

The Level of Relational Self-Construal Moderates the Relationship between Disclosure and  
Well-Being

Stephanie M. Besst

College of Saint Benedict/Saint John's University

The Level of Relational Self-Construal Moderates the Relationship between Disclosure and Well-Being

Approved by:

---

Dr. Pamela Bacon  
Associate Professor of Psychology

---

Dr. Stephen Stelzner  
Professor of Psychology

---

Dr. Richard Wielkiewicz  
Professor of Psychology

---

Dr. Pamela Bacon  
Psychology Department Chair

---

Dr. Emily Esch  
Director, Honors Thesis Program

## The Level of Relational Self-Construal Moderates the Relationship between Disclosure and Well-Being

Self-disclosure is essential to all stages of relationship development. In the early stages of a relationship, self-disclosure facilitates gaining information about others, while in established relationships self-disclosure allows for relationship maintenance and the assurance that the needs of others are met (Derlega, Metts, Petronio, & Margulis, 1993). Current research on self-disclosure has examined its influence on the relationship between the two individuals involved (e.g., Gore, Cross, & Morris, 2006; Sprecher, Treger, Wondra, Hilaire, & Wallpe, 2013), but less research exists on the benefits of self-disclosure to the individual. Because people differ in the extent to which they value relationships, are there different self-disclosure benefits for different individuals?

### **Relational Self-Construal**

People differ in the extent to which they incorporate relationships with others into their self-concept (Cross, Bacon, & Morris, 2000). Cross-cultural psychologists have established concepts explaining the extent to which individuals think about themselves in terms of their social world (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). The concepts independent and interdependent identify the degree to which an individual incorporates aspects of their social world into their understanding of the self (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Western cultures construct more of an independent self-construal, while Eastern cultures construct more of an interdependent self-construal (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Western individuals with an independent self-construal often think of themselves as independent or separate of others and close relationships, valuing individual uniqueness over group memberships (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Those in Eastern cultures with an interdependent self-construal think of themselves as interdependent with their

important social roles and situations, therefore incorporating group memberships and close relationships into the idea of the self (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

Cross et al. (2000) furthered understanding of the Western independent self-construal by developing the concept of the relational-interdependent self-construal (RISC; also referred to as relational self-construal). While a majority of individuals within Western cultures have a high independent self-construal, there is variation among individuals as to the extent of this independence. The concept of the relational self-construal helps capture the self-construal of individuals, such as women, within independent self-construal cultures who think of themselves as more interdependent or relational (Cross et al., 2000).

Individuals with a relational self-construal, called high relationals, think of themselves in terms of their relationship with close others (Cross et al., 2000). In Western cultures high relationals incorporate close relationships into their understanding of the self as opposed to Eastern culture individuals with an interdependent self-construal who incorporate group memberships into their understanding of the self (Cross et al., 2000). Close individual relationships with others, such as with a best friend, coworker, or spouse are included in the understanding of the self (self-definition and self-expression) for high relationals because it reinforces the person is connected to others (Cross et al., 2000; Morry & Kito, 2009).

Cross et al. (2000) suggest the cognitive processes of high relationals may be different from those who do not include relationships with others into their self-concept (low relationals). High relationals may integrate the information about close others as self-relevant information. By combining the information about close others with information about the self, high relationals are more attentive to and better remember the information of close individuals, thus allowing

high relationals to think and behave in ways which indicate their connectedness and strengthen their close relationships (Cross et al., 2000).

It is likely high relationals vicariously experience the emotions of close others because they are more aware of other's emotions, leading them to experience positive and negative affect to a greater degree (Cross & Madson, 1997). Low relationals separate their relationships from their self-concept to a greater degree than high relationals. With the separation of relationships and the self, low relationals disclose less of their emotions to others and avoid the spillover of social affect into their personal affect (Cross & Madson, 1997).

The motivational processes of high relationals may also differ from low relationals. Positive feelings about the self are likely to surface for high relationals when their goals of developing and maintaining close relationships are reached (Cross et al., 2000; Cross & Madson, 1997). The decisions and social interactions of high relationals, as compared to low relationals, are centered on their obligations and responsiveness to other's needs (Cross & Madson, 1997). Research has not explicitly determined the relationship between high relationals and the intimacy motive or need for affiliation. Theoretically, it is expected the RISC scale would correlate highly with measures of affiliation, but this relationship may not exist in the reverse (Cross et al., 2000). In other words, a high relational should score high on intimacy or affiliation measures, but an individual who scores high on intimacy or affiliation measures does not necessarily identify this motive or incorporate this need into their self-concept and identify as a high relational (Cross et al., 2000).

For low relationals, positive feelings are likely to surface when they feel autonomous and appear separate or better than others, especially in relation to self-defining areas (Cross et al., 2000; Cross & Madson, 1997). Cross and Madson (1997) highlight that when uniqueness or

specialness of various behaviors, skills, or attributes of low relationals are displayed, the self-esteem of these individuals is often enhanced. As stated earlier, all individuals desire relationships with others, including low relationals. Unlike high relationals, the relationships valued by low relationals center on individualistic goals, providing a gauge allowing the low relationals to recognize where they stand relative to others in domains such as abilities, attributes, and uniqueness (Cross & Madson, 1997).

High relationals work to establish close relationships, in comparison to low relationals, in order to maintain positive feelings about themselves and their self-esteem through self-disclosure of feelings and thoughts (Cross & Madson, 1997). Low relationals may feel their self-esteem threatened by interdependent relationships (Cross & Madson, 1997). In order to avoid self-esteem threats, low relationals may avoid sharing their feelings and thoughts with others and participate in a “descriptive” self-disclosure instead of an “evaluative” disclosure (Morton, 1978). Descriptive self-disclosure consists of the disclosure of private facts about oneself, while evaluative self-disclosure consists of one disclosing “personal or intense feelings or judgments” (Morton, 1978). Evidence has shown evaluative self-disclosure to be central to the existence of close, intimate relationships (Cross & Madson, 1997). The tendency for low relationals to avoid this type of self-disclosure allows them to avoid a reduction of autonomy and separateness, which occurs during interdependent relationships (Cross & Madson, 1997).

The present study defines one aspect of an individual’s well-being as state self-esteem. Self-esteem “functions as a *sociometer* that monitors the degree to which the individual is being included versus excluded by other people and motivates the person to behave in ways that minimize the probability of rejection or exclusion,” according to Leary, Tambor, Terdal, and Downs (1995, p. 518). In this sense, self-esteem acts like a fuel gauge measuring the social

relations of an individual (Leary et al., 1995). When the gauge is full, it indicates to the individual that others are including them. However, when the gauge is closer to empty, the individual is being socially excluded. The sociometer notifies the individual of how well they are maintaining their interpersonal relationships (Leary et al., 1995). Leary and colleagues (1995) argue self-esteem is a sociometer indicating to individuals when they must alter their behavior in order to return to a status of social inclusion. All human beings strive to make connections with others. Human survival is dependent on inclusion and connectedness. Self-esteem as a sociometer indicates to individuals when these human needs are not met (Leary et al., 1995).

In a study conducted by Leary et al. (1995), individuals who were accepted by a partner after they described themselves felt more positively than individuals who were excluded by their partner. This study found that it did not matter whether or not an individual disregarded another's exclusion and exclusionary comments as inaccurate: self-esteem was still lowered when one was excluded (Leary et al., 1995). The study conducted by Leary et al. (1995) centered on state self-esteem, highlighting that individual's self-feelings and self-esteem can increase or decrease based on social inclusion or exclusion.

Additional research has studied the relational self-construal in other social contexts, such as social support. Heintzelman and Bacon (2015) found relational self-construal moderated the association between social support and life satisfaction. Evidence showed high relationals benefit, in terms of life satisfaction, to a greater extent from social support when experiencing stress as compared to low relationals (Heintzelman & Bacon, 2015). Life satisfaction among low relationals experiencing stress was low no matter the amount of perceived social support (Heintzelman & Bacon, 2015). The moderating influence of the relational self-construal on the

relationship between social support and life satisfaction helps to understand the role the self plays in a social context. While social support has been found to have many positive benefits for individuals, these benefits, especially in terms of life satisfaction, are influenced by the relational self-construal of the individual receiving the social support (Heintzelman & Bacon, 2015).

Similar to the influence the relational self-construal has on social support and life satisfaction, the relational self-construal was found to moderate the relationship between relationship closeness and well-being. Cross and Morris (2003) conducted a study on roommate pairs in which high and low relationals differed in the extent to which relationship closeness increased individual well-being. Roommate pairs who had not previously known each other completed measures pertaining to their individual RISC score, the relationship closeness with their roommate, along with their well-being, measured by the Satisfaction With Life Scale (Cross & Morris, 2003).

Analysis found that for high relationals, greater depth of closeness in the roommate relationship related to a greater life satisfaction (Cross & Morris, 2003). Unlike high relationals, the life satisfaction of low relationals was reduced as the depth of closeness between roommates became greater (Cross & Morris, 2003). In other words, Cross and Morris (2003) found individual's relational self-construal moderated the relationship between closeness and well-being. It is likely the high relationals viewed the greater depth of closeness in the relationship as fulfilling a goal of developing and maintaining close relationships, thus leading the increased well-being and satisfaction with their life. For low relationals, it is likely the demands of a close relationship invade their sense of autonomy and independence from their roommate, thus lowering their satisfaction with life.

