WHEN CARING ABOUT ME IS CARING ABOUT YOU:
INTERPERSONAL GOALS AS MANIFESTATIONS OF SELF-DETERMINATION
IN ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

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A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department

of Psychology

University of Houston

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In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

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By

Benjamin W. Hadden

December, 2013

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ABSTRACT

Research has examined the role of self-determination in relationships has focused solely on the self, and has ignored how relationship autonomy relates to increased focus on one's partner. Recent work on interpersonal goals may provide insight into the dyadic nature of relationship autonomy. The present research explored the link between these two theoretical concepts in order to explain the nature of self-determination in relationships. I examined how relationship autonomy is associated with desire to support one's partner as well as reduction in self-focus. The study had 99 undergraduates report on their relationship autonomy and interpersonal goals. Participants kept a record of their experiences in their relationships over the course of 14 days. The results revealed that relationship autonomy was associated with higher compassionate goals, lower self-image goals, and better relationship quality (e.g., satisfaction, support, and response to conflict). However, evidence for a mediational link with interpersonal goals was less consistent.

KEYWORDS: Self-Determination Theory, Interpersonal Goals, Motivations, Romantic Relationships, Intrapersonal Predictors

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For more than three decades, the field of psychology has taken serious interest in the study of relationships. In that time, the literature has largely come to agreement that people are, by nature, social creatures and that relationships are necessary for psychological well-being (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). The well-documented need to feel connected to others is so strong, in fact, that Cohen (2004) argued that social support is necessary for healthy development. For instance, perceptions of available support serve as a primary buffer from the negative effects of life stresses, beyond instrumental support (material aid) or informational support (information meant to help coping). The need to feel connected is so strong that the absence of social bonds can manifest as a variety of negative symptoms, both mental and physical. For example, lack of connectedness is related to higher levels of emotional distress and maladaptation (Bowlby, 1969). Additionally, isolation can lead to decreased functioning of one's immune system (Cacioppo et al., 2002; Kiecolt-Glaser et al., 1984). Social deprivation may also contribute to the development of psychological disorders, as children who experience chronic social rejection are at higher risk of developing psychopathological symptoms than children who do not (Bhatti, Derezotes, Kim, & Specht, & 1989). However, it is not simply that relationships are intrinsically good for us. Rather, relationships serve to satisfy some innate set of needs. This is readily reasoned when one considers that dissatisfying relationships can be just as detrimental to physical and mental health as social isolation (Gunlicks-Stoesel & Powers, 2009; Thomas, 1995).

Over the past 30 years, several theories have been developed to examine 1) why poor relationships (both low-quality relationships and lack thereof) can lead to such intense problems, and 2) what is necessary for the development of satisfying relationships. These theoretical perspectives largely argue that positive relationships serve to fulfill a basic psychological need or set of needs, while poor relationships leave a deficit. Attachment theory, for example, posits that people have an inherent need for felt security, which is met by forming relationships with responsive partners (Bowlby, 1951; Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Poor relational experiences lead to distress because this basic need for security goes unmet.

More recently, several researchers have applied self-determination theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 1985b, 2000a) to explain both why relationships are necessary and what leads to satisfying relationships. More specifically, SDT proposes that people have three basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 1985b, 2000a). As such, a satisfying relationship is one that fulfills these three needs (Patrick, Knee, Lonsbary, & Canevello, 2007). Furthermore, the theory distinguishes between qualitatively different kinds of motivations. That is, how autonomous (intrinsic and self-directed), controlled (extrinsic and pressured), and impersonal (amotivation) one's actions are. Being autonomously motivated to be in a romantic relationship is defined as being in the relationship because one finds it intrinsically rewarding and it fulfills one's basic needs (Blais, Sabourin, Boucher, & Vallerand, 1990). Controlled motivations, on the other hand, are feelings of pressure, either internal or external, to be in the relationship. Finally, amotivation is a feeling of uncertainty and helplessness, and can be conceptualized as a lack of motivation.

Thus far, research has largely focused on conflict styles and responses to disagreement as a result of motivational types. People who have more autonomous and less controlled motivations tend to experience more openness (Knee, Lonsbary, Canevello, & Patrick, 2005), less defensiveness and fewer negative feelings after conflict (Hodgins & Knee, 2002). Knee et al. (2002) have argued that these findings occur largely because people with higher autonomous motivations and lower controlled motivations are not as ego-driven.

However, this literature has remained focused on the self and has not considered how motivations may influence the degree to which we desire to support and connect with others. That is, what is the mental representation of a desired outcome (Austin & Vancouver, 1996) for people who are autonomously motivated to be in the relationship? This is an interesting question, as the nature of autonomous motivations says nothing about how one feels toward one's partners. Autonomous motivation has been shown to result in a decreased focus on oneself and feeling less ego-involved, but has completely ignored the prospect of increased focus on one's partner and the relationship.

Another recent line of research may provide a potential answer. Crocker and Canevello (2008) outlined two distinct interpersonal goals; compassionate and self-image goals. This recent cognitive concept argues that people have two general types of interpersonal goals; a desire to support one's partner (compassionate) and a focus on producing a desirable self-image (self-image). The goal of the present research is to attempt to link these two theoretical concepts in order to better understand the nature of self-determination in relationships. In other words, I will seek to extend self-determination beyond a mere discussion of the self by testing how autonomous

motivations, relative to controlled motivations, manifest not only as low ego-defensiveness, but also as a genuine desire to support one's partner.

Self-Determination Theory

Self-Determination Theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 1985b, 2000a) is an organismic theory of human motivation and development. SDT proposes that people have an innate tendency toward integration of the self into a coherent, organized entity. Nevertheless, integration does not simply happen. Rather, integration can be either promoted or thwarted by social factors in one's life depending on the extent to which one's surroundings support or deny one's basic psychological needs (Deci & Ryan, 2002). As such a comprehensive theory, it can be broken down into four discrete mini-theories that attempt to explain different phenomena regarding self-determination: Cognitive evaluation theory, organismic integration theory, basic needs theory, and causality orientations theory. These theories together describe different forms of motivation and integration.

Although the majority of focus will be on basic needs theory and causality orientations theory, a brief discussion of cognitive evaluation and organismic integration theory are necessary before moving on to the main discussion. Cognitive evaluation theory (Deci, 1975) focuses on the development and maintenance of intrinsic motivation. In this research, it was found that the development and maintenance of intrinsic motivation depends on the cognitive perception that the environment supports autonomy and competence (Deci & Ryan, 1980) and, to a somewhat lesser extent, relatedness (Anderson, Manoogian, & Raznick, 1976). The second mini-theory is called organismic integration theory, because it assumes a natural tendency for people (organisms) to grow.

This perspective focuses on the extent to which one has integrated behaviors and values along a continuum from amotivation to extrinsic to intrinsic regulation. That is, organismic integration theory organizes self-determination according to the extent to which one regulates behavior for some separate, separable, or external reason versus the extent to which one truly enjoys or values the behavior itself. This theory also discusses the benefits of more internalized regulation styles. However, this theory is somewhat analogous to causality orientations theory (Vallerand & Ratelle, 2002) in its discussion of motivations, so this paper will not discuss regulatory styles in detail.

Basic Needs Theory. Basic needs theory is the study of the three basic psychological needs. This mini-theory tends to focus on the degree to which a situation or experience fulfills each of the three basic psychological needs (autonomy, competence, and relatedness), and the impact that fulfillment has on individual well-being and motivations. When Deci and Ryan formally laid out self-determination theory (2000a) they put forth basic needs theory. The claimed needs for autonomy and competence emerged from research conducted in the 1970s surrounding intrinsic motivation; defined as interest to engage in a given activity without the need for external incentive. Later research conducted in the 1980s and 1990s established the need for relatedness as an additional basic psychological need. In over three decades of research, they found that intrinsic motivation could not be sustained if autonomy (Deci, 1971), competence (Deci & Cascio, 1972), or relatedness (Ryan & La Guardia, 2000) were undermined.

Autonomy is defined as the feeling that one's behaviors are freely engaged and self-directed by the individual, rather than the feeling that one's actions are controlled by external or internal pressure. This is not to be confused with more traditional definitions

of the word which include feelings of reflexive independence and detachment. On the contrary, autonomy as discussed within the domain of SDT says nothing about a desire to feel independent from or not rely upon others. Instead, autonomy in this context means that one acts in ways that one truly endorses. In fact, despite this need being the most frequently criticized need, most SDT researchers would suggest this is perhaps the most important of the three needs for internalization of behaviors and values (Deci & Ryan, 2000a). Early studies of self-determination found that extrinsic rewards can undermine people's intrinsic motivation to engage in certain behaviors, even those in which they were previously intrinsically interested (Deci, 1971). In other words, when people begin to perceive their behavior as being controlled by some external pressure (even a positive pressure, such as monetary reward), they lose interest in the activity. Thus, it was suggested that feeling autonomous is a necessary aspect of well-being.

Feeling competent in a task was determined to be necessary for any type of motivation to perform said task. As discussed in their major review of SDT, Deci and Ryan (2000a) review a series of studies that show that positive feedback increases intrinsic motivation whereas negative feedback leads to a decrease in intrinsic motivation. In other words, feeling incapable of performing effectively decreases one's internal desire to continue engaging in an activity. However, building intrinsic motivation requires more than feeling competent. Indeed, one of the crucial aspects of intrinsic motivation is that one feels one has control over success or failure (Fisher, 1978). Again, this literature suggests that although feeling competent is certainly necessary for intrinsic motivation, one must also feel that the behavior is self-determined.

The third and final basic psychological need is relatedness. In short, one must fulfill the need to feel psychologically connected and close to other people. This is considered by Deci and Ryan (2000a) to be a more distal need, as many activities are engaged in isolation, but function as a backdrop for well-being and motivation. Studies on SDT have found that relatedness is important for the development of intrinsic motivation. For instance, a student feeling that his or her teacher is warm and caring is crucial to the development of one's intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Grolnick, 1986). Indeed, several other theories support a need for relatedness. Both attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969; Hazan & Shaver, 1987) and terror management theory (1991) posit that one of the key aspects to optimal human functioning is a fundamental need to feel secure, which is met by experiencing a sense of belonging.

Causality Orientations Theory. The second mini-theory of SDT, causality orientations theory, is the examination of the formation, maintenance, and consequences of motivation orientations. Causality orientations theory, much like organismic integration theory, focuses on the extent to which one's behaviors are self-determined and autonomous (Deci & Ryan, 2002). Research has outlined three qualitatively different motivation styles that represent different degrees of self-determination: Autonomous, controlled, and impersonal orientations (Deci & Ryan, 1985b). Autonomous motivation represents the extent to which one truly endorses one's behavior and has integrated social values. Controlled motivation concerns how one should behave, often conceived in terms of the degree to which one acts because of pressure (either from others or from oneself). Finally, impersonal motivation is related to feelings of helplessness and the idea that one is unsure of why he or she engages in behaviors. Causality orientation theory posits that

people have a degree of all three motivation orientations that develop over time as a result of a combination of how much one's needs are supported as well as one's own internal resources (Deci & Ryan, 2000a, 2000b). That is, people will develop autonomous, controlled, and impersonal motivation orientations to the extent that their needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness have been supported, as well as the extent to which they are generally inclined to act in a self-determined manner.

