

Different Partners, Different Selves: Strategic Verification of Circumscribed Identities

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It is proposed that people negotiate and receive verification for highly positive, relationship-specific selves. Study 1 indicated that although people wanted evaluations that were roughly consistent with their self-views on most dimensions, on a dimension that was crucial to a specific relationship (physical attractiveness in dating relationships) they wanted evaluations that far exceeded their self-views. Studies 2 and 3 showed that participants recognized that their desired evaluations exceeded their self-views but they expected to—and actually did—evoke exalted appraisals of their attractiveness from dating partners. Study 4 suggested that the desire to receive exceptionally positive appraisals on relationship-relevant dimensions generalized to other self-views and same-sex, nonromantic relationship partners. The authors conclude that people find ways of circumventing the conflict between their desires to be valued yet understood.

Many a youth who is demure enough before his parents and teachers, swears and swaggers like a pirate among his “tough” young friends. We do not show ourselves to our children as to our club companions, to our customers as to laborers we employ, to our own masters and employers as to our intimate friends.

—William James (1890, p. 294)

The sense of strategic manipulator also requires . . . that one willingly though shamefully forsakes the path of authenticity.

—Kenneth Gergen (1991, p. 150)

For James, the tendency for people to assume different identities on different occasions was neither good nor bad: It was simply a fact of social life. When social scientists began studying identity negotiation processes decades later, however, most adopted a more jaundiced

view of these processes. Similar to Gergen’s, their objections had a decidedly moralistic flavor: If there is only one “true” self, then anyone who negotiates distinct identities with different people must be “shamefully inauthentic.” Despite recent attempts to counter this view (Schlenker, Britt, & Pennington, 1996), many have clung to the conviction that self-presentational activities are the soulless refuge of politicians, con artists, televangelists, and the like.

In this report, we suggest that practitioners of self-presentation are not as unscrupulous as some have suggested. While acknowledging that people may negotiate specific identities that are more positive than their characteristic identities, we suggest that they do so with the intent of subsequently enacting “selves” within particular relationships that substantiate these highly positive identities. In this way, people succeed in bringing specific partners to see them in highly positive yet subjectively authentic ways on dimensions that are highly relevant to the relationship. Our analysis begins with Swann’s (1984) discussion of interaction goals and the nature of accuracy in social interaction.

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Interaction Goals and the Pragmatics of Identity Negotiation

Swann (1984) began by asking what identity negotiation is designed to do. He suggested that, at the most general level, people negotiate identities with an eye to satisfying their interaction goals, such as courting favor (E. E. Jones, 1964; Schlenker, 1984; Tedeschi, 1986) and preserving relationships (Kelley, 1979). The research literature supports this idea. For example, Zanna and Pack (1975) showed that college women attempted to win over an attractive male by presenting themselves in ways that they believed would appeal to him (e.g., by claiming to be either highly conventional or highly liberal). Similarly, Baumeister and Jones (1978) demonstrated that when people feared that they had been evaluated negatively, they presented themselves quite favorably, presumably to improve the impression that they made. Finally, in a test of the idea that marriage causes people to shift from seeking positivity to seeking authenticity, Swann, De La Ronde, and Hixon (1994) found that dating couples were more intimate with partners who viewed them positively and married couples were more intimate with spouses who saw them as they saw themselves. In each of these studies, then, people's interaction goals apparently shaped the nature of the identities that they negotiated.

Romantic relationships and physical attractiveness. Precisely how people's interaction goals influence identity negotiation will depend on the nature of the relationship. In the relationships that are the primary focus of this report—romantic relationships—we propose that physical attractiveness is a highly relevant dimension. Walster, Aronson, Abrahams, and Rottmann (1966), for example, found that the attractiveness of one's partner was the best predictor of people's desire to pursue a romantic relationship. This may explain why the most commonly employed strategies for winning the affections of dating partners include wearing attractive outfits and attending to one's physical appearance (Buss, 1988; Clark, Shaver, & Abrahams, 1999). Note also that physical attractiveness is more important to romantic relationships as compared to other relationships. For these reasons, people should be particularly interested in receiving positive evaluations of their physical attractiveness from dating partners.

