

**An Exploration of Eight Dimensions of
Self-Disclosure with Relationship Satisfaction**

By

Courtney Bly Billeter

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Dr. Carol A. Bailey, Chair

Dr. K. Jill Kiecolt

Dr. Alan E. Bayer

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(ABSTRACT)

This research extends previous work on measuring eight dimensions of self-disclosure with intimate relationship satisfaction. 134 individuals answered a questionnaire concerning how they self-disclosed to their partner. I predicted that overall self-disclosure (all eight dimensions combined) would be positively related to degree of relationship satisfaction. Second, overall self-disclosure would be positively related to degree of relationship satisfaction when controlling for gender, length of relationship, and whether the respondent was referring to a current or former partner. Furthermore, I predicted that each dimension of self-disclosure would be positively related to relationship satisfaction. Results indicate that not all of my hypotheses were supported. For example, one's tastes and interests and one's self-feelings were statistically negatively significant with relationship satisfaction. Self-disclosure is an important part of relationship satisfaction, while distinguishing which dimension of self-disclosure had more importance proved to be the complicated factor.

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CHAPTER ONE

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In spite of the high divorce rate in the United States, men and women still continue to get married. Numerous factors have been identified that help us explain the continuation of romantic relationships and marriages. According to analyses of national surveys, compared to those cohabiting, the married report greater happiness, less depression, higher levels of commitment to the relationship, and better relationships with parents (Nock 1995:147). In intimate dyads, relationship satisfaction can help further explain why men and women choose one partner over another and/or why a couple ends their relationship. Relationship satisfaction is one of the variables found to be correlated with marital stability (Rosenfeld and Bowen 1991). Relationship satisfaction is also correlated with length of relationships in exclusive intimate dyads (Lauer and Lauer 2000:149).

Given the importance of relationship satisfaction to relationship stability, the question then becomes, "What factors might affect relationship satisfaction?" One variable that is found to be related to relationship satisfaction is self-disclosure (for example, see Meeks, Hendrick, and Hendrick 1998; Sanderson and Cantor 2001). Self-disclosure is one of the most important mechanisms in the development of intimacy (Lauer and Lauer 2000:130). Self-disclosure is the voluntary verbal sharing of private aspects of the self with another (Prager 1989:436).

An important distinction in the literature on self-disclosure involves the difference between self-disclosure given and self-disclosure received. Self-disclosure given

involves a person revealing details about themselves to another individual. In turn, self-disclosure received is when the partner reveals things about themselves and the perception the individual (receiver) has about the information disclosed from the other (Sprecher 1987). This study focuses on self-disclosure given and eight self-disclosure dimensions with relationship satisfaction.

An important question that has yet to be answered is what dimensions of self-disclosure are most important in predicting relationship satisfaction. This research further explored the interconnection between relationship satisfaction and eight different dimensions of self-disclosure: background/history, one's feelings toward partner, one's self-feelings, one's feelings about the body, one's social issue attitudes, tastes/interests, money/work, and one's feelings about friends.

The dimension "friends self disclosure" is the unique contribution of this study. Self-disclosure studies have not fully explored the possible relationship, if any, between disclosing about one's feelings of own friends and one's feelings about one's partner's friends to relationship satisfaction.

To evaluate the relationship of overall self-disclosure and the eight dimensions of self-disclosure with relationship satisfaction, I obtained a convenience sample by administering a survey to a large undergraduate sociology class. The survey consisted of questions about self-disclosure, relationship satisfaction, and socio-demographic characteristics. The three control variables used were gender, length of relationship, and whether the respondent was referring to a current or former partner. The survey was given to both males and females, ages 18-26 years or older. All respondents who have been involved in romantic dating relationships were included in the analyses.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION TO REVIEW OF LITERATURE

I begin with a brief overview of the literature on relationship satisfaction and then self-disclosure. Then, I turn to conceptual issues related to self-disclosure. Finally, I focus on the literature that explores the relationship between self-disclosure and relationship satisfaction. The review of literature will discuss control variables that were used in this study.

Relationship satisfaction among dating couples has been examined extensively within the literature. Self-disclosure is one of many variables that researchers have studied as a predictor of relationship satisfaction. For instance, relationship satisfaction has been correlated with intimacy goals (Sanderson and Cantor 2001); self-reported coping strategies and reports made by one member about the other member's coping strategies (Ptacek and Dodge 1995); males' and females' own expressive competence and the perceptions of their partner as feminine (Lamke, Sollie, Durbin, and Fitzpatrick 1994); idealized construction (Murray, Holmes, and Griffin 1996); attachment style and interpersonal perception (Tucker and Anders 1999); and commitment (Rusbult 1983).

Researchers also have examined the relationship between self-disclosure and a wide variety of variables. For example, self-disclosure has been correlated with love, attitudes toward sex, and sensation seeking (Hendrick and Hendrick 1987); using condoms, testing for HIV, STDS, multiple sex partners, alcohol, and sexual activity (Desidaroto and Crawford 1995); intimacy (Laurenceau, Pietromonaco, and Barrett

1998); strategy for reaching goals, subjective utility, and potential risk (Omarzu 2000); degree of avoidance, level of security, and ambivalence (Mikulincer and Nachshon 1991); and liking (Collins and Miller 1994).

CONCEPTUALIZATION OF SELF-DISCLOSURE

At a minimum self-disclosure is conceptualized as verbally revealing thoughts, feelings, and experiences to others (Derlega, Metts, Petronio, and Margulis 1993). But, self-disclosure is more than talk that is personal and private. Self-disclosure involves revealing personal information to another with the implicit or explicit understanding that it not be relayed further (Yovetich and Drigotas 1999). "It is the private nature of the information that distinguishes this sort of self-disclosure as a secret" (p. 1135). Through self-disclosure an individual lets himself or herself be known to the other person (Jourard 1971a:6). Self-disclosure "reduces the mystery" between people (Jourard 1971a:6).

The research on self-disclosure makes a distinction between two types of self-disclosure -- self-disclosure given and self-disclosure received. Self-disclosure given, also referred to as self-reported self-disclosure, refers to disclosing one's own personal feelings, thoughts, and experiences. Self-disclosure received, also referred to as partner-perceived self-disclosure, is information disclosed by the other (Sprecher 1987). These two types of self-disclosure are sometimes compared in the literature. For example, Sprecher (1987) found that self-disclosure received is a more important predictor of liking, love, and stability than self-disclosure given in romantic relationships. Studies found that self-reported self-disclosure and partner-perceived self-disclosure were both significant and positively related to relationship satisfaction, but partner-perceived self-disclosure (received) was a stronger predictor of relationship satisfaction (Meeks 1996).

In another study, "Satisfaction was correlated with own self-disclosure and partner's perceived disclosure, though these correlations did not differ" (Meeks et al. 1998:765). Although my study only looks at self-disclosure given, the variables are treated so often together that my review will often include both.