Further, motivation orientations can be conceptualized as hierarchical, that is, measured on various levels from general (e.g., trait) to domain-specific (e.g., relationship) to situational (e.g., daily) (Vallerand & Ratelle, 2002). Specifically, measures vary from a general trait measure, known as causality orientations, to more specific domain and behavioral levels (Deci & Ryan, 2000a). On a general level, motivation orientations (causality orientations) are consistent across domains and are considered individual differences. This is conceptualized as the extent to which one perceives his or her actions in general to generate from autonomous, choiceful reasons; controlled, pressured reasons; or impersonal, helpless reasons. To measure these global orientations, Deci and Ryan (1985a) developed a measure known as the General Causality Orientations Scale (GCOS) which measures the extent to which people tend to approach situations with each type of motivation (autonomous, controlled, and impersonal) with a series of vignettes. Each vignette is paired with an autonomous, controlled, and impersonal reaction, and participants rate how much each reaction matches their own tendencies.

Motivation orientations are then broken down into domains, and conceptualized in terms of the degree of domain autonomy, or the extent to which engagement in

domain-specific behaviors is self-determined and choiceful (see figure 1 for terminology

across levels). Indeed, general level orientations have been shown to be an effective

predictor of various domain-specific approaches (Vallerand & Ratelle, 2002). For

instance, trait autonomy predicts more domain-specific autonomy such as in learning

(Williams & Deci, 1996), exercise (Williams, Grow, Freedman, Ryan, & Deci, 1996),

and romantic relationship autonomy (Knee et al., 2005).

Figure 1. *Terminology of motivations across levels (general and relationship-specific).*

Level	Label	Degree of self-determination		
		Not self-determined		Self-determined
		(low autonomy)		(high autonomy)
General	Motivation Orientation	Amotivated	Controlled	Autonomous
Relationship Specific	Relationship Autonomy			

Self-Determination in Romantic Relationships. In 1990, Blais, Sabourin,

Boucher, and Vallerand first developed a model of relationship autonomy, defined as the

extent to which people's motivations to engage in their relationships stem from self-

determined reasons, as opposed to how pressured people feel to be in the relationship. In

other words, being high in relationship autonomy means that one's motivations to be

involved in the relationship reflect a genuine interest in the relationship, and one is not in

the relationship because of some separable outcome. For instance, those who feel more

relationship autonomy more fully endorse being in their relationship, rather than being

with their partner due to external pressures such as fear of being alone, or a desire to prove oneself as valuable (Hodgins & Knee, 2002). Blais and colleagues (1990) showed that relationship autonomy is related to more adaptive relationship behaviors, such as more consensus between partners, better teamwork and cohesion, and more overall happiness and satisfaction in the relationship.

More recently, research has focused on the application of SDT to romantic relationships, both in terms of need fulfillment and motivation orientation. Relationship autonomy has largely been shown to be beneficial for several reasons, such as increased openness and decreased defensiveness (Hodgins & Knee, 2002) which in turn predict higher relationship quality (Knee, Lonsbary, Canevello, & Patrick, 2005), and more authentic interactions with others (Hodgins, Koestner, & Duncan, 1996). Alternatively, controlled relationship motivations tend to increase defensiveness through disengagement and denial.

Relationship Quality. Researchers have argued that SDT provides a key framework for understanding relationship functioning (La Guardia & Patrick, 2008). Under this framework, various operationalizations of relationship quality such as satisfaction and commitment are best understood as a function of need fulfillment. That is, to the extent that one's needs are fulfilled, one will perceive better relationship experiences. In a meta-analysis of need fulfillment conducted by Patrick and colleagues (2007; study 1), it was found that when needs were perceived as being met, individuals experienced increased positive and decreased negative affect, as well as higher satisfaction and commitment. Partners have also been shown to feel closer to each other (Ryan, La Guardia, Butzel, Chirkov, & Kim, 2005), and experience higher levels of

social support (Patrick et al., 2007) to the extent that their needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are being met within the relationship. From these results, the importance of need fulfillment in relationships is clear. Theoretically, this makes intuitive sense, as the degree to which one perceives a situation as satisfying or rewarding is a reflection of how well one's basic needs are met.

However, to fully fit close relationships into an SDT framework, one must also consider the role of motivations in the form of relationship autonomy. Research on self-determination in relationships has established that people higher in relationship autonomy (autonomous motivations to be in the relationship) experience more relationship quality compared to people who are lower in relationship autonomy. For instance, Blais et al. (1990) found that relationship autonomy was connected to higher satisfaction, commitment, and more adaptive relationship behaviors. Further, in four studies, Knee and colleagues (2005) found that when motivation orientation was measured at both a global level and relationship specific level (relationship autonomy), greater autonomous motivation related to better relationship functioning. Across several diary studies (studies 1 & 3), they found that autonomous motivation predicted daily levels of higher satisfaction. Finally, Patrick et al. (2007; study 3) established the link between relationship need fulfillment, relationship autonomy, and relationship quality. They utilized a daily diary methodology and found that the association between need fulfillment and relationship quality was mediated by the degree of relationship autonomy.

Conflict. To describe why relationship autonomy influences relationship quality, researchers have explored the role of ego-involvement (Hodgins & Knee, 2002). That is, relationship autonomy is associated with a decrease in self-focus and pressure to prove

oneself or one's relationship. As such, researchers theorized that the link between self-determination and relationship outcomes would be explained by more open, honest, and less defensive interactions with one's partner.

Indeed much of the current research on motivation orientations has focused on their role in conflict responses. This makes sense, considering that every couple will have disagreements, and it is whether those conflicts are seen as opportunities for growth and true understanding or if they are viewed as attacks that need to be avoided or defended against that determines how one perceives their relationship (Knee, Porter, Rodriguez, in press). Research has found that relationship autonomy is associated with the belief that conflicts promote growth within the relationship (Knee, Patrick, Vietor, Nanayakkara, & Neighbors, 2002). Individuals' autonomous motivations were related to self-reports of better interpretations of conflict such as less disengagement, and increased acceptance of their partner. Relationship autonomy was also related to more positive affect, less depression, and less hostility following the conflict. Perceiving controlled reasons for being in one's relationship, on the other hand, was related to more denial and less adaptive coping strategies. Behavioral differences also emerged. Individuals high in relationship autonomy showed more positive conflict tactics, such as attempts to better understand their partner.

Additionally, Knee et al. (2005) found that these experiences of daily conflict were important for relationship satisfaction (study 3), and that they predicted visible differences in conflict responses (study 4). In study 3, they found that the association between relationship autonomy and satisfaction was mediated by levels of defensiveness such that those with more autonomous motivation experienced less defensiveness and, in

turn, higher satisfaction. Interestingly, this mediation model was significant when the researchers observed actual behavior in study 4, rather than merely self-reports. Couples who were induced to discuss a discrepancy in a laboratory setting were shown to be more understanding and less defensive to the extent that they were more autonomously motivated to be in the relationship.

Relationship autonomy is thought to be related to more positive conflict styles because it reduces "ego-involvement," or the idea that one needs to prove oneself, whereas controlled orientations promote the idea that one's ego must be defended. Thus, because autonomously motivated individuals are not acting due to pressure (either external or internal pressure), they are not focused on proving themselves to others. As seen in Knee and colleagues' (2002, 2005) work on romantic relationships, this manifests in more open engagements with one's partner. This openness, in turn, has been shown to relate to more authentic, honest, and natural interactions not just with romantic partners, but with friends and family (Hodgins, Koestner, & Duncan, 1996), as well as fewer attempts to "save face" because one feels some kind of pressure to present a desired image of oneself.

Expanding beyond the self in self-determination

Despite the fact that relatedness is a basic psychological need in SDT, most of the research on self-determination in relationships has largely focused on the self. That is, although it is assumed that people seek relatedness, previous research has not examined how motivation orientations influence or predict the extent to which one wants to support one's partner. Rather, as mentioned before, research has addressed the influence of motivation orientations by discussing low relationship autonomy in terms of ego-

involvement and the desire to present a certain self-image (Hodgins & Knee, 2002). In essence, because one is less fixated on a desire to maintain positive self-concept (Knee et al., in press) one is able to interact in a more authentic, flexible, and adaptive manner.

Even though the evidence supports this process, we do not know whether autonomous motivation facilitates a focus on one's partner. Indeed, one is hard pressed to find research that does more than imply an authentic concern for one's partner. Several theoretical perspectives, such as self-expansion theory (Aron & Aron, 1996) and adult attachment (Hazan & Shaver, 1987), agree that excessive focus on the self is maladaptive. However, these theories have gone beyond the self and have suggested that healthy close-relationships also require a focus on one's partner. For instance, self-expansion theory (Aron & Aron, 1996; Aron, Aron, Tudor, & Nelson, 1991) argues that people have a motivation to include others within the self in order to expand their resources and perspectives. From this framework, as significant others are included more fully within one's self-concept, there will be an increased concern and care for one's partner (Aron & Aron, 1996).

Additionally, adult attachment argues for both a decreased focus on proving the self and an increased focus on tending to one's partner. According to Hazan and Shaver (1994), people have both an attachment system and a caregiving system that cannot be simultaneously activated. When the attachment system develops normally (i.e., a secure attachment style), the system can be turned on and off, and one can focus on one's partner's needs. However, the development of an anxious attachment style leads to the constant activation of this system, inhibiting the caregiving system and, thus, a proper concern for one's partner (Collins & Feeney, 2004).

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Interpersonal Goals

The recent emergence of research on interpersonal goals may provide a key that can expand the discussion of relationship autonomy to include partner-focus. Crocker and Canevello (2008) outlined two distinct interpersonal goals: compassionate and self-image. These two interpersonal goals have been largely defined by either a focus on others or on the self, respectively. Compassionate goals are marked by behaviors meant to support significant others, whereas self-image goals have a focus on achieving desirable outcomes for oneself. Importantly, interpersonal goals focus on what one intends to create from a given behavior rather than on specific behaviors. For instance, according to research on interpersonal goals, buying flowers for a significant other, while a nice gesture, is less important than the purpose of buying said flowers. Crocker and Canevello (2008) argue that compassionate goals for this behavior, buying flowers with the desired outcome to make one's partner feel good, would lead to better outcomes than having a self-image goals, which would be buying flowers intending to look like a good boyfriend.

For instance, Crocker and Canevello (2008) examined freshmen's friendships over the course of their first college semester. In the first study, they found that over the course of the semester, higher compassionate goals were predictive of increases in perceived support from friends and family, while self-image goals were related to decreases in familial support. They also found an interaction between interpersonal goals such that those high in compassionate and low in self-image showed increased support and closeness, whereas those high in both self-image and compassionate goals showed no increase in these outcomes. The second study found a similar pattern in first-semester

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college roommates, such that compassionate and self-image goals led to positive and negative spirals, respectively. That is, compassionate goals predicted increases in perceived support and closeness with one's roommate, which in turn predicted increases in compassionate goals, whereas the inverse pattern was found for self-image goals.

