

Lecture # 10

Social Psychology- Liking and Friendship

Presented by
Clinical Psychologist
SADAF SAJJAD

Social Psychology

Study of how others influence our thoughts, feelings, and actions



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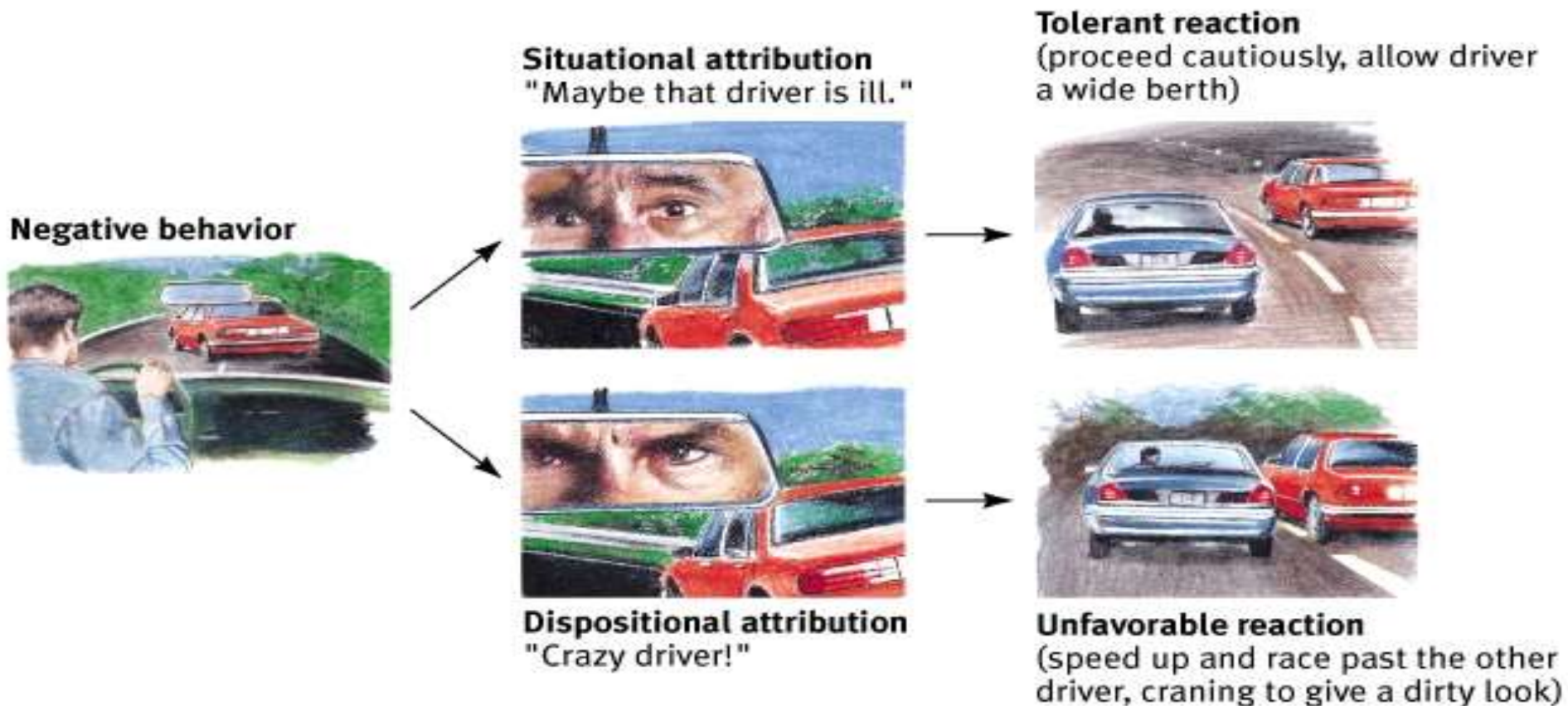
What Are Social Psychology's Big Lessons?