Morry, Kito, Mann, and Hill (2013) found the RISC to play a role in how one perceives their friends and their friendship quality. The study asked participants to nominate three friends and results found individuals nominated friends who they perceived had similar RISC levels as themselves; high relationals perceive friends to have higher RISC levels, while low relationals perceive friends to have lower RISC levels (Morry et al., 2013). Thus, from the nominations individuals preferred friends who they perceived had a similar RISC level whether or not the friends actually had the perceived RISC level.

Additional results found that although individuals prefer others who they perceive have a similar RISC level, individuals, regardless of their own RISC level (high or low), reported higher relationship quality with friends perceived to be high relationals and have high RISC levels (Morry et al., 2013). High relationals prefer being friends with individuals who they perceive are high relationals, and seem to have the highest relationship quality with these individuals. For low relationals the relationship is not as consistent; low relationals prefer being friends with individuals who are perceived to be low relationals, but the low relationals have the highest relationship quality with individuals perceived to have higher RISC levels. It is possible the level and type of disclosure between friends could impact why low relationals prefer friendships with other perceived low relationals, but experience higher relationship quality with higher relationals. Higher levels of disclosure, such as closeness-generating disclosure, are often used when furthering a friendship or relationship. If high levels of disclosure are discussed between low relationals the disclosure may not be acknowledged and valued to the extent it would be with a high relational.

High relationals think of themselves in terms of their close relationships. High relationals maintain these relationships by incorporating information about close others into self relevant

information as well as by being responsive to the needs of close others. Low relationals think of themselves as independent from close relationships and work to maintain autonomy and independence from close others. As high relationals maintain close interpersonal relationships, it is likely their sociometer will increase because these relationships will make them feel included and fulfill their goal of developing close relationships. Low relationals will likely experience an increase in their sociometer when they develop and maintain interpersonal relationships which allow them to retain their sense of independence. As past research has shown, if low relationals experience close relationships which invade upon their independence, it is likely their well-being will decrease due to their goal of maintaining independence from relationships is not met.

### **Self-Disclosure**

Self-disclosure is essential toward accomplishing goals in relationships. Self-disclosure assists relationship development because it allows individuals to gain information about the other in order to determine if they would get along (Derlega et al., 1993). Self-disclosure is also useful in relationship maintenance because it provides information pertaining to the needs of the other, thus allowing the individuals to alter their behavior to either meet the needs of the other or not meet the needs of the other, depending on whether they want to continue the relationship (Derlega et al., 1993). Self-disclosure can provide self-validation to individuals as they talk with another and gain feedback and insight into their feelings, thoughts, and problems (Derlega et al., 1993).

There is a mutually transformative relationship between disclosure and relationships; the information self-disclosed can change the nature of the relationship, as the nature of the relationship can transform the understanding and effects of the self-disclosure (Derlega, et al., 1993). Personal self-disclosure could either result in closeness between two newly acquainted

individuals or foster objection (or rejection) if the personal self-disclosure is perceived as inappropriate to the relatively new relationship. Self-disclosure can also have positive benefits for the self through stress-reduction and social support. Research has shown that withholding disclosure about traumatic experiences in one's life was associated with greater physical ailments and psychological stress (Derlega et al., 1993). Self-disclosure is vital to relationship development and maintenance, providing a foundation for an individual to build connections with others, to validate themselves, their feelings, and their experiences.

Research conducted by Aron, Melinat, Aron, Vallone, and Bator (1997) created a method for establishing closeness in an experimental manner. In their studies, pairs of participants self-disclosed in response to pre-established questions expected to result in closeness, while other pairs discussed pre-established questions expected to result in small-talk. The results showed that the closeness-generating questions led the pairs to feel significantly closer to their partner than individuals who discussed questions resulting in small-talk (Aron et al., 1997). Contrary to previous research, no support was found for the importance of perceived similarity between the pair because pairs still experienced closeness with an individual who held disagreeing views (Aron et al., 1997). Furthermore, the results showed that closeness was still experienced by pairs even without an explicit statement that closeness was the task of the interaction (Aron et al., 1997).

Personality was found to impact the amount of closeness felt by pairs (Aron et al., 1997). Aron et al. (1997) found that when no specific instructions about getting close were stated and extraverts were paired with other extraverts, they reported a greater level of closeness than introverts who were paired with other introverts. In the same study by Aron et al. (1997), when extraverted pairs and introverted pairs were explicitly told their task was to develop closeness,

the differences in closeness between personality types disappeared. Thus, Aron et al. (1997) describe an effective method of generating closeness because closeness was produced in varied conditions, but was not obtained in the small-talk conditions.

Although research has shown that self-disclosure itself does not predict the stability and quality of a relationship, it is likely self-disclosure works alongside other variables influencing whether a relationship continues (Sprecher & Hendrick, 2004). When studying self-disclosure within romantic couples, Sprecher and Hendrick (2004) found self-disclosure did not predict whether couples stayed together one to four years after first being interviewed. It is likely other factors, such as partner listening and understanding or their relational self-construal level, could influence the future of a relationship. Additionally, Sprecher and Hendrick (2004) found a relationship between self-disclosure and well-being. In their study on romantic couples, it was found among women that high relational self-esteem (one's self-esteem in terms of their relationships with others) was associated with high own self-disclosure and the perceived amount of partner disclosure.

Cross et al. (2000) found evidence supporting that high relationals both disclose more information and elicit more self-disclosure from the relationship partner. While high relationals have been found to be related to higher disclosure, extraversion does not necessarily play a role in the relationship because the RISC is only moderately related to extraversion (Cross et al., 2000; Morry & Kito, 2009). Individuals who were paired with a high relational as opposed to a low relational found the interaction more satisfying and expressed more partiality and closeness toward their partner (Cross et al., 2000). The amount of self-disclosure that took place between partners was significantly related to the partner's perception of the high relational's responsiveness (Cross et al., 2000). In turn, the amount of satisfaction in the interaction felt by

the partner was strongly related to their perception of responsiveness to their disclosure (Cross et al., 2000). These studies provide support in understanding how close relationships are formed for high relationals (Cross et al., 2000). High relationals, compared to low relationals, are more likely to disclose than others. By doing so, the individuals high relationals disclose to perceive and evaluate the high relational as more responsive, concerned, and caring (Cross et al., 2000). Individuals who perceive their relationship partner as more responsive and sensitive to their concerns are thus more likely to positively rate the relationship (Cross et al., 2000).

Another study conducted by Gore, Cross, and Morris (2006) further supports the importance of self-disclosure between individuals in the process of creating and maintaining close relationships. High relationals more willingly shared emotional and personal information about themselves with their roommate compared to low relationals. Subsequently, high relationals were viewed as more responsive by their roommates (Gore et al., 2006). Similar to the research of Cross et al. (2000), Gore et al. (2006) found that the evaluation of relationship quality from the roommate was related to their perception of their partner's emotional disclosure along with their partner's responsiveness (which were related to each other). It can be determined from these findings that emotional disclosure and responsiveness are intricate parts of closeness and commitment feelings in relationships, especially newly initiated ones (Gore et al., 2006). A second study conducted by Gore et al. (2006) provided evidence that disclosure from high relationals elicits similar intimate disclosure from their partner, which causes a reciprocated sense of disclosure, thus supporting the previous study mentioned. In turn, intimate disclosure establishes a cycle which strengthens and maintains the relationship (Gore et al., 2006).

Research conducted by Morry (2005) studied the personal attribute of allocentrism, a collectivistic trait where one centers their focus and behaviors on others instead of themselves, and its relationship with cross-sex friendship satisfaction. Results of Morry's (2005) study found individuals who scored higher on the allocentrism reported disclosing more to a friend, their friend disclosing more to them in return, the relationship was reported as closer, and they found more satisfaction with the friendship. The relationship between allocentrism and interpersonal variables is similar to the relationship between high relationals and interpersonal variables. Both high allocentric individuals and high relationals were found to disclose more and perceived the relationship as closer. These results show support for personal attributes influencing interpersonal variables, such as disclosure and closeness, instead of an inverse relationship (Morry, 2005).

Similar to the second study conducted by Gore et al. (2006), reciprocity of self-disclosure was further studied by Sprecher, Treger, Wondra, Hilaire, and Wallpe (2013) examining how self-disclosure reciprocity relates to feelings about the interaction (such as liking). Two types of self-disclosure reciprocity were studied: turn-taking reciprocity and extended reciprocity. Turn-taking reciprocity involves immediate self-disclosure between individuals, therefore after one self-discloses the other will respond with their own self-disclosure (Sprecher et al., 2013). In contrast, extended reciprocity involves reciprocating disclosure, but over a longer period of time, an example would be one individual asking the other questions for the entire time then switching roles (Sprecher et al., 2013).