The study of the relationship between self-disclosure and relationship satisfaction is complicated further because self-disclosure is a multi-dimensional concept. For instance, disclosing one's taste in movies and disclosing one's past sexual history are different. Researchers have rightfully posited that it may not be self-disclosure per se that predicts relationship satisfaction, but particular dimensions of self-disclosure. Some of the dimensions explored are personal disappointment and personal accomplishments of which they are proud (Keelen, Dion, and Dion 1998); sexual likes and sexual dislikes (Byers and Demmons 1999); and feelings toward partners, feelings toward closest friends, feelings about classes and work, things in life most afraid of, accomplishments at school or work, political views, and previous other sexual relationships (Sprecher 1987).

One dimension of self-disclosure that previous research has scarcely studied is friendship self-disclosure. This dimension involves examining self-disclosing one's feelings toward one's own friends and toward one's partners' friends. Literature indicates that friends are important to the dynamics of romantic couples (Agnew, Loving, and Drigotas 2001; Feilmlee 2001). For example, a couple's social network's perception of the relationship is "powerfully predictive" of later relationship fate, even when accounting for dating members own perceptions of the relationship (Agnew et al. 2001:1053). In addition, friends of the female couple member were particularly successful at predicting

relationship dissolution (p. 1042). Like other dimensions of self-disclosure, it may influence relationship satisfaction

SELF-DISCLOSURE AND RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION

The evidence is strong that self-disclosure and relationship satisfaction are significantly and positively related. The relationship seems to hold across a variety of diverse samples. For example, Vera and Betz (1992) found that participants who were emotionally self-disclosing were more satisfied in their relationships than those who did not self-disclose. Other studies found that self-disclosure given and the ability to elicit self-disclosure from others was related to relationship satisfaction (Keelan et al. 1998; Sanderson and Cantor 1997). The relationship between self-disclosure and relationship satisfaction held true for married couples as well (Hendrick 1981; Bograd and Spilka 1996). Although additional research suggested that the spouses' own level of self-disclosure was a stronger predictor of their marital satisfaction than their spouses' level of self-disclosure, both types were statistically significant for husbands and wives (Rosenfeld and Bowen 1991:79).

Even in more complicated studies with additional variables, self-disclosure still played a role in relationship satisfaction. Keelan et al. (1998) found that reported self-disclosure to one's partner and self-rated ability to elicit self-disclosure from others were positively related to satisfaction. Sanderson and Cantor (1997) found among dating couples that those partners with a strong focus on intimacy who elicited self-disclosure experienced greater relationship satisfaction and relationship stability. In addition, a partner with a strong focus on intimacy was able to compensate for having a partner with weaker intimacy goals by working to elicit self-disclosure and interdependence (p. 1431).

Although the literature indicates a relationship between the two variables of interest for this study, the relationship is more nuanced than the overall brief review would suggest. It is to these complicating factors that I now turn.

GENDER

One might expect that self-disclosure would be more important for females' satisfaction than males' satisfaction due to traditional sex roles. However, the literature does not, for the most part, support this. Most research found that self-disclosure was significantly related to relationship satisfaction for both males and females (Rubin, Hill, Peplau, and Dunkel-Schetter 1980; Franzoi, Young, and Davis 1985; Prager 1989; Vera and Betz 1992; Fitzpatrick 1994; Sanderson and Cantor 1997; Van Horn et al. 1997; Meeks et al. 1998 and 1996; Byers and Demmons 1999; Sanderson and Evans 2001).

How self-disclosure affects relationship satisfaction differs by gender when self-disclosure is measured as: 1) the difference between self-disclosure given and self-disclosure received, 2) perceptions of which gender discloses more in the relationship, and 3) what self-disclosure dimension is being disclosed. For example, Millar and Millar (1988) tested for gender differences in how perceived self-disclosure given and self-disclosure received affected relationship satisfaction. They concluded that, "Males experienced less satisfaction in a dating relationship if they perceived more personal disclosure on their part compared to their partner; females experienced less satisfaction in a dating relationship if they perceived less disclosure on their part compared to their partner" (p. 63). In contrast, according to Franzoi et al. (1985), self-disclosure and relationship satisfaction is positively related. Men's self-disclosure was significantly related to their satisfaction as women's self-disclosure was significantly related to their

satisfaction. "Although self-disclosure increased the discloser's satisfaction, it had little impact on the recipients' feelings of satisfaction in the relationship. These findings suggest that revealing private aspects to one's partner is a more important factor influencing satisfaction than is listening to similar disclosure from one's partner" (p. 1592).

Females seem to disclose more and different things than males. In one of the most widely cited studies of self-disclosure, Rubin et al. (1980) found a pattern among college students of significant gender differences that seemed to conform in measure to traditional sex-role expectation (p. 309). For instance, males were more likely to disclose about their political views, a traditionally masculine domain, and females were more likely to reveal in detail their feelings toward other people, which is traditionally a feminine concern (p. 314). "When the total report of self-disclosure by women and men was compared, no overall difference was found. Notable sex differences were found in particular topic areas" (p. 314). Women disclosed more than men on, "My feelings toward my parents," "My feelings toward my closest friends of my own sex," "My feelings about my classes or my work," "The things in life that I am most afraid of," and "My accomplishments at school or work." Men disclosed more than women on, "My political views," "The things about myself that I am most proud of," and "The things I like most about (my partner)." The tendency for respondents to state that women disclosed more than males was found from the two-year follow-up questionnaire when more than twice as many of the respondents reported that women had revealed more than men (p. 313). Similarly, Byers and Demmons (1999) found females disclosing more than males about both sexual and nonsexual issues. However, the researchers conclude, "In

all of the analyses, neither gender nor the interaction of gender between the variables of interest added significantly to the model, indicating that the relationships did not differ for men and women" (p. 184). Sprecher (1987) reported that women and men both self-disclosed an overall great amount to their partner with women disclosing significantly more on eight topic areas of self-disclosure. For example, females disclosed significantly more than men on: "Things liked least about partner," "Previous opposite-sex relationships," "Feelings towards closest same-sex friends," and "Things in life most afraid of." The only thing that men disclosed more than women (the difference was not significant) was "Things about myself I am most proud of" (p. 119). Similarly, Meeks (1996) found that females tended to disclose significantly more than males, but there was no difference in the overall pattern for males and females in the relationship of self-disclosure and relationship satisfaction. Self-disclosure and relationship satisfaction was related for both (p. 56). Likewise, Vera (1990) and Vera and Betz (1992) found that female students reported significantly higher levels of emotional self-disclosure than male students did. But interestingly, self-disclosure was a significant predictor of relationship satisfaction for males only (Vera 1990:48).