- We construct our social reality
- Our social intuitions are often powerful but sometimes perilous
- Social influences shape our behavior
- Personal attitudes and dispositions also shape behavior
- Social behavior is biologically rooted
- Social psychology's principles are applicable to everyday life and other disciplines



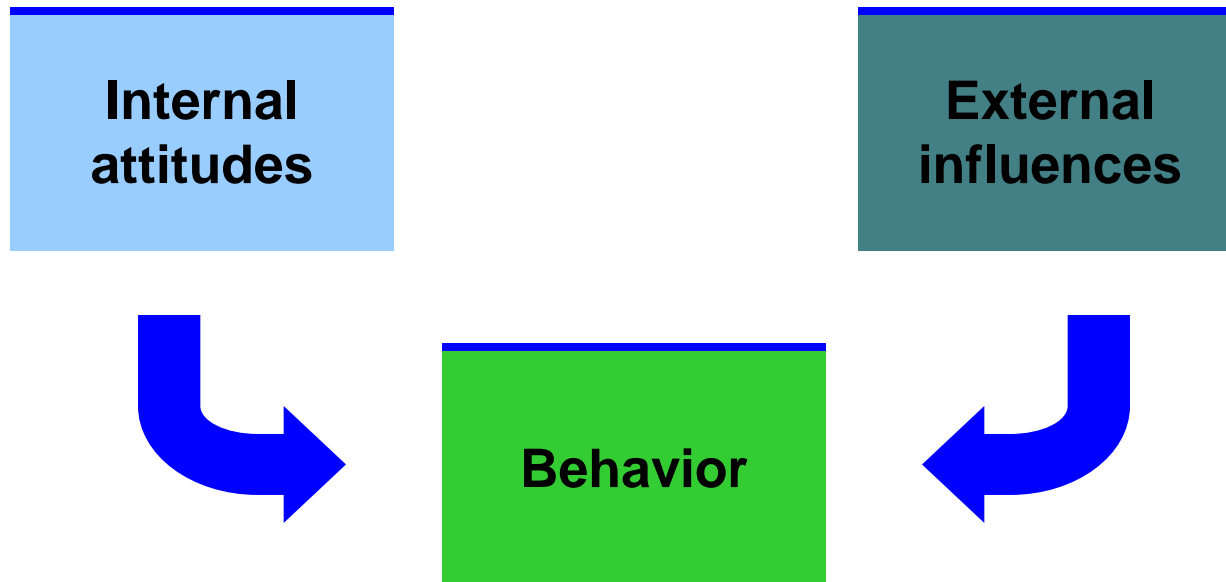
Attribution Theory

- Tendency to give a causal explanation for someone's behavior, often by crediting either the situation or the person's disposition



Social Thinking

- Our behavior is affected by our inner attitudes as well as by external social influences



Social Relations- Liking and Attraction

- **The Need to Belong**

- The need to belong is a basic human motive
- We care deeply about what others think of us
- Those with a network of close social ties tend to be happier, healthier, and more satisfied with life than those who are more isolated



Social Relations- Liking and Attraction

- **Ostracism**
 - Acts of excluding or ignoring.
 - Often used as social punishment.
 - Leads to multiple negative outcomes including self-defeating behaviors, an inability to regulate behaviors, and aggression.



Social Relations- Liking and Attraction

- **Need for Affiliation**

- The desire to establish social contact with others.
- We are motivated to establish and maintain an optimum balance of social contact.

