offered some speculations about the chemistry of the "highs" and the "lows" that crisscross people's consciousness. These include the highs of euphoria, excitement, relaxation, spiritual feelings, and relief, as well as the lows of anxiety, terrifying panic attacks, the pain of separation, and the fear of punishment.

Liebowitz proposed that naturally occurring brain chemicals produce emotions. *Joy and excitement:* Chemicals resembling stimulants (such as amphetamine and cocaine) produce the "rush" felt by joyous people, lovers, and those engaging in exciting activities. *Relaxation:* Chemicals related to the narcotics (such as heroin, opium, and morphine), tranquilizers (such as Librium and Valium), sedatives (such as barbiturates, Quaaludes, and other "downers"), alcohol, and marijuana all produce a mellow state and wipe out loneliness, panic attacks, and depression. *Spiritual peak experiences:* Chemicals similar to the psychedelics (such as LSD, mescaline, and psilocybin) produce a sense of beauty, meaningfulness, and timelessness.

Physiologists do not usually try to produce painful experiences in the laboratory. Thus, we know a bit less about the chemistry of pain. Such painful feelings may, however, arise from two sources: (a) withdrawal from the chemicals that produce the highs; (b) the infusion of chemicals which, in and of themselves, produce anxiety, pain, or depression. (A great deal is known about the physiology and chemistry of emotion. For a review of relevant sources see Carlson and Hatfield, in press.)

The basic emotions, then, are associated with chemical neurotransmitters or with chemicals that increase/decrease the receptors' sensitivity. The basic emotions may well be, in part, chemically distinct. Yet, at the same time, emotions have more similarities than differences. Chemically, joy, love, sexual desire, and excitement, as well as anger, hate, fear, jealousy, and anxiety have much in common: for example, they are all intensely arousing. They all produce a sympathetic response in the automatic nervous system (ANS). This is evidenced by the symptoms associated with all of these emotions—a flushed face, sweaty palms, weak knees, butterflies in the stomach, dizziness, a pounding heart, trembling hands, and accelerated breathing. Lacey (1967) made a surprising discovery. In emotional situations people seemed to react in stereotyped, *but very different,* ways. For example, Person A's heart might start to beat wildly in response to feeling frightened *or* excited *or* joyous—and that would be the only ANS

reaction manifested. Person B might start to breathe heavily and perspire whenever becoming emotional, and those would be the only reactions visible. Lacey pointed out that it was therefore misleading to speak of ANS "arousal," as if all people at all times showed a uniform ANS reaction, one in which the various indicants of ANS arousal were perfectly correlated. Different people experience different patterns of ANS arousal. The reactions shown by one person will not be strongly correlated with those shown by others in the same emotional situation, and the various indicants of ANS arousal themselves will not be correlated. Once again we see that people seem to share *some* emotional experiences (most show some type of ANS arousal), but that some aspects of their experiences are unique.

There are other factors that contribute to the difficulty people have both in articulating their own emotional experiences with precision much less making assumptions about what other people might be experiencing. Recent neuroanatomical/neurophysiological research suggests that the various emotions probably are more tightly interrelated than psychologists once thought. Hatfield (1970) and Hatfield and Walster (1978) pointed out that when people are caught up in an intensely emotional situation, "chemical spill-over" is likely to occur—that is, peoples' feelings get all mixed up. Everything gets intensified. People can move from elation through terror into the depths of despair and back again in a matter of seconds. They know that they are feeling intensely but it is difficult to disentangle their complicated interlocking feelings. They literally do not know whether to laugh or to cry.

Skeletomotor Reactions

A variety of researchers have studied the impact of emotional experiences on facial reactions (For recent reviews, see Cacioppo, Petty, & Tassinary, in press).

The Facial Response System. When we think about things (as evidenced in the anecdote that began this chapter) our bodies play out our thoughts. As we think about what we will say next, the *orbicularis oris* (the muscle around the mouth; see Fig. 2.1) invisibly sounds out the words. When we think about writing, small muscle movements occur in our fingers and arms. Although these movements are invisible to the naked eye, scientists can easily detect them via EMG (electromyographic) recordings. Scientists have demonstrated that facial EMG activity is capable of distinguishing positive from negative emotional states, even when there are no changes in overt facial action or auto-