LENGTH OF RELATIONSHIP

The length of a dating relationship was found in the review of literature to be correlated to self-disclosure and relationship satisfaction. For example, some studies indicated that couples who have been together longer had self-disclosed more and were more satisfied in their relationships (Sprecher 1987; Vera and Betz 1992; Meeks 1996; Sanderson and Evans 2001). Sprecher (1987) found that, "the more men perceived that their partner had disclosed to them, the more likely it was that the couple stayed together"

(p. 123). Byers and Demmons (1999) also found that, “participants who had been in their relationship longer, had had more sexual partners, were in an exclusive dating relationship, reported more frequent affection, were more satisfied with their relationship, reported more extensive self-disclosure about non-sexual topics, and reported more extensive sexual self-disclosure by their partner, also reported more extensive sexual self-disclosure” (p. 185). In contrast, Sanderson and Cantor (1997) and Prager (1989) revealed that the length of relationship was not significantly related for either males or females when examining the relationship between self-disclosure on relationship satisfaction.

DIMENSIONS OF SELF-DISCLOSURE

Some of the literature illustrates that different self-disclosure dimensions affect relationship satisfaction differently. For example, Vera (1990) tested self-disclosure using two measurement scales, but only looked at how individuals self-disclosed their emotions to their partner. One scale was emotional self-disclosure scale comprised of forty items, which measured 8 distinct emotions: depression, happiness, jealousy, anxiety, anger, calmness, apathy, and fear. The second scale was the affective self-disclosure scale, which measured the frequency of emotional self-disclosure to partners. Vera found that both the emotional self-disclosure scale and the affective self-disclosure scales were significantly positive for both genders on both measures of relationship satisfaction (p. 40). Vera and Betz (1992) found that female students reported significantly higher levels of emotional self-disclosure on both scales than male students did (p. 426). In addition, they found that frequency of self-disclosure was the strongest predictor of relationship satisfaction for the total group and within the male and female

samples regardless of the method for measuring relationship satisfaction (p. 428).

Another study tested self-disclosure using intimate self-disclosure (sharing personal and private information with the partner) and descriptive self-disclosure (sharing factual information with the partner). Intimate self-disclosure mattered more than descriptive self-disclosure in relationships staying together (Van Horn et al. 1997).

Other studies that tested different dimensions of self-disclosure reported specific effects for participants. For example, Keelan et al. (1998) reported that participants disclosed more intimately when asked to talk about a personal disappointment compared to a personal accomplishment of which they were proud (p. 29). In a test of sexual self-disclosure, Byers and Demmons (1999) found that participants were more fully disclosing about their sexual likes than about their sexual dislikes. Also, participants reported that their partners communicated more about their sexual likes than about their sexual dislikes (p. 184). Byers and Demmons conclude that, "Individuals self-disclose more about their sexual likes and dislikes when there is a high level of self-disclosure about other topics in the relationship, and when they perceive their partner to self-disclose his or her own sexual likes and dislikes" (p. 186). The study found that sexual and nonsexual self-disclosure were positively related to sexual satisfaction, relationship satisfaction, and sexual communication satisfaction (Byers and Demmons 1999). As discussed above, Rubin et al. (1980) and Sprecher (1987) found gender differences in self-disclosure dimensions.

The relationship between self-disclosure and relationship satisfaction may vary by the intimacy of the relationship. Prager (1989) compiled a test of self-disclosure based on the privacy of facts disclosed and the depth of emotion, judgment, or opinion

expressed (p. 438). Prager found that when both individuals were "committed to a relationship that meets the criteria for depth and autonomy," both partners self-disclosed more and over a broader range of topics, and male partners were more satisfied (p. 436). The effect of intimacy for female partner's satisfaction was not significant; however, the means show a pattern similar to the men (p. 448). In addition, individuals in an intimate relationship had more personal levels of self-disclosure over a broader range of topics and reported higher levels of satisfaction with their relationship (p. 448). A similar study (Sanderson and Evans 2001) that investigated intimacy goals and relationship satisfaction among women college students shows that women with higher intimacy goals experience greater satisfaction in dating, partly because of greater self-disclosure elicited from one's partner.

SUMMARY

The research indicates that there is a relationship between self-disclosure and relationship satisfaction. This relationship is complicated, however, by type of self-disclosure and the dimension of the self-disclosure being studied. Gender, length of relationship, and whether the respondent is referring to a current or former partner also affect the relationship in some ways. Based upon this review of literature, I propose the following hypotheses.

HYPOTHESES

Overall Self-disclosure and Relationship Satisfaction

1. Level of overall self-disclosure will be positively related to degree of relationship satisfaction.
2. Level of overall self-disclosure will be positively related to degree of relationship satisfaction when controlling for gender and length of relationship.

Dimensions of Self-disclosure and Relationship Satisfaction

3. Level of self-disclosure about background/history will be positively related to degree of relationship satisfaction.
4. Level of self-disclosure about one's feelings toward partner will be positively related to degree of relationship satisfaction.
5. Level of self-disclosure about one's self-feelings will be positively related to degree of relationship satisfaction.
6. Level of self-disclosure about the body will be positively related to degree of relationship satisfaction.
7. Level of self-disclosure about social issue attitudes will be positively related to degree of relationship satisfaction.
8. Level of self-disclosure about tastes/interests will be positively related to degree of relationship satisfaction.
9. Level of self-disclosure about money/work will be positively related to degree of relationship satisfaction.
10. Level of self-disclosure about friends will be positively related to degree of relationship satisfaction.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

PROCEDURE

The method used for this study was a self-administered questionnaire with 55 questions. The questionnaire was administered to a large undergraduate introductory sociology class.

In trying to decide what kind of sampling strategy and what form of questionnaire administration I was going to use I ran into limits of cost and expertise. Although, a probability sample such as a random or stratified sample of Virginia Tech students is fairly easy to select, administering the questionnaire to this sample became problematic. Mailing questionnaires to students with a stamped return envelopes with the suggested follow-ups was simply too expensive. I did not have the skills or software availability to design a web survey (the software provided by Virginia Tech for survey design makes the data almost useless for analysis). Because I needed to gain experience with the design of a self-administered questionnaire I chose this method. Once I decided to give a self-administered questionnaire, a convenience sample was all that was in my budget.

As part of data analysis, I compared the class's demographics with the university's spring semester 2002 undergraduate enrollment statistics on the students in the class. My sample was similar to Virginia Tech on gender. For example, sixty percent of my respondents were male and forty percent were female. Fifty-nine percent of Virginia Tech undergraduates were male and forty-one percent were female. Sixty-seven percent of my respondents were ages 18-19; twenty-seven percent were ages 20-21; five percent

were ages 22-23; and one percent were ages 26 or older. No comparison data were available. My sample was similar to Virginia Tech on race and ethnicity. Of the 129 cases that reported their race in my sample, ninety percent were Caucasian/white; four percent were African American/black; 1.5 percent were Asian; one percent were Native American Indian; and 3.8 percent were another race. Of the 132 cases that reported their Hispanic or Latino origin, six percent were of Hispanic/Latino origin. Of Virginia Tech students, two percent were of unknown race; five percent were black; .02 percent were American Indian; seven percent were Asian; eight-one percent were white; two percent were Hispanic; and two percent were Foreign. My sample was not similar to Virginia Tech in class distribution. For example, sixty percent were freshmen; twenty-four percent were sophomores, ten percent were juniors, and two percent were seniors. Of Virginia Tech students, twenty-two percent were freshman; twenty-three percent were sophomores; twenty-three percent were juniors; and thirty-two percent were seniors.