Subsequent research has examined why these interpersonal goals are important for relationship functioning, proposing that responsiveness is at least partly responsible for this link (Crocker & Canevello, 2010). Indeed, the increased concern for other's well-being inherent in compassionate goals and a lack of desire to maintain a positive image of oneself was shown to be important for increasing responsiveness between roommates over the course of a semester. That is, high compassionate and low self-image participants reported increased responsiveness to partners, which in turn predicted increased perceptions of partner responsiveness, ultimately predicting an increase in relationship quality over the course of the semester.

Linking Self-Determination and Interpersonal Goals

Similarities between SDT and interpersonal goals. To date, the general discussion of interpersonal goals mirrors that of the self-determination literature. Compassionate goals are a cognitive representation of desired outcomes such that one is concerned with others' well-being. Behaviors that emerge from compassionate orientations are engaged with a genuine desire to support others with no desired outcome for the self (Crocker 2011). On the opposite side are self-image goals, in which behaviors are engaged with a desire to establish or maintain a positive image. It is important to note that this is not a desire to build a false image, but rather is emergent from a perceived need to prove that one is a good, competent person to others or to

oneself (Canevello & Crocker, 2010). This is remarkably similar to the research on self-determination in relationships, as both theories place a large emphasis on reducing the focus on the self and keeping the ego out of interactions with others (Crocker, 2011; Hodgins & Knee, 2002).

Although much of the research on interpersonal goals has been studied in roommate pairs or close friendships, rather than romantic relationships, the empirical evidence appears to have the potential to expand our knowledge of self-determination in romantic relationships. For instance, compassionate goals have largely been linked to positive relationship outcomes such as higher perceived support (Crocker & Canevello, 2008), better perceptions of responsiveness both to and from one's partner (Crocker & Canevello, 2010) while self-image goals have largely shown the reverse trend. Although most research has been interested in roommates and friendships, similar patterns have been observed for romantic relationships, in which compassionate goals were found to predict increased relationship quality over the course of a month (Hadden & Smith, 2010).

Additionally, both relationship autonomy and interpersonal goals have been linked to growth beliefs. As previously mentioned, relationship autonomy was found by Knee and colleagues (2002) to predict higher endorsements of growth beliefs, the belief that difficulties in one's relationship are an opportunity for partners to grow and better understand each other. More recently, Canevello and Crocker (2011) showed that compassionate goals were predictive of increases in growth beliefs over time, which were in turn related to higher levels of satisfaction. In essence, both constructs have been demonstrated to increase flexibility and lower ego-involvement in relationships. The

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associations of both relationship autonomy and interpersonal goals with growth beliefs

provide perhaps the best indirect evidence for a link between SDT and interpersonal

goals.

     Interpersonal Goals as Manifestations of Motivations. Given the nature of

goals as conscious representations of desired outcomes (Austin & Vancouver, 1996), I

propose a model that integrates goals and motivations such that interpersonal goals are

cognitive manifestations of relationship autonomy. That is, relationship autonomy and

interpersonal goals should capture different aspects of the same phenomena. Whereas

relationship autonomy reflects the extent to which one's relationship is integrated within

oneself and engaged in out of genuine interest, interpersonal goals represent the more

tangible cognitive representations of desires in the relationship that guide behavior (with

compassionate goals being a desire to support partners, and self-image goals being a

desire to protect or build a positive image). Furthermore, interpersonal goals may act as

the mediator between motivations for being in one's relationship and relationship

outcomes. In other words, compassionate goals arise from strong autonomous

motivations while self-image goals come from controlled motivations.

     When one conceives of relationship autonomy as a genuine desire and

endorsement of one's relationship with others (Hodgins & Knee, 2002), it is only natural

that this genuine desire for connection would lead to a mindset of authentic concern for

one's partner. As a result of this concern, one should construct a mental representation of

one's intentions that is compassionately oriented. That is, one desires to support one's

partner, which leads to behavior intended to benefit one's partner's well-being

(compassionate goals). Alternatively, controlled relationship motivations are thought to

result in higher ego-involvement, which should in turn produce a cognitive desire to ensure one is seen in a positive light (self-image goals).

Autonomous motivations should then lead to increased compassionate goals, which in turn lead to more authentic interactions with one's partner in which one is less concerned with protecting one's image and more interested in supporting one's partner. This should result in better relationship quality, such as higher levels of satisfaction, commitment, and better responses to conflict.

Figure 2. *Compassionate goals as mediators between autonomous motivations and relationship quality*
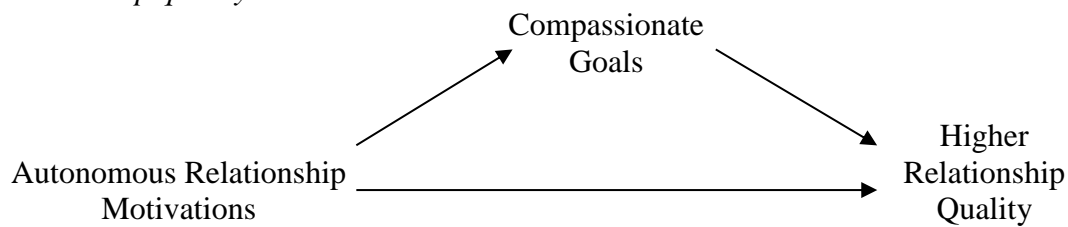
Conversely, controlled motivations should lead to self-image goals, which turn focus inward on the self. This increased self-focus then leads to less authentic interactions and poorer relationship quality, such as lower feelings of satisfaction, commitment, and worse responses to conflict.

Figure 3. *Self-image goals as mediators between controlled motivations and relationship quality*
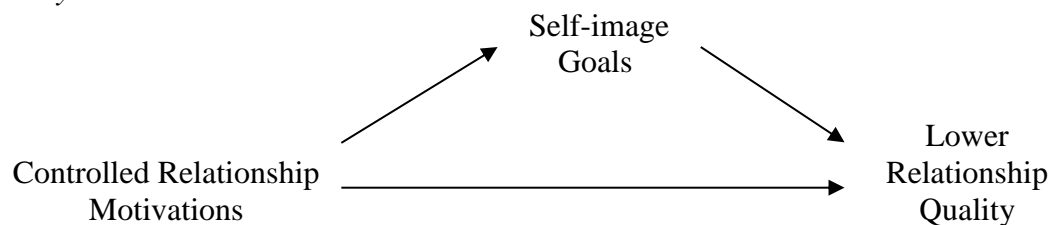
The Present Study

The present study merges self-determination theory with the emerging interpersonal goals literature in order to provide a more complete perspective on how self-determination functions in relationships. Specifically, the study tested the mediational role of interpersonal goals in the established link between self-determination and relationship outcomes such as satisfaction (Blais et al., 1990) and perceptions of conflict (Knee et al., 2005). A daily diary method was employed to test the mediational role of interpersonal goals in daily relationship experiences.

Hypothesis 1: More positive relationship outcomes would be predicted by one's degree of relationship autonomy. That is, more self-determined involvement in the relationship would predict better daily relationship experiences.

Hypothesis 1a: Baseline autonomous relationship motivations would significantly predict daily relationship experiences. To the extent that one's relationship is self-endorsed and the reasons for being in the relationship are autonomously oriented, one would experience greater day-to day emotional and relationship experiences.

Hypothesis 1b: Baseline controlled relationship motivations would significantly negatively predict daily relationship experiences. People in relationships for non-self-determined reasons would experience worse day-to day emotional and relationship experiences.

Hypothesis 2: Interpersonal goals would predict daily relationship outcomes.

Hypothesis 2a: Higher baseline compassionate goals would predict more positive daily relationship experiences. That is, to the extent that one's intentions are to support one's partner, they would experience higher relationship quality.

Hypothesis 2b: Baseline self-image goals would negatively predict daily relationship experiences. People who are concerned with creating a positive self-image for themselves would experience worse daily relationship outcomes.

Hypothesis 3: Conceiving of compassionate and self-image goals as cognitive manifestations of autonomous and controlled relationship motivations, respectively, when controlling for interpersonal goals, motivations would no longer be significant predictors of daily relationship experiences. This would demonstrate the mediational role of interpersonal goals between motivations and relationship outcomes.

Hypothesis 3a: Controlling for compassionate goals would reduce the association between autonomous relationship motivations and positive relationship outcomes.

Hypothesis 3b: Controlling for self-image goals would reduce the association between controlled relationship motivations and negative relationship outcomes.

Method

Participants

Participants were 118 students who were recruited from psychology classes at a large metropolitan university in Texas. Three participants were dropped from analyses because they did not provide enough information in the initial survey, and 16 more were dropped from analyses because they did not provide any daily records.

All participants were in romantic relationships for at least three months, to ensure participants are in a somewhat stable relationship and have sufficient knowledge of and feelings toward their current partner and at least 18 years of age. Students were notified

of the study both through SONA-systems, which organizes psychology studies for students, as well as flyers hung around campus with information about how to sign-up for the study, and awarded extra credit as an incentive for participation.

Of the 99 participants included in the analyses, 17 were male and 82 were female. The average age of participants was 21.7 years of age (SD: 5.71). The sample was 21% Asian/Pacific Islander, 12% African American, 24% Caucasian, 31% Latino/a, 2% Middle Eastern, and 9% chose other. The average duration of relationships was about 33 months (SD: 32.37). Among the sample, 2% of people were in casual dating relationships, 61% were in exclusive or serious dating relationships, 30% were engaged or nearly engaged, and 7% were married.

Procedure

The study consisted of three separate parts: A one-time questionnaire/orientation session, a 14-day diary, and a brief follow-up survey during debriefing after the diary portion is complete.

Orientation. First, participants were asked to come in for an initial orientation session where the three parts of the study were outlined, as well as the participants' responsibilities. Additionally, as the daily diary included questions about possible conflicts, the researcher thoroughly explained in person what a conflict was for the purposes of this study. Following the paradigm set by Knee and colleagues (2005), disagreement was defined as a discussion of a difference of opinion, even if it is not necessarily a major disagreement. The disagreement must include a discussion or interaction, even if this interaction is only several seconds long. This definition was used in order to maximize the inclusiveness of the construct, as I was interested in examining

participants' perceptions to a range of conflict interactions. Participants were assigned an identification number which was used to match their results from the diaries. They then completed a battery of questionnaires online. This questionnaire asked about both general and relationship motivational orientations, romantic interpersonal goals, and several measures of relationship quality (e.g., satisfaction, commitment).

Daily Diary. Following the completion of the one-time battery, participants completed a 14-day diary meant to assess their daily relationship experiences. This diary was completed every night before sleep in order to gauge participants' experiences of relationship quality (e.g., satisfaction, commitment) as well as overall daily mood. Participants were also asked whether or not they had a conflict with their partner that day. If participants said yes, they were displayed with questions meant to measure extent to which participants tried to understand versus avoid conflict, and how positively and negatively they perceived the disagreement to be report on the most relevant conflict from the day. If participants experienced more than one conflict that day, they were instructed to report on the most relevant one.