Or should they? If people believe that they are unattractive, they may feel uncomfortable with positive evaluations of their attractiveness (e.g., Swann, 1983). Insofar as people rely on their self-views to predict and control their worlds, challenges to their self-views may diminish people's belief that their worlds are stable and coherent. Also, people may be concerned that if they negotiate an identity that is more positive than reality suggests, their

partner may eventually recognize this discrepancy and experience disappointment. Such considerations may explain why people with negative self-views prefer and seek evaluations that verify these self-views (e.g., Giesler, Josephs, & Swann, 1996; Joiner, Katz, & Lew, 1997; Robinson & Smith-Lovin, 1992; Swann, Pelham, & Krull, 1989).

Delivering on self-presentational promises. How, then, do people reconcile their desire for self-verification with their desire for highly positive evaluations on dimensions that are critical to relationships? If romantic relationships require partners to view one another in a highly positive manner on some dimensions, then people should be motivated to present themselves highly favorably on these dimensions. Yet, such highly positive self-presentations could sabotage the self-verification strivings of those with negative self-views. What are such persons to do?

We suggest that two facts of social life may work to minimize this problem. First, people's interaction goals generally require them to present themselves highly favorably on a limited number of dimensions only. For example, whereas people need to be attractive to their dating partners (a high-relevance dimension), they rarely need to compose sonatas or solve differential equations for the same partners (low-relevance dimensions). Hence, people may seek exalted evaluations on relationship-relevant dimensions but self-confirming evaluations on other dimensions, thus minimizing any discrepancy between their self-presentations and their chronic self-views.

Second, in assessing the authenticity of their own actions, people may pay more attention to continuity *within* as compared to *between* relationships (e.g., Athay & Darley, 1981). That is, people may simultaneously recognize the need to honor the identities that they negotiate with particular others as well as the need to negotiate somewhat different identities with different partners. Consider, for example, the prosecuting attorney who is critical and analytical with defendants, polite and formal with trial judges, and warm and effusive with her children. Despite the apparent contradiction between these identities, each identity may be uniquely adaptive in its own context. For example, defendants who are counting on the lawyer to be unwavering in the courtroom will be unconcerned that she is flexible and responsive with her children. Indeed, in most social situations people care about circumscribed rather than global accuracy (Swann, 1983).

This point is even easier to see in the context of romantic relationships. Whereas it is highly appropriate for people to present themselves as sexually attractive to their lovers, it is highly inappropriate for people to present themselves the same way to their taxi drivers, tax con-

sultants, or taxidermists (e.g., Mischel & Shoda, 1995). Within limits, then, it is reasonable for people to construct unique identities with different relationship partners (e.g., Hardin & Higgins, 1996; Schlenker & Leary, 1982; Swann, 1984; Tedeschi, 1986).

But can people successfully negotiate conflicting identities with different partners? For example, can people convince their lovers that they are highly attractive while others regard them as plain? At first blush, it may seem difficult to exert a high degree of control over others' perceptions of one's attractiveness. Yet, research suggests that applying a touch of perfume, brushing one's hair, or even eating "lightly" in front of others may dramatically enhance one's appearance (e.g., Aune, 1999). Other dimensions may be even more readily controlled: With relative ease, most people can offer a smile of encouragement, slip into a pair of running shoes, step onto the dance floor, or display other characteristics that seem likely to win the favor of their relationship partners.

We conducted four investigations to test these ideas. In the first two studies, we expected that participants would desire highly positive evaluations of their attractiveness from their dating partners but self-confirming evaluations on other self-concept dimensions. In addition, we anticipated that participants would prefer relatively self-confirming evaluations of their attributes (including physical attractiveness) from nonromantic relationship partners (close friends, roommates). In Study 2, we predicted that participants would perceive the highly positive appraisals they sought on the attractiveness dimension as "accurate" because they planned to present themselves to their dating partners in an exceptionally positive manner on this dimension. In the third study, we tested the hypothesis that the pattern of feedback preferences identified in the first two studies would be reinforced by the actual appraisals that people received from their dating partners. Finally, in Study 4, we asked if the pattern of feedback preferences obtained in Studies 1 through 3 would generalize to other dimensions of the self and to different types of relationship partners.

STUDY 1

Method

PARTICIPANTS AND PROCEDURE

Participants included 41 undergraduates who participated for credit in their introductory psychology course; 1 participant failed to complete all of the measures and was dropped from analyses.