Sprecher et al. (2013) found that after the first interaction, where dyads either took turns disclosing (reciprocal disclosure) or one partner disclosed and the other listened (non-reciprocal disclosure), reciprocally disclosing dyads reported higher liking, levels of closeness, perceived

similarity, and enjoyment in the interaction than non-reciprocal dyads. It is likely participants in the reciprocal disclosure dyads reported greater liking and closeness for the interaction because they may have perceived greater responsiveness (Sprecher et al., 2013). As dyad members responded immediately in a turn-taking style to the self-disclosure of the other, there was room for acknowledgement and concern toward what was said by the partner, likely leading to a higher sense of responsiveness and affirmation nonexistent in the non-reciprocal dyads. Among non-reciprocal dyads, higher closeness was reported for those who initially listened to their partner compared to those who initially disclosed (Sprecher et al., 2013). This finding supports that receiving disclosure can be more influential in the amount of closeness generated than giving disclosure (Sprecher et al., 2013).

Additional research has examined which aspect of self-disclosure, giving or receiving, is related to greater liking and closeness of the interaction. Sprecher, Treger, and Wondra (2013) found that receiving rather than giving disclosure is related to increased liking, enjoyment of the interaction, and closeness to the discussion partner. It is likely when one receives disclosure, knowledge and information is provided about the other allowing the receiver to become more familiar with the discloser (Sprecher et al., 2013). It was found when roles switched (the receiver disclosing and the discloser receiving), the new receiver experienced similar increases in liking, enjoyment, and closeness as the first receiver experienced (Sprecher et al., 2013).

Vittengl and Holt (2000) found positive and negative affect were related to aspects of social relationship development. After brief dyadic conversations, increases in positive affect were predicted by participants' increased self-disclosure and social attraction (attracted as a potential friend; liking) to their discussion partners (Vittengl & Holt, 2000). It was also found self-disclosure and social attraction to discussion partners were positively related suggesting that

self-disclosure is linked to liking or social attraction, and positive emotions (Vittengl & Holt, 2000). Vittengl and Holt (2000) also found negative affect to significantly decrease after conversations, which was predicted by participants' report of their larger contribution to the conversation (how much more they talked during the conversation than their partner). It is possible the relationship between negative affect and contribution to the conversation was present because individuals felt relief by simply contributing to the conversation, instead of specifically self-disclosing information (self-disclosure was not related to negative affect) (Vittengl & Holt, 2000).

Self-disclosure is beneficial to relationship development and maintenance as it provides information about the relationship partner and allows the individual to gain insight into the needs of the partner. Past research has shown that while self-disclosure is beneficial in relationships, there are other factors which play a role, such as partner listening and understanding (Sprecher & Hendrick, 2004). Studies have found high relationals disclose more and elicit more disclosure from their partner which likely causes the disclosure to appear appropriate and not overwhelm the relationship partner (Cross et al., 2000). As high relationals elicit similar intimate disclosure from their partner, there is a sense of reciprocity in disclosure (Gore et al., 2006). The reciprocal sense of disclosure leads relationship partners to perceive their high relational partner as more responsive (than low relationals), thus increasing ratings of relationship quality (Cross et al., 2000).

In the current study, it is expected the level of relational self-construal will moderate the relationship between self-disclosure and well-being. When discussing closeness-generating topics, high relationals will likely disclose more and elicit more disclosure from their partner leading to higher levels of closeness. The increased closeness will be related to higher

relationship quality and an expected higher well-being among high relationals. When closeness-generating topics are discussed between low relationals, the closeness will interfere with their independence and autonomy, thus relating to lower levels of well-being among low relationals.

### **Proposed Design**

The present study is a quasi-experiment in which pairs of high or low relationals will be randomly assigned to one of two disclosure conditions: closeness-generating or small-talk generating. The disclosure conditions will utilize the interaction designs established by Aron et al. (1997) and revised by Cross et al. (2000). After the disclosure, participants will answer questions about their sense of well-being after the disclosure.

Participants will be paired with another participant of their same relational level; the high relationals will be paired with high relationals, and low relationals will be paired with low relationals. These two extremes will be selected in order to increase the power of the designed study.

### **Hypotheses**

High relationals should experience higher well-being (higher self-esteem, happiness, positive affect, and life satisfaction, and lower loneliness and negative affect) in the closeness-generating condition than in the small-talk condition (see Figure 1). Low relationals should experience lower well-being (lower self-esteem, happiness, positive affect, and life satisfaction, and higher loneliness and negative affect) in the closeness-generating condition than in the small-talk condition (see Figure 1).

This hypothesis is expected to be supported because high relationals will receive an internal “boost” from the disclosure since they will feel their goal of building close relationships is being accomplished. If a high relational believes they are meeting one of their goals in terms

of relationships, they will feel satisfied with themselves and will have a higher well-being. As stated earlier, high relationals vicariously experience the emotions of close others and if closeness is increased through closeness-generating disclosure, high relationals will likely enjoy the discussion, receiving increased happiness and positive affect, which will be vicariously experienced by each member of the dyad. Positive affect was also increased in individuals when there was an increase in participant self-disclosure and liking for their partner. It is likely the high relational partners will express high levels of responsiveness and take turns reciprocating disclosure which will likely increase the amount of closeness-generating information disclosed and increase liking between partners. High relationals will likely feel a large contribution to the conversation which, as stated earlier, is expected to reduce negative affect. As more closeness-generating information is disclosed, it is expected the life satisfaction of high relationals will increase as they find the closeness fulfilling to their goals of developing close relationships. The developing closeness between the high relational dyad will expectedly reduce feelings of loneliness.

Low relationals do not strive for relationships to a similar extent as high relationals and because of this, low relationals will not experience as high well-being and happiness when they are disclosing in a situation fostering closeness. Instead, low relationals will feel this intimate disclosure impedes on their separateness and hinders their goal to remain separate from others. The impediment of closeness-generating self-disclosure will likely reduce positive affect, and instead increase negative affect because low relationals will experience closeness-generating disclosure as distressing rather than enjoyable. As stated earlier, when low relationals are disclosing closeness-generating information, it is expected the depth of closeness will increase which will lead to a decrease in life satisfaction. Loneliness is expected to increase among low

relationals because, as discussed earlier, the interaction will not result in a high relationship quality as if the low relational was interacting with a high relational.

Conversing with another over trivial life details will foster a high well-being for low relationals compared to low relationals conversing with another over personal life matters because the small-talk between low relationals allows dyad members to retain their sense of independence. Low relationals conversing about trivial matters will not feel as though their partner is infringing upon their autonomous selves, resulting in a higher well-being compared to low relationals who converse about deeper personal matters.

High relationals should experience higher well-being and low relationals should experience lower well-being in the closeness-generating condition than in the small-talk condition.

## **Method**

### **Participants**

Participants will be 80 female students, ranging from first-years to seniors, from the College of St. Benedict. Female students will be selected due to practicality and in order to reduce potential confounds of gender and potential romantic attraction on self-disclosure (similar approaches have been used by Cross et al., 2000; Cross & Morris, 2002). These participants will be enrolled in an introductory psychology course and will receive partial course credit for their participation. Only participants who scored in the top or bottom third on the RISC will participate in the study in order to enhance statistical power. All participants will be paired with a partner of the same relational level (high or low). Pairs will be randomly assigned to one of two disclosure conditions: a condition where closeness is generated or small-talk is generated. Each condition will contain 10 pairs.

## Measures

**Relational-Interdependent Self-Construal Scale.** The Relational-Interdependent Self-Construal (RISC; Cross et al., 2000; see Appendix A) assesses the extent to which participants define themselves in terms of their close relationships. This measure contains 11 items which participants respond to on a 7-point Likert scale format, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*), with two items being reversed scored. The range of possible scores is 11 to 77, with higher scores indicating a higher relational self-construal. Instead of referring to specific relationships, the items on the scale refer to how one defines themselves in terms of general close relationships (e.g., “My close relationships are an important reflection of who I am”). Cross et al. (2000) found the scale correlates moderately with the Communal Orientation Scale (Clark, Ouellette, Powell, & Millberg, 1987), the Interdependent Self-Construal Scale (Singelis, 1994), and the Empathic Concern Scale (Davis, 1980). These correlations indicate the scale measures interdependence and awareness of other’s feelings and thoughts (Cross et al., 2000). The scale did not correlate strongly with measures of independence, such as Singelis’ (1994) Independent Self-Construal Scale (Cross et al., 2000). Principal components analysis of the RISC scale provided support for a single factor of the items in the scale, which accounted for 47% of the total variance (Cross et al., 2000). The reliability of the measure was acceptable with coefficient alphas ranging from .85 to .90, and test-retest reliability over a 2-month period was .73 (Cross et al., 2000).

**The Fordyce Emotions Questionnaire.** The Fordyce Emotions Questionnaire (Fordyce, 1988; see Appendix B) asks participants to select how happy or unhappy they are “right now” on an 11-item scale ranging from 0 (*Extremely unhappy [utterly depressed, completely down]*) to 10 (*Extremely happy [feeling ecstatic, joyous, fantastic!]*) in order to assess participant’s quality of

happiness. Analysis has been conducted and has shown test-retest reliability after one month to be .59, and after two months to be .59 (Fordyce, 1988). Coefficient alpha was not computed for this scale. Research has shown the questionnaire is sensitive to short-term change which is beneficial in this study because well-being (including happiness) is expected to be influenced by a short conversation (Fordyce, 1988). The questionnaire has acceptable convergent validity with other measures of well-being, such as Diener et al.'s (1985) Satisfaction With Life Scale and Fordyce's (1986) Psychap Inventory achieved happiness scale (Fordyce, 1988).