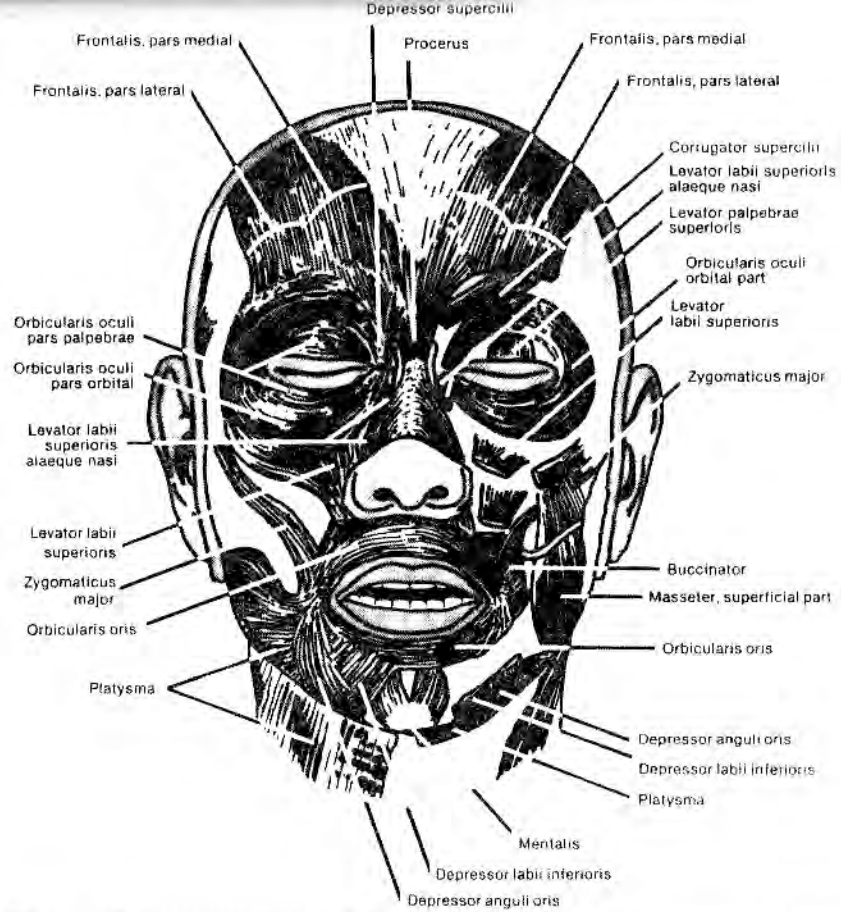

FIG. 2.1. Schematic representation of selected facial muscles. Overt facial expressions of emotion are based on contractions of the underlying musculature that are sufficiently intense to result in visibly perceptible dislocations of the skin and landmarks. The more common visible effects of strong contractions of the depicted facial muscles include the following.

Muscles of the lower face: Depressor anguli oris—pulls the lip corners downward; *Depressor labii inferioris*—depresses the lower lip; *Orbicularis oris*—tightens, compresses, protrudes, and/or inverts the lips; *Mentalis*—raises the chin and protrudes the lower lip; *Platysma*—wrinkles the skin of the neck and may draw down both the lower lip and the lip corners.

Muscles of the mid-face: Buccinator—compresses and tightens the cheek, forming a "dimple"; *Levator labii superioris alaeque nasi*—raises the center of the upper lip and flares the nostrils; *Levator labii superioris*—raises the upper lip and flares the nostrils, exposing the canine teeth; *Masseter*—adducts the lower jaw; *Zygomaticus major*—pulls the lip corners up and back.

Muscles of the upper face: corrugator supercilii—draws the brows together and downward, producing vertical furrows between the brows; *Depressor supercilii/procerus*—pulls the medial part of the brows downward and may wrinkle the skin over the bridge of the nose; *Frontalis, pars lateral*—raises the outer brows, producing horizontal furrows in the lateral regions of the forehead; *Frontalis, pars medial*—raises the inner brows, producing horizontal furrows in the medial region of the forehead; *Levator palpebrae superioris*—raises the upper eyelid; *Orbicularis oculi, pars orbital*—tightens the skin surrounding the eye causing "crows-feet" wrinkles; *Orbicularis oculi, pars palpebrae*—tightens the skin surrounding the eye causing the lower eyelid to raise. (From Cacioppo, Martzke, Petty, & Tassinary, 1987).