Participants first completed an 8-item version of Pelham and Swann's (1989) Self-Attributes Questionnaire (SAQ). On 19-point percentile scales ranging from 5

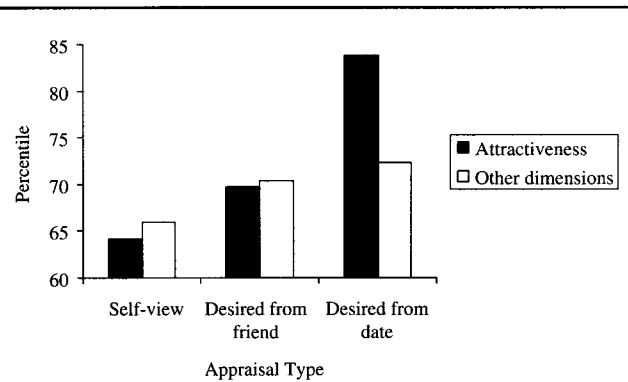


Figure 1 Study 1: Self-views and desired appraisals from first date and close friend on physical attractiveness versus other dimensions.

NOTE: $N = 40$, completely within-subjects.

(way below average) to 95 (way above average), participants rated themselves on the following dimensions: intellectual ability, social skills, artistic ability, musical ability, athletic ability, physical attractiveness, leadership ability, and common sense. After completing the SAQ, participants completed two measures of their ideal appraisals on each of the SAQ attributes. One measure asked participants to indicate, on the same 19-point scales described above, how they would ideally like to be viewed by a dating partner they were just getting to know. The second measure asked participants to indicate how they would ideally like to be viewed by a good friend whom they had known for many years. Participants completed all scales in counterbalanced order (order did not qualify any of our conclusions and is not discussed further).

Results and Discussion

We expected that participants would prefer exceptionally positive evaluations from a first date on the physical attractiveness dimension relative to the other dimensions but that this disparity would not occur in people's ideal appraisals from a close friend. As shown in Figure 1, the results supported this prediction. A 2 (dimension: attractiveness vs. others) \times 3 (appraisal type: self-view vs. desired from date vs. desired from friend) within-subjects ANOVA revealed a Dimension \times Appraisal-Type interaction, $F(2, 38) = 15.77, p < .001$, that qualified a main effect of appraisal type, $F(1, 39) = 25.45, p < .001$. Simple effects tests revealed that, from their dates, participants wanted to be evaluated more favorably on the attractiveness dimension than on the other dimensions, $F(1, 39) = 42.79, p < .001$, but from their friends, the attractiveness evaluations that participants desired were no more favorable than their ideal appraisals of their other qualities, $F < 1$. Also, participants' perceptions of their own attractiveness were no more favorable than their self-views on the other dimensions, $F < 1$.

Correlational analyses corroborated these ANOVA results. Participants' self-views and their preferred appraisals from a dating partner on the nonattractiveness dimensions were strongly correlated, $r(38) = .77, p < .001$, but the correlation between participants' self-views and preferred appraisals on the attractiveness dimension was more modest, $r(38) = .21$. Comparison of these two correlations (Steiger, 1980) confirmed that the former was significantly larger than the latter, $z = 3.81, p < .001$.

Although the results of the ANOVA supported our expectation that people would desire highly favorable evaluations of their attractiveness from a date, they leave open the possibility that one or more dimensions other than attractiveness may have behaved similarly. That is, by combining the nonattractiveness dimensions into a single item, we may have obscured the fact that participants also desired excessively favorable evaluations on one or more of these dimensions. To address this possibility, we first subtracted participants' self-ratings from their ideal appraisals within each dimension. We then compared the resulting difference score on the attractiveness dimension to the difference score on each of the other dimensions separately. The discrepancy between peoples' self-rated attractiveness and their desired attractiveness appraisals was significantly larger than the discrepancy between their actual and ideal appraisals on any of the other dimensions, all $t(39) > 2.15, ps < .05$.¹

Our data thus support the idea that participants wanted uniquely positive appraisals on the relationship-relevant dimension of attractiveness. In fact, participants' desired appraisals from dates exceeded their self-views by an average of nearly 20 points on the attractiveness dimension. Of course, these data do not necessarily indicate that participants preferred self-verifying appraisals on the other dimensions. After all, participants' ideal appraisals from dates exceeded their self-views by an average of 6 points on the nonattractiveness dimensions, and even this relatively modest disparity was significant, $p < .01$.