Follow-up/Debriefing. Participants came in for a debriefing session. At this session they were debriefed, awarded credit for participation, and told to destroy their identification card in order to remove any identifying information.

Measures

Orientation. The orientation included three separate measures of motivations—two relationship specific measures and one general measure. The Relationship Causality Orientation Scale (RCOS) was used in the main analyses and the General Causality

Orientation Scale and Couples Motivation Questionnaire were used to provide

preliminary evidence of validity for the RCOS.

General Causality Orientation Scale (GCOS) (Deci & Ryan, 1985a) (Appendix

A). This scale measures people's relatively enduring general motivational orientations. It

assesses three motivational orientations: Autonomous ($\alpha = .88$), controlled ($\alpha = .74$),

and impersonal ($\alpha = .86$) causality orientations. However, due to the nature of the

hypotheses, I will only examine autonomous and controlled motivations. Participants

read 17 short vignettes with three items for each vignette (one item representing one of

the motivational orientations) with 51 items in total. Participants then rated how likely it

is for each item that they would react to the vignette in that way on a 7-point likert-type

scale.

Relationship Causality Orientation Scale (Appendix B). Relationship

motivations were measured using this scale. The RCOS is currently being developed by

Knee, Hadden, Rodriguez, and Porter from the GCOS as a relationship specific

motivation questionnaire. As mentioned previously, motivation orientations are said to be

arranged hierarchically, from global to contextual to situational. This scale provides a

similar structure as the GCOS to analyze the extent to which one tends to approach

relationships with autonomous ($\alpha = .76$), controlled ($\alpha = .63$) and impersonal ($\alpha =$

.80) orientations. Participants read 16 short vignettes with three items for each vignette

(one item representing one of the motivational orientations) with 48 items in total.

Participants rated how likely it is for each item that they would react to the vignette in

that way on a 7-point likert-type scale. Additionally, as this scale contains relationship

specific measures of autonomous and controlled motivations, all of the main analyses are

computed using this scale. As the present hypotheses focus only on autonomous and controlled motivations, the following analyses will only examine these two subscales.

Couples Motivation Questionnaire (CMQ) (Blais et al., 1990) (Appendix C). This 18-item scale was developed by Blais, Sabourin, Boucher, and Vallerand (1990) to measure relationship autonomy, that is, the extent to which one is involved in the relationship for extrinsic (external pressure) and intrinsic (self-directed) reasons. The scale has 6 subscales with 3 questions each that represent the 6 different levels of internalization: Intrinsic, integrated, identified, introjected, external, and amotivational. Further, an index of relationship autonomy was computed by weighting the items according to where their relative positions on the self-determination continuum ($\alpha =$ .71). For details on how the weights were derived, see Blais and colleagues (1990). Participants rated how much each statement represents a reason they are currently in their relationship on a 7-point likert-type scale from "does not correspond at all" to "corresponds exactly."

Romantic Relationship Goals Questionnaire (RGQ) (Hadden & Smith, 2010) (Appendix D). I created a measure of interpersonal goals based on the work done by Crocker and Canevello (2008) that was worded for romantic interpersonal goals rather than roommate interpersonal goals. This scale measures compassionate goals (e.g., "Avoid neglecting my relationship with my partner," "Be supportive of my relationship partner) (12 items; α = .86) and self-image goals (e.g., "Avoid being rejected by my partner," "Get my partner to acknowledge my positive qualities") (7 items; α = .85). The interpersonal goals are measured on a 5-point likert-type scale from 1 (disagree strongly) to 5 (agree strongly).

Daily Diary. These measures were completed in the daily diaries. Participants were instructed to think about how they apply for *that day*.

Rusbult Investment Model (RIM) (Rusbult, Martz, & Agnew, 1998) (Appendix E). This 22-item scale consists of four subscales meant to measure how invested one is in their relationship, two of which were included in the daily questionnaire: satisfaction and commitment. The satisfaction subscale consists of 5 items ("My relationship is close to ideal") ($\alpha = .93$) and the commitment subscale consists of 7 items ("I am committed to maintaining my relationship with my partner") (daily $\alpha = .93$). Participants rated each statement on a 9-point likert-type scale ranging from "do not agree at all" to "agree completely."

Inclusion of Other in Self Scale (IOS) (Aron, Aron, & Smollan, 1992) (Appendix F). This single item scale measures felt closeness using a sliding pictoral scale. The scale consists of 7 Venn diagrams with varying degrees of overlap to represent overlap between participants and their partners. Participants were asked to select with diagram best reflects how close they felt to their romantic partner.

Basic Psychological Need Scale (La Guardia, Ryan, Couchman, & Deci, 2000) (Appendix G). This 9-item scale measures the degree to which one's romantic partner fulfills one's basic psychological needs. There are 3 subscales measuring autonomy ("When I am with my romantic partner, I feel free to be who I am") ($\alpha = .72$), competence ("When I am with my romantic partner, I feel like a competent person") ($\alpha = .70$), and relatedness ("When I am with my romantic partner, I feel loved and cared about") ($\alpha = .80$). These subscales were aggregated to form an overall score for need

fulfillment (α = .86). Participants rated each statement on a 7-point likert-type scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree."

Secure Base Scale (Feeney & Thrush, 2010) (Appendix H). This scale measures the extent to which one is supportive toward to one's partner. There are three subscales with five items each that measure the extent to which one is available for one's partner ("When my partner is facing a challenging or difficult situation, I try to make myself available to him/her in case he/she needs me"), non-intrusive ("I'm usually very careful not to interfere in my partner's activities when he/she is trying something new and challenging"), and encouraging ("When my partner tells me about something new that he/she would like to try, I usually encourage him/her to do it"). These subscales were combined to create an overall score on supportiveness. Participants rated how much they felt they felt the statements were accurate on a 7-point likert-type scale from "not at all" to "very much so" (α = .72).

Responsiveness Scale (Cutrona, Hessling, & Suhr, 1997) (Appendix I). This scale measures how responsive one is to one's partner. The scale is comprised of six items (e.g., "I tried to be sensitive to my partner's feelings") that participants rate on a 7-point likert-type scale from "not at all" to "very much so" (α = .89).

Conflict (Appendix J). Participants were asked whether or not they had a conflict with their partner that day ("Did you have a conflict or disagreement with your partner today?"). If participants responded yes they were asked to respond to the following questions. If they responded no, they were forwarded to the end of the survey.

Severity of Conflict (Appendix K). One item measured participants' perceived severity of the conflict ("How severe was the conflict?") on a 7-point likert-type scale from "not at all" to "very much."

Perceptions of Conflict (Knee et al., 2005) (Appendix L). Twelve items assessed the degree to which participants attempted to understand the disagreement and attempted to avoid the conflict. Participants rated how they felt during the conflict on a 7-point likert-type scale from "not at all" to "very much." The scale consists of two subscales, openness ("Explore other points of view") ($\alpha = .88$) and defensiveness ("Want to leave or walk away") ($\alpha = .81$).

Positive and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS) (Watson, Clark, & Tellengen, 1988) (Appendix M). This scale lists 20 adjectives that describe various feelings and emotions (e.g., "jittery", "proud"). Participants rated how much they felt each feeling on a 5-point likert-type scale from "very slightly or not at all" to "extremely."

Results

Participants recorded 991 daily diaries during the 14 day period, with the average participant completing 10.010 entries. Additionally, there were 462 conflicts recorded during the diary period, with 91 participants having reported at least one conflict with their partner during the 14 day period. The average participant reported having 5.077 conflicts with their partners over the course of 14 days.

Preliminary Analyses

The main analyses of this paper focus on how relationship autonomy—as conceptualized by Causality Orientations Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000)—corresponds with the two distinct types of interpersonal goals (Crocker & Canevello, 2008). As such,

it was important to establish convergent validity for the Relationship Causality Orientation Scale (RCOS). To do this, I computed correlations between the RCOS and the General Causality Orientations Scale (GCOS) and Couple's Motivation Questionnaire (CMQ), which measures relationship autonomy along a single dimension from autonomous to amotivated. As expected, relationship-specific autonomous motivations were strongly associated with general autonomous motivations ($r = .636$, $p < .001$) and moderately with the CMQ ($r = .356$, $p < .001$). Surprisingly, relationship-specific autonomous motivations were also weakly correlated with general controlled motivations ($r = .222$, $p = .027$). However, as expected, relationship-specific controlled motivations were strongly associated with general controlled motivations ($r = .624$, $p < .001$), and marginally negatively with the CMQ ($r = -.170$, $p = .095$). Additionally, they were uncorrelated with general autonomous motivations. These associations provide evidence of convergent validity for the RCOS. Although the subscales of the RCOS were strongly correlated with their respective subscales in the GCOS the correlations were not strong enough to imply complete overlap.

As such, the following results focus on the RCOS, which is composed of distinct measures of autonomous and controlled motivations. Preliminary analyses were conducted to determine if relationship autonomy was associated with the number of diaries completed or conflicts reported. Results showed that the baseline autonomous motivations were not associated with either the number of diaries completed ($r = .059$, $p = .564$) or the number of conflicts reported ($r = -.010$, $p = .922$). However, while controlled motivations were not associated with the number of diaries completed ($r =$

.157, $p = .120$), they were found to be associated with reporting more conflicts with one's partner ($r = .332$, $p = .001$).

Next, I computed means and standard deviations as well as a set of correlations between relationship-specific motivations, interpersonal goals, and daily outcomes, which can be found in Table 1. For daily variables, participants' scores were aggregated from the diary observations such that each participant had one score that represented their average score on the measure. As expected, autonomous motivations were positively associated with baseline compassionate goals ($r = .419$, $p < .001$) but not with self-image goals ($r = -.062$, $p = .546$). Autonomous motivations were also significantly positively associated with aggregate daily satisfaction ($r = .242$, $p = .016$), commitment ($r = .231$, $p < .021$), need fulfillment ($r = .331$, $p = .027$), supportiveness ($r = .288$, $p = .003$), responsiveness ($r = .441$, $p < .001$), and marginally more understanding during conflict ($r = .192$, $p < .068$). However, they were not associated with daily closeness or defensiveness.

As expected, controlled motivations were associated with higher levels of baseline self-image goals ($r = .482$, $p < .001$) but not with compassionate goals ($r = .133$, $p = .191$). Interestingly, bivariate correlations revealed a significant correlation between controlled motivations and daily supportiveness ($r = -.301$, $p = .003$) and responsiveness ($r = -.205$, $p = .041$) to one's partner, but not with satisfaction, commitment, need fulfillment, or responses to conflict (p's $> .137$).

