

Self-Monitoring and Close Relationships

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ABSTRACT Three types of close relationships have received attention from theorists and researchers interested in self-monitoring: friendships, romantic relationships, and marriage. Our review of this literature was organized around three phases of relationships: initiation, maintenance, and dissolution. Across the three types of relationships, consistent differences between high self-monitors and low self-monitors emerged concerning the structure of their social relationships (segmented vs. integrated), the basis for choosing friends and romantic partners (activity-based vs. person-based), and the orientation taken to romantic and marital partners (uncommitted vs. committed). Across all three types of relationships, however, little is known about the processes and consequences involved in the dissolution of close relationships for high self-monitors and low self-monitors. Relatively little is also known about the processes used by high self-monitors and low self-monitors to maintain their friendships and marriages. In addition to addressing these deficiencies in the literature, theorists and researchers interested in self-monitoring and close relationships need to develop sophisticated, causal models that can account for (a) interaction exchanges in the relationships, (b) dyadic as well as individual levels of analysis, and (c) temporal and situational changes in the course of close relationships.

Close relationships are the sine qua non of human existence. The desire to establish and maintain intimate ties with others is considered by some to be a basic human motive (e.g., Baumeister & Leary, 1995;

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Deci & Ryan, 1991). Consistent with the fundamental nature of this motive, the success and failure of interpersonal relations have a profound impact on our life satisfaction (e.g., Argyle, 1987; Myers & Deiner, 1995), psychological well-being (e.g., Coyne & Downey, 1991; Kessler & McLeod, 1985; Schwarzer & Leppin, 1992), and physical health (e.g., Berkman, 1985; Cohen, Kaplan, & Manuck, 1994; Schwarzer & Leppin, 1989). Given the significant role that close relationships play in our lives, it is not surprising that an interest in understanding the nature and dynamics of such relationships can be traced back not only to early philosophical inquiries such as that of Aristotle (Pakaluk, 1991) but also to early social scientific investigations (e.g., Monroe, 1898; Moreno, 1934; Waller, 1937).

Given its importance in the daily lives of individuals and in the analyses of philosophers as well as social scientists, it is somewhat surprising that the social science of close relationships has emerged only in the past few decades (Berscheid, 1999). Take, for example, the study of personality and romantic relationships. Although relatively few investigations appeared in the literature in the first half of the twentieth century, the number of investigations doubled every decade in the last half of the twentieth century (Cooper & Sheldon, 2002). Similar trends can be observed in other disciplines that comprise the multidisciplinary field of relationship science (e.g., Felmlee & Sprecher, 2000).

At approximately the same time that the science of relationships was growing and expanding, the psychology of self-monitoring also emerged, developed, and evolved (Snyder, 1974, 1979, 1987). Although the simultaneous emergence of the psychology of self-monitoring and greening of relationship science may have been coincidental, this coincidence is not without theoretical and empirical import. For at its core, the construct of self-monitoring is one designed to capture individual differences in characteristic orientations to close relationships.

DIVERGENT ORIENTATIONS TO CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS

High self-monitors and low self-monitors differ in a variety of ways: motivation, ability, attention, use of ability, and behavioral variability (Snyder, 1979, 1987). Out of a concern for situational or social appropriateness, high self-monitors attend to the behavior of others and use that behavior as a guide for their own words and actions. High self-monitors use their considerable social skills

and knowledge to engage in strategic self-presentation (i.e., to tailor a socially desirable image of themselves). Because different social settings involve different social roles, the behavior of high self-monitors tends to be situationally specific. Out of a concern for self-behavior congruence, low self-monitors attend to their inner psychological states (e.g., attitudes, values, personality attributes) and use these states as a guide for their own words and actions. Low self-monitors use their limited social skills and knowledge to engage in self-verification (i.e., to act in ways that satisfy dispositionally based goals). Because dispositions such as attitudes, values, and personality attributes tend to remain stable across time and places, the behavior of low self-monitors tends to be cross-situationally consistent.

In short, high self-monitors and low self-monitors have different conceptions of the self. High self-monitoring persons have a pragmatic conception of the self in which their identities are a product of social interactions and the roles these individuals play in different social settings. Low self-monitoring persons have a principled conception of the self in which their identities are a product of personal dispositions and the impact these dispositions have for social interaction.

These individual differences in self-conception, in turn, have implications for the approach that high self-monitors and low self-monitors take to their social worlds (Gangestad & Snyder, 2000; Snyder, 1987). Indeed, dispositional tendencies can most clearly be seen in the strategies people use to structure their social worlds in ways that allow them to act in accordance with their dispositions (e.g., Snyder & Ickes, 1985). Self-monitoring propensities can be seen in the ways high self-monitors and low self-monitors design their social worlds (Snyder & Simpson, 1987).

In order to be the “right person at the right place at the right time,” high self-monitors need to have a social world that is much like themselves. That is, high self-monitors need to structure their interpersonal relationships in a way that allows sufficient flexibility and adaptability to play a variety of diverse roles without suffering from role conflict. Accordingly, high self-monitors adopt an uncommitted orientation to their social world in which they create a segmented social network that allows them to be “less close” (i.e., feel emotionally distant from others) and “nonexclusive” (i.e., engage in different activities with a variety of partners). Given this

orientation, it is perhaps not surprising that the attachments high self-monitors form with significant others tend to be avoidant (Gaines, Work, Johnson, Youn, & Lai, 2000). That is, high self-monitors feel uncomfortable being psychologically close to their significant others and fear that their significant others want them to be more intimate than high self-monitors are. The high self-monitors' uncommitted orientation may also be seen in a lack of willingness to seek forgiveness from a close partner whom they have wronged (Sandage, Worthington, Hight, & Berry, 2000).

In order to just be "themselves," low self-monitors need to have a social world that is also much like themselves. That is, low self-monitors need to structure their interpersonal relationships in a way that allows sufficient freedom and security to express a variety of dispositional attributes without suffering from interpersonal conflict. Accordingly, low self-monitors adopt a committed orientation to their social world in which they create a uniform social network in which they are "close" (i.e., feel emotionally intimate with others) and "exclusive" (i.e., engage in different activities with a small number of partners). Given this orientation, it is perhaps not surprising that the attachments low self-monitors form with significant others tend to be secure (Gaines et al., 2000). That is, low self-monitors feel comfortable being psychologically close to their significant others and do not fear that their significant others will want them to be more intimate than low self-monitors are. The low self-monitors' committed orientation may also be seen in a willingness to seek forgiveness from a close partner whom they have wronged (Sandage et al., 2000).

How are these divergent orientations to the social world manifested in intimate relationships? What are the implications of these divergent orientations for the quantity and quality of close relationships individuals have? In our attempt to answer these questions, we have adopted a two-faceted organizational scheme to our review.

First, we have organized the literature on self-monitoring around three types of relationships: friendships, romantic relationships (dating), and marriage. These three types of relationships (albeit primarily romantic encounters) have received considerable attention from theorists and researchers. Other important kinds of relationships (e.g., parent-child) have not been the focus of much interest vis-a-vis the impact of self-monitoring differences in the dynamics and development of these relationships. Other important kinds of

relationships (e.g., professional relationships) are the focus of other reviews (e.g., Day & Schleicher) in this special section.

Second, we have organized the literature on self-monitoring around three phases of relationships: initiation, maintenance, and dissolution. Relationships, like the individuals that comprise them, have a beginning, an existence, and an end. Focusing on the initiation, maintenance, and dissolution of relationships thus mirrors the natural developmental trajectory of relationships. Focusing on the initiation, maintenance, and dissolution of relationships also provides a means of bringing into relief areas in which our understanding of the role of individual differences in self-monitoring is lacking or circumscribed.