Note, however, that the fact that participants' preferred appraisals on the other dimensions exceeded their self-views does not necessarily indicate that they pursued positivity at the expense of self-verification. Why? Because the "selves" that our participants planned to enact with their dates may have exceeded their characteristic self-views by the same margin as did their desired appraisals. If so, then people should receive actual appraisals from their dating partners that match their desired appraisals, suggesting that they successfully elicit evaluations that verify their circumscribed, somewhat-better-than-normal selves (we explore this possibility in Study 3).

Study 2 was designed to follow up on several questions raised by the results of Study 1. First, what is on people's minds when they indicate that they want exceptionally positive evaluations on dimensions that are highly relevant to the relationship? Do they recognize that the positive appraisals they desire are more positive than their self-views? If so, do they feel that their highly positive ideal appraisals are inauthentic or do people convince themselves that they will actually "be" persons who would merit such appraisals? In addition to exploring these questions, in Study 2 we assessed gender differences in people's desired appraisals, and we tested our hypotheses using actual, rather than hypothetical, relationship partners.

STUDY 2

We modified the paradigm used in Study 1 in several ways. First, to determine if our findings would generalize to real relationship partners, we selected participants who had both a romantic partner and a roommate and had them respond with respect to one of these target persons.² Second, to discover what people were thinking as they indicated their preferred appraisals, we had them "think out loud" while completing the desired appraisals scale. Third, to measure participants' perceptions of the accuracy of their ideal appraisals, we had them indicate how accurate their romantic partners or roommates would be if they rated participants in a manner that matched participant's desired appraisals. This last measure was particularly important to our model because we hoped it would shed light on the mechanism by which people maintain feelings of authenticity despite their inflated desired appraisals. Finally, an additional purpose of Study 2 was to test for gender differences in people's desired attractiveness appraisals from a dating partner. According to Buss (1988, 1994), heterosexual women are more likely to alter their appearance in the interests of attracting mates than are heterosexual men, in part because they are aware that men place more emphasis on the attractiveness of their partners than do women. Thus, we wondered whether women—relative to men—would desire more favorable appraisals of their attractiveness from a dating partner.

Method

PARTICIPANTS AND PROCEDURE

Participants included 17 male and 31 female undergraduates who participated for credit in their introductory psychology course. We included only those participants who were (a) involved in a romantic relationship and (b) living with a roommate at the time of the experiment. We deleted data from 3 participants because they

TABLE 1: Studies 2 and 3: Mean Self-Views and Desired Appraisals

Partner/Sex	Self-View		Desired Appraisal	
	Attractiveness	Other Dimensions	Attractiveness	Other Dimensions
Study 2				
Dating partner/men	74.44 (14.02)	69.72 (7.90)	84.44 (11.02)	76.39 (5.71)
Dating partner/women	68.57 (11.67)	71.49 (10.26)	79.29 (13.57)	75.00 (9.47)
Roommate/men	67.50 (11.95)	66.41 (13.85)	61.88 (25.20)	69.69 (15.01)
Roommate/women	69.64 (11.84)	67.05 (9.53)	72.14 (21.10)	69.91 (11.06)
Study 3				
Dating partner/men	70.27 (17.60)	69.63 (13.93)	80.43 (12.87)	72.93 (12.81)
Dating partner/women	69.46 (14.47)	64.56 (11.86)	85.81 (10.64)	70.91 (14.35)

NOTE: Scores are percentile ratings, based on a scale of 5% to 95%. Values in parentheses are standard deviations.

misunderstood the instructions, leaving 17 men and 28 women in the final sample.

Participants learned that the study was designed to explore “people’s desires for certain types of evaluations from their relationship partners.” We randomly assigned some participants to focus on their relationship with their roommate during the session; others focused on their relationship with their romantic partner. The experimenter then left participants alone to complete some filler questionnaires concerning how close they felt to their partner. Next, the experimenter introduced participants to the “think-aloud” task by explaining that we were interested in what people think about as they answer certain questions. She explained that participants would be tape-recorded as they read and answered a questionnaire that asked them about their ideal appraisals from their relationship partner. After emphasizing that participants should voice any and all thoughts they had while answering the questions, the experimenter left them alone.

The desired appraisals questionnaire asked participants to indicate how they ideally wanted their roommate or romantic partner to view them, compared with other college students their age and sex, on five dimensions from the SAQ: intellectual competence, social competence, artistic/musical ability, athletic ability, and physical attractiveness. Responses were made on scales ranging from 1 (*bottom 5%*) to 10 (*top 5%*). Instructions requested that participants first read each question aloud into the tape recorder and then voice all of their reactions and thoughts as they circled their responses.