- **Benefits of Affiliation**

- Sense of attachment
- Social integration
- Reassurance of worth
- Sense of reliable alliance
- Guidance



Factors Involved in Interpersonal Attraction

- **Familiarity: Being There**
 - Who are we most likely to become attracted to?
 - Two basic and necessary factors in the attraction process:
 - Proximity
 - Exposure

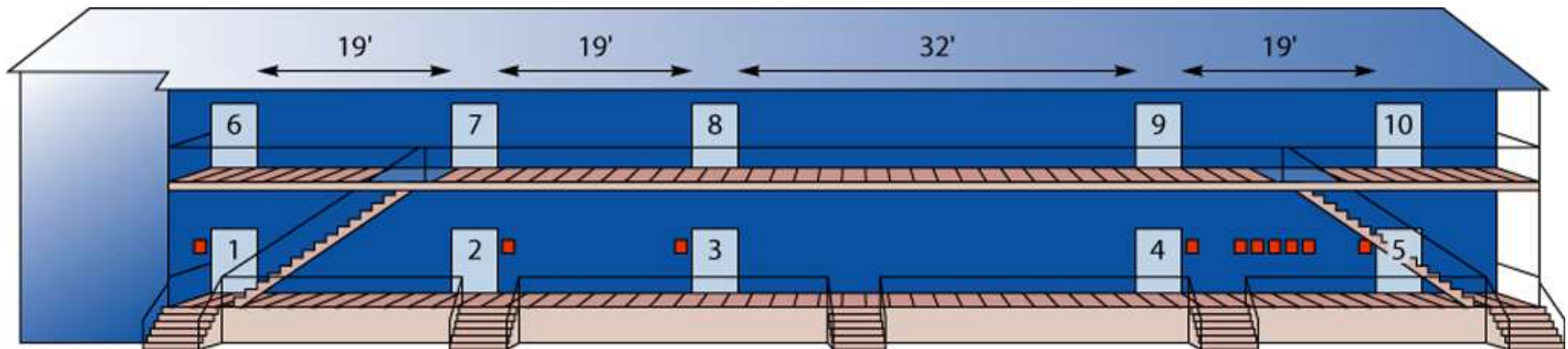
Factors Involved in Interpersonal Attraction

- **Proximity**

- The physical closeness of two people is the single best predictor of the development of a social relationship
 - more likely to know our neighbors than people 10 blocks away.
 - what about recent technological advancements?

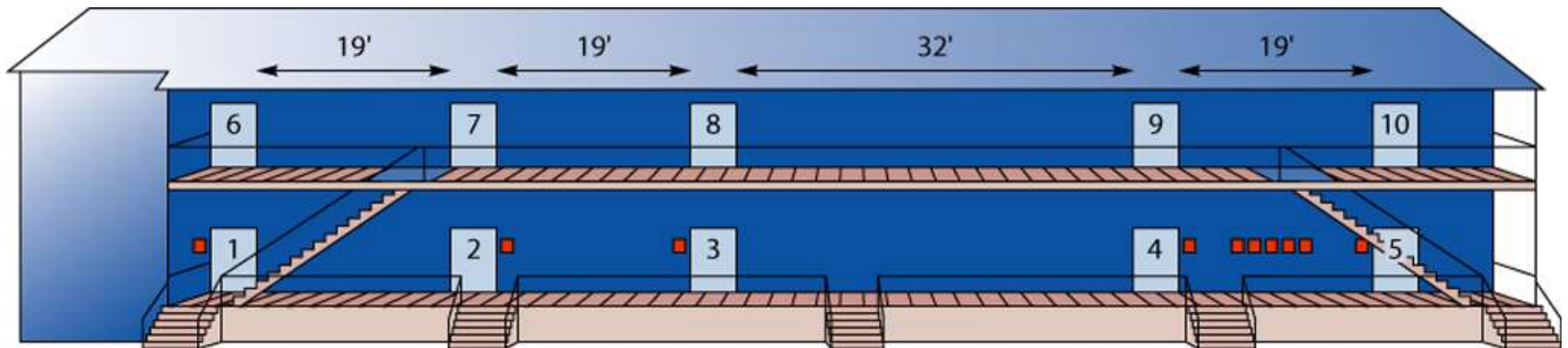
Proximity: The Person Next Door

- Festinger, Schachter, and Back (1950) tracked friendship formation among the couples in various apartment buildings.
- Residents had been assigned to their apartments at random. Most were strangers when they moved in.
- The researchers asked the residents to name their three closest friends in the entire housing project.
- Just as the proximity effect would predict, 65% of the friends mentioned lived in the same building, even though the other buildings were not far away.