The survey was designed to measure the relationship of self-disclosure on premarital relationship satisfaction while controlling for various variables. The respondents were asked to answer whether they were referring to a current intimate partner or a previous intimate partner. The respondents answered the questions on an opscan form provided and took approximately 15 minutes to complete. The respondent's identity remained anonymous, and he/she could skip any questions or stop the survey at any time. If respondents have never had an intimate relationship with another person, they were instructed to respond to "does not apply" to questions 1 through 48 and then to respond to the remaining questions. If a respondent skipped a question, I deleted them from the analyses.

SAMPLE

The sample was a convenience sample consisting of students in a large introductory sociology class, which had 540 students enrolled. Because of time constraints, I had to give my questionnaires at the beginning of class while students were filing in to get their seats. Because the instructor was making announcements during this time, most of the students did not obtain, did not understand the purpose of, or chose not to complete the questionnaire. Consequently, only 146 students completed the survey. These classes typically have an adequate gender mix and usually have a cross section of majors and students from all years in college.

MEASURES

DEPENDENT VARIABLE

Five questions were used to create an additive scale to measure the dependent variable, relationship satisfaction. These questions were derived from Rusbult, Martz, and Agnew (1998). Relationship satisfaction was measured on a four point Likert scale. The responses were "not at all," "somewhat," "moderately," and "completely," recoded 0 through 3, respectively. ¹

These variables are "I trust my partner", "My relationship is ideal," "My relationship makes me happy," "I am satisfied with my relationship," and "My relationship fulfills my needs for intimacy."

¹ The reader will note that all the answers in the questionnaire start with a value of one. For example, a four point likert scale has responses ranging from 1-4. However, the Virginia Tech testing center, who prepared my data for analysis, recodes all responses by subtracting a value of one. Therefore, a four point Likert scale was recoded to range from 0-3.

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE

To measure Overall self-disclosure, I created a scale by summing eight dimensions of self-disclosure. In addition, the eight dimensions of self-disclosure were measured individually. The dimensions are: disclosing one's background/history to your partner; disclosing one's feelings about your partner to your partner; disclosing one's self feelings to your partner; disclosing one's feelings about the body to your partner; disclosing one's social issue attitudes to your partner; disclosing one's tastes/interests to your partner; disclosing one's attitudes about money and work to your partner; and disclosing one's attitudes and feelings about friends to your partner. Overall self-disclosure excludes the variables, "My feelings towards my parents or legal guardians" and "My sexual fantasies," due to the reliability analysis that indicated that reliability could be improved by dropping the variables. To see the overall self-disclosure questions refer to the next two pages.

All eight self-disclosure dimensions were measured on a five point Likert scale. The responses were "disclose everything," "disclose almost everything," "disclose some things," "disclose a few things," "disclose nothing," recoded 0 through 4, respectively. Citations indicate questions derived from a previous study; the others I designed myself. In all eight scales the mean value for each variable was substituted for any missing values on that variable. Individual items contributing to each scale were randomly presented in the survey instrument.

The first scale of self-disclosure, Background/History, was originally created from five variables. These variables are "My feelings toward my parent(s) or legal guardian(s)" (Rubin et al. 1980), "Experiences that my previous romantic partner(s) and I

shared” (Rubin et al. 1980), “Past experiences prior to meeting my current partner,” “The extent of my sexual experience previous to my relationship with my partner” (Rubin et al. 1980), and “My thoughts and feelings about my previous romantic partner(s).”

The second index of self-disclosure, One's feelings toward one's partner, was created from five variables. These variables are “How much I trust my partner,” “My feelings about our sexual relationship” (Jourard 1971b), “How much I like my partner” (Rubin et al. 1980), “Things I dislike about my partner” (Rubin et al. 1980), and “My thoughts about the future of our relationship” (Rubin et al. 1980).

The third index of self-disclosure, One's self-feelings, was created from five variables. All five of these variables were created from Jourard (1971b). These variables are “The things that hurt my feelings,” “The things about myself that I am ashamed of,” “The things that make me depressed,” “The things about myself that I am proud of,” and “The things about myself that I am afraid of.”

The fourth index of self-disclosure, One's feelings about the body, was created from five variables. These variables are “Whether or not I have any health problems” (Jourard 1971b), “My feelings about my sexual adequacy” (Jourard 1971b), “How I feel about my appearance” (Jourard 1971b), “Things I enjoy sexually” (Jourard 1971b), “How I feel about my partner's appearance.”

The fifth index of self-disclosure, One's social issue attitudes, was created from five variables. These variables are “My religious views” (Jourard 1971b), “My views on politics” (Jourard 1971b), “My feelings about women's rights,” “My feelings on racial equality” (Jourard 1971b), and “My feelings about homosexuality.”

The sixth index of self-disclosure, Tastes/Interests, was originally created from five variables. These variables are “My likes/dislikes in music” (Jourard 1971b), “My sexual fantasies,” “My views on drinking alcohol” (Jourard 1971b), “My favorite ways of spending my spare time,” and “My views on drug usage.”

The seventh index of self-disclosure, Money/Work, was created from five variables. These variables are “How much money my parent(s) or guardian(s) have” (Jourard 1971b), “How I feel about my career choice/college major” (Jourard 1971b), “How I feel about my partner’s career choice/college major,” “How I feel about how much money my partner has,” and “My feelings about couples sharing expenses.”

The eighth index of self-disclosure, One's feelings about friends, was created from five variables. These variables are “My feelings towards how much time my partner spends with their friends,” “My feelings towards my partners’ friends,” “The kind of party or social gathering I like best” (Jourard 1971b), “My feelings towards my closest friends” (Rubin et al. 1980), and “My feelings about how much time I spend with my friends.”

CONTROL VARIABLES

The control variables used were gender, length of relationship, and whether the respondent was referring to a former or current partner. Gender was recoded 0 = male and 1 = female. To measure length of relationship, the respondents were asked, “How long have you been (were you) with this partner?” The answers were recoded 0 = less than 1 month, 1 = 1-2 months, 2 = 3-4 months, 3 = 5-6 months, 4 = 7-11 months, 5 = 12-23 months, and 6 = 2 years or more. To measure current or former partner, the respondents were asked, “Are your answers above in reference to a current partner,

former partner, or does not apply?" The answers were recoded 0 = current partner, 1 = former partner (those responding "does not apply" were deleted from the analyses).

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS

Of 146 surveys completed, one was deleted because the respondent was under the age of 18 and 11 were deleted because the respondents had never had a relationship, resulting in a sample size for analysis of 134.