FRIENDSHIPS

Do differences between high self-monitors and low self-monitors in their characteristic orientations toward the social world have implications for relationships such as friendships? Clearly, friendships are of much importance to most individuals. Individuals spend a considerable amount of time with their friends, interact with their friends in a variety of contexts, and rely on their friends in numerous ways (Argyle & Henderson, 1985; Fehr, 1996). In short, friends share a significant portion of their social lives with one another.

Linking individual differences in self-monitoring to the number and variety of functions served by friends can help shed light on both friendships and self-monitoring (Snyder & Smith, 1986). How do individuals define their friendships? With whom do individuals choose to become friends? What are the dynamics involved in interactions between friends? Illuminating the way in which the characteristic orientations of high self-monitors and low self-monitors toward social relationships affect friendships might provide answers to questions that are of both theoretical and practical significance.

Initiation of Friendships

Like many other close relationships, the initiation of friendships among adults depends in part on what friendship means. Given that friendship means different things to different persons (Argyle & Henderson, 1985; Fehr, 1996), individuals undoubtedly look for certain attributes and not others in prospective friends. In turn, the

extent to which attributes sought in prospective friends match the attributes that comprise individuals' prototypes of friends will affect the development of friendships.

Conceptions of friendship. When individuals think of a friend, what sort of person comes to mind? That is, what are the attributes used to characterize the person who fills the role of friend, what sort of thoughts about friends come to mind, and what does the notion of friendship mean? The qualities of friends, ideas about friends, and the nature of friendships are dramatically different for high self-monitors and low self-monitors.

The friends and friendships of high self-monitors and low self-monitors can be compared and contrasted on five dimensions (Snyder & Smith, 1986). Those dimensions include basis for friendship (shared situations vs. shared values), descriptions of interactions with friends (utility of interactions vs. time spent together), depth of the relationship (superficial, short-term exchanges vs. profound, long-term exchanges), sense of compatibility (situationally limited vs. cross-situationally generalizable), and presence of nurturance (restricted emotional support vs. unrestricted emotional support). And on these dimensions, the divergent orientations of high and low self-monitoring individuals toward the social world are manifested in divergent conceptualization of friendships (Snyder & Smith, 1986). The friendships of high self-monitoring individuals are (a) based on shared situations; (b) utilitarian in nature; (c) superficial, short-term exchanges; (d) limited to specific contexts; and (e) restricted in terms of the amount of nurturance involved. The friendships of low self-monitoring individuals are (a) based on shared values; (b) person-oriented in nature; (c) profound, long-term exchanges; (d) generalizable across situations; and (e) unrestricted in terms of the amount of nurturance involved. In brief, high self-monitors consider activity preferences as the basis for their friendships, whereas low self-monitors consider attitude similarity as the basis for their friendships (Jamieson, Lydon, & Zanna, 1987). When these divergent conceptualizations of friendships emerge in development and how stable these contrasting views are across the life span are matters that merit further study (Broderick & Belz, 1996).

Choice of friends. The divergent views of friendship held by high self-monitors and low self-monitors are not without consequence.

High self-monitors and low self-monitors translate the ways in which they conceptualize friendships into several behavioral manifestations. One such manifestation is the differences in the persons with whom high self-monitors and low self-monitors choose to spend time.

These differential choices can be seen in the persons considered to be the close or casual friends of high self-monitors and low self-monitors (Snyder, Simpson, & Smith, 1984). Close friends can be thought of as those persons whose company someone would enjoy regardless of the situation (i.e., the person is more important than the activity of interest). Casual friends can be thought of as those persons whose company someone would enjoy depending on the situation (i.e., the activity of interest is more important than the person). For high self-monitoring individuals, their close friends are also likely to be high in self-monitoring—especially when compared to their casual friends. For low self-monitors, their close friends are also likely to be low in self-monitoring—especially when compared to their casual friends. Thus, at least for adults (cf. Broderick & Belz, 1996), the choices of close friends by high self-monitors and low self-monitors seem to be guided by the similarity–attraction rule (Berscheid & Reis, 1998).

These opposing choices naturally beg the question, namely, what functions might close friendships serve for high self-monitors and low self-monitors? By virtue of their high self-monitoring propensity, the close friends of high self-monitors have a mutual concern with the social appropriateness of their behavior and a mutual appreciation for the value of organizing one's social world (including friendships) accordingly. By virtue of their low self-monitoring propensity, the close friends of low self-monitors have a mutual concern for self-behavior congruence and a mutual appreciation for the value of organizing one's social world (including friendships) accordingly. The choice of best friends by high self-monitors and low self-monitors may therefore reflect not a simple, straightforward tendency to be attracted to similar others but instead a strategic attempt to solicit support in structuring their social worlds in a way that has functional value.

Another manifestation of the divergent views of friendship held by high self-monitors and low self-monitors is the way in which these individuals allocate their leisure time (Snyder, Gangestad, & Simpson, 1983). When it comes to interacting with friends, compromises

often have to be made. One might engage in an activity with a friend who is not especially well liked but is particularly skilled at or knowledgeable about the activity. One might engage in an enjoyable activity with a friend who is especially well liked but not particularly skilled at or knowledgeable about the activity.

When faced with such options, what friendship choices do high self-monitors and low self-monitors make? The persons chosen by high self-monitors as activity partners tend to be “specialists” (i.e., persons who are particularly skilled at or knowledgeable about the activity). The persons chosen by low self-monitors as activity partners tend to be personally compatible (i.e., persons who are particularly well liked by their low self-monitoring partners).

As was the case with the choice of best friends, the choice of activity partners by high self-monitors and low self-monitors seems to be guided by functional considerations. High self-monitors are motivated to engage in strategic self-presentation (i.e., to behave in ways that are appropriate to the demands of the task at hand). These individuals ought to be able to reach this goal of socially appropriate behavior when accompanied by someone whose knowledge or skills are suited for the situation (i.e., can competently deal with the demands of the task at hand). Low self-monitors are motivated to engage in self-verification (i.e., to behave in ways that are congruent with their enduring dispositions). These individuals ought to be able to reach this goal of self-congruent behavior when accompanied by someone whose dispositions are well suited to themselves (i.e., can share mutual interests, attitudes, and values that allow their partner to be comfortable being themselves).

Maintenance and Dissolution of Friendships

Clearly, the starting point of friendships for high self-monitors and low self-monitors is quite different. High self-monitors and low self-monitors look for different attributes in potential friends and choose their friends on the basis of different criteria. Do the divergent ways in which friendships are initiated have consequences for the developmental trajectories of such relationships for high self-monitors and low self-monitors? If so, is the course of friendship for high self-monitors and low self-monitors maintained by different strategies? Is the termination of friendship for high self-monitors and low self-monitors the product of different dynamics?

There are surprisingly few empirical answers to these questions (cf. Day & Schleicher in this special section; Kilduff, 1992). At a macro level of analysis, there are self-monitoring differences in the way individuals handle accommodative dilemmas with their friends (Gaines et al., 2000). When faced with a situation in which a friend acts in a manner detrimental to the friendship, high self-monitors tend to use passive strategies (e.g., waiting out crises, ignoring and spending less time with the friend, letting the friendship dissolve) to resolve the conflict. When faced with a situation in which a friend acts in a manner detrimental to the friendship, low self-monitors tend to use active strategies (e.g., discussing problems in a constructive fashion, seeking mutually acceptable compromises, getting help from third parties) to resolve the conflict.

At a micro level of analysis, however, little if anything is known about the particular strategies high self-monitors and low self-monitors employ to organize their social worlds or the reactions high self-monitors and low self-monitors have when circumstances interfere with the sought after organization. The strategies needed to maintain a large but compartmentalized friendship network ought to be quite unlike the strategies needed to maintain a small but undifferentiated friendship network. The effects of losing one of many friends in whom little was invested ought to be unlike the effects of losing one of a few friends in whom much was invested. These possible self-monitoring differences in relationship maintenance strategies and relationship dissolution consequences have not yet been addressed (cf. Clinton & Anderson, 1999; Malikioti-Loizos & Anderson, 1999). However, several promising avenues are available that, if pursued, might lead to insights about the relationship maintenance strategies and relationship dissolution consequences for high self-monitors and low self-monitors.

