

The Dissolution of Relationships

Monday, April 11, 2005

I. Relationships in Distress: Dealing with Troubled Relationships
(Rusbult & colleagues, 1986, 1987)

A. Passive Strategies

1. *Loyalty*: Wait it out for the good days to return.

Small or very large problems

No alternatives

Loyal partner has invested much

2. *Neglect*: Wait for the inevitable break-up.

More common in *men*

Small investments but no alternatives

B. Active Strategies

1. *Voice*: Express concerns, work to improve self or the relationship.

More common in *women*

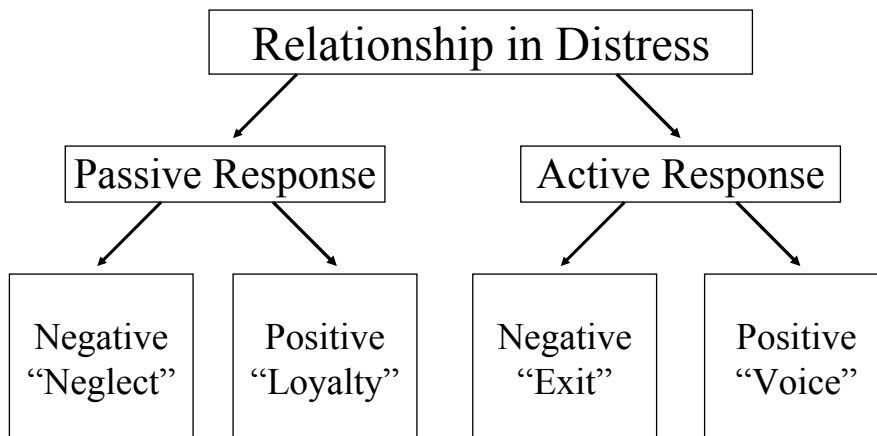
More common in those who are *securely attached*

More common when investment is *high*

2. *Exit*: Leave the relationship.

More common when investment is *low*

More common when there are *alternatives*



II. The Dissolution of Relationships

A. How do people end relationships?

1. *Positive Tone*: “You’re a good person, but...”
2. *Verbal De-escalation*: “My feelings for you have changed.”
3. *Behavioral De-escalation*: Avoid the other person, reduce interdependence
4. *Negative Identity Management*: “Maybe we *both* should see other people.”
5. *Justification*: “This relationship just isn’t working for me because...”

B. Breaking up is the result of a series of steps (Duck, 1982)

1. *Intrapersonal*: Thinking
2. *Dyadic*: Discussions

3. *Interpersonal*: Consulting others

4. *Intrapersonal Revisited*: Coping

C. How do people feel after breaking up? (Akert, 1982)

1. *“Breakees”/People Left*

2. *“Breakers”/People Leaving*

3. *“Mutuals”/Both decide to end it.*

D. Can there be friendship after breaking up? (Akert, 1992)

1. Women more likely than men to want to remain friends.

2. Male breakers and especially breakees want to cut ties.

3. Mutuals more likely to want to stay friends (both men and women)