Next, participants indicated, on scales ranging from 1 (*not at all accurate*) to 9 (*very accurate*), how accurate their roommates or romantic partners would be if they “saw you the way you just indicated that you *want* him/her to see you” on each of the SAQ dimensions. Thus, this item tapped into people’s perceptions of the accuracy of their desired appraisals. Finally, participants rated their own intellectual ability, social ability, artistic ability, athletic ability, and physical attractiveness on scales ranging from 1 (*bottom 5%*) to 10 (*top 5%*).

Coding the think-aloud protocols. Six independent raters coded the motives that participants expressed while indicating their desired appraisals. Specifically, coders indicated on scales ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much*) the extent to which participants expressed positivity strivings and self-confirmation strivings during the think-aloud task. We defined positivity strivings as statements that reflected either a desire to be seen favorably simply for the sake of being seen favorably (e.g., “I would want my partner to think I was an easy person to get along with”) or a desire not to be seen negatively (e.g., “I don’t want my roommate to think I’m dumb”). In contrast, we defined self-confirmation strivings as statements that reflected a desire to be seen in a manner consistent with one’s self-views (e.g., “I would say [the upper 20%] because I’m a pretty decent-looking guy”). Interrater reliability (intraclass correlation coefficients) for ratings of positivity and self-confirmation strivings ranged from .82 to .92.

Results and Discussion

DESIRED APPRAISALS

As in Study 1, we expected that participants would prefer more positive evaluations from their romantic partner than from a roommate, but only on the dimension of attractiveness. The means displayed in Table 1 support this prediction.³ A 2-within (dimension: attractiveness vs. others) \times 2-within (appraisal type: self-view vs. desired) \times 2-between (relationship partner: dating vs. roommate) \times 2-between (sex: male vs. female) ANOVA revealed a Dimension \times Appraisal-Type \times Relationship Partner interaction, $F(1, 41) = 6.24, p < .05$, that qualified a main effect of appraisal type, $F(1, 41) = 6.34, p < .05$, and an interaction between appraisal type and relationship partner, $F(1, 41) = 4.28, p < .05$. Although people’s desired appraisals were overall more favorable than their self-views, this effect was driven by a desire for appraisals that exceeded the self-views from dating partners, $F(1, 41) = 11.42, p < .01$, but not from roommates, $F(1, 41) < 1$.

TABLE 2: Studies 2 and 3: Means for Perceived Accuracy of Desired Appraisals and Favorability of Self-Presentation

Partner/Sex	Dimension	
	Attractiveness	Others
Study 2: Perceived accuracy of desired appraisals		
Dating partner/men	8.33 (1.00)	8.03 (0.63)
Dating partner/women	6.93 (1.59)	7.23 (0.89)
Roommate/men	6.50 (2.45)	7.47 (0.60)
Roommate/women	6.79 (1.89)	7.54 (0.85)
Study 3: Favorability of self-presentation		
Dating partner/men	5.11 (1.59)	5.18 (0.94)
Dating partner/women	5.53 (1.31)	4.59 (1.01)
Close friend/men	4.26 (1.41)	5.16 (0.97)
Close friend/women	4.87 (1.34)	4.63 (1.10)

NOTE: Perceived accuracy scores can range from 1 to 9, with higher scores indicating greater accuracy of desired appraisals. Self-presentation scores can range from 1 to 7, with higher scores indicating more favorable self-presentation. Values in parentheses are standard deviations.

There was no main effect of sex, $F(1, 41) < 1$, nor did sex interact with any other variables, all $F_s < 2.46$, $p_s > .13$.

We decomposed the three-way interaction by examining participants' responses separately in the dating partner and roommate conditions. In the dating partner condition, an Appraisal-Type \times Dimension interaction, $F(1, 21) = 5.17$, $p < .05$, qualified a main effect of appraisal type, $F(1, 21) = 24.60$, $p < .001$. Simple effects tests revealed that there was no difference in how people rated themselves in attractiveness versus the other dimensions, $F < 1$, but they wanted marginally more favorable evaluations of their attractiveness as compared to their other qualities from a dating partner, $F(1, 21) = 3.90$, $p = .062$. In contrast, in the roommate condition, there were no significant main or interactive effects, $F_s < 2.02$, $p_s > .17$.