In regard to maintenance strategies, for example, there is some consensus among individuals about the rules that govern friendships (e.g., Argyle & Henderson, 1984), even though many persons believe that not everyone follows these rules (e.g., Jones, Couch, & Scott, 1997). Given their divergent conceptions of friendships, high self-monitors and low self-monitors might very well have divergent rules about the conditions necessary to maintain their friendships. Given differences in the consistency of their behavior in general, high self-monitors and low self-monitors might very well diverge in the degree to which they employ specific rules across situations.

In regard to dissolution consequences, for example, many people believe that violations of the rules of friendships are responsible for the deterioration and dissolution of friendships (e.g., Argyle & Henderson, 1984). Given differences in the extent to which their behavior is rule driven, high self-monitors and low self-monitors could terminate their friendships or have their friendships terminated due to differences in the rules that were thought to apply to their friendships or to differences in the impact of rule violations for their friendships. Additionally, transitions that involve major life events (e.g., college entrance and graduation, marriage, parenthood) are a time in which friendship networks are reconstituted and reorganized (e.g., Fischer & Oliner, 1983; Reis, Lin, Bennett, & Nezek, 1993; Shaver, Furman, & Buhrmester, 1985). Given the different nature of their friendship networks, high self-monitors and low self-monitors could be differentially affected by transitions that necessitate reconstitution and reorganization of friendship networks. These and other promising avenues of inquiry need to be pursued so that the dynamics of the friendships of high self-monitors and low self-monitors are fully understood.

ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Do differences between high self-monitors and low self-monitors in their characteristic orientations toward the social world also have implications for romantic relationships? Romantic relationships are of considerable significance to most individuals. Individuals spend a considerable amount of their time and resources in “engineering” successful romantic encounters as evidenced by the use of personal ads, dating services, and Internet sites (e.g., Goode, 1996; Merkle & Richardson, 2000; Woll & Cosby, 1987). Moreover, passionate love is considered—at least in some cultures—as a prerequisite for marriage (Dion & Dion, 1996; Sprecher et al., 1994), and most adults are at one time or another married. In short, romantic partnerships constitute an important facet of individuals’ social connections with each other.

As was the case with friendships, tying individual differences in self-monitoring to the number and variety of functions served by romantic relationships can illuminate both the nature of romantic relationships as well as self-monitoring (Snyder & Simpson, 1987).

How do individuals define their romantic relationships? With whom do individuals choose to become romantically involved? What are the dynamics involved in interactions between romantic partners? Identifying the way in which the characteristic orientations of high self-monitors and low self-monitors toward social relationships affect romantic partnerships might provide answers to questions that are theoretically and practically important.

Initiation of Dating Relationships

Like friendships, the initiation of romantic relationships among adults depends in part on what romance means. Romance is often associated with love, but love means different things to different persons (Sternberg, 1998), and individuals undoubtedly look for certain attributes and not others in prospective romantic partners. In turn, the extent to which attributes sought in prospective romantic partners match the attributes that comprise an individual's prototypes of romantic partners will affect the development of romantic relationships.

Conceptions of love. When individuals think of love, what sort of experience comes to mind? That is, what kinds of thoughts, emotions, and actions do individuals anticipate will be part of the phenomenology of love? Given their divergent orientations to social relationships, it may come as no surprise that high self-monitors and low self-monitors have different expectations about the nature of the experiences they will have in romantic relationships.

Consider, for example, the notion of true love (see Snyder, 1987, for a discussion of this issue). At least some individuals endorse the idea that there is only one person who is ideally suited to them (i.e., "one true love"). Such individuals tend to be low self-monitors. Other individuals endorse the idea that there may be more than one person who they can love—even at the same time (i.e., "love the one you're with"). Such individuals tend to be high self-monitors.

Consider also the notion of styles of love (cf. Lee, 1988). Some individuals prefer to think of love as a social game. Games often involve many players and are transient in nature, and individuals who see love as a game tend to remain uncommitted to any one partner and to seek alliances with other partners. Some individuals, in contrast, prefer to think of love as intensely passionate,

psychologically close, and even emotionally stressful (e.g., jealousy, possessiveness, insecurity). Still other individuals prefer to think of love as a somewhat dispassionate quest to find someone who shares similar dispositions and will therefore be a compatible life partner.

The extent to which individuals prefer these dissimilar styles of love depends in large measure on the self-monitoring propensities of those individuals (Neto, 1993). Individuals who see love as a game are more likely to be high self-monitors than low self-monitors. Individuals who see love as an affectively profound experience are more likely to be low self-monitors than high self-monitors. And individuals who see love as a search for a partner with whom they can develop a close and long-lasting attachment are more likely to be low self-monitors than high self-monitors.

These dissimilar views of love naturally beg several questions. When high self-monitors and low self-monitors are contemplating entering into a romantic relationship with someone, what attributes do they look for in a prospective romantic partner? How do high self-monitors and low self-monitors determine that a would-be romantic partner possesses the attributes they desire? And if a prospective partner has those sought-after features, do high self-monitors and low self-monitors differ in the ways in which they set in motion the interaction necessary to form the sort of romantic relationship that suits their dispositions? Answers to these questions can be found by examining the cognitive and behavioral processes by which individuals initiate romantic encounters.

Cognitive processes. An initial encounter is considered the starting point of any relationship (Berscheid & Reis, 1998), and attention to another person is often the first process engaged in such an encounter. Given that attention to others is a starting point for the various social cognitive processes (e.g., attribution, impression formation) by which we come to know others, high self-monitors and low self-monitors might differ not in their allocation of attention to prospective romantic partners but in the reasons for such allocation. In other words, attention to potential dates might serve different functions for high self-monitors and low self-monitors.

High self-monitors are generally motivated out of concerns about situational or social appropriateness. Consequently, high self-monitoring persons read the dispositions of others like a potential date in order to identify "skilled activity partners." For

high self-monitors, attention to a prospective romantic partner allows them to gather the sort of interpersonal information needed to decide if a potential date possesses those attributes (e.g., physical attractiveness, social status) that are valued in a romantic encounter. Low self-monitors are generally motivated out of concerns about self-behavior congruence. Consequently, low self-monitoring persons read the dispositions of others like a potential date in order to determine if that person is “personally compatible.” For low self-monitors, attention to a prospective romantic partner allows them to gather the sort of interpersonal information needed to decide if a potential date possesses those attributes (e.g., shared interests, similar values) that are valued in close relationships. In short, high self-monitors and low self-monitors can be expected to differ not in the *amount* of attention they allocate to a prospective romantic partner but in the *focus* of their attention on a prospective romantic partner.

Consistent with this reasoning, high self-monitors and low self-monitors do not differ in the time they spend gathering information about a potential date when faced with the prospect of imminent interaction with that date (Berscheid, Graziano, Monson, & Dermer, 1976). Instead, high self-monitors and low self-monitors differ in the kind of information they gather about their partner. High self-monitors “focus on the exterior” of a potential date. That is, high self-monitors tend to look for and value attributes in prospective romantic partners such as physical attractiveness (e.g., Buchanan, 2000; Glick, 1985; Jones, 1993; Snyder, Berscheid, & Glick, 1985), sex appeal (Jones, 1993), social status (Jones, 1993), and financial resources (Jones, 1993). Low self-monitors “focus on the interior” of a potential date. That is, low self-monitors tend to look for and value attributes in prospective romantic partners such as personality desirability (e.g., Buchanan, 2000; Glick, 1985; Snyder et al., 1985), similarity of values and beliefs (Jones, 1993), and other dispositions like honesty, responsibility, and kindness (Jones, 1993).