Proximity: The Person Next Door

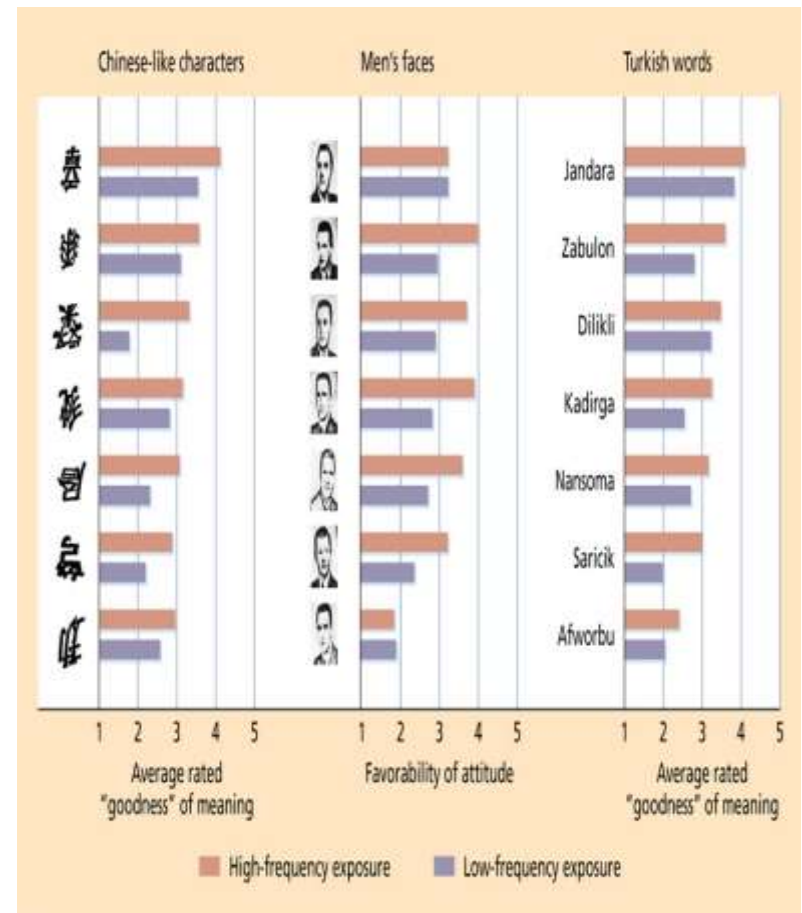
- Even more striking was the pattern of friendships within a building:
- 41% of the next-door neighbors indicated they were close friends.
- 22% of those who lived two doors apart said so.
- Only 10% of those who lived on opposite ends of the hall indicated they were close friends.



Factors Involved in Interpersonal Attraction

- **Mere Exposure**

- Contrary to folk wisdom, familiarity does not breed contempt
- The more often we are exposed to a stimulus, the more we come to like that stimulus
- Familiarity can influence our self-evaluations



Mere Exposure

- If we simply recognize a brand, we will judge it more positively.
 - Researchers asked people to pick which of two airlines to fly on, one familiar, one unfamiliar.
 - People overwhelmingly chose the familiar.
 - Even after adding three troubling pieces of information, such as accidents, 67% still chose the familiar company.
- One goal of advertising is to blitz us with a name so many times that it unconsciously triggers the recognition heuristic.
 - Children definitely preferred the taste of food in McDonalds wrappers over the same food in plain wrappers.



Factors Involved in Interpersonal Attraction

- **Physical Attractiveness**
 - We react more favorably to others who are physically attractive than to those who are not
 - Bias for beauty is pervasive

Is Beauty an Objective Quality?

- Some argue that certain faces are inherently more attractive than others
 - High levels of agreement for facial ratings across ages and cultures
 - Physical features of the face are reliably associated with judgments of attractiveness
 - Babies prefer faces considered attractive by adults



Is Beauty a Subjective Quality?