Cacioppo, J. T. Mahtzke, J. S., Petty, R. E., & Tassinary, L. G. (1988). Specific forms of facial EMG response index emotions during an interview: from Darwin to the continuous flow hypothesis of affect-laden information processing. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 54*, 592–603. Permission obtained from: Dr. John Cacioppo Department of Psychology, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio.

nomic activity (Cacioppo et al., in press, or Fridlund & Izard, 1983). Since this research is just in its infancy, researchers are optimistic that they may be able to distinguish the basic emotions via their EMG signatures.

Perhaps the most powerful way we communicate with one another is via visible facial expressions. Ekman (1972) and Izard (1971) have argued that the face speaks a universally understood language. Recently, psychologists have uncovered some compelling evidence that the basic emotions *are* expressed in much the same way in all cultures. (Of course, every culture also possesses its own display rules). Recent research illustrates how both these processes operate. Scientists studying infants, children, and adults from a variety of cultures have linked happiness, sadness, fear, anger, disgust, and surprise to a series of distinctive facial displays (Ekman, 1972; Izard, 1977; Scherer & Ekman, 1982; Steiner, 1979). Figure 2.2, for example, illustrates how a

FIG. 2.2. Basic emotions posed by the Fore of New Guinea. Copyright © 1972 by Paul Ekman. Permission received from: Dr. Paul Ekman, Human Interaction Laboratory, University of California San Francisco, 401 Parnassus Avenue, San Francisco, California 94943.

sampling of emotions are expressed among the Fore of New Guinea, who have never been exposed to Western man.

These same studies, however, show that peoples' emotional reactions are most similar when observed in private. In public, powerful "display rules" partially shape our responses. (For example, we try to look happy at weddings and sad at funerals, regardless of how we might really feel.)

Behavioral Aspects of Emotion

Many eminent learning theorists have explored the link between emotion and motivation, and the link between both those factors and behavior. For example, Skinner (1953) argued that emotional patterns of responding may arise from two very different sources. First, the evolutionary history of the species may favor certain unlearned or unconditioned responses. "For example, in some species biting, striking and clawing appear to be strengthened during anger before conditioning (that is, learning) can have taken place" (Skinner, 1953, p. 164). In short, we may strike out in anger simply because we are "wired" that way. Second, some emotional behaviors are learned. For example, an angry child may have been conditioned to "teasing the other child, taking toys away from him, destroying his work, or calling him names" (Skinner, 1953, p. 164). Such children have learned that such irritating behavior causes their enemies to suffer.

In the case of innate behaviors, such as instinctive anger, the history of the species may have insured that certain behavioral consequences are rewarding or punishing. That is, those patterns of angry behavior that fostered survival (such as biting or clawing one's enemies) came to be wired in. Reactions that were ineffective dropped out. Learned emotional behavior continues because it is reinforcing. People soon learn that an angry outburst "works." They cause the timid to give them what they want (a positive reinforcer) or at least to quit causing trouble (a negative reinforcer).

More recently, theorists such as Baron and Byrne (1981) and Berscheid and Hatfield (1969) attempted to explain why people are attracted to some people and repelled by others by citing the principle of reinforcement. They contend that people come to like and love those who reward them and dislike and hate those who punish them. Baron and Byrne's (1981) argument goes as follows:

1. Most stimuli can be identified as either rewarding or punishing.
2. Rewarding stimuli arouse positive feelings; punishing stimuli arouse negative feelings. These feelings, or affective responses, fall along a continuum from extremely positive to extremely negative.
3. The evaluation of any given stimulus as good or bad, enjoyable or unenjoyable, depends on whether it arouses positive or negative feelings. How positively or negatively a person evaluates another depends on the strength of the aroused effect. They illustrate their theory with this example:

> To take an obvious example, if a stranger were to walk up to you on the street and give you a swift kick in the shins, negative feelings would be aroused. If asked to evaluate the experience, you would no doubt say you also learned to associate negative feelings with the person, you would also indicate dislike for him in the future, but that is not all you learned in the situation. It may be less obvious, but your negative feelings aroused by a kick would also be likely to extend to any innocent bystander who happened to be there, . . . to the street where the kicking took place, and to anything else that was associated with the unpleasant interaction. In an analogous way, if on the following day, another passing stranger gave you a year's supply of free movie passes, your feelings would be positive and you would probably express liking toward your surroundings. (p. 212)

In this view, the human mind functions like a giant computer. The mind tallies up how emotionally pleasurable versus painful a lifetime of intimate encounters with Person X have proved to be, sums, and "spits out" an emotional reaction. A very handy tally indeed. Byrne (1971) even proposed a simple formula, a "law of attraction" to predict how people will evaluate others (See Fig. 2.3).