In addition to the sociodemographic data described in Chapter 3, several sociodemographic characteristics are ascertained (for questions, see Appendix A). Fifty-nine percent of the respondents refer to a current partner and forty-one percent to a former partner (results not shown). Three percent of the respondents have been in the relationship for less than one month, seven percent for 1-2 months, eleven percent for 3-4 months, twelve percent for 5-6 months, thirteen percent for 7-11 months, twenty-four percent for 12-23 months, and thirty-one percent for 2 or more years. Forty-nine percent of respondents are in a long-distance relationship. An explanation for such a high number of respondents being in a long-distance relationship is due to high number of respondents being first or second year students and 18-20 years in age or being in past relationships. It is likely that the respondents are in relationships that have carried on from before they came to Virginia Tech. Therefore, their partner still resides in their hometown, while they are away at college resulting in a long-distant relationship. Two percent of the respondents are married. Four percent of the respondents are engaged.

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics and Cronbach's alpha reliabilities for the variables in the analysis. The alphas for all variables were high. In addition to value ranges, medians, means, and standard deviations, I include skewedness.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for the Two Measures of Relationship Satisfaction and All Eight Self-disclosure Dimensions (N = 134)

Variable Name	Potential Range, Actual Range	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skewedness	Cronbach Alpha
<u>Dependent Variable</u>						
Relationship Satisfaction	0-20, 1-15	12	11.3	3.1	-1.073	.86
<u>Independent Variables</u>						
Overall Self-disclosure	0-152, 13-150	116.7	109.9	26.1	-.896	.96
Background/History*	0-16, 0-16	10.8	10.4	3.2	-.436	.78
One's feelings toward partner	0-20, 2-20	15	14.8	3.5	-.967	.79
One's self-feelings	0-20, 2-20	14	12.8	4.4	-.532	.88
Body	0-20, 0-20	15	14.3	4.0	-.830	.81
One's social issue attitudes	0-20, 0-20	16	15	4.8	-1.121	.88
Tastes/Interests*	0-16, 0-16	14	13.5	3.1	-2.203	.79
Money/Work	0-20, 0-20	14.5	13.8	4.7	-.893	.85
Friends	0-20, 2-20	16	15.3	3.8	-1.082	.82

* = Deleted one item from original five item scale

Thirty-one percent of the sample had a score of 16 on the dimension tastes/interests, the highest value received on this scale, while less than 31 percent had a scale score of 0-12. Thus, respondents were clustered at the high end of this scale. Therefore, this indicates that people freely disclose things about their tastes and interests. Because of this concern,

a measure of skewedness was calculated indicating that the eight dimensions and relationship satisfaction were negatively skewed, except for Background/History.

"A negatively skewed distribution has a median that is higher than its mean...When a distribution is relatively symmetric, its mean and median will be very close to one another. However, when the distribution is highly skewed, they can differ rather sharply...The mean and median differ because the mean is a weighted average-extreme values affect it-whereas the median is not. Consequently, many social scientists favor using the median as a central tendency measure for distributions that are highly skewed (Bohrnstedt and Knoke 1994, p. 59-60).

BIVARIATE CORRELATIONS

The correlations for the variables are presented in Table 2. All the self-disclosure dimensions are statistically significantly related to relationship satisfaction, except for "Tastes/Interests." This provides support for my hypotheses that these dimensions, except for one, are correlated with relationship satisfaction. All the relationships are in the expected positive direction. The dimension self-disclosure of "One's feelings towards one's partner" has the strongest correlation with relationship satisfaction. Two things emerge when reviewing the correlations among the independent variables. First, all variables are significantly correlated with one another. Second, these correlations are high. For example, the correlation between "One's feelings towards partner" and "One's feelings about the body" is high ($r = .8$, $\text{prob.} = .01$). The relationships between "One's feelings towards partner" and "One's feelings about friends" ($r = .75$, $\text{prob.} = .01$), "One's self-feelings" and "One's feelings toward partner" ($r = .73$, $\text{prob.} = .01$), "One's self-feelings" and "One's feelings about the body" ($r = .73$, $\text{prob.} = .01$), and "One's social issue attitudes" and "Money/Work" ($r = .72$, $\text{prob.} = .01$) are also high.

The high correlations among the dimension suggested that multi-collinearity could be a problem for the regression analysis. For example, one cannot determine which independent variable has the strongest effect on the dependent variable when the independent variables are so highly correlated. Because of my concern with the high correlations among the independent variables, collinearity diagnostics were done. The VIF statistics ranged between 1 and 4 for all dimensions and the tolerance for all dimensions were under .6.

Table 2: Bivariate Correlations of Self-Disclosure Dimensions and Relationship Satisfaction (N = 134)

	Relationship Satisfaction	Background /History	Feelings Toward Partner	Self-Feelings	Feelings About the Body	Social Issue Attitudes	Tastes/ Interests	Money/ Work	Feelings About Friends
Relationship Satisfaction	1.00								
Background /History	.19*	1.00							
Feelings Toward Partner	.40**	.44**	1.00						
Self-Feelings	.25**	.42**	.73**	1.00					
Feelings About the Body	.28**	.50**	.80**	.73**	1.00				
Social Issue Attitudes	.23**	.40**	.54**	.57**	.64**	1.00			
Tastes/ Interests	.08	.32**	.66**	.55**	.72**	.72**	1.00		
Money/ Work	.34**	.51**	.68**	.70**	.71**	.72**	.66**	1.00	
Feelings About Friends	.19*	.43**	.75**	.67**	.72**	.68**	.79**	.74**	1.00

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$

MULTIPLE REGRESSION

Even though the collinearity diagnostics were reassuring, they were of enough concern to alter my analyses. While combining dimensions were a possibility, there was no theoretical justification for doing so. Instead, a series of regression analyses was done with the highly correlated dimensions excluded one at a time. The consistency across the models indicates that my original concern with multicollinearity may have been unwarranted (see Table 3).

Model 1 is a test of the hypothesis that the "Overall" dimension of self-disclosure is statistically significantly related to relationship satisfaction when controlling for gender, length of relationship, and whether respondent is referring to a current or former partner. This hypothesis is supported with "Overall" being statistically significant at the .05 level. Thirty percent of the variance in relationship satisfaction is explained by the combination of these four variables.

In Models 2 to 5, one of the highly correlated self-disclosure dimensions is deleted from each of the models when testing for relationship satisfaction and controlling for gender, length of relationship, and whether the respondent is referring to a current or former partner. Model 6 contains all the self-disclosure dimensions with relationship satisfaction when controlling for gender, length of relationship, and whether the respondent is referring to a current or former partner.

Unfortunately, the regression analysis provides only limited support for my hypotheses. Except for "One's feelings about the body" dimension being statistically significantly related in Model 2 and none of the other models, the rest of the dimension's show a consistent pattern across models. Thus, this discussion is limited to Model 6 that

contains all the self-disclosure dimensions with relationship satisfaction and control variables.