**The State Self-Esteem Scale.** The State Self-Esteem Scale (SSES; Heatherton & Polivy, 1991; see Appendix C) will be used to address participant's state self-esteem. This 20-item measure requires participants to respond using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*extremely*). The items on the SSES pertain to how the participant is thinking and feeling right now or in the current moment, instead of overall (e.g., "I feel that others respect and admire me," "I feel good about myself"). Higher scores on this scale indicate higher state self-esteem. The scale contains five areas pertaining to self-esteem: academic, performance, social, appearance, and general self-esteem (Heatherton & Polivy, 1991). Analysis found the items from all five areas to be very homogeneous, with a coefficient alpha for the scale being .92 (Heatherton & Polivy, 1991). Three factors within the scale accounted for all 20-items (performance, social, and appearance self-esteem) and were found to have eigenvalues greater than 1.00 and accounted for 50.4% of total variability in scores (Heatherton & Polivy, 1991).

**Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS).** The Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988; see Appendix D) assesses participant's mood in terms of positive affect (PA) and negative affect (NA). The measure contains two 10-item mood scales with randomly distributed terms related to both positive affect (e.g.,

“attentive,” “excited,” “enthusiastic”) and negative affect (e.g., “upset,” “irritable,” “scared”). A participant responds to these 20 items based on how much they had experienced the mood related item “right now” (at the present moment), using a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 (*very slightly or not at all*) to 5 (*extremely*). The PANAS when used under “moment time” instructions had a Cronbach’s alpha of .89 for the PA scale, and .85 for the NA scale (Watson et al., 1988). Intercorrelation of the PA and NA scales was -.15 for the “moment time” instructions, indicating these scales do not share much of their variance because they are independent dimensions. Correlations between the PA and NA scales are low, and the scales share roughly 1% to 5% of their variance indicating quasi-independence (Watson et al., 1988). Two dominant factors were found which accounted for 62.8% of the common variance in the moment time instructions (Watson et al., 1988). The test-retest reliability after two months was adequate for “in the moment” time instructions, .54 for the PA scale and .45 for the NA scale (Watson et al., 1988). As discussed by Watson et al. (1988), the stability of the retests increases as the instruction time frame increases because when responding to the “in the past year” instructions compared to the “in the moment” time instructions, individuals aggregate their experiences over a longer time frame leading it to be more stable.

**UCLA Loneliness Scale (Version 3).** The latest revision of the UCLA Loneliness Scale (Version 3) will be used to assess participant’s current level of loneliness (Russell, 1996; see Appendix E). The measure contains a total of 20 items, with 11 negatively worded (lonely items) and nine positively worded (non-lonely items) which are reversed scored. Every question begins with “How often do you feel . . .” and then asks how the individual feels about their relationships with others (e.g., “How often do you feel you lack companionship,” “How often do you feel that your relationships with others are not meaningful”). Participants respond to these

items based on a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*never*) to 4 (*always*). Data analysis has been conducted on the UCLA Loneliness Scale (Version 3) by Russell (1996) and determined the scale provides reliable and valid loneliness assessments for different populations. When the scale was used with college students coefficient alpha was .92 (ranging from .89 to .94 across the other samples), and test-retest reliability for the scale when used with an elderly population sample was .73 (Russell, 1996). The scale has shown high convergent validity as it correlates highly with other measures of loneliness: NYU Loneliness Scale, Differential Loneliness Scale, and Social Provisions Scale (Russell, 1996). Discriminant validity is present in the scale as a factor analysis has shown the UCLA Loneliness Scale (Version 3) and measures of social support contained distinct factors that related differently to mood and personality (Russell, 1996). The construct validity of the scale was also supported as the scale was significantly related to Neuroticism and Introversion-Extroversion personality traits (Russell, 1996).

**Satisfaction With Life Scale.** The Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS; Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985; see Appendix F) assesses participant's global life satisfaction. This 5-item scale asks participants their overall judgment of their life in order to determine their satisfaction with it (e.g., "In most ways my life is close to my ideal," "I am satisfied with my life"). Participants responded based on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*), and scores range from 5 (low satisfaction) to 35 (high satisfaction). Research has indicated the SWLS has acceptable reliability and validity. Coefficient alpha for the scale in past research has been .87, and two-month test-retest correlation produced a correlation coefficient of .82 (Diener et al., 1985). Past research has determined the scale contains one factor that accounts for 66% of the variance (Diener et al., 1985). The scale contains high convergent validity as past research has shown moderately strong correlations with

other measures of subjective well-being, Tellegen's (1979) Differential Personality Questionnaire and Campbell, Converse, and Rodgers' (1976) semantic differential-life scale (Diener et al., 1985). Criterion validity determined from past research was moderately strong with a correlation coefficient of .46 between Adams' (1969) Life Satisfaction Index and the SWLS (Diener et al., 1985).

**Ten-Item Personality Inventory.** The Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI; Gosling, Rentfrow, & Swann, 2003; see Appendix G and H) will be used to assess participant's personality and discussion partner's personality. Each item in the 10-item inventory consists of two descriptors, which are separated by a comma (e.g., "extraverted, enthusiastic," "anxious, easily upset"). The items are read using the stem, "I see myself as:". Participants are asked to rate the extent to which each item listed applies to themselves using a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*disagree strongly*) to 7 (*agree strongly*). The TIPI uses two items to represent each of the scales present in the Big Five Inventory (BFI). Due to the small amount of items representing each domain, inter-item correlations are relatively low compared to other homogeneous scales (Gosling et al., 2003). Cronbach's alphas ranged from .40 to .73 (.68 for Extraversion, .40 for Agreeableness, .50 for Conscientiousness, .73 for Emotional Stability, and .45 for Openness to Experience) (Gosling et al., 2003). Convergent validity between the TIPI and the BFI was significant for each domain with a mean of .77 (Gosling et al., 2003). Discriminant correlations between the TIPI and the BFI had a mean of .20, and did not exceed .36 (Gosling et al., 2003). The test-retest correlations for the TIPI after six-weeks were impressive, with a mean of .72 (Gosling et al., 2003).

### **Closeness-Generating Induction Task**

**Self-Disclosure.** Participants will use slips containing disclosure questions established by Aron et al. (1997; see Appendix I and J), revised for time constraints by Cross et al. (2000), in order to generate closeness or small-talk. Each condition of disclosure contains 15 questions (reduced to 15 due to time constraints of 20 minutes for disclosure) chosen by the author and Cross et al. (2000) from the original 36 by Aron et al. (1997). The closeness-generating slips contain items requiring the individual to disclose deep, personal information (e.g., “For what in your life do you feel most grateful,” “What is the greatest accomplishment of your life,” “What is your most treasured memory”). The small-talk generating slips contain items which initiate superficial and trivial disclosure (e.g., “How did you celebrate Halloween last year,” “What is a good number of people to have in a student household and why,” “What are the advantages and disadvantages of artificial Christmas trees”). Two of the items in the small-talk condition needed to be changed in order to refer to the current environment of the participants; “UCSC (University of California Santa Cruz)” was replaced with “CSB (College of St. Benedict).” The items related to inducing closeness were created in order to establish a temporary feeling of closeness between strangers through self-disclosure (Aron et al., 1997). A subset of these items has been used in other studies, such as in Study 3 conducted by Cross et al. (2000), in order to create closeness in environments with time constraints. Research has shown the nature of the disclosure (whether self-disclosure in a closeness generating manner, or small-talk oriented) makes the most significant difference on inducing closeness (Aron et al., 1997). Research by Aron et al. (1997) has shown a difference of the mean scores of closeness from the closeness-generating condition and the small-talk condition representing a significant effect size ( $d$ ) of .88 standard deviations.

### **Manipulation Check**

**Evaluation of Disclosure Session Questions.** At the end of the questionnaire (see Appendix K), participants will answer four items pertaining to the disclosure they experienced through conversing with their partner. Participants will respond to the four items using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The first two items question will determine whether dyads disclosed information related to closeness-generating items (“I disclosed deep and personal information with my partner,” “I feel my partner disclosed deep and personal information with me”). The third and fourth question will determine whether dyads disclosed information related to small-talk generating items (“I disclosed trivial and minor important information with my partner,” “My partner disclosed trivial and minor important information with me”). Participants will respond to all four questions regardless of which condition they were in (closeness-generating or small-talk). Two questions will be included in order to determine how well participants knew their partner before the study and their opinions toward their partner after the study (“Before today, I would have considered my discussion partner a(n),” “After today’s discussion, I consider my discussion partner a(n)”). Participants will respond to both questions by circling the answer from four choices provided: *stranger*, *acquaintance*, *casual friend*, or *friend*. A final question will ask participants how often they conversed about their personal lives with their partner before today’s discussion (“Before today, I regularly had in-depth conversations with my discussion partner about our personal lives”). Participants will respond to the last question in the same manner they did with the first four questions, using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

### **Procedure**

Participants will complete the RISC inventory online in order to sign up for a time to participate in the study. In the online application participants will respond to the RISC inventory

in order to determine whether they scored high, low, or in the middle on relational self-construal. Participants who score high will be able to randomly select a time slot (not knowing whether it will be the small-talk or closeness condition) from available time slots with other high-scoring participants, while participants who score low will randomly select available time slots available to other low-scoring participants (not knowing which time slots are which disclosure conditions). Randomness will be ensured as the participants will select their time slots unsystematically.