Table 1. *Bivariate correlations among motivations, goals, and daily outcomes*

Characteristic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Autonomous Motivations	5.4856 (0.645)													
2. Controlled Motivations	-.043	3.747 (0.778)												
3. Compassionate Goals	.419***	.133	4.429 (0.488)											
4. Self-Image Goals	-.062	.482***	.232*	2.926 (0.791)										
5. Satisfaction	.242*	-.022	.225*	.030	7.480 (1.396)									
6. Commitment	.231*	.014	.254*	.027	.757***	7.887 (1.410)								
7. Closeness	.069	-.110	.053	-.172†	.569***	.418***	4.650 (1.371)							
8. Need Fulfillment	.221*	-.150	.070	-.200*	.753***	.672***	.647***	7.374 (1.158)						
9. Supportiveness	.288**	-.301**	.255*	-.213*	.683***	.658***	.435***	.704***	5.759 (0.768)					
10. Responsiveness	.441***	-.205*	.314**	-.095	.754***	.653***	.495***	.699***	.741***	6.096 (0.905)				
11. Understanding	.192†	.027	.162	.059	.182†	.097	.198†	.152	.052	.239*	3.830 (1.405)			
12. Defensiveness	-.085	.114	.044	.212*	-.247*	-.218*	-.233*	-.274**	-.352***	-.276**	.225*	3.213 (1.194)		
13. Positive Affect	-.003	.120	.108	.169	.055	-.042	0.164	.052	-0.04221	.025	.490***	0.074	2.134 (0.885)	
14. Negative Affect	-.097	.173	.089	.209*	-.145	-.271**	-.177†	-.239*	-.264*	-.195†	.241*	.651***	.388***	1.956 (0.661)

$^\dagger p \leq .10$ $*p \leq .05$ $**p < .01$ $***p < .001$. Means and Standard Deviations are along the diagonal. Autonomous and controlled motivations reflect scores on the RCOS. Characteristics 5-14 were measured daily.

Plan of Analysis

To test the role of interpersonal goals as mediators between relationship autonomy and daily relationship outcomes, the analyses follow Kenny, Kashy, and Bolger (1998) recommendations for establishing mediational pathways. In Step 1, I first independently tested whether daily outcomes are predicted by baseline levels of autonomous motivations (Hypothesis 1a) and controlled motivations (Hypothesis 1b). In Step 2, as mentioned previously, results showed a positive association between autonomous motivations and compassionate goals, and a positive association between controlled motivations and self-image goals (see Table 1). In step 3, I tested whether daily outcomes were predicted by baseline levels of compassionate goals (Hypothesis 2a) and compassionate goals (Hypothesis 2b). Finally, I computed a set of hierarchical linear models in which the daily outcomes were regressed onto both autonomous motivations and compassionate goals (Hypothesis 3a) and another set in which the daily outcomes were simultaneously regressed onto controlled motivations and self-image goals (Hypothesis 3b) and used the modified Sobel test to determine the significance of the indirect mediation pathway (Kenny, Kashy, & Bolger, 1998). This tested the hypothesis that interpersonal goals serve as the mediating variable between motivations and relationship outcomes. It is important to note that I decided to use this method rather than bootstrapping as bootstrapping methods are still in development for multilevel designs.

The following results were conducted using hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) in order to model non-independence within participants over the diary period. Analyses were computed in PROC MIXED in SAS, using restricted maximum likelihood

estimation. In HLM analyses, variables can exist at two levels. Level 1 is referred to as the daily level, which captures the fluctuations between days within people. Level 2 is known as the person level, and is the variance that is explained by differences between participants. The baseline variables in this study exist at level 2, as they were only measured once and all of the variance is between participants. The daily variables, meanwhile, are mixed variables, as they contain variance that is due both to individual differences and daily fluctuations within people. Because the predictor variables were measured at level 2, the following analyses were conducted exclusively at level 2 and test variance between people. Additionally, all predictor variables in the following analyses were grand mean centered, created by subtracting the overall mean score for the variable from each observation.

Hypothesis 1: Relationship Autonomy and Daily Outcomes

Hypothesis 1a. A series of hierarchical models were computed in which autonomous motivations (referred to as AM in the following model equations) were included as the predictor and daily variables included as the outcome.

$$Daily\ Outcome = \beta_{10} + \beta_{11}AM + e_1$$

As shown in Table 2, autonomous motivations were positively associated with daily satisfaction ($\beta = .505$, $p = .002$), commitment ($\beta = .399$, $p = .024$), need fulfillment ($\beta = .415$, $p = .002$), supportiveness ($\beta = .350$, $p < .001$), responsiveness ($\beta = .617$, $p < .001$). However, autonomous motivations were not associated with daily levels of closeness.

Hierarchical models were computed with responses to conflict as the outcome. These models included perceived severity of the conflict as a covariate.

$$Response\ to\ Conflict = \beta_{10} + \beta_{11}AM + \beta_{12}Severity + e_1$$

Results revealed that autonomous motivations were positively associated with more desire to understand one's partner ($\beta = .401$, $p = .021$), but not with defensiveness or positive or negative affect following conflict. Overall, these analyses found support for the hypothesis that autonomous motivations predict overall better outcomes.

Hypothesis 1b. A series of hierarchical models were computed in which controlled motivations (referred to as CM in the following model equations) were included as the criterion and daily variables included as the outcome.

$$Daily\ Outcome = \beta_{10} + \beta_{11}CM + e_1$$

The results for controlled motivations showed somewhat mixed support for the hypothesis. As shown in Table 2, controlled motivations were associated with lower need fulfillment ($\beta = -.239$, $p = .035$), supportiveness ($\beta = -.290$, $p < .001$), responsiveness ($\beta = -.251$, $p = .004$), and marginally with closeness ($\beta = -.228$, $p = .098$). However, controlled motivations were not associated with daily levels of satisfaction or commitment.

Additionally, hierarchical models were computed with responses to conflict as the outcome. These models included perceived severity of the conflict as a covariate.

$$Response\ to\ Conflict = \beta_{10} + \beta_{11}CM + \beta_{12}Severity + e_1$$

Results revealed that controlled motivations were not associated with more desire to understand one's partner, defensiveness, or positive or negative affect following conflict. These results found somewhat mixed support for this hypothesis. However, controlled motivations were generally predictive of less support and quality.

Table 2. Hierarchical Analyses for Autonomous Motivations and Controlled Motivations

Outcome	*B*	*SE B*	*p*	*B*	*SE B*	*p*
		Autonomous Motivations			Controlled Motivations	
Satisfaction	.505	.157	**	-.111	.136	*ns*
Commitment	.399	.174	*	.022	.149	*ns*
Closeness	.183	.165	*ns*	-.228	.137	*†*
Need Fulfillment	.415	.130	**	-.239	.111	*
Supportiveness	.350	.093	***	-.290	.078	***
Responsiveness	.617	.093	***	-.251	.085	**
Understanding	.401	.171	*	-.062	.162	*ns*
Defensiveness	.064	.115	*ns*	.090	.107	*ns*
Positive Affect	.021	.126	*ns*	.151	.113	*ns*
Negative Affect	-.018	.083	*ns*	.097	.075	*ns*

†p ≤ .10 *p ≤ .05. **p ≤ .01. ***p ≤ .001.

Hypothesis 2: Interpersonal Goals and Daily Outcomes

Hypothesis 2a. A series of hierarchical models were computed in which compassionate goals (referred to as CG in the following model equations) were included as the criterion and daily variables included as the outcome.

$$Daily\ Outcome = \beta_{20} + \beta_{21}CG + e_2$$

As shown in Table 3, compassionate goals were positively associated with daily satisfaction ($\beta = .612$, $p = .003$), commitment ($\beta = .694$, $p = .002$), supportiveness ($\beta = .423$, $p < .001$), responsiveness ($\beta = .555$, $p < .001$). However, compassionate goals were not associated with daily levels of closeness and need fulfillment.

Hierarchical models were computed with responses to conflict as the outcome. These models included perceived severity of the conflict as a covariate.

$$Response\ to\ Conflict = \beta_{20} + \beta_{21}CG + \beta_{22}Severity + e_2$$

Results revealed that compassionate goals were marginally associated with more desire to understand one's partner ($\beta = .409$, $p = .059$), but not with defensiveness, or positive or negative affect following conflict. This set of analyses provides support for the hypothesis, finding overall that compassionate goals predict worse outcomes.

Hypothesis 2b. A series of hierarchical models were computed in which self-image goals (referred to as SG in the following model equations) were included as the criterion and daily variables included as the outcome.

$$Daily\ Outcome = \beta_{20} + \beta_{21}SG + e_2$$

As shown in Table 3, self-image goals were negatively associated with closeness ($\beta = -.394$, $p = .005$), need fulfillment ($\beta = -.367$, $p = .001$), supportiveness ($\beta = -.230$, $p =$

.004), responsiveness ($\beta = -.197$, $p = .023$). However, self-image goals were not associated with daily levels of satisfaction or commitment.

Hierarchical models were computed with responses to conflict as the outcome. These models included perceived severity of the conflict as a covariate.

$$Response\ to\ Conflict = \beta_{20} + \beta_{21}SG + \beta_{22}Severity + e_2$$

Results revealed that self-image goals were associated with more defensiveness ($\beta = .206$, $p = .036$) and more negative affect following conflict ($\beta = .171$, $p = .014$), but not with desire to understand one's partner. Surprisingly, self-image goals were positively associated with positive affect following conflict ($\beta = .215$, $p = .400$). Overall, these results provide evidence for an overall negative association between self-image goals and relationship outcomes.

Table 3. Hierarchical Analyses for Compassionate and Self-Image Goals

Outcome	*B*	*SE B*	*p*	*B*	*SE B*	*p*
	Compassionate Goals			Self-Image Goals		
Satisfaction	.612	.203	**	-.119	.135	*ns*
Commitment	.694	.222	**	-.003	.148	*ns*
Closeness	.104	.212	*ns*	-.394	.136	**
Need Fulfillment	.160	.172	*ns*	-.369	.109	***
Supportiveness	.423	.121	***	-.230	.078	**
Responsiveness	.555	.125	***	-.197	.085	*
Understanding	.409	.214	*†*	.032	.147	*ns*
Defensiveness	.170	.143	*ns*	.206	.097	*
Positive Affect	.115	.158	*ns*	.215	.103	*
Negative Affect	.105	.103	*ns*	.171	.068	*

†p ≤ .10 *p ≤ .05. **p ≤ .01. ***p ≤ .001.

Hypothesis 3: Interpersonal Goals as Mediators

Hypothesis 3a. A series of hierarchical models were computed in which both autonomous motivations and compassionate goals were included as the predictors and daily variables included as the outcome. In order to test whether compassionate goals act as a mediator between autonomous motivations and relationship outcomes, a Sobel test was performed along with each model.

$$Daily\ Outcome = \beta_{30} + \beta_{31}AM + \beta_{32}CG + e_3$$

Results can be found in Table 4. The Sobel test revealed that the association between autonomous orientations and commitment was significantly mediated by compassionate goals, and marginally so for supportiveness and responsiveness.

Hierarchical models were computed with responses to conflict as the outcome. These models included perceived severity of the conflict as a covariate.

$$Daily\ Outcome = \beta_{30} + \beta_{31}AM + \beta_{32}CG + \beta_{33}Severity + e_3$$

However, results did not show compassionate goals acted as a mediator for desire to understand one's partner, defensiveness, or positive or negative affect after conflict. These results provide mixed support for this hypothesis, such that compassionate goals only mediated associations with commitment and support.