- People from different cultures enhance their beauty in very different ways
- Ideal body shapes vary across cultures, as well as among racial groups within a culture
- Standards of beauty change over time
- Situational factors can influence judgments of beauty

Why Are We Blinded by Beauty?

- Inherently rewarding to be in the company of people who are aesthetically appealing
 - Possible intrinsic and extrinsic rewards
- Tendency to associate physical attractiveness with other desirable qualities
 - What-is-beautiful-is-good stereotype

Physical Attraction Stereotype

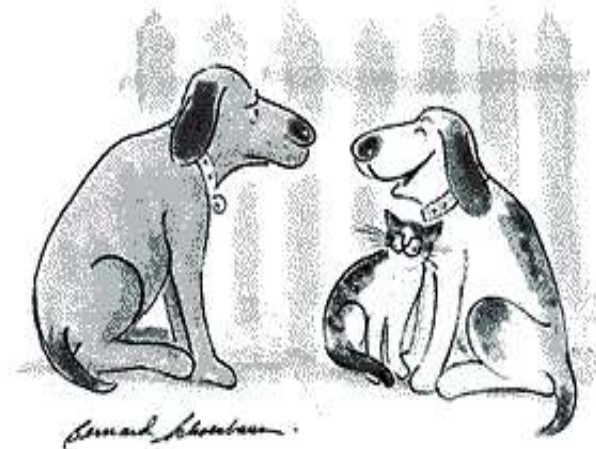
- People within a culture, assume that attractive people have the traits that are valued by that culture
- Adults and children are biased toward attractive people
- Even infants stare at attractive people longer than unattractive people!
- Lessons begin early – how many ugly heroes are there in children's tales vs. the number of ugly villains?



Factors Involved in Interpersonal Attraction

- **Similarity**

- Proximity increases familiarity, which leads to liking, but something more is needed to fuel a growing friendship.
- That “fuel” is *similarity*—a match between our interests, attitudes, values, background, or personality and those of another person.



“We laugh at the same things.”

Similarity

- Three Areas of Similarity that Increase Liking
 - Demographic Similarity
 - Attitudes and Values
 - Personality
 - Similar cognitive complexities
 - Similar emotional styles
 - Attachment styles



Similarity

- The more similar to ourselves we find someone to be, the more we tend to like them.
- Friends more likely to share opinions, attitudes, beliefs, and values.
- Dissimilarity breeds dislike in an even stronger fashion that similarity breeds liking.



Factors Involved in Interpersonal Attraction

- **Reciprocal Liking**

- One of the *most potent* determinants of our liking someone is if we believe that that person likes us—*reciprocal liking*.
- Reciprocal liking effects can only occur if we like ourselves. People with negative self-concepts tend to be skeptical that others actually do like them and therefore may not reciprocate liking.
- Reciprocal liking can come about because of a *self-fulfilling prophecy*.

Reciprocal Liking

People with a negative self-concept respond quite differently:

- Such people indicate that they'd prefer to meet and talk to a person they know has criticized them earlier than meet and talk to a person they know has praised them earlier.
- Thus if people think of themselves as unlikable, another person's friendly behavior toward them will seem unwarranted, and they may not respond, setting in motion another self-fulfilling prophecy.

Theories of Liking and Attraction

- Exchange Theory
- Equity Theory
- Gain-Loss Theory

Exchange Theory

- The main idea behind social exchange is everyone tries to maximise the rewards they obtain from a relationship and try to minimise the costs. If the a relationship is to be successful then both parties are expected to *give* and *take* in equal proportions.
- In exchange theory, there are 4 basic steps:
 - Reward
 - Cost
 - Outcome
 - Comparison level



Exchange Theory

Rewards are the positive, gratifying aspects of the relationship that make it worthwhile and reinforcing, including:

- The kinds of personal characteristics and behaviors of our relationship partner that we have already discussed, and
- Our ability to acquire external resources by virtue of knowing this person (e.g., gaining access to money, status, activities, or other interesting people).