When participants arrive at the experimental session they will complete an informed consent form. They will then be told the purpose of the experiment is to collect insight into whether certain personality traits allow individuals to better predict the personality of their partner after conversing with them. Participants will be separated and complete a TIPI questionnaire (see Appendix G). Next participants will be brought together and receive slips containing disclosure items, either closeness-generating or small-talk (see Appendix I and J). Disclosure between participants will occur for 20 minutes without the experimenter in the room. Again, participants will be separated and complete a second questionnaire containing the TIPI (which they will answer about their partner; see Appendix H), a happiness measure (Fordyce, 1988; see Appendix B), a state self-esteem measure (SSES; Heatherton & Polivy, 1991; see Appendix C), a mood measure (PANAS; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988; see Appendix D), a loneliness measure (Russell, 1996; see Appendix E), satisfaction with life (SWLS; Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985; see Appendix F), and a manipulation check (see Appendix K). The second questionnaire will have corresponding numbers written at the top in order to represent participants in each dyadic session. Participants will return the second set of questionnaires to the experimenter and will be debriefed as to the purpose of the study.

If participants knew each other as friends before their self-disclosure sessions, their data will be removed from the study. Data will be removed post-study in order to ensure participants do not lie about being friends in order to avoid completing the study. Participants will be debriefed and told the study was actually interested in how partner interaction relates to well-being, and also how different self-concepts along with different types of disclosure relate one's well-being (see Appendix L).

### **Results**

High relationals should experience higher well-being (higher self-esteem, happiness, positive affect, and life satisfaction, and lower loneliness and negative affect) in the closeness-generating condition than in the small-talk condition (see Figure 1). Low relationals will experience lower well-being (lower self-esteem, happiness, positive affect, and life satisfaction, and higher loneliness and negative affect) in the closeness-generating condition than in the small-talk condition (see Figure 1). A 2 (high or low relational) x 2 (closeness-generating or small-talk) x 2 (askers or answerers) ANOVA will be conducted for each of the well-being measures (SSES, The Fordyce's Emotions Questionnaire, PANAS, UCLA Loneliness Scale [Version 3], SWLS).

### **Discussion**

If the results follow what has been predicted, high relationals in the closeness-generating condition will have higher well-being than those in the small talk condition. High relationals will have a higher self-esteem, happiness level, positive affect level, and life satisfaction after closeness-generating self-disclosure because they will be forming a close relationship which can reinforce their own self-concept. A goal of high relationals is to form close relationships and by achieving this through closeness-generating self-disclosure, their self-esteem will be high due to

the indication they are socially included. The positive affect of the high relationals will also be high because the participant will be more aware of, and likely to vicariously experience, their partner's positive affect in the formation of a close relationship. Life satisfaction among high relationals is also likely to be high because they will have formed a deep close relationship through evaluative disclosure. The more the relationship is perceived to have depth, the greater the increase in life satisfaction for high relationals because their goal of creating and maintaining close relationships is achieved.

High relationals are also likely to experience a lower amount of loneliness and negative affect after closeness-generating self-disclosure. The connection built with the partner fulfills the high relational's need to create close relationships, reducing perceived social loneliness. By forming a close relationship between two high relationals, the expression of negative affect will be minimized because they are greatly contributing to the disclosure, and fulfilling their goal of creating a close relationship.

Low relationals in the close condition will have lower well-being than those in the small talk condition. Low relationals should not experience high self-esteem, happiness, positive affect, or life satisfaction in the closeness-generating condition because they do not strive for the creation of close relationships. When low relationals are required to disclose evaluative information to fellow low relationals, their sense of autonomy and separateness will be imposed upon, thus likely leading to a lower well-being. Low relationals may experience an increase in negative affect if they feel pressured to disclose closeness information. Life satisfaction of low relationals will be decreased because of the perceived and expected high depth of closeness experienced through the disclosure.

The pool of participants for this study will only consist of females for various reasons. Past research has shown females score higher on the RISC scale than males (Cross et al., 2000; Cross & Morris, 2003; Gore et al., 2006). A review of literature conducted by Cross and Madson (1997) explain why the majority of the time females score higher on the RISC scale than males. Evidence gathered by Cross and Madson (1997) found that when comparing males to females, females more often describe themselves in terms of their relations to others while males more often describe themselves in terms of their independence from others. It is suggested that the gendered social roles experienced by females and males as they grow are influential in how they describe themselves (Cross & Madson, 1997). In U.S. society, females are more frequently expected to be nurturing in the way of raising children, maintaining relationships, and providing social support (Cross & Madson, 1997). By only selecting females, there is a greater likelihood of the high relationals behaving in more ways specific to high relationals. If males were used in the study, there would be lower likelihood of high relational males scoring as high on the RISC scale, and thus, may not behave as extremely in ways specific to a high relational.

The relation between gender, RISC scores, and emotions also determined why only females were selected for this study. Cross and Madson (1997) suggest that females are socialized to be more aware of emotions than males. This is often due to parents discussing emotions more frequently with daughters than sons (Cross & Madson, 1997). Females, then, tend to view the importance of emotions in relationships (such as with their parents), and hence attribute the basis of emotions to interpersonal causes more often than males (Cross & Madson, 1997). Consequently, there is a greater likelihood that after experiencing disclosure with a partner, a female will allow this interaction to more heavily influence the emotions experienced.

Although males would likely attribute emotions felt after the disclosure to the interaction, they may not attribute these emotions to the same degree as a female.

The amount of self-disclosure to same-sex and opposite-sex partners also differs between genders. Meta-analysis conducted by Dindia and Allen (1992) found females disclose more to other females than males disclose to females. The meta-analysis also found females do not disclose more to males than males disclose to males (Dindia & Allen, 1992). Among same-sex partners, it was found female-to-female self-disclosure produced more disclosure than male-to-male disclosure (Dindia & Allen, 1992). It is suggested that women may avoid self-disclosing when interacting with a male in order to reduce potential negative relationship outcomes and personal hurt (Dindia & Allen, 1997).

Considering the low numbers of males who would have scored high enough on the RISC to qualify for this study, this study would have been run with opposite-sex self-disclosure partners. The results from meta-analysis conducted by Dindia and Allen (1997) indicate the opposite-sex self-disclosure produced less disclosure than same-sex self-disclosure. It is possible that females, when paired with a male, may not disclose as much in order to reduce the chances of a negative outcome occurring in the potential relationship. By using only female participants, this study is better able to ensure the interactions between participants contain relatively the same amount of disclosure.

The results hypothesized would be useful in understanding that disclosing to another does not always mean an individual will feel better about themselves. It is often thought if one discusses their concerns or issues with others, that stressful weight will be alleviated and the person will feel better. This study would illustrate the relationship between an individual's relational self-construal and the type of disclosure occurring on the relational well-being of the

individual disclosing. If an individual is looking to disclose to others in hopes of increasing their well-being, it might be useful to seek out someone they know to really value relationships and to disclose more emotional and personal information consisting of feelings and judgments, instead of simply private facts.

### **Limitations**

There are limitations in the design of this study. Participants cannot be completely randomly assigned to relational conditions because the participants are inherently high or low relationals to begin with and this will not be manipulated in this present study. Additionally, it is difficult to ensure the participants disclosed to the same extent as other individuals in their respected condition: closeness or small-talk. Although a manipulation check is included, one participant might perceive a small-talk conversation to be what another perceives as close conversation.

Due to only using female participants in this study, the results cannot be extended to males. It is difficult to say for certain whether the results found in this study can represent results that would be found if the study were to be conducted with male participants. Males do not score as highly on the RISC and may therefore not be as high of relationals as high relational females. Also, males may not disclose to the same extent as females hindering the use of disclosure in this study. It would be best to run this experiment with male participants to see those separate results before applying the results of this study to males.

The participants in this study will be interacting and disclosing to another participant causing the data to lack independence. The lack of independent data can interfere with the internal validity because participant responses are dependent upon their interaction with the other participant.