Table 4. Results of Mediation Analyses for Autonomous Motivations and Compassionate Goals

Outcome	*B*	*SE B*	*p*	*B*	*SE B*	*p*	*t*	*p*
	Autonomous Motivations			Compassionate Goals			Sobel Test	
Satisfaction	.453	.176	*.011*	.375	.220	*.091*	1.600	*.111*
Commitment	.277	.194	*.156*	.548	.245	*.027*	**2.008**	**.045**
Closeness	.200	.192	*.299*	-.007	.237	*.977*	-0.029	.977
Need Fulfillment	.514	.148	*<.001*	-.108	.184	*.559*	-.581	.562
Supportiveness	.324	.102	*.002*	.251	.129	*.054*	***1.791***	***.073***
Responsiveness	.566	.104	*<.001*	.263	.129	*.044*	***1.863***	***.062***
Understanding	.310	.191	*.107*	.274	.228	*.233*	1.162	.245
Defensiveness	-.020	.129	*.878*	.179	.155	*.251*	1.119	.263
Positive Affect	-.060	.139	*.669*	.143	.171	*.407*	0.821	*.412*
Negative Affect	-.092	.092	*.319*	.146	.112	*.193*	1.259	.208

Note. Bold indicates significant mediation. Bold and italicized indicates marginally significant mediation.

Hypothesis 3b. A series of hierarchical models were computed in which both controlled motivations and self-image goals were included as the predictors and daily variables included as the outcome. In order to test whether or not self-image goals act as a mediator between controlled motivations and relationship outcomes, a Sobel test was performed along with each model to measure the extent to which the association between controlled motivations and relationship outcomes was accounted for by self-image goals.

$$Daily\ Outcome = \beta_{30} + \beta_{31}CG + \beta_{32}SG + e_3$$

Results can be found in Table 5. The Sobel test revealed that the associations between controlled orientations and both closeness and need fulfillment were significantly mediated by self-image goals. However, there was no observed mediation for satisfaction, commitment, supportiveness, or responsiveness.

Hierarchical models were computed that included responses to conflict as the outcome. These models included perceived severity of the conflict as a covariate.

$$Daily\ Outcome = \beta_{30} + \beta_{31}CM + \beta_{32}SG + \beta_{33}Severity + e_3$$

Results show that self-image goals marginally mediated the association between controlled motivations and desire to understand one's partner, as well as both positive and negative affect following conflict. However, self-image goals were not a mediator for defensiveness. Overall, these analyses provide some evidence that self-image goals function as a mediator, specifically for closeness, need fulfillment, and responses to conflict.

Table 5. Results of Mediation Analyses for Controlled Motivations and Self-Image Goals

Outcome	*B*	*SE B*	*p*	*B*	*SE B*	*p*	*t*	*p*
	Controlled Motivations			Self-Image Goals			Sobel Test	
Satisfaction	-.075	.156	*.629*	-.083	.154	*.590*	-.536	.592
Commitment	.026	.171	*.881*	-.015	.170	*.929*	-.141	.888
Closeness	-.051	.155	*.742*	-.369	.156	*.020*	**-2.166**	***.030***
Need Fulfillment	-.085	.125	*.500*	-.329	.124	*.009*	**-2.381**	***.017***
Supportiveness	-.237	.088	*.009*	-.119	.087	*.178*	-1.326	.185
Responsiveness	-.203	.097	*.039*	-.102	.096	*.292*	-1.042	.297
Understanding	-.089	.178	*.619*	.065	.162	*.688*	.400	.689
Defensiveness	-.003	.117	*.981*	.207	.107	*.056*	**1.821**	***.069***
Positive Affect	.066	.124	*.596*	.189	.115	*.103*	**1.732**	***.083***
Negative Affect	.024	.082	*.771*	.162	.075	*.034*	**2.001**	***.045***

Note. Bold indicates significant mediation. Bold and italicized indicates marginally significant mediation.

Discussion

The present research provided support for several of my hypotheses. Hypothesis 1, that relationship autonomy would be associated with relationship outcomes was strongly supported, replicating findings of previous studies (e.g., Knee et al., 2005). Autonomous motivations were positively associated with most measures of relationship outcomes, such as satisfaction and desire to understand one's partner during conflict. Controlled motivations, meanwhile were less predictive of relationship outcomes, especially ones conceptually related to relationship quality (e.g., satisfaction, commitment).

Of importance is that the results point to an association between relationship autonomy and support for one's partner, which has been relatively unexplored in previous research. Results found a positive association between autonomous motivations and supportiveness and responsiveness toward one's partner, and a negative association between controlled motivations, supportiveness and responsiveness. This is an important finding to note, as it suggests that relationship autonomy is not simply a lack of focus on the self, but a turn to one's partner. In other words, this suggests that when people are genuinely invested in their relationship, they are more likely to be committed, caring, and supportive to partners.

Hypothesis 2, that interpersonal goals are associated with relationship outcomes was also largely supported. Compassionate goals were found to be associated with higher quality (e.g., satisfaction, closeness), support, and desire to understand one's partner during conflict. Self-image goals, meanwhile were generally associated with

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worse relationship outcomes, and higher levels of reported defensiveness during conflicts with one's partner. This extends previous research on interpersonal goals, providing some insight into their role in romantic relationships. A limited amount of previous research has examined how interpersonal goals are associated with romantic relationship processes (e.g., Hadden, Smith, Knee, & Canevello, under review; Hadden, Overup, & Knee, under review). The current research provides some replication of previous research, finding that compassionate goals are associated with higher satisfaction and support. However, this is the first research to my knowledge that has examined how interpersonal goals are associated with responses to conflict, showing that the extent to which one is either self-focused or partner focused predicts how well one will react to conflict. Specifically, being focused on crafting some kind of image of oneself was connected to feeling that conflict is a threat, and a desire to shut down or otherwise walk away from the situation. However, having a genuine desire to care about one's partner also appears to matter during conflicts, as one is more open to communicating with one's partner about his or her perspective.

This finding is important to note as it helps to clarify how interpersonal goals are associated with different styles of interactions with one's partner. Early research on goals has mostly focused on providing support and being responsive to partners' needs and desires (e.g., Crocker & Canevello, 2008; Canevello & Crocker, 2010). Although these early studies found that self-image goals are associated with downward spirals in relationship quality, little was known about how this might be associated with defensiveness and authenticity of interactions with relationship partners. Hadden and colleagues (under review) provided some evidence that self-image goals are associated

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with less self-presentation toward partners—behaviors such as ingratiation, self-handicapping, etc. The current research expands upon this by directly examining conflict, and further tying interpersonal goals to openness during interactions with partners.

Hypothesis 3, that interpersonal goals act as a mediator between relationship autonomy and relationship outcomes, also received support, albeit not for every outcome variable. The results revealed that compassionate goals mediated the pathway between autonomous motivations and commitment and (marginally) supportiveness and responsiveness. However, the mediation failed to reach significance for satisfaction, closeness, need fulfillment, and responses to conflict. Self-image goals, meanwhile, were found to mediate the relationship between controlled motivations and closeness and need fulfillment, as well as marginally for defensiveness, positive, and negative affect, but did not mediate the relationship with supportiveness or understand responses to conflict. These findings suggest that relationship autonomy is associated with certain positive relationship outcomes due not only to a lack of ego-involvement, but rather via a turn to one's partner and genuine desire to support and care for him or her.

It is especially interesting to note the pattern of significant mediation analyses. That is, although compassionate goals did not mediate the association between autonomous motivations and satisfaction or responses to conflict, they appear to act as a mediator specifically for the association between autonomous motivations and commitment and support giving, a concept previously unexplored in terms of SDT. This is particularly relevant for my hypotheses, as although it is possible that people high in relationship autonomy do not experience greater overall relationship quality (e.g.,

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satisfaction, closeness) or less defensiveness due to partner focus (and thus compassionate goals were not revealed as a mediator), interpersonal processes such as committing to and providing support for one's partner may rely more on the aspect of relationship autonomy that encompasses partner-focus and care. In this regard, these findings provide evidence for such a link. Additionally, although this research did not examine behaviors or partner perception, relationship autonomy may predict upward spirals in relationships specifically due to more responsive and supportive behavior over time, which benefits partners and, ultimately, the relationship.

Meanwhile, for people low in controlled motivations, perceptions of the relationship may benefit from a lack of self-image goals. That is, based on the results it appears that high levels of ego-involvement, in the form of self-image goals, specifically mediate the association between controlled motivations and perceptions of closeness, need fulfillment, and conflict. This is interesting, as it suggests that perhaps the reason people who feel pressured to be in a relationship lack closeness and satisfaction is because of a high self-focus. That is, being focused on protecting one's ego may inhibit the development of intimacy and fulfillment in the relationship. Additionally, during conflict, these self-image goals may be the reason that one high in controlled motivation perceives conflict as a threat.

In this sense, the results suggest that interpersonal goals function as mediators between relationship autonomy and outcomes, albeit in a more nuanced way hypothesized. That is, there are two mechanisms that provide distinct functions. On one hand, interpersonal processes such as focusing on or committing to one's partner, relationship autonomy is important as it involves a turn to one's partner out of genuine

care and concern. On the other hand, low relationship autonomy predicts worse intrapersonal processes specifically because of one's desire to establish a particular image of oneself. That is, feelings of intimacy (e.g., closeness) with one's partner or non-defensiveness during conflict are impeded because one is focused primarily on oneself.

Limitations

The current research had several limitations that are worth noting. First, despite the utilization of a diary design with outcomes being measured daily, both relationship autonomy and interpersonal goals were measured at only one time. As such, these analyses were conducted exclusively at the between-person level, and are unable to rule out the possibility that significant findings were the result of systematic individual differences. This also limits the interpretability of the mediation analyses. As the data include only one time point for the independent variable (relationship autonomy) and mediator (interpersonal goals), the reverse mediational pathways cannot be empirically ruled out. Additionally, I was unable to test temporal relationships between variables. For instance, testing whether relationship autonomy predicts future levels of interpersonal goals or vice versa could rule out possible causal pathways.

Also, as a result of the sample, these data cannot speak to the generalizability of the findings across contexts, including other types of close relationships, demographics, or time frames. The sample in this study was young (average age of 21.7), mostly female and dating, relatively educated (at least one member of each couple was enrolled in university courses), and they were only followed for two weeks. Although I do not see a reason why the findings of this paper should not hold across different contexts (i.e., more

established relationships, with an older sample) these findings should be tested across a variety of circumstances.

Future Directions

There are several possible future directions to the current research. First, as mentioned above, this study was unable to examine within-person differences. Future research may attempt to address this limitation by including a measure of motivations and goals in the daily diary. However, this may be difficult as the RCOS is, by nature, a rather long and burdensome survey. Alternatively, it may be possible to track participants over a longer period of time, and use weekly, rather than daily, surveys. For example, a future design might follow participants over the course of the semester, having participants fill out a survey once per week. This survey could include measures that assess quality or support giving in the past week. Additionally, this design could use slightly longer surveys than a daily design, which would allow some flexibility in cutting down the motivations and goals measures.