These self-monitoring differences in the attributes desired in romantic partners apparently reflect general orientations toward romantic relationships. Specifically, high self-monitors and low self-monitors presume that the attributes they seek in a romantic partner of their own are the same attributes that others would seek in a romantic partner (e.g., Bazzini & Shaffer, 1995; Glick, DeMorest, & Holtze, 1988). When asked to serve as “matchmaker,” high self-monitors matched couples in terms of those individuals’ similarity of

physical attractiveness. When asked to serve as “matchmaker,” low self-monitors matched couples in terms of those individuals’ similarity of personality. Thus, the tendency for high self-monitors to focus on the exterior and for low self-monitors to focus on the interior of romantic partners appears to be a robust inclination.

There are circumstances, however, in which there is no difference in the information that high self-monitors and low self-monitors seek in a prospective romantic partner (e.g., Rowatt, Cunningham, & Druen, 1998; Rowatt, DeLue, Strickhouser, & Gonzales, 2001; Shaffer & Bazzini, 1997). Similarly, there are circumstances in which there is no difference in the information that high self-monitors and low self-monitors believe others would find desirable in a potential date (e.g., Bazzini & Shaffer, 1995; Buchanan, 2000). To date, the nature of these circumstances has not been identified.

One possible factor that might be relevant in this regard concerns the alternatives available to dating partners (Shaffer & Bazzini, 1997). Sometimes, the field of eligibles is rather limited and individuals must make hard choices that involve tradeoffs (i.e., physical attractiveness versus personal compatibility). In this case, the differential weight given by high self-monitors and low self-monitors to different attributes in others may come into relief and the approaches of high self-monitors and low self-monitors may be “systematically different.” Sometimes, the field of eligibles is relatively unlimited and individuals can “have it all,” so to speak (i.e., physical attractiveness as well as personal compatibility). In this case, the differential weight given by high self-monitors and low self-monitors to different attributes in others may be attenuated and the approaches of high self-monitors and low self-monitors may both be focused on “maximizing outcomes” from a romantic relationship.

Another possible factor that might be relevant in this regard concerns the functional nature of the criteria used to seek out prospective dates. In terms of criteria for choosing a person to date, high self-monitors consider a prospective partner’s physical attractiveness as more important than that partner’s personality whereas low self-monitors consider a prospective partner’s personality as more important than that partner’s physical attractiveness (e.g., Bazzini & Shaffer, 1995). Presumably, these differential preferences reflect the functional value that these two criteria have for high self-monitors and low self-monitors. Physical attractiveness may be important to high self-monitors because this attribute in a prospective partner

serves a social-adjustive function (i.e., enhances one's social image), whereas personality may be important to low self-monitors because this attribute in a prospective partner serves a value-expressive function (i.e., enhances one's compatibility). There are circumstances, however, in which high self-monitors might see the personality of a prospective partner as serving a social-adjustive function for themselves and in which low self-monitors might see the physical attractiveness of a prospective partner as serving a value-expressive function for themselves (Bazzini & Shaffer, 1995). In these circumstances, high self-monitors may be more inclined than otherwise to give weight to personality in their choice of dating partners, and low self-monitors may be more inclined than otherwise to give weight to physical attractiveness in their choice of dating partners (Bazzini & Shaffer, 1995). These possibilities as well as other plausible explanations merit further theoretical and empirical attention.

Behavioral processes. To the extent that high self-monitors and low self-monitors search for dissimilar attributes in a prospective romantic partner, their divergent searches may in turn steer their subsequent behavior in different directions. That is, these attentional differences between high self-monitors and low self-monitors may translate into divergent behavioral strategies for establishing a romantic relationship. When faced with an initial encounter with a prospective romantic partner, high self-monitors and low self-monitors do, in fact, differ in the ways they express interest in such a partner.

One of the ways in which high self-monitors and low self-monitors differentially express their interest in a prospective romantic partner is nonverbal behavior. Although nonverbal behavior can serve many functions, one of its purposes is communication about the nature of the relationship (i.e., relational communication) between the parties involved (Burgoon & Hale, 1984, 1987). With respect to romantic relationships, some of these behaviors (e.g., flirtatious glances, smiling) are thought to indicate sexual interest without affection. Given their dissimilar motives for establishing romantic relationships, high self-monitoring and low self-monitoring persons can be expected to differ in the extent to which they engage in these particular nonverbal behaviors. This does, in fact, seem to be the case. Although their nonverbal behavior is similar in many respects, high self-monitors—both men and women—do smile more and make more

flirtatious glances than do low self-monitors when attempting to initiate a date with a potential partner (Simpson, Gangestad, & Biek, 1993). These differences in the nonverbal behavior of high self-monitors and low self-monitors used to signal romantic interest might emerge, however, only when such behavior is spontaneous rather than feigned (Leck & Simpson, 1999).

When initiating a date, high self-monitors and low self-monitors differ not just in the way they use nonverbal channels of communication but also in the way they use verbal channels of communication. Nonverbal behavior is often more difficult to monitor and regulate than is verbal behavior (DePaulo, 1992). Hence, differences between high self-monitors and low self-monitors in their interactions with potential dates should be more evident in verbal than in nonverbal channels of communication.

At least with respect to verbal behavior, high self-monitors are more likely than low self-monitors not only to believe that they can feign romantic interest but also actually to do so (Leck & Simpson, 1999). In particular, high self-monitors are more likely than low self-monitors to tailor their words so as to exaggerate their own physical attractiveness, to create an impression that they're personally compatible with a prospective romantic partner, and to create the perception that they share similar views of love with a prospective romantic partner (Rowatt et al., 1998). These self-monitoring differences in self-promotion are apparently strategic in nature, given that high self-monitors are more likely than low self-monitors to feel that deception is acceptable as a means of initiating a date (Rowatt et al., 1998).

The strategic nature of this differential use of verbal communication can also be observed in other choices high self-monitors and low self-monitors make when initiating a romantic relationship. High self-monitors and low self-monitors differ in the way they choose to enter and spend time in different situations with different persons. When high self-monitors have the opportunity to interact with someone who possesses those attributes (e.g., physical attractiveness) that they seek in a date, high self-monitors choose to spend time with that person in romantic rather than nonromantic settings (Glick, 1985). Similarly, when low self-monitors have the opportunity to interact with someone who possesses those attributes (e.g., personal compatibility) that they seek in a date, low self-monitors choose to spend time with that person in romantic rather than nonromantic settings (Glick, 1985).

Taken as a whole, there is considerable evidence that high self-monitors and low self-monitors differ in the cognitive and behavioral processes used to initiate romantic relationships. These differences appear to be part of the general orientation that high self-monitors and low self-monitors have toward structuring their social worlds in ways that are functional to their interpersonal goals. Moreover, these differences are potentially of considerable consequence to the extent that events that occur at early stages of relationships (e.g., initiation) influence the course of events that occur at later stages (e.g., maintenance and dissolution).

Maintenance of Dating Relationships

Having initiated romantic relationships for different reasons and by different means, do the dating histories of high self-monitors and low self-monitors differ accordingly? If the dating histories of high self-monitors and low self-monitors are dissimilar, what are the developmental trajectories of romantic relationships like for high self-monitors and low self-monitors? And given the divergent routes by which they arrive at the starting point of romantic relationships, are there disparate psychological mechanisms by which these relationships are maintained for high self-monitors and low self-monitors?

Dating histories. In some sense, differences in the way high self-monitors and low self-monitors initiate romantic relationships can be construed as evidence that initiating such relationships comes more easily to high self-monitors than to low self-monitors. If so, then the dating histories of high self-monitors and low self-monitors can be expected to differ both qualitatively and quantitatively. Consistent with these expectations, individual differences in self-monitoring are related to perceived romantic popularity (Speed & Gangestad, 1997). The persons that peers report as being most likely to have dates are high self-monitors rather than low self-monitors.