The dimension with the strongest relationship to relationship satisfaction is “One’s feelings towards partner” (Beta = .5, prob. = .001). Next is the “Money/Work” dimension, which is also positively related (Beta = .26, prob. = .05). These two dimensions provide support for my hypothesis; none of the other dimensions do.

The dimensions “Background/History”, “One’s feelings about the body”, “One’s social issue attitudes”, and “One’s feelings towards friends” are not statistically significantly related to relationship satisfaction. Surprisingly, “One’s self-feelings” dimension (Beta = -.32, prob. = .01) and “Tastes/Interests” (Beta = -.37, prob. = .01) are significantly and negatively related to relationship satisfaction. That is, the more one discloses about one’s tastes/interests or one’s feelings, the less satisfied one is in their relationship.

Both “length of relationship” and “whether the partner is a current or former partner” were statistically significant (Beta = .19, prob.= .01 and Beta = -.36, prob. = .001). “Whether current or former partner” was not originally proposed as a control variable, but it was included after some exploratory data analysis. The longer one is in a relationship the more satisfied they are. Not surprisingly, current partners are more satisfied with their relationship than former partners. Gender was not statistically significant.

Models 3, 4, and 6 explain the most variance in relationship satisfaction. Model 1 explains the least variance in relationship satisfaction.

Table 3: Multiple Regression of Relationship Satisfaction on Self-Disclosure and Control Variables (N = 134)

Independent Variables ^a	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
<u>Control Variables</u>						
Gender (1 = female)	-.01	-.09	-.09	-.09	-.08	-.09
Length of relationship	.23**	.27***	.18**	.19**	.21**	.19**
Current or former partner (1 = current)	-.40***	-.39***	-.36***	-.37***	-.39***	-.36***
<u>Overall self-disclosure</u>	.17*					
<u>Type of Self-disclosure</u>						
Background/History		-.13	-.12	-.14	-.09	-.13
Feelings toward partner		XXX	.54***	.48***	.47***	.50***
Self-feelings		-.24*	-.30**	-.33**	-.27*	-.32**
Feelings about the body		.31*	XXX	.11	-.01	.10
Social issue attitudes		.11	.20	.18	.08	.19
Tastes/Interests		-.32*	-.34**	-.40***	XXX	-.37**
Money/Work		.29*	.27*	.24*	.25*	.26*
Feelings about friends		.07	-.09	XXX	-.24	-.08
R Square	.30	.36	.43	.43	.39	.43

^aStandardized regression coefficients are shown.

* p < .05 ** p < .01 *** p < .001

"XXX" indicates variable excluded in the model.

Because only positive effects were expected, additional analyses were done to explore the negative effects of "Self-feelings" and "Tastes/Interests on relationship satisfaction (for example, see Table 4). The "One's self-feelings" item correlations with relationship satisfaction are either statistically significantly positive or not correlated. That is, none of the items in "One's self-feelings" are negatively correlated with relationship satisfaction. None of the items in "Tastes/Interests" are statistically significantly correlated; although one is negative it is so small as to not be different from a value of zero. This item analysis provides no insights as to why "One's self-feelings" and "Tastes/Interests" are negative in a multivariate context.

Table 4: Items in the Dimensions of "One's Self-Feelings" and "Tastes/Interests" Correlated with Relationship Satisfaction (N = 134)

	<u>Relationship Satisfaction</u>
<u>One's Self-feelings</u>	
Hurt (The things that hurt my feelings)	.200*
Ashamed (The things about myself that I am ashamed of)	.125
Depressed (The things that make me depressed)	.341**
Proud (The things about myself that I am proud of)	.212*
Afraid (The things about myself that I am afraid of)	.147
<u>Tastes/Interests</u>	
Music (My likes/dislikes in music)	-.017
Alcohol (My views on drinking alcohol)	.103
Mytime (My favorite ways of spending my spare time)	.094
Drug (My views on drug usage)	.095

* p < .05 ** p < .01

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationships among an overall measure of self-disclosure to relationship satisfaction and the eight dimensions of self-disclosure to relationship satisfaction. I hypothesized that the overall self-disclosure measure and the eight self-disclosure dimensions would be positively related to relationship satisfaction when controlling for gender and length of relationship. The review of literature indicated that self-disclosure and relationship satisfaction would be related, but the literature had not identified which dimension of self-disclosure might have the greatest effect (for example, see Franzoi et al. 1985). In addition, I created a new dimension that referred to self-disclosure about things related to friends.

To test these hypotheses, I designed a questionnaire and administered it to an availability sample of students at Virginia Tech. The analysis found some support for my hypotheses. "Overall" self-disclosure, which includes all eight dimensions combined, was statistically significantly related to relationship satisfaction. This measure accounted for 36 percent of the variance in relationship satisfaction when controlling for gender, length of relationships, and whether or not it is a current or former partner. This finding is consistent with the self-disclosure literature (for example, see Sanderson and Evans 2001; Vera and Betz 1992). Self-disclosure as one form of communication seems important to relationship satisfaction.

The findings are more mixed when the eight different dimensions of self-disclosure were examined. Not all forms of self-disclosure were related to relationship satisfaction, and some were statistically significantly negatively related. Simply put,

while self-disclosure may be important, not all forms of this communication have the same effect. Comparison with the literature on dimensions of self-disclosure is difficult because of the lack of similarity across studies and insufficient details within a study. I found no other work that was the same as my research. While others have looked at the different dimensions, relationship satisfaction was not their dependent variable. For example, Rubin et al. (1980) used a list of 17 potential topic areas of self-disclosure. However, his focus was on gender differences on the different dimensions of self-disclosure.

Self-disclosure dimensions that have the strongest positive correlation to relationship satisfaction are “Disclosing one's feelings towards partner” and “Disclosing one's feelings about money and work.” Being able to talk about their “feelings about the future of the relationship” (one of the items in this dimension that was strongly correlated), for example is related to being satisfied with the relationship. Another dimension was “One's feelings about Money and Work.” Given that the items in this dimension would seem on the surface to be less intimate and thus easier to disclose, it was somewhat surprising that this item had such a strong effect. For example, one of the items in the dimension was “disclosing their feelings about their partner's college major” and another was “disclosing how they feel about their own college major.” However, also included in the dimension was “disclosing how much money their parents or guardians make.”

In contrast to expectations, “disclosing one's self-feelings” and “disclosing one's tastes and interests” are statistically significantly negatively correlated to relationship satisfaction. That is, the more one “discloses about the things that hurt their feelings” and

“disclosing about one's likes and dislikes in music,” the more one is less satisfied in their relationship. Several explanations can be suggested.

First, when an individual begins disclosing these things to their partner, they realize that their self-feelings and tastes and interests do not match with their partner; therefore are less satisfied and the relationship is terminated soon thereafter. Second, the taste and interest dimension was the most skewed of all variables. Nearly everyone had disclosed many of his or her tastes and interests. The lack of variation in this variable may have affected the results. Third, disclosing tastes and interests are often done early in a relationship. Consequently, a focus on tastes and interests may indicate a superficial relationship and therefore one in which a person is less satisfied. However, these partial explanations still do not explain why tastes and interests are negatively related in a multivariate context.