Additionally, while some research has found that relationship autonomy is important for one's partner's perceptions of the relationship, it is unclear whether one's relationship autonomy predicts partner's perceptions of support received, and the implications for subsequent relationship quality. As such, future research should take a dyadic approach to the link between relationship autonomy and partner focus, specifically regarding partner perceptions of support and subsequent changes in relationship autonomy and interpersonal goals. Furthermore, as previously mentioned, the current research was limited by having only baseline measures of relationship autonomy and

interpersonal goals. Future work may focus on how these constructs fluctuate over time, and how these fluctuations are associated with various relationship outcomes.

Furthermore, as this research suggests, relationship autonomy is associated with higher support giving and responsiveness to one's partner. However, this link is still not well established, nor are the mechanisms that underlie it. Future research may continue to focus on the possibility that relationship autonomy leads to increased focus on one's partner via experimental methodology. Specifically, future research can attempt to prime relationship autonomy in participants, and examine any possible effects on compassionate goals and support giving. For example, relationship autonomy can be primed using scrambled word tasks in which participants are assigned either to unscramble words associated with autonomy (e.g., choiceful) or neutral words (e.g., banana). Following the prime, participants would be asked about their relationship goals and perceptions of their partner. Additionally, future research can utilize observational methodologies to examine how relationship autonomy leads to more supportiveness. For instance, couples brought into a lab can be split up such that one is assigned a difficult or stressful task, and the partner given an opportunity to write their partner a note. This note can then be coded for the extent to which it provides support.

Conclusion

The data revealed several unique and interesting findings. First, the results provide evidence that relationship autonomy is associated with an increased focus on one's partner, rather than simply a decreased focus on oneself, as witnessed in the association between autonomous motivations and compassionate goals, support giving, and responsiveness towards one's partner. The results also support a connection between

interpersonal goals and relationship outcomes. Namely, compassionate goals are associated with higher relationship quality, support, and more desire to understand one's partner during conflict while self-image goals were associated with worse relationship outcomes and defensiveness in response to conflict with one's partner. Additionally, the present research found support for the hypothesis that interpersonal goals function as a mediator between relationship autonomy and relationship outcomes, specifically in regards to commitment and supportiveness toward one's partner (e.g., support giving). Specifically, the findings support a link between relationship autonomy and commitment and support for one's partner because of higher concern for one's partner.

Appendix A

General Causality Orientation Scale (GCOS) (Deci & Ryan, 1985a)

Instructions: On this questionnaire you will find a series of 17 scenarios. For the <u>each</u> <u>of the three</u> statements following the scenarios, use the scale from 1 to 7 to indicate how likely it is you would respond in that way. **Please respond to each of the 51 statements**.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very			Moderately			Very
unlikely			Likely			Likely

You have been offered a new position in a company where you have worked for some time. The first question that is likely to come to mind is:

1. What if I can't live up to the new responsibility?

2. Will I make more at this position?

3. I wonder if the new work will be interesting.

You had a job interview several weeks ago. In the mail you received a form letter which states that the position has been filled. It's likely that you might think:

4. It's not what you know, but who you know.

5. I'm probably not good enough for the job.

6. Somehow they didn't see my qualifications as fitting their needs.

You are a plant supervisor and have been charged with the task of allotting coffee breaks to three workers who cannot all break at once. You would likely handle this by:

7. Telling the three workers the situation and having them work with you on the

schedule.

8. Simply assign the times that each can break to avoid any problems.

9. Find out from someone in authority what to do or what has been done in the past.

You have just received the results of a test you took, and discovered that you did very poorly. Your initial reaction is likely to be:

10. "I can't do anything right," and feel sad.

11. "I wonder how it is I did so poorly," and feel disappointed.

12. "That stupid test doesn't show anything," and feel angry.

When you and your friend are making plans for Saturday evening, it is likely that you would:

13. Leave it up to your friend; he (she) probably wouldn't want to do what you'd suggest.

14. Each make suggestions and then decide together on something that you both feel like doing.

15. Talk your friend into doing what you want to do.

You have been invited to a large party where you know very few people. As you look forward to the evening you would likely expect that:

16. You'll try to fit in with whatever is happening in order to have a good time and not look bad.

17. You'll find some people with whom you can relate.

18. You'll probably feel somewhat isolated and unnoticed.

You are asked to plan a picnic for yourself and your fellow employees. Your style for approaching this project could most likely be characterized as:

19. Take charge: that is, you would make most of the major decisions yourself.

20. Follow precedent: you're not really up to the task so you'd do it the way it's been done before.

21. Seek participation: get inputs from others who want to make them before you make your final plans.

Recently a position has opened up at your place of work that could have meant a promotion for you. However, a person you work with was offered the job rather than you. In evaluating the situation, you are likely to think:

22. You didn't really expect the job; you frequently get passed over.

23. The other person probably "did the right things" politically to get the job.

24. You would probably take a look at factors in your own performance that led you to be passed over.

You are embarking on a new career. The most important consideration is likely to be:

25. Whether you can do the work without getting in over your head.

26. How interested you are in that kind of work.

27. Whether there are good possibilities for advancement.

A woman who works for you has generally done an adequate job. However, for the past two weeks her work has not been up to par and she appears to be less interested in her work. Your reaction is likely to be:

28. Tell her that her work is below what is expected and that she should start working harder.

29. Ask her about the problem and let her know that you are available to help her work it out.

30. It's hard to know what to do to get her straightened out.

Your company has promoted you to a position in a city far from your present location.

As you think about the move you would probably:

31. Feel interested in the challenge and a little nervous at the same time.

32. Feel excited about the higher status and salary that is involved.

33. Feel stressed and anxious about the upcoming changes.

Within your circle of friends, the one with whom you choose to spend the most time is:

34. The one with whom you spend the most time exchanging ideas and feelings.

35. The one who is the most popular of them.

36. The one who needs you the most as a friend.

You have a school-age daughter. On parents' night the teacher tells you that your

daughter is doing poorly and doesn't seem involved in the work. You are likely to:

37. Talk it over with your daughter to understand further what the problem is.

38. Scold her and hope she does better.

39. Make sure she does the assignments, because she should be working harder.

Your friend has a habit that annoys you to the point of making you angry. It is likely that

you would:

40. Point it out each time you notice it, that way maybe he (she) will stop doing it.

41. Try to ignore the habit because talking about it won't do any good anyway.

42. Try to understand why your friend does it and why it is so upsetting for you.

A close friend of yours has been acting moody lately, and a couple of times has been

angry with you over "nothing". You might:

43. Share you observations with him (her) and try to find out what is going on for him

    (her).

44. Ignore it because there's not much you can do about it anyway.

45. Tell him (her) that you're willing to spend time together if and only if he (she) makes more effort to control himself (herself).

Your friend's younger sister is a freshman in college. Your friend tells you that her sister has been doing badly and asks you what he (she) should do about it: You advise your friend to:

46. Talk it over with her and try to see what is going on for her.

47. Not mention it; there's nothing he (she) could do about it anyway.

48. Tell her it's important for her to do well, so she should be working harder.

You feel that your friend is being inconsiderate. You would probably:

49. Find an opportunity to explain why it bothers you; he (she) may not even realize how much it is bothering you.

50. Say nothing; if your friend really cares about you he (she) would understand how you feel.

51. Demand that your friend start being more considerate; otherwise you'll respond in kind.

Appendix B

Relationship Causality Orientation Scale (RCOS)

Instructions: On this questionnaire you will find a series of 17 scenarios. For the <u>each</u> <u>of the three</u> statements following the scenarios, use the scale from 1 to 7 to indicate how likely it is you would respond in that way. **Please respond to each of the 48 statements.**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very			Moderately			Very
unlikely			Likely			Likely

You have been invited to dinner with your partner's parents. This will be the first time they meet you. To what extent are each of these questions likely to come to mind?

1. What if I can't live up to their expectations?

2. Will I make a good impression on them?

3. I wonder if it will be fun?

You went on a blind date with someone you really came to like. When you ask about going on a second date, the person says no. It's likely that you might think:

4. That person isn't good enough for me anyway.

5. I'm probably not good enough for that person.

6. I guess we are not as compatible as I had thought.

You have just received the results of a relationship health test that you and your partner took, and discovered that you scored very poorly. Your initial reaction is likely to be:

7. "I'm a bad partner," and feel sad.

8. "I wonder how it is we did so poorly," and feel disappointed.

9. "That stupid test doesn't show anything," and feel angry.

When you and your partner are making plans for Saturday evening, it is likely that you would:

10. Leave it up to your partner; he or she probably wouldn't want to do what you'd suggest anyway.

11. Each make suggestions and then decide together on something that you both feel like doing.

12. Talk your partner into doing what you want to do.

Your partner has been spending a lot more time at work and has seemed distant lately. Your reaction is likely to be:

13. Tell your partner that you deserve more of his or her time.

14. Ask your partner about the situation and try to work it out.

15. Just accept the fact that your partner will not be spending more time with you.

You and your partner have been invited to a large party where you know very few people. As you look forward to the evening you would likely expect that:

16. You'll try to fit in with whatever is happening in order to have a good time and not look bad.

17. You'll find some people with whom you can relate.

18. You'll probably feel somewhat isolated and unnoticed.

You are planning a special date for your partner. Your style for approaching this task can be characterized as:

19. Try to outdo what previous partners have done for him or her.

20. Do something simple because your partner might not like it much anyway.

21. Seek others' advice: Ask your partner's closest friends for ideas that your partner would really enjoy.

You and your partner have been arguing more than usual lately. During one of the arguments, your partner says that he or she has found someone else. In evaluating the situation, you are likely to think:

22. You didn't really expect it to last forever anyway.

23. The other person must have done "all the right things" to win your partner's affection.

24. I don't fully understand, but I will do my best to accept it. I just want my partner to be happy.

You are involved in a new relationship. The most important consideration is likely to be:

25. Whether you are getting in over your head.

26. How interesting and fulfilling you find it to be.

27. What my friends will think of this new person.

Your partner has been promoted to a new position in a city far away from your present location, and you are discussing whether to move there together. As you think about the move you would probably:

28. Feel interested in the challenge and a little nervous at the same time.

29. Feel excited about the higher status and salary that is involved.

30. Feel stressed and anxious about the upcoming changes.

Your partner has a habit that annoys you to the point of making you angry. It is likely that you would:

31. Point it out each time you notice it, that way maybe he or she will stop doing it.

32. Try to ignore the habit because talking about it won't do any good anyway.

33. Try to understand why your partner does it and why it is so upsetting for you.

Your partner has been acting moody lately, and a couple of times has been angry with you over "nothing". You might:

34. Share you observations with your partner and try to find out what is going on for him or her.

35. Ignore it because there's not much you can do about it anyway.

36. Tell your partner that you're willing to spend time together if and only if he or she makes more effort to control his or her emotions.