Do these *perceived* differences in the dating lives of high self-monitors and low self-monitors, however, bear any resemblance to *actual* differences in their dating lives? In both their words and their actions, high self-monitors are more adept than are low self-monitors in promoting themselves as desirable dating partners (Leck & Simpson, 1999; Rowatt et al., 1998). Does this differential

capacity for self-promotion in the arena of dating translate into differential attractiveness to others?

Apparently so! Among those persons who are not currently dating one partner exclusively, the number of partners dated in the previous year is greater for high self-monitors than for low self-monitors (Snyder & Simpson, 1984). That is, when it comes to the multiplicity of romantic relationships, high self-monitors have an edge over their low self-monitoring counterparts. Among those persons who are currently dating one person exclusively, the length of romantic relationships is greater for low self-monitors than for high self-monitors (Snyder & Simpson, 1984). That is, when it comes to the longevity of romantic relationships, low self-monitors have an edge over their high self-monitoring counterparts.

Maintenance processes. If the dating histories of high self-monitors and low self-monitors differ quantitatively and qualitatively, then the psychological mechanisms involved in these romantic relationships can also be expected to differ. What mechanisms might be responsible for the differences in the stability and closeness of the dating relationships of high self-monitors and low self-monitors? The answer to this question may be found in the implications the factors responsible for relationship initiation have for relationship maintenance.

As mentioned previously, the attributes desired in prospective partners differ for high self-monitors and low self-monitors (e.g., Jones, 1993). High self-monitors look for attributes in potential partners such as sex appeal, social status, financial resources, physical attractiveness, and recreational interests. Low self-monitors look for attributes in potential partners such as honesty, kindness, thoughtfulness, responsibility, faithfulness, and loyalty.

These divergent sets of interpersonal interests have implications for the development of trust within dating relationships. Trust in a romantic partner appears to be a function of predictability, dependability, and faith (Holmes & Rempel, 1989). The qualities in others that are associated with dependability (e.g., honesty, kindness, thoughtfulness, responsibility) and with faith (e.g., faithfulness, loyalty) are the qualities in a prospective partner more likely to be sought by low self-monitors than by high self-monitors. Thus, the differential preferences on the part of high self-monitors and low self-monitors suggest that trust is more likely to develop in the dating

relationships of low self-monitors than in the dating relationships of high self-monitors.

Consistent with this reasoning, the romantic relationships of low self-monitoring couples involve more trust than do the romantic relationships of high self-monitoring couples (Norris & Zweigenhaft, 1999). It is perhaps not surprising that, given these differences in trust, low self-monitoring and high self-monitoring couples have disparate views of the future of their romantic relationships. Specifically, low self-monitoring couples are more likely than high self-monitoring couples to project that their current romantic relationship will evolve into marriage in the future (Norris & Zweigenhaft, 1999). Thus, it appears that differences in the attributes sought in prospective partners create differential opportunities for the development of interpersonal trust between romantic partners, which, in turn, mediates differences in the longevity and intimacy of the dating relationships of high self-monitors and low self-monitors.

Of course, not all of the romantic relationships of high self-monitors are brief and psychologically distant, and not all of the romantic relationships of low self-monitors are enduring and psychologically close. Although trust may be one psychological mechanism for maintaining romantic relationships, other factors also come into play (Richards, Butler, & Gross, 2003). One of those factors is the extent to which the outcomes received from a relationship meet or exceed expectations based on similar relationships in the past or alternative relationships in the present (Simpson, Gangestad, & Lerma, 2004).

In instances in which the romantic relationships of high self-monitors and low self-monitors are equally viable, individuals in such relationships can be expected to see their partner as providing those rewards they seek in a prospective partner. To the extent that high self-monitors and low self-monitors value different attributes in a prospective partner, the ongoing dating relationships of these individuals may be maintained by disparate outcomes. In particular, the dating relationships of high self-monitors ought to be viable to the extent that these individuals obtain from their partner outcomes such as social status, approval from others, and opportunities for connections with others. In contrast, the dating relationships of low self-monitors ought to be viable to the extent that these individuals obtain from their partner outcomes such as empathic concern, mutual satisfaction, and shared attitudes.

Indeed, the viability of the romantic relationships of high self-monitors and low self-monitors does seem to be the product of a different set of interpersonal outcomes. When actively involved in a dating relationship, high self-monitors cite the satisfaction of “extrinsic” motives (e.g., interpersonal connections that could benefit their career) as the reasons for their involvement (Jones, 1993). When actively involved in a dating relationship, low self-monitors cite the satisfaction of “intrinsic” motives (e.g., shared interests, concerns, and values) as the reasons for their involvement.

Relationship Dissolution

The considerations that influence the choices high self-monitors and low self-monitors make when entering a romantic relationship have implications for the processes that affect the maintenance of such relationships for these individuals. The different routes by which romantic relationships are maintained for high self-monitors and low self-monitors should, in turn, have implications for the developmental trajectory of such relationships. This indeed is the case. The characteristic orientations toward dating adopted by high self-monitors and low self-monitors have cognitive (i.e., intentions), behavioral (i.e., actions), and affective (i.e., emotions) consequences that can and do affect the course of their romantic relationships (Snyder & Simpson, 1984).

When given a choice, high self-monitors say they would more often choose to engage in a social activity (e.g., recreational activities) with an opposite-sex friend than with their partner in a current dating relationship. Even when they initially choose their dating partner for an activity, high self-monitors are relatively willing to switch later to an opposite-sex friend as an activity partner. These choices made by high self-monitors are guided by the extent to which the person chosen was a “specialist” (i.e., well suited for the nature of the activity at hand). When given a choice, low self-monitors say they would more often choose to engage in a social activity (e.g., cultural events) with their partner in a current dating relationship than with an opposite-sex friend. And given that they initially choose their dating partner for an activity, low self-monitors are relatively unwilling to switch later to an opposite-sex friend as an activity partner. These choices made by low self-monitors are guided by the extent to which the person chosen was compatible (i.e., well liked

and similar dispositionally). These differential preferences for interaction partners are evident whether the choices involve the same or different activities (Snyder & Simpson, 1984). In short, high self-monitors appear to be more willing than their low self-monitoring counterparts to spend considerable time with others outside their dating relationship.

These apparent differences in involvement with a dating partner are further reflected in the likelihood that high self-monitors and low self-monitors would choose to terminate their romantic relationships. When asked who they would choose if they could form an ideal romantic relationship, both high self-monitors and low self-monitors were most likely to say that their current dating partner would be their choice. Those individuals who indicated that they were willing to change partners, however, were much more likely to be high self-monitors than low self-monitors (Snyder & Simpson, 1984). Whether high self-monitors are more likely than low self-monitors to actually terminate a romantic relationship and date others remains to be determined. But consistent with this expectation, among those persons who were not currently dating anyone exclusively, high self-monitors reported dating nearly twice as many people in the preceding 12 months than did low self-monitors (Snyder & Simpson, 1984).

Given these cognitive and behavioral differences in the dating patterns of high self-monitors and low self-monitors, it should come as no surprise that these differences are accompanied by divergent developmental trajectories for romantic relationships (Snyder & Simpson, 1984; Simpson, 1987). From a quantitative perspective, exclusive dating relationships are likely to last almost twice as long for low self-monitors than for high self-monitors. From a qualitative perspective, exclusive dating relationships are likely to become psychologically more intimate for low self-monitoring than for high self-monitors. To the extent low self-monitors are unwilling to change a dating partner suggests a commitment to their relationships, this commitment seems to translate into relatively more enduring and intimate romantic relationships. To the extent that high self-monitors are willing to change a dating partner suggests a lack of commitment to their relationships, this lack of commitment seems to translate into relatively less enduring and intimate romantic relationships.