## References

- Aron, A., Melinat, E., Aron, E. N., Vallone, R. D., & Bator, R. J. (1997). The experimental generation of interpersonal closeness: A procedure and some preliminary findings. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 23*, 363-377. doi: 10.1177/0146167297234003
- Clark, M. S., Ouellette, R., Powell, M. C., & Millberg, S. (1987). Recipient's mood, relationship type, and helping. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 53*, 94-103.
- Campbell, A., Converse, P. E., & Rodgers, W. L. (1976). *The quality of American life*. New York: Russell Sage.
- Cross, S. E., Bacon, P. L., & Morris, M. L. (2000). The relational-interdependent self-construal and relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 78*, 791-808. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.78.4.791
- Cross, S. E., & Madson, L. (1997). Models of the self: Self-construals and gender. *Psychology Bulletin, 122*, 5-37. doi: 10.1037/0033-2909.122.1.5
- Cross S. E., & Morris, M. L. (2003). Getting to know you: The relational self-construal, relational cognition, and well-being. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 29*, 512-523. doi: 10.1177/0146167202250920
- Davis, M. H. (1980). A multidimensional approach to individual differences in empathy. *JSAS: Catalog of Selected Documents in Psychology, 10*, 85.
- Derlega, V. J., Metts S., Petronio, S., & Margulis, S. T. (1993). *Self-disclosure*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.
- Diener, E., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J., & Griffin, S. (1985). The Satisfaction With Life Scale. *Journal of Personality Assessment, 49*, 71-75.

Dindia, K., & Allen, M. (1992). Sex differences in self-disclosure: A meta-analysis.

*Psychological Bulletin*, *112*, 106-124. doi: 10.1037/0033-2909.112.1.106

Figueredo, A. J., Sefcek, J. A., & Jones, D. N. (2006). The ideal romantic partner personality.

*Personality and Individual Differences*, *41*, 431-441.

Fordyce, M. W. (1988). A review of research on the happiness measures: A sixty second index of happiness and mental health. *Social Indicators Research*, *20*, 355-381. doi:

10.1007/BF00302333

Gore, J. S., Cross, S. E., & Morris, M. L. (2006). Let's be friends: Relational self-construal and the development of intimacy. *Personal Relationships*, *13*, 83-102. doi: 10.1111/j.1475-

6811.2006.00106.x

Gosling, S. D., Rentfrow, P. J., & Swann, W. B., Jr. (2003). A very brief measure of the Big-Five personality domains. *Journal of Research in Personality*, *37*, 504-528. doi:

10.1016/S0092-6566(03)00046-1

Heintzelman, S. J., & Bacon, P. L. (2015). Relational self-construal moderates the effect of social support on life satisfaction. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *73*, 72-77. doi:

10.1016/j.paid.2014.09.021

Leary, M. R., Tambor, E. S., Terdal, S. K., & Downs, D. L. (1995). Self-esteem as an

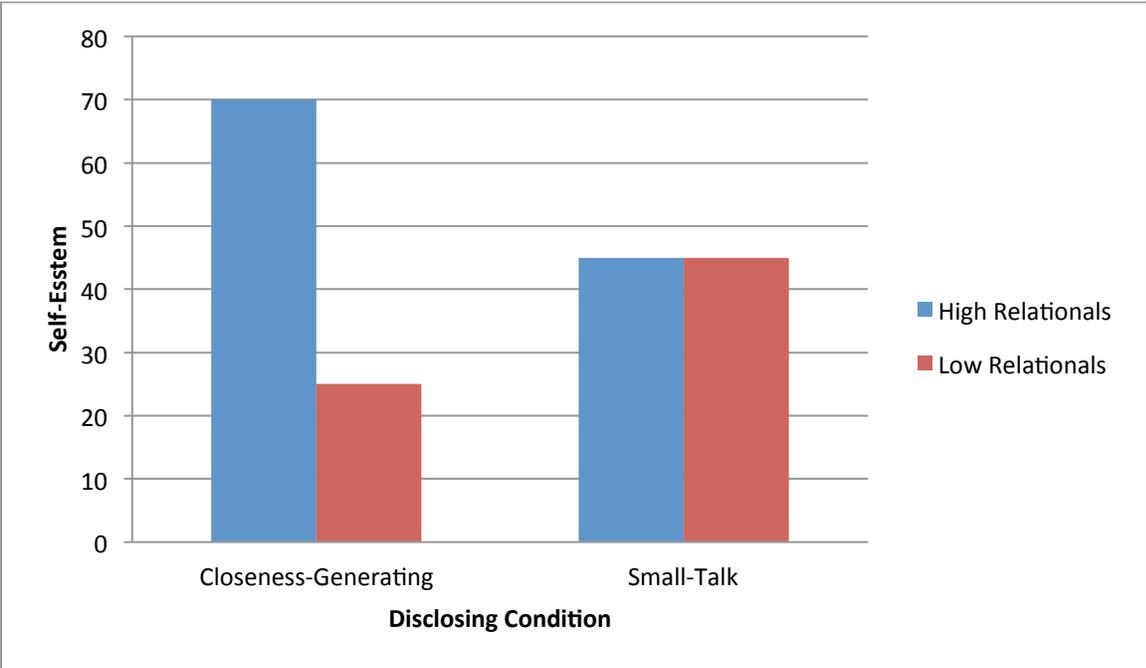
interpersonal monitor: The sociometer hypothesis. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *68*, 518-530. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.68.3.518

Markus, H. R., & Kitayama, S. (1991). Culture and the self: Implications for cognition, emotion, and motivation. *Psychological Review*, *98*, 224-253. doi:10.1037/0033-295X.98.2.224

- Morry, M. M. (2005). Allocentrism and Friendship Satisfaction: The Mediating Roles of Disclosure and Closeness. *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science/Revue canadienne des sciences du comportement*, *37*, 211-222.
- Morry, M. M., & Kito, M. (2009). Relational-interdependent self-construal as a predictor of relationship quality: The mediating roles of one's own behaviors and perceptions of the fulfillment of friendship functions. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, *149*, 205-222.
- Morry, M. M., Kito, M., Mann, S., & Hill, L. (2013). Relational-interdependent self-construal: Perceptions of friends and friendship quality. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, *30*, 44-63.
- Morton, T. L. (1978). Intimacy and reciprocity of exchange: A comparison of spouses and strangers. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *36*, 72-81. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.36.1.72
- Peplau, L. A., & Perlman, D. (1982). *Loneliness: A sourcebook of current theory, research, and therapy*. New York: Wiley.
- Reis, H. T., Capobianco, A., & Tsai, F. F. (2002). Finding the person in personal relationships. *Journal of Personality*, *70*, 813-850.
- Rosenberg, M. (1965). *Society and the adolescent self-image*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Russell, D. W. (1996). UCLA Loneliness Scale (Version 3): Reliability, validity, and factor structure. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, *66*(1), 20-40. doi: 10.1207/s15327752jpa6601\_2

- Singelis, T. M. (1994). The measurement of independent and interdependent self-construals. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *62*, 154-158. doi: 10.1177/0146167294205014
- Sprecher, S., & Hendrick, S. S. (2004). Self-Disclosure in Intimate Relationships: Associations With Individual and Relationship Characteristics Over Time. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, *23*, 857-877.
- Sprecher, S., Treger, S., & Wondra, J. D. (2013). Effects of self-disclosure role on liking, closeness, and other impressions in get-acquainted interactions. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, *30*, 497-514.
- Sprecher, S., Treger, S., Wondra, J. D., Hilaire, N., & Wallpe, K. (2013). Taking turns: Reciprocal self-disclosure promotes liking in initial interactions. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *49*, 860-866.
- Vittengl, J. R., & Holt, C. S. (2000). Getting acquainted: The relationship of self-disclosure and social attraction to positive affect. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, *17*, 53-66. doi: 10.1177/0265407500171003
- Watson, D., Clark, L. A., & Tellegen, A. (1988). Development and validation of brief measures of positive and negative affect: The PANAS scales. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *54*, 1063-1070. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.54.6.1063

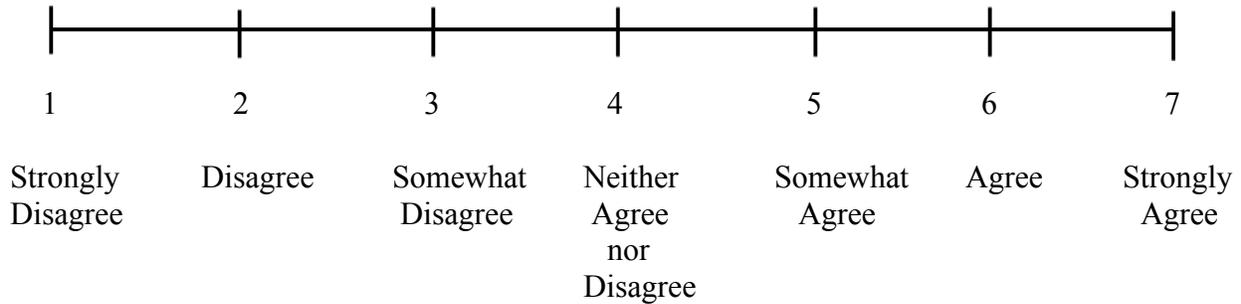
Figure 1. Illustration of Hypothesis



## Appendix A

### RELATIONAL-INTERDEPENDENT SELF-CONSTRUAL SCALE

Listed below are a number of statements about various attitudes and feelings. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of these statements using the following scale:



1. My close relationships are an important reflection of who I am. \_\_\_\_\_
2. When I feel very close to someone, it often feels to me like that person is an important part of who I am. \_\_\_\_\_
3. I usually feel a strong sense of pride when someone close to me has an important accomplishment. \_\_\_\_\_
4. I think one of the most important parts of who I am can be captured by looking at my close friends and understanding who they are. \_\_\_\_\_
5. When I think of myself, I often think of my close friends or family also. \_\_\_\_\_
6. If a person hurts someone close to me, I feel personally hurt as well. \_\_\_\_\_
7. In general, my close relationships are an important part of my self-image. \_\_\_\_\_
8. Overall, my close relationships have very little to do with how I feel about myself. \_\_\_\_\_
9. My close relationships are unimportant to my sense of what kind of person I am. \_\_\_\_\_
10. My sense of pride comes from knowing who I have as close friends. \_\_\_\_\_

11. When I establish a close friendship with someone, I usually develop a strong sense of identification with that person. \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix B****The Fordyce's Emotions Questionnaire**

---

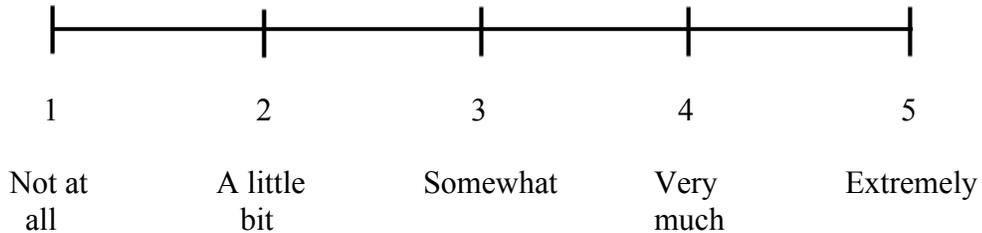
As of right now, how happy or unhappy do you feel? Circle the number from the scale below that best describes your average happiness:

- 0 = Extremely unhappy (utterly depressed, completely down)
- 1 = Very unhappy (depressed, spirits very low)
- 2 = Pretty unhappy (somewhat “ blue ”, spirits down)
- 3 = Mildly unhappy (just a bit low)
- 4 = Slightly unhappy (just a bit below neutral)
- 5 = Neutral (not particularly happy or unhappy)
- 6 = Slightly happy (just a bit above neutral)
- 7 = Mildly happy (feeling fairly good and somewhat cheerful)
- 8 = Pretty happy (spirits high, feeling good)
- 9 = Very happy (feeling really good, elated!)
- 10 = Extremely happy (feeling ecstatic, joyous, fantastic!)

### Appendix C

#### THE STATE SELF-ESTEEM SCALE

This is a questionnaire designed to measure what you are thinking at this moment. There is, of course, no right answer for any statement. The best answer is what you feel is true of yourself at this moment. Be sure to answer all of the items, even if you are not certain of the best answer. Again, answer these questions as they are true for you RIGHT NOW.



1. I feel confident about my abilities. \_\_\_\_\_
2. I am worried about whether I am regarded as a success or failure. \_\_\_\_\_
3. I feel satisfied with the way my body looks right now. \_\_\_\_\_
4. I feel frustrated or rattled about my performance. \_\_\_\_\_
5. I feel that I am having trouble understanding things that I read. \_\_\_\_\_
6. I feel that others respect and admire me. \_\_\_\_\_
7. I am dissatisfied with my weight. \_\_\_\_\_
8. I feel self-conscious. \_\_\_\_\_
9. I feel as smart as others. \_\_\_\_\_
10. I feel displeased with myself. \_\_\_\_\_
11. I feel good about myself. \_\_\_\_\_
12. I am pleased with my appearance right now. \_\_\_\_\_
13. I am worried about what other people think of me. \_\_\_\_\_
14. I feel confident that I understand things. \_\_\_\_\_
15. I feel inferior to others at this moment. \_\_\_\_\_
16. I feel unattractive. \_\_\_\_\_
17. I feel concerned about the impression I am making. \_\_\_\_\_
18. I feel that I have less scholastic ability right now than others. \_\_\_\_\_
19. I feel like I'm not doing well. \_\_\_\_\_
20. I am worried about looking foolish. \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix D****THE POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE AFFECT SCHEDULE (PANAS)**

This scale consists of a number of words that describe different feelings and emotions. Read each item and then mark the appropriate answer in the space next to that word. Indicate to what extent you feel this way right now, that is, at the present moment. Use the following scale to record your answers.

1	2	3	4	5
very slightly or not at all	a little	moderately	quite a bit	extremely
	<input type="checkbox"/> interested		<input type="checkbox"/> irritable	
	<input type="checkbox"/> distressed		<input type="checkbox"/> alert	
	<input type="checkbox"/> excited		<input type="checkbox"/> ashamed	
	<input type="checkbox"/> upset		<input type="checkbox"/> inspired	
	<input type="checkbox"/> strong		<input type="checkbox"/> nervous	
	<input type="checkbox"/> guilty		<input type="checkbox"/> determined	
	<input type="checkbox"/> scared		<input type="checkbox"/> attentive	
	<input type="checkbox"/> hostile		<input type="checkbox"/> jittery	
	<input type="checkbox"/> enthusiastic		<input type="checkbox"/> active	
	<input type="checkbox"/> proud		<input type="checkbox"/> afraid	

## Appendix E

### UCLA LONELINESS SCALE (VERSION 3)

---

*Instructions:* The following statements describe how people sometimes feel. For each statement, please indicate how often you feel the way described by writing a number in the space provided. Here is an example:

How often do you feel happy?

It you have never felt happy, you would respond “never”; if you always feel happy, you would respond “always.”

NEVER

RARELY

SOMETIMES

ALWAYS

1

2

3

4

1. How often do you feel that you are “in tune” with the people around you? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How often do you feel that you lack companionship? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How often do you feel that there is no one you can turn to? \_\_\_\_\_
4. How often do you feel alone? \_\_\_\_\_
5. How often do you feel part of a group of friends? \_\_\_\_\_
6. How often do you feel that you have a lot in common with the people around you? \_\_\_\_\_
7. How often do you feel that you are no longer close to anyone? \_\_\_\_\_
8. How often do you feel that your interest and ideas are not shared by those around you? \_\_\_\_\_
9. How often do you feel outgoing and friendly? \_\_\_\_\_
10. How often do you feel close to people? \_\_\_\_\_
11. How often do you feel left out? \_\_\_\_\_
12. How often do you feel that your relationships with others are not meaningful? \_\_\_\_\_
13. How often do you feel that no one really knows you well? \_\_\_\_\_
14. How often do you feel isolated from others? \_\_\_\_\_
15. How often do you feel you can find companionship when you want it? \_\_\_\_\_
16. How often do you feel that there are people who really understand you? \_\_\_\_\_
17. How often do you feel shy? \_\_\_\_\_

- 18. How often do you feel that people are around you but not with you? \_\_\_\_\_
- 19. How often do you feel that there are people you can talk to? \_\_\_\_\_
- 20. How often do you feel that there are people you can turn to? \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix F****SATISFACTION WITH LIFE SCALE**

---

Below are five statements with which you may agree or disagree. Using the 1-7 scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by placing that appropriate number on the line preceding that item. Please be open and honest in your responding. The 7-point scale is: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = slightly disagree, 4 = neither agree nor disagree, 5 = slightly agree, 6 = agree, 7 = strongly agree.

1. In most ways my life is close to my ideal. \_\_\_\_\_
2. The conditions of my life are excellent. \_\_\_\_\_
3. I am satisfied with my life. \_\_\_\_\_
4. So far I have gotten the important things I want in life. \_\_\_\_\_
5. If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing. \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix G

### Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI)

Here are a number of personality traits that may or may not apply to you. Please write a number next to each statement to indicate the extent to which *you agree or disagree with that statement*. You should rate the extent to which the pair of traits applies to you, even if one characteristic applies more strongly than the other.

Disagree Strongly	Disagree Moderately	Disagree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree a little	Agree moderately	Agree strongly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

*I see myself as:*

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Extraverted, enthusiastic.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Critical, quarrelsome.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Dependable, self-disciplined.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Anxious, easily upset.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Open to new experiences, complex.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ Reserved, quiet.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ Sympathetic, warm.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ Disorganized, careless.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ Calm, emotionally stable.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ Conventional, uncreative.

## Appendix H

### Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI)

Here are a number of personality traits that may or may not apply to your discussion partner. Please write a number next to each statement to indicate the extent to which *you agree or disagree with that statement applying to your discussion partner*. You should rate the extent to which the pair of traits applies to your discussion partner, even if one characteristic applies more strongly than the other.

Disagree Strongly	Disagree Moderately	Disagree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree a little	Agree moderately	Agree strongly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

*I see my discussion partner as:*

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Extraverted, enthusiastic.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Critical, quarrelsome.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Dependable, self-disciplined.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Anxious, easily upset.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Open to new experiences, complex.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ Reserved, quiet.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ Sympathetic, warm.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ Disorganized, careless.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ Calm, emotionally stable.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ Conventional, uncreative.