FIG. 2.3. Byrne's "Law of Attraction."

$$Y = \left[\frac{\Sigma PR}{(\Sigma PR + \Sigma NR)}\right] + k$$

The Y in Byrne's formula stands for attraction. On the other side of the equation the only symbols that really matter are PR (which stands for positive reinforcement—i.e., reward) and NR (which stands for negative reinforcement—which Byrne equates with punishment). Y (attraction) is greatest when there is a great deal of PR and very little NR. In *The Attraction Paradigm*, Byrne (1971) provided an encyclopedic review of evidence in support of these propositions.

Learning theorists make it clear that people may learn very different things about what is appropriate to feel, express, and observe in social situations.

What rewards seem most critical in love relationships? Hatfield and

men and women, and 400 elderly women as to the rewards (or lack thereof) the interviewees found to be most critical in their love relationships (Hatfield, Traupmann, Sprecher, Utne, & Hay, 1984). Their answers were surprisingly similar. The following rewards were critically important to almost everyone:

PERSONAL REWARDS

1. *Social grace.*
   Having a partner who is sociable, friendly, and relaxed in social settings.
2. *Intellect.*
   Having a partner who is intelligent and informed.
3. *Appearance.*
   Having a physically attractive partner.
   Having a partner who takes care of his or her appearance and conditioning; who attends to such things as personal cleanliness, dress, exercise, and good eating habits.

EMOTIONAL REWARDS

1. *Liking and loving.*
   Being liked by your partner.
   Being loved by your partner.
2. *Understanding and concern.*
   Having your personal concerns and emotional needs understood and responded to.
3. *Acceptance.*
   Because of your partner's acceptance and encouragement, being free to try out different roles occasionally—for example, being a baby sometimes, a mother, a colleague or a friend, an aggressive as well as a passive lover, and so on.
4. *Appreciation.*
   Being appreciated for contributions to the relationship; not being taken for granted by your partner.
5. *Physical affection.*
   Receiving open affection—touching, hugging, kissing.
6. *Sex.*
   Experiencing a sexually fulfilling and pleasurable relationship with your partner.
   Sexual fidelity; having a partner who is faithful to your agreements about extramarital relations.
7. *Security.*
   Being secure in your partner's commitment to you and to the future of your relationship together.

8. *Plans and goals for the future.*
   Planning for and dreaming about your future together.

DAY-TO-DAY REWARDS

1. *Day-to-day operations.*
   Having a smoothly operating household, because of the way you two have organized your household responsibilities.
2. *Finances.*
   The amount of income and other financial resources that you may gain through your "joint account."
3. *Sociability.*
   Having a pleasant living together situation, because your partner is easy to live with on a day-to-day basis.
   Having a good companion, who suggests enjoyable things to do and who also goes along with your ideas for what you might do together.
   Knowing your partner is interested in hearing about your day and what is on your mind, and in turn will share concerns and events with you.
   Having a partner who is compatible with your friends and relatives; who is able to fit in.
4. *Decision making.*
   Having a partner who takes a fair share of the responsibility for making and carrying out decisions that affect both of you.
5. *Remembering special occasions.*
   Having a partner who is thoughtful about sentimental things; who remembers, for example, birthdays and other special occasions.

OPPORTUNITIES GAINED AND LOST

1. *Opportunities gained.*
   Having the opportunity to partake of the many life experiences that depend on being married—for example, the chance to become a parent and even grandparent, the chance to be included in "married couple" social events, and, finally, having someone to count on in old age.
2. *Opportunities foregone.*
   Necessarily giving up certain opportunities in order to be in this relationship. The opportunities could have been other possible mates, a career, travel, etc.

Summary

To understand emotion, scientists have found it necessary to acknowledge that emotions are a complex system, with multiple components. In part, the three components of the emotional trinity interact with one another. Candland (1977) proposed that emotional stimuli

quickly elicit a response in the cognitive and physiological systems. The two elements combine to produce an emotional experience and then to generate appropriate emotional behavior. Each of the three elements is an indispensable part of a continuous emotional feedback loop. Each element modifies and is modified by the others. Each is both a stimulus and a response. Cognitive appraisals shape and are shaped by physiological reactions. The experience feeds back and shapes the perception of the eliciting stimuli. The various aspects of emotion continually feed back on one another, affecting the course of an emotional experience (see Figure A).

