

Chapter 5 Reading Guide

1. Describe several differences between the way men and women communicate. Remember that these are generalities. □
2. How would you describe an intimate relationship before reading this chapter? How does the author describe intimate relationships? How would you describe an intimate relationship after reading this chapter?
3. Differentiate between passionate love and companionate love. Are the two mutually exclusive? □
4. What are some ways that friendship and love relationships are similar? Dissimilar?
5. What is oxytocin/vasopressin? How do they relate to bonding and attachment?
6. What are some reasons that effective communication can be difficult to achieve?
7. How do self-concept and self-esteem potentially affect communication?
8. Discuss the several specific techniques for improving communication effectiveness. Be sure to include the many different aspects of Appropriate Self Disclosure, Being a Better Listener, Non-Verbal Communication, Expressing Difficult Feelings, Communicating Assertively, Establishing a Supportive Climate, and Managing Conflict (phew!). Be sure to also pay attention to defining/describing words and phrases that appear in bold or italics. Yep, this should be a long answer.
9. Summarize the box “Skills for behavior change: Learning to Really Listen,” page 146.
10. What are the differences between assertive communication, aggressive communication, and non-assertive communication? Which tends to be the most effective? Why?
11. Why do communication experts recommend that you use “I” statements rather than “you” statements when expressing difficult feelings?
12. Revisit the section on conflict resolution. Think about a time that you got in an argument with someone you were close to, and the argument got irrational (name calling, blame, being more about winning than finding a solution, etc). How could you have changed your responses to try to keep the argument rational and productive?
13. What are some factors that tend to affect the likelihood of feelings of jealousy?
14. What are some advantages of being in a happy marriage (or other committed partnership)? Do you think these advantages dissipate if the marriage is chronically unhappy (I say "chronically," because all marriages go through rough periods)? □
15. Does having children usually save a bad relationship?
16. Why is self-nurturance important for maintaining healthy relationships?
17. Summarize table 5.3, recognizing healthy vs. unhealthy relationships. Have you experienced either of them with friends, family or significant others?
18. Discuss methods for coping with failed relationships. Why is it important to avoid rebound relationships?

-from required links-

19. Discuss the tips from the Gottman Institute for successful marriage/relationships.
By the way, they are local, right here in Seattle!
20. What are some factors that have been shown experimentally to be important in the way we choose a mate? Explain the study involving sweaty T-shirts.
21. In what way (chemically) does passionate love resemble OCD?

Supplemental lectures

I. Is love always the number one consideration in choosing a mate? Apparently not!

Some cross-cultural research points out some differences. Below, the place where love ranks in selecting a partner is given, as well as what else ranked as important...

Ranking of love as a factor in choosing a spouse---(where love ranked is given by a number):

US: 1st

Iran: 3rd, education/intelligent, ambition, chastity

Nigeria: 4th, good health, refinement, desire for home and children

China: 6th, good health, chastity, domestic skills

South Africa--Zulu: 7th, emotional stability, maturity, dependable character

II. Oxytocin- one of the coolest hormones in the animal world! -a little more info-

Oxytocin is a hormone that has a variety of effects. For example, it causes contractions of the vaginal walls, penis and glands during both male and female orgasm, and also causes contraction of the uterus during childbirth.

All mammals have oxytocin. In addition to causing muscular contractions, oxytocin (as the book briefly discussed) can affect the brain. One specific effect oxytocin can have on the brain is to enable it to make some very specific and important memory connections: it helps you bond emotionally. During sexual activity or childbirth, there is a surge of oxytocin in the blood. Besides causing contractions, that oxytocin also prepares the brain to bond emotionally with the person you are around (mate or child). Here are a couple of examples from non-human mammals:

There is a species of rodent that is strictly monogamous (very rare for mammals in general). When a young pair mates for the first time, each experiences a surge of oxytocin. In this species, that surge causes their brains to wire in such a way that each will only accept the other as a mate thereafter!

When goats give birth, they experience a surge of oxytocin. The surge lasts for about 5 minutes post-birth. If a mother goat is exposed to her kid (that is the technical term) within that 5 minute period, she will recognize her kid and act maternally, even if you remove the kid for hours after then. But, if you remove the kid when it is born and expose the mother after the 5 minute window, she will be unable to make the connection and will reject her kid!

Oxytocin is powerful stuff, and there is evidence that it plays a very important role in emotional bonding in humans. □

III. A quick note on conflict resolution tip #6: “Never think in terms of winning an argument”-

I think the author left out an important part of this. She recommends that you instead think about how to avoid an argument, which can be fine if it is not something worth arguing over or discussing. However, once you are in an argument or discussion, or if an issue needs to be discussed, the point is to remember that you are not in a contest in which the goal is for one person to win and the other to lose. You are trying to resolve a problem so that both of you can be happy with the outcome, and leave the discussion feeling that you trust the other person to have your best interest in mind (and the other person should feel that way about you, too!).