In brief, there is a consistent pattern of self-monitoring differences in the (a) intention to change partners, (b) number of partners with

whom dating interactions have taken place, and (c) longevity as well as intimacy of dating relationships. Taken together with self-monitoring differences in attitudes and behavior involving casual sex with multiple partners (Snyder, Simpson, & Gangestad, 1986), the aforementioned pattern can be interpreted as an indication that romantic relationships are more prone to dissolution for high self-monitors than low self-monitors. If so, then why should this be the case? Several proximal and distal factors might operate to make dissolution of romantic relationships more frequent and likely for high self-monitors than for low self-monitors (cf. Snyder & Simpson, 1987).

First, the differential rate of dissolution for the dating relationships of high self-monitors and low self-monitors may be accounted for by differences in the perceived *availability* of alternative partners. In part, commitment to any relationship is a function of the availability of alternative relationships (cf. Simpson et al., 2004; Rusbult & van Lange, 1996). To the extent they believe that they have a broad “field of eligibles” (i.e., available, alternative romantic partners), high self-monitors may feel less commitment to their current romantic partner than they would otherwise feel. To the extent they believe that they have a narrow “field of eligibles” (i.e., available, alternative romantic partners), low self-monitors may feel more commitment to their current romantic partner than they would otherwise feel. Such differences in the perceived availability of romantic partners are congruent with the fact that high self-monitors are more likely than low self-monitors to have dated a large number and variety of partners (Snyder & Simpson, 1984), to have had sex with a large number and variety of partners (Snyder et al., 1986), to anticipate having a large number and variety of sexual partners in the future (Snyder et al., 1986), to have a large network of friends and acquaintances (Snyder et al., 1983), and to be willing to engage in social activities with friends rather than a romantic partner (Snyder & Simpson, 1984).

Second, the differential rate of dissolution for the dating relationships of high self-monitors and low self-monitors may also be accounted for by differences in the perceived *desirability* of alternative partners. In part, commitment to any relationship is a function of the *attractiveness* of alternative relationships (cf. Simpson et al., 2004; Rusbult & van Lange, 1996). To the extent that they know they possess the behavioral repertoire to get along with a wide variety of

other individuals (Snyder & Cantor, 1980), high self-monitors may find a wide variety of potential partners as attractive alternatives to their current romantic partner. Moreover, the propensity for high self-monitors to choose a “specialist” as an activity partner implies that their current romantic partner may pale in comparison to others who are well suited for certain social activities. To the extent they know that they do not possess the behavioral repertoire to get along with a wide variety of other individuals (Snyder & Cantor, 1980), low self-monitors may find only a small number, if any, of potential partners as attractive alternatives to their current romantic partner. Moreover, the propensity for low self-monitors to choose a “personally compatible” person as an activity partner implies that their current romantic partner may outshine others when it comes to shared interests, similar dispositions, and mutual values. Such differences in the perceived desirability of romantic partners are congruent with the fact that high self-monitors are more likely than low self-monitors to believe that they have a large “pool of admissible sexual partners” (Mongeau & Johnson, 1995; Snyder et al., 1986), to have sexual fantasies about persons other than their current dating partner (Snyder et al., 1986), and to believe that it is possible to love two people at the same time (Snyder, 1987).

Last, the differential rate of dissolution for the dating relationships of high self-monitors and low self-monitors may also be accounted for by distal factors such as differences in future-time orientation. In a romantic context, future-time orientation is the capacity to organize current experiences and to plan for subsequent experiences in terms of their consequences for the future of a romantic relationship (Oner, 2002). An extended future-time orientation is associated with seeking long-term romantic relationships, focusing on future romantic exchanges, selectively choosing a romantic partner, committing oneself to an ongoing romance, and being reluctant to give up a current romantic partnership (Oner, 2001). In light of the nature of this time orientation, it is perhaps not surprising that low self-monitors are more likely than high self-monitors to have an extended future-time orientation to their romantic relationships (Oner, 2002). Given their focus on the future of their romantic partnerships, low self-monitors may act like social engineers who structure their experiences so as to maximize the longevity of their relationships. Given their focus on the immediacy of their

romantic relationships, high self-monitors may act like social engineers who structure their experiences so as to maximize the utility of here-and-now experiences.

MARRIAGE AND COHABITATION

Do differences between high self-monitors and low self-monitors in their characteristic orientations toward the social world have implications for relationships such as marriage and cohabitation? Marriage and cohabitation tend to be relatively long-term relationships whereas romantic affairs such as dating tend to be relatively short-term relationships. By virtue of these differences in relationship longevity, the dynamics involved in marriage and cohabitation are quite different than the dynamics involved in romantic affairs (Stafford & Canary, 1991; Stueve & Gerson, 1977). In contrast to dating relationships, marriage and cohabitation are likely to involve considerably more personal investment, public commitment, psychological intimacy, and relationship satisfaction.

Despite these many and important points of departure between long-term relationships like marriage and short-term relationships like dating, the general orientations of high self-monitors and low self-monitors to their social worlds can be expected to carry over to particular intimate associations such as marriage or cohabitation. After all, it would be out of character for high self-monitors and low self-monitors to abandon their distinctive approaches to the social world for intimate relationships with so much psychological impact. So what consequences would the orientations of high self-monitors and low self-monitors have for these intimate associations?

Relationship Initiation

One of the potential consequences of the divergent orientations that high self-monitors and low self-monitors might adopt toward intimate associations is their choice of partners with whom they enter into marriage or cohabitation. What might guide the choices of high self-monitors and low self-monitors as they consider the suitability of a prospective partner in a long-term relationship? The answer to

this question can perhaps be found in the literature on homogamy in marriage or assortative mating. Across several decades, researchers have consistently found that mate selection follows an attraction-similarity principle—including dimensions of personality (see Buss, 1985, for a review).

Are the marital choices of high and low self-monitoring spouses guided by similar concerns? Do high self-monitoring spouses seek out as a prospective long-term partner someone who is also high in self-monitoring and who will therefore feel comfortable and satisfied living in a highly segmented world? Do low self-monitoring spouses seek out as prospective long-term partners someone who is also low in self-monitoring and who will therefore feel comfortable and satisfied living in a highly undifferentiated world? The tentative answer to this question from a preliminary investigation is “apparently not.” There is no evidence of assortative mating with respect to self-monitoring and marriage (Leone & Hall, 2002). That is, high self-monitors are just as likely to have high self-monitoring spouses as they are to have low self-monitoring spouses, and low self-monitors were just as likely to have high self-monitoring spouses as they are to have low self-monitoring spouses. This conclusion is, of course, tentative, and whether or not such a finding is robust is a matter for future investigations.

If, however, high self-monitors and low self-monitors do not base their choice of a long-term partner on that person’s self-monitoring propensity, then on what grounds do high self-monitors and low self-monitors decide to enter into a partnership like marriage or cohabitation? Although no empirically based answer to this question can yet be found in the literature, we speculate that high self-monitors and low self-monitors are motivated in their choice of a long-term partner by the same considerations that influence their choice of friends or dates. To the extent that high self-monitors choose as friends persons who are “activity specialists,” high self-monitors may choose as long-term partners persons who are in some sense “activity specialists” in the context of marriage. For example, high self-monitors may choose to enter into marriage or cohabitation with someone because that person is especially skilled at providing a stable financial future, raising a family, or entertaining potential business associates. To the extent that low self-monitors choose as friends persons who are “personally compatible,” low self-monitors may choose as long-term partners persons who are in some sense

personally compatible in the context of marriage. For example, low self-monitors may choose to enter into marriage or cohabitation with someone because that person is unusually similar to them in many ways such as financial matters, child rearing, and social relationships. These intriguing possibilities remain a matter for future investigation.