Nonetheless, each component of the emotional trinity provides unique information. This information is not redundant. For example, Lazarus (1977) pointed out that the various aspects of emotion are not always in sync:

> ". . . the three components correlate very poorly with each other. An individual might report no distress yet exhibit strong physiological reactions, or the behavioral responses signifying anger or fear might be inhibited as a result of social or internal pressures. . . . In short, the somatic changes connected with an emotion usually appear in a complex pattern of end-organ responses rather than in a simple, highly correlated one." (pp. 69–70)

To truly understand an intimate's inner life, one ideally would have some glimmering of how they *thought* about emotional events, and *felt* (physiologically) in addition to how they *behaved*. In the next section, we argue that intimates would do well to broaden their skills at speaking their mates' and families' emotional languages. We think Skinners' advice (chapter 1) is misleading because he suggests that intimates narrow the way they speak about their feelings and that they rule out entire forms of discourse. We think people will do better if they expand their skills at emotional communication, adding those of Skinner and others to their existing repertoire, rather than trying to force themselves and those they love into a narrow, artificial form of expression. This richer repertoire fits with the more complex view of emotions derived from recent research. Let us begin our discussion of techniques for implementing these suggestions, by discussing how the authors try to communicate with their clients in psychotherapy about their inner lives.

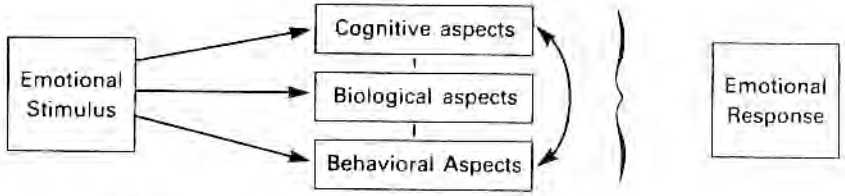

FIG. A. An emotional sequence.

IN THERAPY

In addition to our academic careers, Drs. Rapson and Hatfield work as family therapists in Honolulu, Hawaii. In Hawaii, couples come from a wide array of educational and occupational backgrounds and ethnic groups—Caucasian, Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, Hawaiian. (Surprisingly, in Hawaii, more than 60% of relationships are interethnic. See Rapson, 1980). It is no surprise, therefore, to discover that couples often speak a wide variety of emotional "languages." Thus, the first step in therapy is to find out how clients think and feel. That is no easy feat. Some clients speak in poetic metaphors. For example, one English teacher spoke of sexual passion as akin to holding grapes, cool and tart, in her mouth; touching the fruit's stiff skin with her tongue. Others are singularly direct. "My problem started when my mother croaked" said one man, with tears in his eyes. Some clients have *no* verbal language for expressing feelings. They may be unaware that they ever feel anything like an emotion. With them, we may well use the very techniques Skinner recommends: "Feel under your arms; Are you sweating? Do you have a lump in your throat? Cramps?" Sometimes, clients' perceptions seem at variance with ours. An example: A woman's eyes *seem* to flash with anger, as she describes her mother-in-law's impending visit. "How do you feel"? we ask. "I've always loved her," she replies. To unravel the mystery we have to talk some more. Often she will finally admit in a rush, after long denials, that: "Well, wouldn't you be angry, too, if she never lifted a finger? You just stand there like a piece of luggage while she and my husband go off hand-in-hand for a walk on Sunday. On Monday, he has to go to work, but she expects me to sit around entertaining her all day, and I can't stand her. . . . I guess."

In deciphering emotion, we sometimes use a second clue that therapists rarely talk about: *We observe our own emotional reactions as a clue to what our clients are feeling!* For example, on occasion we will start to feel very anxious as we listen to the client. What is going on? At first glance, the client *looks* calm. But we are still anxious. We begin a little detective work. What is the client thinking about? What is she feeling? After a time, clients will usually recognize their own feelings of anxiety. Had we not probed, we might have missed it. Scientific work into the nature of emotions gives us some insights into how such "contagion" might work. Ekman (1985) observed that when people are feeling strong

emotions, but are suppressing them, nearly indiscernible "micromovements," which signal their true feelings (but are completely at variance with their displayed feelings), often flicker across their face for a quarter of a second. Perhaps that is what we are picking up. Or perhaps we are merely sensitive to subtle cues of shifting posture or alerted tone. It is also possible that therapists tend to mimic their clients' tones, postures, and facial expression, and that the feedback from these pseudo-emotional expressions feeds back and produces the same emotional reaction the client feels. However it works, the therapists' own emotional reactions are often an indispensable guide to the emotions that flicker across the clients' consciousness.