Your partner is concerned about an unhealthy habit that you have. Your reaction is likely to be:

37. Be grateful about his or her concern and try to understand what you can do to fix it.

38. Be annoyed that your partner is trying to change you.

39. Hope that it doesn't come up again because I can't do anything to change it anyway.

You feel that your partner is being inconsiderate. You would probably:

40. Find an opportunity to explain why it bothers you; he or she may not even realize how much it is bothering you.

41. Say nothing; if your partner really cares about you, he or she would understand how you feel.

42. Demand that your partner start being more considerate; otherwise you'll respond in kind.

Your partner has been spending a lot of time with an attractive coworker lately, and does not seem to want to talk about it. You would probably:

43. Try to prevent your partner from spending time with that person.

44. Do nothing; your partner is going to do what he or she thinks is best anyway.

45. Be open to getting to know the coworker better. If your partner likes them, then you might like them too.

Your partner buys you a gift that you don't like. You would probably:

46. Feel annoyed, tell your partner that you don't like it, and to return it.

47. Feel happy, and accept the gift. It's the thought that counts.

48. Feel sad, and think that your partner doesn't know you very well.

Appendix C

Couples Motivation Questionnaire (CMQ) (Blais et al., 1990)

Please take a few moments to think about the reasons why you are currently in the relationship with your partner. Using the scale below, indicate the degree to which you feel each of the following statements corresponds to your reasons for having a relationship with your romantic partner by placing the appropriate number beside each statement.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Does not correspond at all						Corresponds exactly

Why are you in this relationship?

1. Because I need to be in a relationship with my partner to feel important.

2. Because I value the way my relationship with my partner allows me to improve myself as a person.

3. Because I value the way our life as a couple gives me the opportunity to participate in new activities.

4. Because I love the many fun and exciting times I share with my partner.

5. Because I would feel guilty if I separated from my partner.

6. Because people who are important to me (e.g., children, friends, family) are proud of our relationship and I wouldn't want to disappoint them.

7. Because my partner wouldn't be able to cope with a separation.

8. Because this I the person I have chosen to share life plans that are important to me.

9. There is nothing motivating me to stay in my relationship with my partner.

10. Because I do not want to live alone.

11. Because with my partner, I feel free to commit myself to future plans that I hold dear.

12. Because my relationship allows me to share my emotions and special moments with someone.

13. Because my relationship is a commitment that I must keep.

14. Because the many deep and meaningful discussions I have with my partner are very satisfying to me.

15. Because being with my partner gives me the opportunity to develop new abilities that I didn't know I had.

16. Because the moments I share with my partner are very stimulating and satisfying to me.

17. I don't know. In all honesty, I don't feel like making the effort to keep this relationship together.

18. I don't know why anymore. Our relationship is destined to fail since I no longer see any possibility of saving it.

Appendix D

Romantic Relationship Goals Questionnaire (RGQ) (Hadden & Smith, 2010)

Please respond to the following items by using the scale below.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all	A little	Somewhat	A lot	Extremely

In my relationship with my partner, I wanted / tried to . . .

1. Be his/her best friend, closer than anyone else.

2. Get my partner to respect or admire me.

3. Make sure I'm not taken advantage of in any way.

4. Get my partner to do things my way.

5. Demonstrate my intelligence.

6. Get my partner to acknowledge my positive qualities

7. Demonstrate my desirable qualities.

8. Convince my partner that I am right.

9. Avoid revealing my shortcomings or vulnerabilities.

10. Avoid the possibility of being wrong.

11. Avoid showing my weaknesses.

12. Avoid being rejected by my partner.

13. Avoid taking risks or making mistakes in our relationship.

14. Avoid being blamed or criticized.

15. Avoid coming across as unintelligent or incompetent.

16. Avoid appearing unattractive, unlovable, or undesirable.

17. Avoid closing myself off emotionally from my partner.

18. Avoid neglecting my relationship with my partner.

19. Avoid being selfish or self-centered.

20. Avoid doing things that aren't helpful to me or my partner.

21. Avoid doing anything that would be harmful to my partner.

22. Avoid saying things to my partner that I don't mean.

23. Have compassion for his/her mistakes and weaknesses.

24. Make a positive difference in his/her life.

25. Be supportive of my partner.

26. Create for him/her what I want to experience myself.

27. Do things that are helpful for both me and my partner.

28. Be constructive in my comments to him/her.

29. Be aware of the impact my behavior might have on my partner's feelings.

Appendix E

Rusbult Investment Model (RIM) (Rusbult, Martz, & Agnew, 1998)

Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements TODAY. These

statements pertain to how you feel about your relationship TODAY .

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

 Do not   Somewhat   Agree

agree at   agree   completely

   all

1. I feel satisfied with our relationship.

2. My relationship is much better than others' relationships.

3. My relationship is close to ideal.

4. Our relationship makes me very happy.

5. Our relationship does a good job of fulfilling my needs for intimacy, companionship,

   etc.

6. I want our relationship to last for a very long time.

7. I am committed to maintaining my relationship with my partner.

8. I would not feel very upset if our relationship were to end in the near future.

9. It is likely that I will date someone other than my partner within the next year.

10. I feel very attached to our relationship – very strongly linked to my partner.

11. I want our relationship to last forever.

12. I am oriented toward the long-term future of my relationship (for example, I imagine

    being with my partner several years from now)

Appendix F

Inclusion of Other in Self Scale (IOS) (Aron, Aron, & Smollan, 1992)

Please indicate the picture below that best describes your relationship with your
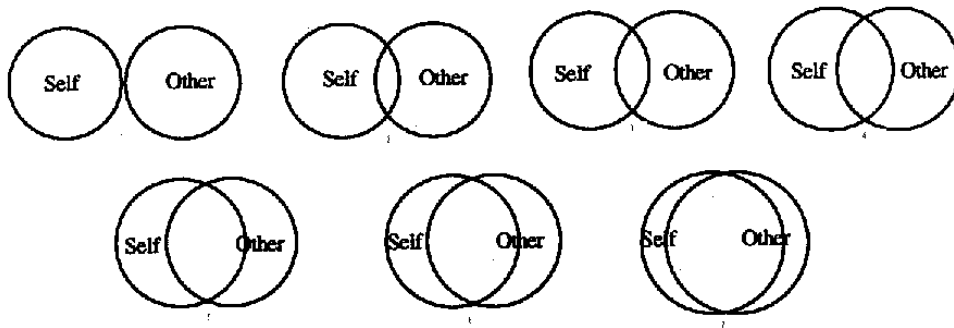
partner TODAY.

Appendix G

Basic Psychological Need Scale (La Guardia, Ryan, Couchman, & Deci, 2000)

The following items concern your feelings about your romantic

partner TODAY . Today, when I was with my romantic partner...

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Strongly		Disagree		Neither		Agree		Strongly
disagree		Somewhat		Agree or		Somewhat		Agree
				Disagree				

1.   I felt free to be who I am.

2.   I felt like a competent person.

3.   I felt loved and cared about.

4.   I felt inadequate or incompetent.

5.   I had a say in what happens and could voice my opinion.

6.   I felt a lot of distance in our relationship.

7.   I felt very capable and effective.

8.   I felt a lot of closeness and intimacy.

9.   I felt controlled and pressured to be certain ways.

Appendix H

Secure Base Scale (Feeney & Thrush, 2010)

Please select the answer that corresponds to how much you feel the following statements are accurate about your relationship TODAY. If the item does not apply to anything that happened today (i.e., there was nothing that called for you to go out of your way for your partner today), please answer as you think you would have responded/felt today if the situation had arisen.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all						Very much so

1. My partner could not count on me to be available to help out if he/she ran into trouble when pursuing personal goals

2. My partner would be willing to take risks and try new things because he/she knew I am available to help and comfort him/her if things don't turn out well.

3. I did not go out of my way to make myself available to my partner if he/she was facing a challenging or difficult situation.

4. If my partner faced a challenging or difficult situation, I tried to make myself available to him/her in case he/she needs me.

5. If my partner felt stressed about a new or unknown situation, I found ways to let him/her know that I would be available to help him/her if he/she needs me.

6. I sometimes interfered with my partner's activities when he/she was exploring a challenging activity or task.

7. If my partner was exploring a new activity (for example, working on a new and challenging task), I would try to get involved and do it with or for him/her.

8. I sometimes interfered with my partner's ability to accomplish his/her personal goals.

9. I was very careful not to interfere in my partner's activities if he/she was trying something new and challenging.

10. If my partner was working on something difficult or challenging, I sometimes tried to take over and do it for him/her.

11. If my partner told me about something new that he/she would like to try, I usually encouraged him/her to do it.

12. I sometimes discouraged my partner from pursuing his/her personal goals and plans—especially if the things my partner wanted did not match my preferences and interests.

13. I usually encouraged my partner to accept challenges and try new things.

14. I encouraged my partner to do independent things that would help him/her grow as a person and develop new competencies.

15. I usually encouraged my partner to do the things he/she needed to do to achieve his/her personal goals.

Appendix I

Responsiveness Scale (Cutrona, Hessling, & Suhr, 1997)

Please select the answer that corresponds to how much you feel the following statements are accurate about you and your relationship TODAY.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Not at all   Very

much so

1. I tried to make my partner feel comfortable about him/herself and how he/she feels

2. I tried to make my partner feel valued as a person

3. I tried to be sensitive to my partner's feelings

4. I really tried to understand my partner's concerns

5. I really listened to my partner when he/she talks

6. I behaved warmly toward my partner.

Appendix J

Conflict

Did you have a conflict or disagreement with your partner today?

Yes

No

Appendix J

Appendix K

Severity of Conflict

How severe was the conflict? (If you had no conflicts with your partner, please do not

answer the following questions)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all						Very
						much

Appendix L

Perceptions of Conflict (Knee et al., 2005)

Read each question carefully and select the most accurate response that best describes

how you feel. Please respond according to how you felt IMMEDIATELY AFTER you

and your partner had the disagreement. After you and your partner have a disagreement

or misunderstanding, to what extent do you tend to feel that it led you to: __?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Not at all   Very much

1. Explore other points of view.

2. Feel detached or distant from your partner.

3. Understand your relationship better.

4.   Pretend to agree with your partner.

5. Question the future of the relationship.

6. Want to yell or shout.

7. Try to help your partner see other perspectives.

8. Want to stop talking to your partner.

9. Understand yourself better.

10. Identify fundamental differences between you and your partner.

11. Want to leave or walk away.

12. Understand the disagreement better.

13. Want to convince your partner to agree with you.

14. Feel closer to your partner.

15. Understand your partner better.

Appendix M

Positive and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS) (Watson, Clark, & Tellengen, 1988).

This scale consists of a number of words that describe different feelings and emotions.

Read each item and then mark the appropriate answer in the space next to that word.

Indicate to what extent you felt IMMEDIATELY AFTER the disagreement. Use the

following scale to record your answers.

1	2	3	4	5
Very slightly	A little	Moderately	Quite a bit	Extremely

1.   Interested

2.   Irritable

3.   Distressed

4.   Alert

5.   Excited

6.   Ashamed

7.   Upset

8.   Inspired

9.   Strong

10.   Nervous

11.   Guilty

12.   Determined

13.   Scared

14.   Attentive

15.   Hostile

16.   Jittery

17.   Enthusiastic

18.   Active

19.   Proud

20.   Afraid

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