Relationship Maintenance

The social worlds of high self-monitors and low self-monitors differ quantitatively (i.e., number of relationships) and qualitatively (i.e., closeness of relationships). Given that spouses are presumably just one part of their social worlds, how do high self-monitoring spouses sustain their marriages while preserving the segmented nature of their interpersonal relationships? Given that spouses are presumably a large part of their social worlds, how do low self-monitoring spouses sustain their marriages while preserving the undifferentiated nature of their interpersonal relationships? In short, what mechanisms are responsible for the differences in the intimacy of the marriages of high and low self-monitoring spouses?

The answer to this question may be found in the processes employed by spouses in general to maintain or repair their marital relationships. To foster their marriages, spouses sometimes use illusions such as overestimating the degree of similarity between themselves and their spouse or underestimating the harmful intentions underlying their spouse's behavior (e.g., Rusbult, Olsen, Davis, & Hannon, 2001; Simpson, Ickes, & Orina, 2001). Spouses also engage in activities of mutual interest as a way of making their marriage rewarding for both partners (e.g., Acitelli, 2001; Aron, Norman, & Aaron, 2001). Additionally, spouses communicate in ways such as displaying affection toward each other (e.g., Stafford & Canary, 1991) or making accommodations when a problem arises (e.g., Acitelli, 2001; Rusbult et al., 2001) in order to make their marriages function well. These and other "relational strategies" seem to nurture close relationships like marriage by enhancing intimacy and attachment (see Holmes & Murray, 1996, and Reis & Patrick, 1996, for reviews of the literature).

To the extent that the aforementioned strategies maintain marriages by enhancing intimacy and attachment, low self-monitoring spouses should be more likely than high self-monitoring spouses to

employ these strategies. If their marriages are like other facets of their social worlds (e.g., friendships), then low self-monitoring spouses should be relatively more likely to behave in ways that will promote the psychological closeness of their marital relationships. If their marriages are also like other facets of their social worlds (e.g., friendships), then high self-monitoring spouses should be relatively less likely to behave in ways that will promote the psychological closeness of their marital relationships.

Consistent with these expectations, differences in the ways high self-monitoring and low self-monitoring spouses communicate and interact with partners emerge when the dynamics of marital exchanges are explored (Leone & Hall, 2001). Compared to their high self-monitoring counterparts, low self-monitoring spouses are more likely to perceive that there is consensus within the marriage about matters such as career decisions, family finances, and religious issues. Low self-monitoring spouses are also more likely than high self-monitoring spouses to say that they and their partner engage in relationship-maintaining activities such as discussing ideas calmly and resolving problems with mutual concessions. Additionally, low self-monitoring spouses are more likely than high self-monitoring spouses to report that they regularly display affection to their partner.

Differences in the strategies employed by high and low self-monitoring spouses to communicate and interact with their partners also emerge when a macrolevel of analysis is used to investigate the dynamics of marital exchanges. Take, for example, the work of Rusbult and her colleagues (Rusbult et al., 2001). Rusbult has suggested that the amount of resources that spouses invest in their marriage promotes commitment to that relationship. Commitment is thought to motivate a variety of behavioral (e.g., accommodation, forgiveness) and cognitive (e.g., positive illusions, derogation of alternatives) strategies that, in turn, promote the well-being of the couple. In other words, general approaches (i.e., investment, commitment) to relationships function as distal causes for proximal relationship maintenance strategies.

Are there self-monitoring differences in the general approach that spouses take toward their marriage? Although both high self-monitors and low self-monitoring spouses say they are heavily invested in their marriage, deeply committed to their spouse, and psychologically close to their partner, self-monitoring differences nonetheless

emerge in investments, commitment, and intimacy (Leone & Hall, 2001). Compared to their high self-monitoring counterparts, low self-monitoring spouses (wives as well as husbands) are more likely to say that they invest a great deal of their resources in the marriage, are intensely committed to the marriage, and feel psychologically intimate (emotionally, sexually, intellectually) with their spouse. These self-monitoring differences in investment, commitment, and intimacy occur despite a lack of assortative mating with respect to self-monitoring. Thus, these self-monitoring differences seem to be a product of the individual partner's approach to the marriage rather than the nature of the partnership per se. Due to the structure of their social worlds (undifferentiated vs. differentiated), low self-monitoring spouses are more likely than high self-monitoring spouses to have the opportunity and motivation to invest much of themselves in their marriages.

Other strategies can be employed to solve specific problems while minimizing "conflict negativity" (Holmes & Murray, 1996). Problems can be rendered more manageable than otherwise by separating global beliefs about one's partner from beliefs about the partner's behavior (e.g., Karney, McNulty, & Fry, 2001). The stressful nature of marital problems can also be mitigated by conflict resolution tactics such as responding positively to a spouse's potentially harmful behavior (e.g., Rusbult et al., 2001), engaging in self-disclosure as it relates to the problem at hand (e.g., Omarzu, Whalen, & Harvey, 2001), and avoiding unpleasant exchanges if possible (e.g., Canary & Stafford, 2001).

To the extent that these behaviors are more problem focused than relationship focused (cf. Holmes & Murray, 1996), these relational strategies might be used by both high self-monitoring and low self-monitoring spouses. When queried about their views of marriage, high self-monitoring spouses are no more or less likely than low self-monitoring spouses to hold dysfunctional beliefs (e.g., disagreement is destructive, partners cannot change) about the nature of marriage (Haferkamp, 1994). When presented with a conflict to resolve, high self-monitoring spouses are no more or less likely than low self-monitoring spouses to exercise leadership in solving the conflict, to get into either agreements or disagreements, to disclose personal feelings about the situation at hand, to voice partisan opinions about solutions, or to have their own way in terms of the couples' final solution (Haferkamp, 1994).

Relationship Dissolution

The aforementioned differences in investment, commitment, and intimacy are not without consequence. The social worlds of low self-monitors involve a few psychologically intimate relationships; there are comparatively few alternative relationships that would be well matched to their particular attitudes, values, and other dispositions. If so, then low self-monitors rely heavily on their few close relationships for the satisfaction of their needs. The social worlds of high self-monitors involve many psychologically distant relationships; there are comparatively many alternative relationships that would be well suited to their activity-based needs. If so, then high self-monitors do not rely heavily on any particular one of those many relationships for the satisfaction of their needs.

To the extent that high self-monitoring spouses invest little of their resources in their marriage, are not so committed to their marriage, and feel somewhat psychologically distant from their spouses, high self-monitoring spouses ought to be relatively unsatisfied with their marital partners and their relationship. To the extent that low self-monitoring spouses invest many of their resources in their marriage, are very committed to their marriage, and feel psychologically close to their spouses, low self-monitoring spouses ought to be rather satisfied with their marital partners and their relationship. Such is indeed the case for marital satisfaction and self-monitoring (e.g., Leone & Hall, 2003). When asked if they are satisfied with their current marriage, relatively unsatisfied spouses tend to be high self-monitors rather than low self-monitors, whereas relatively satisfied spouses tend to be low self-monitors rather than high self-monitors. Moreover, these differences in marital satisfaction between high and low self-monitoring spouses are independent of other factors (e.g., children, age) known to adversely affect marital satisfaction. In short, marital discontent is apparently more intense in the lives of high self-monitoring spouses than low self-monitoring spouses (e.g., Haferkamp, 1994; Richmond, Craig, & Ruzicka, 1991).

These differences in marital satisfaction between high and low self-monitoring spouses naturally beg the question, namely, are high self-monitoring spouses more likely than their low self-monitoring counterparts to leave partners with whom they are dissatisfied? Given their uncommitted orientation to close relations in general and their somewhat low commitment to their marriage (Leone & Hall,

2001), high self-monitoring spouses can be expected to have left a former spouse and married another partner. Given their committed orientation to close relations in general and their somewhat high commitment to their marriage (Leone & Hall, 2001), low self-monitoring spouses can be expected to remain married to their first spouse.