## Appendix I

### SELF-DISCLOSURE ITEMS: Closeness-Generating Condition

---

#### INSTRUCTIONS

For the next 20 minutes, please read aloud the questions or tasks on each of the cards and please BOTH do what it asks. If the card asks you a question, share your answer with your partner. Then let her share her answer to the same question with you. If it is a task, do it first, then let your partner do it. Alternate who reads aloud and thus goes first with each new slip. If there is a card that is too difficult for you to answer, you may skip it.

It is not important to finish all 15 cards within the time allotted. Take plenty of time with each card, doing what it asks thoroughly and thoughtfully.

*You may begin!*

#### *Task Slips for Closeness-Generating Procedure*

1. Given the choice of anyone in the world, whom would you want as a dinner guest?
2. Would you like to be famous? In what way?
3. For what in your life do you feel most grateful?
4. If you could change anything about the way you were raised, what would it be?
5. Take 2 minutes and tell your partner your life story in as much detail as possible.
6. If you could wake up tomorrow having gained any one quality or ability, what would it be?
7. If a crystal ball could tell you the truth about yourself, your life, the future, or anything else, what would you want to know?
8. Is there something that you've dreamed of doing for a long time? What?
9. What is the greatest accomplishment of your life?
10. What do you value most in a friendship?
11. What is your most treasured memory?
12. If you knew that in one year you would die suddenly, would you change anything about the way you are now living? What?
13. If you were going to become a close friend with your partner, please share what would be important for him or her to know.
14. Share with your partner an embarrassing moment in your life.

15. Your house, containing everything you own, catches fire. After saving your loved ones and pets, you have time to safely make a final dash to save any one item. What would it be? Why?

## Appendix J

### SELF-DISCLOSURE ITEMS: Small-Talk Condition

---

#### INSTRUCTIONS

For the next 20 minutes, please read aloud the questions or tasks on each of the cards and please BOTH do what it asks. If the card asks you a question, share your answer with your partner. Then let her share her answer to the same question with you. If it is a task, do it first, then let your partner do it. Alternate who reads aloud and thus goes first with each new slip. If there is a card that is too difficult for you to answer, you may skip it.

It is not important to finish all 15 cards within the time allotted. Take plenty of time with each card, doing what it asks thoroughly and thoughtfully.

*You may begin!*

#### *Task Slips for Small-Talk Condition*

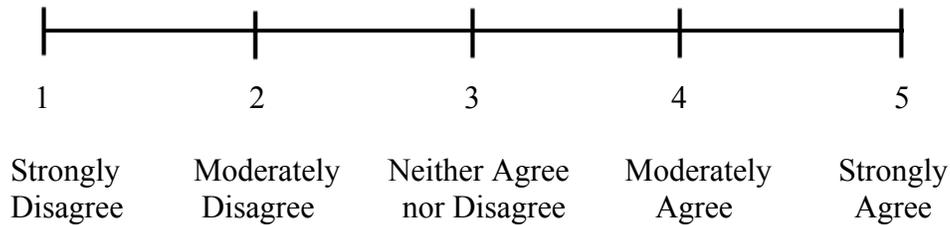
1. When was the last time you walked for more than an hour? Describe where you went and what you saw.
2. How did you celebrate last Halloween?
3. What is a good number of people to have in a student household and why?
4. If you could invent a new flavor of ice cream, what would it be?
5. What gifts did you receive on your last birthday?
6. One of you say a word, the next say a word that starts with the last letter of the word just said. Do this until you have said 25 words. Any words will do—you aren't making a sentence.
7. Where are you from? Name all of the places you've lived.
8. What is your favorite class at CSB so far? Why?
9. What was your impression of CSB the first time you ever came here?
10. What is the best TV show you've seen in the last month that your partner hasn't seen?  
Tell your partner about it.
11. Where did you go to high school? What was your high school like?
12. Do you prefer digital watches and clocks or the kind with hands? Why?
13. What are the advantages and disadvantages of artificial Christmas trees?
14. Do you think left-handed people are more creative than right-handed people?

15. What is the last concert you saw? How many of that band's album do you own?  
Have you seen them before? Where?

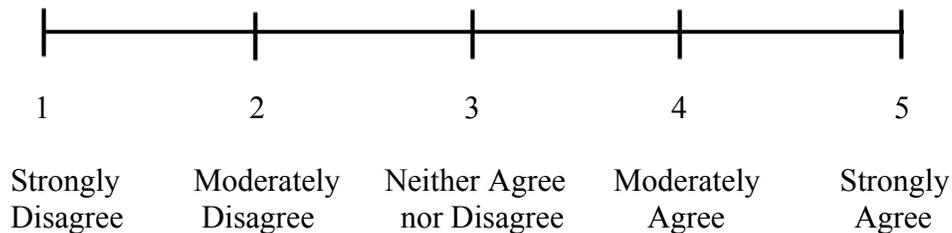
## Appendix K

## MANIPULATION CHECK

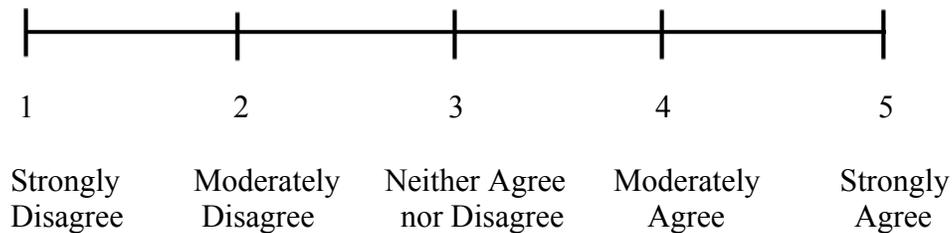
1. I disclosed deep and personal information with my partner...



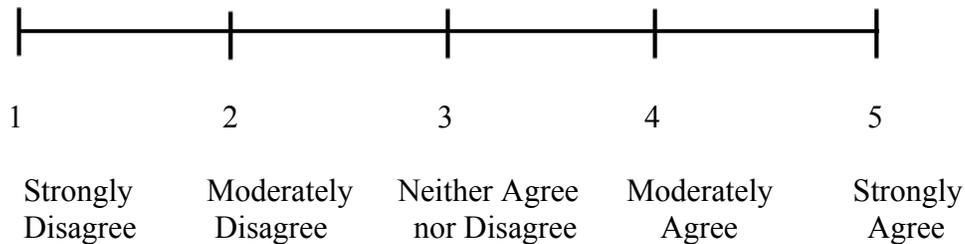
2. I feel my partner disclosed deep and personal information with me...



3. I disclosed trivial and minor important information with my partner...



4. My partner disclosed trivial and minor important information with me...



5. Please select the answer that best applies to this statement:

“Before today, I would have considered my discussion partner a(n) . . .”

**stranger**

**acquaintance**

**casual friend**

**friend**

6. Please select the answer that best applies to this statement:

“After today’s discussion, I consider my discussion partner a(n)...”

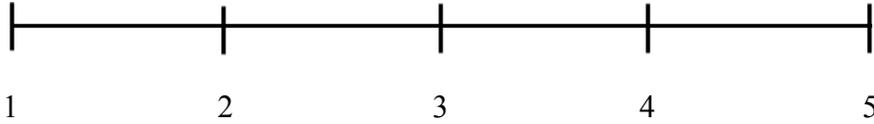
**stranger**

**acquaintance**

**casual friend**

**friend**

7. Before today, I regularly had in-depth conversations with my discussion partner about our personal lives...



Strongly  
Disagree

Moderately  
Disagree

Neither Agree  
nor Disagree

Moderately  
Agree

Strongly  
Agree

## Appendix L

### DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

---

Thank you for participating in this study! Before you leave, we want to be certain that you understand the full purpose of this study. Although we told you that we were interested in collecting insight into whether certain personality traits allow individuals to better predict the personality of their partner after conversing with them, we were actually interested in something a little different. The purpose of this study is to see how partner interaction relates to well-being, and also how different self-concepts along with different types of disclosure relate one's well-being.

All participants completed the same questionnaires and disclosed to a partner. However, participants were assigned to partners based on their self-concept, and were randomly assigned to converse about closeness-generating or small-talk items. We will examine whether differences in self-concept when disclosing specific topics relates to different levels of well-being.

We want to see whether individuals who define themselves in terms of their close relationships (high relationals) have a greater well-being after disclosing closeness-generating topics. It has been suggested that high relationals often receive the greatest boost from close interactions because these relationships are fundamental to their understanding of themselves. On the other hand, individuals who do not define themselves in terms of close relationships (low relationals) are expected to have a higher well-being after disclosing small-talk generating topics. Low relationals do not view close relationships as important to their self-concept, therefore it is expected they will feel as though their independence is being infringed upon when a partner is conversing with them about closeness-generating items.

You were told this study was interested in your personality and how well you could predict your partner's personality, but this is not true. We did this to reduce suspicion and ensure we received your true reactions and feelings toward the interaction.

Because we are interested in how lots of people respond to our experiment, your data will be combined with the data of many other participants. Thus, no one will ever be able to figure out exactly how YOU responded to this experiment.

**Because we won't be done with this experiment for a few months, it is very important that you DO NOT discuss it with any other students. Many of them will be participating, and any information they have about the study might contaminate the results. Therefore, please don't talk to anyone about this study!**

Once again, thank you for your participation! Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns about this research.