Self-disclosure about “One's self-feelings” is another problematic dimension. It was statistically significant and negatively related to relationship satisfaction in the regression. It is not clear why disclosing such things as “being comfortable with expressing the things for which one is ashamed,” or “whether one is depressed or hurt,” should be negatively related to relationship satisfaction. One possible explanation is that a person who often discloses that they feel down may be dissatisfied with life and others more generally. For example, when people are clinically depressed they find no joy in events and relationships that would otherwise please them. Also, the recipient of such disclosure may be giving feedback that these types of self-feelings are not welcome. As the recipient starts to be less satisfied with the relationship, and possibly expressing this

dissatisfaction in various ways, the giver may respond by becoming less satisfied, too. The withdrawal of support can lead to dissatisfaction.

My unique contribution in this study was adding self-disclosure about one's feelings about friends as a dimension. I expected to find "One's feelings about friends" to be positively related to relationship satisfaction. Rather, it was nonsignificant and negative. Therefore, disclosing one's feelings about one's own friends and disclosing one's feelings about one's partners' friends do not seem to be a factor in relationship satisfaction.

My results support the view that self-disclosure and some dimensions of self-disclosure are related to relationship satisfaction. However, I have extended past research by finding that not all dimensions are, and that some can even have a negative effect on relationship satisfaction.

LIMITATIONS OF MY RESEARCH

Several limitations could have affected my results. Of the 134 cases analyzed, seventy-nine (51%) indicated they were referring to a current partner and fifty-five (41%) indicated they were referring to a former partner. How much one disclosed and the evaluation of a relationship may be systematically different for those who are no longer in a relationship compared to those who are. Because of the relatively young age of my sample, the longevity of these relationships for seventy percent of the sample was less than two years. Findings could be different on samples with more long-term relationships. Only three of my respondents were married and the relationship between self-disclosure and relationship satisfaction may vary by marital status. Which of the

eight self-disclosure dimensions is most important to relationship satisfaction may depend upon longevity of the relationship and marital status.

Another complicating factor is that about half of the respondents were in long-distant relationships--possibly because of sixty percent were first year students who may still have ties to partners that they were involved with before they came to Virginia Tech.

Another limitation of this research is the lack of a probability sample. Therefore, the results cannot be generalized to any other introductory sociology class, to Virginia Tech students or to any population more generally.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The results of this study suggest several possibilities for future research. One suggestion is to study self-disclosure and relationship satisfaction with longitudinal data. This would give us a better understanding of how self-disclosure influences relationship satisfaction as an intimate relationship changes over time. A second suggestion for future research is to refine the self-disclosure instruments. While the scale reliabilities were good, my analysis revealed that there is a need for improvement. A third suggestion is to obtain a large sample of intimate couples of all ages, interracial relationships, and diverse backgrounds. A fourth suggestion is to separately analyze two groups--those who are referring to a present partner and those who are referring to a former partner. This could distinguish how self-disclosure differs in relationships that are more or less satisfying, for example.

In addition, some suggestions that I have for further research are the same as Sprecher (1987). First, this research can be examined with other types of relationships, such as married couples, homosexual couples, and friendships. Second, future

investigations need to determine more specifically which types of self-disclosure are most and least important in relationship satisfaction. My work in this area is only the first step. Another issue for future research is how the relationship between self-disclosure and relationship satisfaction changes over different stages of relationship development (Sprecher 1987:125) and what other variables have influence over maintenance and dissolution.

Perhaps self-disclosure given is less important at the beginning of an intimate relationship and more important over time for a relationship to progress. Alternatively, perhaps self-disclosure is more important at the beginning of an intimate relationship and levels off as the relationship progresses. Comparisons of self-disclosure given and perceptions of self-disclosure received may provide additional insight. Finally, the casual direction, and most likely reciprocal relationship between self-disclosure and relationship satisfaction needs to be untangled to understand the relationship between the two concepts.

A final and non-trivial suggestion is to explore these variables within a theoretical framework. A research devoid of a theoretical underpinning contributes considerably less than it could otherwise.

Self-disclosure is an important part of intimate relationship satisfaction. However, the relationship between types of self-disclosure and relationship satisfaction is a lot more complicated than I had assumed at the start of this study.

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APPENDIX A

This survey is completely anonymous; do not put your name anywhere on the survey. Please fill in the answer that best describes you to the appropriate question number on the opscan form.

For the purposes of this study, your responses are to apply to your current or last intimate relationship partner, or if married, to your spouse. Please respond by indicating how you have self-disclosed to this partner. Self-disclosure is when you reveal details about yourself to your intimate partner. If you have never had a relationship with another person, which you consider intimate, please respond with "does not apply" to questions 1 through 48, then answer the remaining questions.

1. My likes/dislikes in music.
 1. disclose everything
 2. disclose almost everything
 3. disclose some things
 4. disclose a few things
 5. disclose nothing
 6. does not apply

2. My feelings toward my parent(s) or legal guardian(s).
 1. disclose everything
 2. disclose almost everything
 3. disclose some things
 4. disclose a few things
 5. disclose nothing
 6. does not apply

3. The things that hurt my feelings.
 1. disclose everything
 2. disclose almost everything
 3. disclose some things
 4. disclose a few things
 5. disclose nothing
 6. does not apply

4. Experiences that my previous romantic partner(s) and I shared.
 1. disclose everything
 2. disclose almost everything
 3. disclose some things
 4. disclose a few things
 5. disclose nothing
 6. does not apply

5. The things about myself that I am ashamed of.
 1. disclose everything
 2. disclose almost everything
 3. disclose some things
 4. disclose a few things
 5. disclose nothing
 6. does not apply

6. Whether or not I have any health problems.
 1. disclose everything
 2. disclose almost everything
 3. disclose some things
 4. disclose a few things
 5. disclose nothing
 6. does not apply

7. My religious views.
 1. disclose everything
 2. disclose almost everything
 3. disclose some things
 4. disclose a few things
 5. disclose nothing
 6. does not apply

8. How much I trust my partner.
 1. disclose everything
 2. disclose almost everything
 3. disclose some things
 4. disclose few things
 5. disclose nothing
 6. does not apply

9. My feelings towards how much time my partner spends with their friends.
 1. disclose everything
 2. disclose almost everything
 3. disclose some things
 4. disclose a few things
 5. disclose nothing
 6. does not apply

10. My views on politics.
 1. disclose everything
 2. disclose almost things
 3. disclose some things
 4. disclose a few things
 5. disclose nothing
 6. does not apply

11. My feelings about our sexual relationship.
 1. disclose everything
 2. disclose almost everything
 3. disclose some things
 4. disclose a few things
 5. disclose nothing
 6. does not apply