This is indeed the case for divorce and self-monitoring (Leone & Hall, 2003). When individuals who were currently married were asked whether or not they had been previously married, high self-monitoring spouses were more likely than low self-monitoring spouses to report that they had previously been divorced at least once whereas low self-monitoring spouses were more likely than high self-monitoring spouses to report that they had been married to one and only one partner. Moreover, this difference in divorce rates for high and low self-monitoring spouses was independent of other factors (e.g., children, age) known to adversely affect marital stability. In brief, whatever the nature of the strategies that high and low self-monitoring spouses used to communicate and interact with their partners, these strategies were apparently not equally effective in maintaining the viability of their marriages.

Conclusions and Caveats

As noted at several points in this review, a great deal is known about the close relationships of high and low self-monitoring individuals. High self-monitors choose their friends as well as their romantic partners in terms of being skilled activity partners, segment their social worlds such that their close relationships are many in number but low in intimacy, and maintain an unrestricted orientation to their close relationships such that they are quite willing to dissolve friendships, romantic partnerships, and marriages. Low self-monitors choose their friends as well as their romantic partners in terms of being personally compatible, integrate their social worlds such that their close relationships are few in number but high in intimacy, and maintain a restricted orientation to their close relationships such that they are quite unwilling to dissolve friendships, romantic partnerships, and marriages. These and other findings reviewed herein are congruent with the divergent orientations—uncommitted versus committed—that high self-monitors and low self-monitors adopt toward their social worlds in general.

As also noted at several points in this article, a great deal remains relatively unknown about the close relationships of high and low self-monitoring individuals. This dearth of knowledge is especially apparent with respect to all three phases (initiation, maintenance, dissolution) of marital relationships. Similarly, much remains to be discovered about various phases (maintenance, dissolution) of friendships. Even for romantic relationships like dating, more is known about some phases (initiation) than about others (maintenance, dissolution) of such relationships. More theoretical and empirical work is needed to complete the emerging picture of self-monitoring and close relationships.

Take, for example, self-monitoring and marriage. The implications of differences between high self-monitors and low self-monitors in their characteristic orientations toward marriage are slowly being brought to light, but more must be done before these implications are brought fully into relief. Clearly, many important questions remain unanswered (see Snyder & Simpson, 1987, for a discussion).

What qualities do high self-monitors and low self-monitors look for in a prospective mate, and are the dispositions sought in prospective mates differentially related to the developmental course of marriage for high self-monitors and low self-monitors? What motivations underlie the decisions of high self-monitors and low self-monitors to enter into what most people expect to be a long-term relationship like marriage. Given their uncommitted orientation to close relationships, are high self-monitoring spouses more likely than low self-monitoring spouses to engage in extramarital affairs? Given their committed orientation to close relationships, are the marriages of low self-monitoring spouses likely to last longer than the marriages of high self-monitoring spouses? Given differences in the way they organize their social worlds, are the lives of low self-monitoring spouses more likely to be disrupted than are the lives of high self-monitoring spouses by the loss of a partner through separation, divorce, or death? Similarly important questions can be asked of self-monitoring and relationships such as friendship and romance.

The answers to these questions are of both theoretical and practical importance (Snyder & Simpson, 1987). With an increased understanding of the role of individual differences in self-monitoring for marriage, theorists will be better able to explain the different dynamics in the marriages of high and low self-monitoring spouses. With an increased understanding of the role of individual differences

in self-monitoring for marriage, practitioners will be better able to intervene in the different problems encountered in the marriages of high and low self-monitoring spouses. Answers to questions concerning self-monitoring and friendship or romance are also likely to be theoretically and practically valuable.

Beyond adding to the existing body of knowledge about the ways in which high self-monitoring and low self-monitoring individuals initiate, maintain, and dissolve close relationships, future analyses and investigations are called for in which other issues and problems are addressed. In much the same way that the psychology of self-monitoring shared a time frame of development with the science of relationships, investigations of self-monitoring and close relationships share some of the limitations that have hamstrung other investigations of close relationships. In this regard, future analyses and investigations would benefit from some of the caveats offered by Cooper in her analysis of the close relationships literature (Cooper, 2002).

First, close relationships are the product of a series of interactions between two individuals. To adequately comprehend the role that personality plays in close relationships, investigators need to study the ways in which each partner in a relationship influences and is influenced by his or her partner. Framing close relationships in this way has implications for the causal models created and used to account for the role of personality in such relationships. These causal models could involve reciprocal influence in the form of cross-lagged correlations (e.g., Robins, Caspi, & Moffitt, 2002) or recursive models (e.g., Kumashiro, Finkel, & Rusbult, 2002). These causal models could involve higher-order relational constructs such as the personality of the dyad (e.g., Gonzales & Griffin, 2002) or the interlocking of cognitive-affective processing systems (e.g., Zayas, Shoda, & Ayduk, 2002). Framing close relationships in this way also has implications for methods created and used to account for the role of personality in such relationships. These methods may take the form of daily experience records (e.g., Kennedy, Bolger, & Shrout, 2002) or the direct assessment of behavior sequences (e.g., Gottman, 1995). These methods may take the form of statistical techniques that account for and estimate the interdependencies among observations (e.g., Kashy & Kenny, 2000). With few exceptions, theorists and researchers have not availed themselves of these conceptual and empirical tools for understanding self-monitoring and close relationships.

Second, to the extent that close relationships are the product of a series of interactions between two individuals, then an understanding of relationships involves as the unit of analysis the dyad (i.e., pairs of individuals). From a conceptual point of view, observing dyads allows theorists to consider phenomena that would not otherwise be available from observing only individual members of the dyad. For example, agreements as well as disagreements may occur between spouses (e.g., Neff & Karney, 2002), and the nature of these convergent and divergent views may be a relational phenomenon of interest in its own right. From a methodological point of view, observing dyads allows researchers to identify potential artifacts in data that would not otherwise be identifiable from collecting information about individuals alone. For example, biases that might artificially enhance the connection between a person's personality and relationship characteristics can be estimated when both partners in the relationship provide information (Kashy & Kenny, 2000). Although investigations of self-monitoring and close relationships have occasionally involved pairs of friends, romantic partners, or spouses (e.g., Leone & Hall, 2001), these investigations are the exception rather than the rule.

Finally, relationships are phenomena that not only emerge from the dynamic exchanges of two individuals but also do so over time and situations. The dynamics and features of close relationships that are crucial at one point in the developmental trajectory of a relationship may not be so important at another point in a relationship. For example, conceptions of the basis for a romantic relationship (i.e., love) may change with the passage of time (Lee, 1988; Sternberg, 1998). Similarly, the dynamics and features of relationships that are crucial in one context may not be so important in another context. For example, those attributes that make an individual attractive as a romantic partner may not make the same individual attractive as a best friend (e.g., Hendrick & Hendrick, 1993; Rubin, 1973). Although the effects of context have been implicated in the connection between self-monitoring and close relationships (e.g., choice of friends, choice of romantic partners), the effects of time in this connection have been conspicuous by their absence.

In sum, much theoretical and empirical work is in order. Such work has the potential to enhance our understanding of not just self-monitoring but also of close relationships in general. Self-monitoring may be conceptualized as a disposition on which

individuals chronically differ or as a social motivation activated for many individuals on different occasions and in separate situations (Snyder, 1979). By “bootstrapping” (see Snyder & Ickes, 1985, for a discussion), insights about two kinds of persons who exemplify different orientations to close relationships may also provide insights about the dynamics underlying the desire for close, exclusive relationships and for detached, less exclusive relationships.

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