Why is it so important to know what our clients are thinking and feeling, rather than limiting ourselves to observing how they are acting?

1. A knowledge of our own and others' inner lives is one of the delights of life. It is the stuff of poetry, literature, dance, music, and the arts.

2. The mind is a giant computer. We get a great deal of information from rational analysis. We get even more by looking at a "printout" of our feelings. For example, if you wish to know how things can be expected to go with your Great Aunt Ethel, you can often gain some information by noticing how you *feel* when you go to the mailbox and find a letter from her. Consciously, you may *think* she is a fine person who wishes you the best. You should let her visit you for the two weeks she proposes. But if your heart sinks when you spot her purple ink and scented card, you might think again. Think through those interactions with her again. Something must be going on to make receipt of her letters so depressing. The emotions seem to be an accurate summary of how things have gone during the years you have interacted with Ethel.

3. One does better if one is using all one's faculties—cognitive *and* emotional—to make decisions.

4. Others don't always know or want to tell you what they feel. If you have a knowledge of many emotional languages, you can make some rough estimates. One gains by listening to what people say, as well as observing their physiological and behavioral responses. One gains by tuning into as many subtle cues as possible in addition to observing more obvious responses. Even behavior often expresses itself in a variety of disguises.

We have reviewed why we think emotional detective work is so important in therapy. How can intimates learn to communicate about their emotions? Researchers have formulated some suggestions, discussed in the following section.

Developing Intimacy Skills

Before we begin, let us define two terms we will be using—companionate love and intimacy.

Companionate Love

Companionate love (sometimes called "true love") has been defined as "the affection we feel for those with whom our lives are deeply entwined." (Hatfield & Walster, 1978, p. 9).

Rubin (1970) developed a scale to measure such love. He sifted through a jumble of lovers', novelists', and scientists' descriptions of love. He concluded that love includes such elements as idealization of the other, tenderness, responsibility, the longing to serve and be served by the loved one, intimacy, the desire to share emotions and experiences, sexual attraction, the exclusive and absorptive nature of the relationship, and finally, a relative lack of concern with social norms and constraints. Sternberg (1988) proposed a triangular theory of love. He argued that, potentially, love may involve three different components.

1. Passion: This component embraces the drives that lead to romance, physical attraction, and sexual consummation.
2. Intimacy: This component embraces close, connected, and bonded feelings.
3. Decision/commitment: In the short term, this encompasses the decision that one loves another. In the long term, it involves the commitment to maintain that love.

Intimacy

What about intimacy? The word intimacy is derived from the Latin *intimus*, meaning "inner" or "inmost." To be intimate means to be close to another. Hatfield (1984) defined intimacy as "A process in which people attempt to get close to another; to explore similarities (and differences) in the way they think, feel, and behave." (p. 207).

Intimate relationships have a number of characteristics:

Cognitive Characteristics. Intimates are willing to reveal themselves to one another. They disclose information about themselves and listen to their partners' confidences. In deeply intimate relationships, friends and lovers feel free to reveal most facets of themselves. As a result, intimates share profound information about one another's histories, values, strengths, weaknesses, idiosyncracies, hopes, and fears. (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Huesmann & Levinger, 1976; Jourard, 1964).

Emotional Characteristics. Intimates care deeply about one another. People generally feel more intense love for intimates than for anyone else. Yet, because intimates care so much about one another, they have the power to hurt one another as well. The dark side of love is jealousy, loneliness, depression, and anger. It is this powerful interplay of conflicting emotions that gives vibrancy to the most intimate of relationships. (See Berscheid, 1983; Hatfield & Walster, 1978). Basic to all intimate relationships, of course, is trust.

Behavioral Characteristics. Intimates are comfortable in close physical proximity. They gaze at one another (Argyle, 1967), stand close to one another (Allgeier & Byrne, 1973), lean on one another (Galton, 1884; Hatfield, Roberts, & Schmidt, 1980), and perhaps touch.

Now that we have defined what we mean by companionate love and intimacy, let us see what scientists and therapists have learned about how to get it (see Figure B).