12. Past experiences prior to meeting my current partner.
 1. disclose everything
 2. disclose almost everything
 3. disclose some things
 4. disclose a few things
 5. disclose nothing
 6. does not apply

13. How much money my parent(s) or guardian(s) have.
 1. disclose everything
 2. disclose almost everything
 3. disclose some things
 4. disclose a few things
 5. disclose nothing
 6. does not apply

14. The extent of my sexual experience previous to my relationship with my partner.
 1. disclose everything
 2. disclose almost everything
 3. disclose some things
 4. disclose a few things
 5. disclose nothing
 6. does not apply

15. My feelings towards my partner's friends.
 1. disclose everything
 2. disclose almost everything
 3. disclose some things
 4. disclose few things
 5. disclose nothing
 6. does not apply

16. How much I like my partner.
 1. disclose everything
 2. disclose almost everything
 3. disclose some things
 4. disclose a few things
 5. disclose nothing
 6. does not apply

17. My thoughts and feelings about my previous romantic partner(s).
 1. disclose everything
 2. disclose almost everything
 3. disclose some things
 4. disclose a few things
 5. disclose nothing
 6. does not apply

18. My feelings about women's rights.
 1. disclose everything
 2. disclose almost everything
 3. disclose some things
 4. disclose a few things
 5. disclose nothing
 6. does not apply

19. The things that make me depressed.
 1. disclose everything
 2. disclose almost everything
 3. disclose some things
 4. disclose a few things
 5. disclose nothing
 6. does not apply

20. How I feel about my career choice/college major.
 1. disclose everything
 2. disclose almost everything
 3. disclose some things
 4. disclose a few things
 5. disclose nothing
 6. does not apply

21. My sexual fantasies.
 1. disclose everything
 2. disclose almost everything
 3. disclose some things
 4. disclose a few things
 5. disclose nothing
 6. does not apply

22. The kind of party or social gathering that I like best.
 1. disclose everything
 2. disclose almost everything
 3. disclose some things
 4. disclose a few things
 5. disclose nothing
 6. does not apply

23. My feelings about my sexual adequacy.
 1. disclose everything
 2. disclose almost everything
 3. disclose some things
 4. disclose a few things
 5. disclose nothing
 6. does not apply

24. How I feel about my partner's career choice/college major.
 1. disclose everything
 2. disclose almost everything
 3. disclose some things
 4. disclose a few things
 5. disclose nothing
 6. does not apply

25. My views on drinking alcohol.
1. disclose everything
 2. disclose almost everything
 3. disclose some things
 4. disclose a few things
 5. disclose nothing
 6. does not apply
26. How I feel about how much money my partner has.
1. disclose everything
 2. disclose almost everything
 3. disclose some things
 4. disclose a few things
 5. disclose nothing
 6. does not apply
27. My feelings toward my closest friends.
1. disclose everything
 2. disclose almost everything
 3. disclose some things
 4. disclose a few things
 5. disclose nothing
 6. does not apply
28. My feelings about couples sharing expenses.
1. disclose everything
 2. disclose almost everything
 3. disclose some things
 4. disclose a few things
 5. disclose nothing
 6. does not apply
29. Things I dislike about my partner.
1. disclose everything
 2. disclose almost everything
 3. disclose some things
 4. disclose a few things
 5. disclose nothing
 6. does not apply

30. The things about myself that I am proud of.

1. disclose everything
2. disclose almost everything
3. disclose some things
4. disclose a few things
5. disclose nothing
6. does not apply

31. How I feel about my appearance.

1. disclose everything
2. disclose almost everything
3. disclose some things
4. disclose a few things
5. disclose nothing
6. does not apply

32. My feelings on racial equality.

1. disclose everything
2. disclose almost everything
3. disclose some things
4. disclose a few things
5. disclose nothing
6. does not apply

33. Things I enjoy sexually.

1. disclose everything
2. disclose almost everything
3. disclose some things
4. disclose a few things
5. disclose nothing
6. does not apply

34. My favorite ways of spending my spare time.

1. disclose everything
2. disclose almost everything
3. disclose some things
4. disclose a few things
5. disclose nothing
6. does not apply

35. My feelings about how much time I spend with my friends.

1. disclose everything
2. disclose almost everything
3. disclose some things
4. disclose a few things
5. disclose nothing
6. does not apply

36. My thoughts about the future of our relationship.

1. disclose everything
2. disclose almost everything
3. disclose some things
4. disclose a few things
5. disclose nothing
6. does not apply

37. My views on drug usage.

1. disclose everything
2. disclose almost everything
3. disclose some things
4. disclose a few things
5. disclose nothing
6. does not apply

38. The things about myself that I am afraid of.

1. disclose everything
2. disclose almost everything
3. disclose some things
4. disclose a few things
5. disclose nothing
6. does not apply

39. How I feel about my partner's appearance.

1. disclose everything
2. disclose almost everything
3. disclose some things
4. disclose a few things
5. disclose nothing
6. does not apply

40. My feelings about homosexuality.
1. disclose everything
 2. disclose almost everything
 3. disclose some things
 4. disclose a few things
 5. disclose nothing
 6. does not apply

Please answer the next set of questions that best apply to your current romantic partner, your last romantic partner, or your husband/wife.

41. I trust my partner.

1. not at all
2. somewhat
3. moderately
4. completely
5. does not apply

42. My relationship is ideal.

1. not at all
2. somewhat
3. moderately
4. completely
5. does not apply

43. My relationship makes me happy.

1. not at all
2. somewhat
3. moderately
4. completely
5. does not apply

44. I am satisfied with my relationship.

1. not at all
2. somewhat
3. moderately
4. completely
5. does not apply

45. My relationship fulfills my needs for intimacy.

1. not at all
2. somewhat
3. moderately
4. completely
5. does not apply

46. Are your answers above in reference to a

1. current partner
2. former partner
3. does not apply

47. How long have you been (were you) with this partner?

1. less than 1 month
2. 1-2 months
3. 3-4 months
4. 5-6 months
5. 7-11 months
6. 12-23 months
7. 2 years or more
8. does not apply

48. Is this relationship with a partner who currently lives nearby or is it a long-distance (more than one hour away) relationship?

1. nearby relationship
2. long-distance relationship
3. does not apply

The next set of questions are demographics about yourself.

49. Are you:

1. male
2. female

50. Are you married?

1. yes
2. no

51. Are you currently engaged?

1. yes
2. no

52. What is your age?

1. under 18
2. 18-19
3. 20-21
4. 22-23
5. 24-25
6. 26 or more

53. What is your class standing?

1. 1st year
2. 2nd year
3. 3rd year
4. 4th year
5. 5th or more year

54. Are you:

1. Caucasian/white
2. African American/black
3. Asian
4. Native American Indian
5. Other

55. Are you of Hispanic or Latino background?

1. yes
2. no

Thank you for your help. Please be sure not to put any personal identifying information on the opscan sheet or survey.

Return this survey and your opscan sheet to the box located in the front of the room as you leave.

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the scanned document**