Exchange Theory

Costs are, obviously, the other side of the coin, and all friendships and romantic relationships have some costs attached to them. (Such as putting up with someone's annoying habits and characteristics)

Exchange Theory

Outcome If the cost is more than reward we have a negative outcome. If on the other hand there is a profit left over after we have subtracted the cost we have a positive outcome,

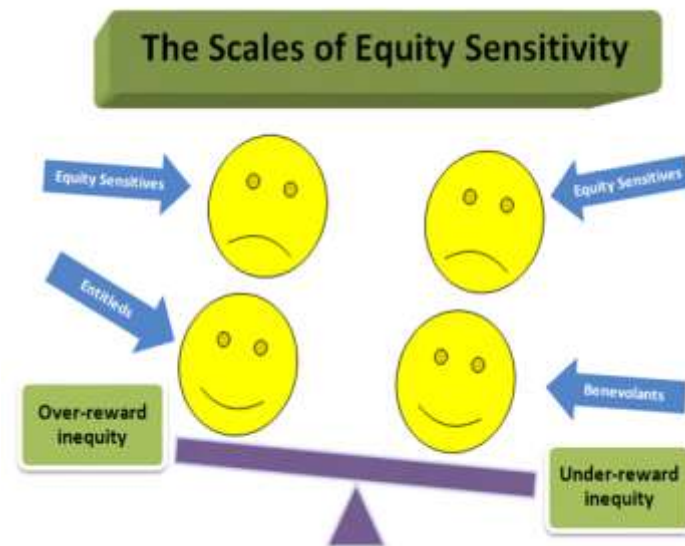
$$\textit{Reward} - \textit{cost} = \textit{outcome}$$

Exchange Theory

Comparison Level People's expectations about the level of rewards and punishments they are likely to receive in a particular relationship.

Equity Theory

- Proponents of **equity theory** describe equitable relationships as the happiest and most stable.
- In comparison, inequitable relationships result in one person feeling:
 - Over-benefited (getting a lot of rewards, incurring few costs, having to devote little time or energy to the relationship), or
 - Under-benefited (getting few rewards, incurring a lot of costs, having to devote a lot of time and energy to the relationship).



Gain- loss Theory



- This deals with the area of liking and feedback.
- According to this theory changes in another person evaluation of us will have more impact on our liking for him/ her than if the evaluation were constant.
- Thus we like a person who is esteemed for us increases overtime better than someone, who has always liked us. (**a gain situation**)
- Similarly, we dislike a person whose evaluation of us become negative over time. More than some one who has always disliked us. (**a loss situation**)

Social Relations- Friendship

- Definition: Reciprocal relationship with positive affect
 - Distinct from popularity
- Importance
 - Source of social support
 - Conflict resolution skills
 - Preparation for adulthood
 - Can have bad consequences as well:
Quality of friendships



Stages of Friendship

- There are 4 stages of friendship.
 - Formative stage.
 - Exploratory research.
 - Negotiation (Bargaining) State.
 - Commitment.



Formative Stage

- Analysis focuses upon the sequence of events and stages that led to the development of friendship.
- The sequence may be examined as we described the process of an imaginary group
- A group of students lets say from various universities are strangers to each other who are brought together for a weekend conference.

Exploratory Research

- At the first meeting of the imaginary group, the students who are attending the conference, look each other and engage in a process term as sampling and estimation.
- Each person explores a varying degree of cost to him or herself and the rewards available in potential relations with other persons around the room.

Negotiating / Bargaining

- The process is not conscious or rational.
- Each person makes evaluations and attempts to negotiate a definition of the situation and of the resultant relationship that will maximize the outputs.
- In parts such attempts take the form of strategies.

Commitment

- Members of pair progressively reduce their sampling and bargaining with other person.
- They stop looking around the room, stop thinking about other possibilities and commit themselves to a particular other person.
- Thus, find a stage called institutionalization.