Intimacy Skills

Encouraging People to Accept Themselves as They Are. Many people are determined to be perfect (at the least!). They find it hard to settle for less in themselves. Perfectionists are bound to have trouble in their intimate encounters. Intimates rarely assume their partners are

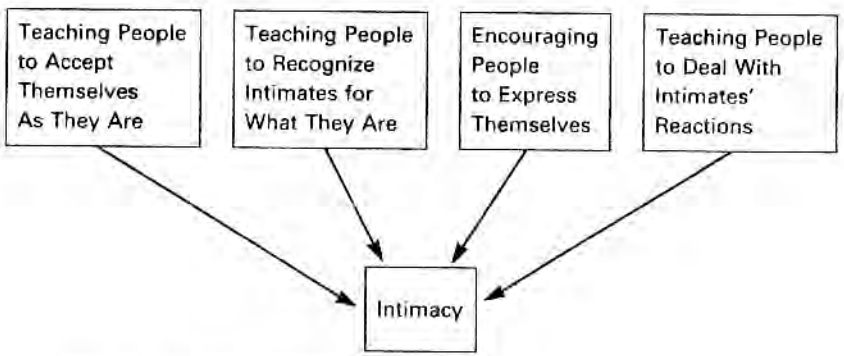

FIG. B. Developing intimacy skills.

perfect; soon enough they begin to think tart thoughts about their "Beloved One." The first step in learning to be intimate, then, is to accept the fact that you are entitled to be what you are—to have the ideas you have and the feelings you feel—and to accept the fact that after you've done the best you can, there is not much more you can do, that your best is good enough.

In therapy, we try to move people away from the notion that one should come into the world perfect and stay that way, toward a more modest realization that one can usually gain wisdom only in small steps. People must pick one small goal and work to accomplish that. When that is accomplished, they can move on to another. In that way change becomes possible and manageable (Watson & Tharp, 1985). The American notion that "you can be whatever to want to be" is an exaggeration—sometimes charming, often harmful (See Rapson, 1988).

Encouraging People to Recognize Their Intimates for What They Are. People may be hard on themselves, but they are generally even harder on their partners. Most people have the idea that everyone is entitled to a perfect partner, or at least one a little bit better than the one available (See Hatfield, 1984). If people are going to have an intimate relationship, they have to learn to enjoy others as they are, without hoping to fix them.

It is extraordinarily difficult for people to accept that their friends are entitled to be the people that they are. People long for their mate to be the person they want him to be. It would take so little for him to change his entire personality. Why is she so stubborn? Why is he so mean? What is wrong with me that I can't change her?

If we can come to the realization that our lover or friend is the person who exists right now, not the person we wish he was, not the person he could be, but what he is—once that realization occurs, intimacy becomes possible.

Encouraging People to Express Themselves. Next, intimates have to learn to be more comfortable about expressing ideas and feelings. This is harder than one might think. Intimate relationships spring forth with powerful hopes. When passions are so intense, consequences so momentous, people are often hesitant to speak the truth. From moment to moment, it is tempting to present a consistent picture. In the throes of passionate love, people are hesitant to admit having residual niggling doubts. (What if the person they love is hurt? What if revelations destroy the relationship?) When they are angry, they don't want to speak about their complicated love or their self-doubts,

and their wish to lash out. Dependent persons are particularly loathe to express inner doubts for fear of losing the person without whom they think survival is not possible.

To be intimate, people have to push toward a more honest, graceful, complete, and patient communication. They must understand that ideas and feelings are necessarily complex, with many nuances, shadings, and inconsistencies. In love, there is 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 when they think that they have fallen out of love—they are "bored" with their affair—that 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) described 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 lovemaking 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)

Teaching People to Deal with Their Intimate's Reactions. To say that you should communicate your ideas and feelings, *must* communicate them if you are to have an intimate affair, does not mean your partner is always going to like it. You can expect that when you try to express your deepest feelings, it will sometimes hurt. Your lovers and friends may tell you frankly how deeply you have hurt them and that may 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—backing up, apologizing for what they have said, measuring their words. They have to learn to stay calm, remind themselves that they are entitled to say what they think and what they feel, and to listen to what their partners think and feel—and keep on trying.

Only then is there a chance of an emotionally intimate encounter.

In sum. It appears that a multifaceted approach to emotional communication will likely yield better results than a more limited approach. This is because emotions themselves are a multifaceted phenomenon.

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