PERCEIVED ACCURACY OF DESIRED APPRAISALS

To determine if participants recognized that their ideal attractiveness appraisals conflicted with their self-views, we conducted a 2-within (dimension: attractiveness vs. other) \times 2-between (relationship partner: dating vs. roommate) \times 2-between (sex: male vs. female) ANOVA on participants' ratings of the accuracy of their desired appraisals. No significant main or interactive effects of sex emerged, all $F_s < 1.71$, $p_s > .19$. Overall, people rated their ideal attractiveness appraisals marginally significantly lower in accuracy than their ideal appraisals on the other dimensions, $F(1, 41) = 3.47$, $p = .07$. As shown in Table 2, however, this main effect of dimension occurred because people claimed that their desired attractiveness appraisal from their roommate, and not from their dating partner, was relatively low in accuracy: The Dimension \times Relationship Partner interaction

approached significance, $F(1, 41) = 3.49$, $p = .069$, and people rated their desired attractiveness appraisals lower in accuracy than their desired appraisals on the other dimensions in the roommate condition, $F(1, 41) = 6.72$, $p < .05$. In the dating partner condition, people rated their desired attractiveness and other appraisals similarly in accuracy, $F < 1$. Thus, participants indicated that their dating partners would not be off the mark if they saw participants as highly attractive.

REASONS FOR DESIRED APPRAISALS

To explore the reasons behind participants' desired appraisals, we entered their think-aloud data—their self-confirmation and positivity motives—into a 2-within (dimension: attractiveness vs. others) \times 2-within (motive: self-confirmation vs. positivity) \times 2-between (relationship partner: dating vs. roommate) \times 2-between (sex: male vs. female) ANOVA. A significant Dimension \times Relationship Partner \times Motive interaction, $F(1, 40) = 4.22$, $p < .05$, prompted us to conduct separate ANOVAs on people's motives in the roommate and dating partner conditions. No significant main or interactive effects of sex emerged, all $F_s < 2.49$, $p_s > .12$.

The means displayed in Table 3 reveal that in the dating partner condition, there was an interaction between motive and dimension, $F(1, 21) = 10.98$, $p < .01$. When commenting on their desired attractiveness appraisals from a dating partner, people verbalized stronger positivity strivings than self-confirmation strivings, $F(1, 21) = 13.90$, $p < .01$. For example, one participant said, "Well, I want him to think I'm beautiful . . . it's really important for him to think that I'm beautiful. I would want him to think I was prettier than anyone else." In contrast, when commenting on their desired appraisals from their dating partner in the other domains, people expressed similar desires for positivity and self-confirmation, $F < 1$. As an example of a statement reflecting self-confirmation strivings, one participant mused, "Well, I'm not very artistic and I'm not very musical. I would want [my girlfriend] to know, kind of, the truth, that maybe I wasn't the best." In the roommate condition, only a main effect of motive type emerged, $F(1, 19) = 6.67$, $p < .01$, such that people expressed more self-confirmation than positivity strivings regardless of the dimension they were discussing.⁴

Of course, one must interpret self-reports cautiously given that self-presentational pressures may influence them. Nevertheless, these data show that when contemplating the appraisals they desired from roommates on all dimensions, and their ideal appraisals from dating partners on nonattractiveness dimensions, participants made explicit reference to their self-views and indicated a desire for evaluations that matched these self-views. Such evidence of self-verification strivings was far less

TABLE 3: Study 2: Mean Self-Confirmation and Positivity Strivings

<i>Partner/Sex</i>	<i>Self-Confirmation</i>		<i>Positivity</i>	
	<i>Attractiveness</i>	<i>Other Dimensions</i>	<i>Attractiveness</i>	<i>Other Dimensions</i>
Dating partner/men	1.37 (0.45)	2.23 (1.11)	2.37 (1.50)	2.36 (1.35)
Dating partner/women	1.45 (0.67)	2.12 (1.08)	3.07 (1.73)	2.20 (1.02)
Roommate/men	2.40 (1.51)	2.67 (1.19)	1.46 (0.65)	2.09 (1.27)
Roommate/women	1.91 (1.53)	2.22 (0.82)	1.61 (0.72)	1.71 (0.85)

NOTE: Scores can range from 1 to 7, with higher scores indicating stronger presence of the motive. Values in parentheses are standard deviations.

common in the accounts of participants commenting on the appraisals they desired from their dating partner on the physical attractiveness dimension; instead, participants expressed a desire for positive evaluations on this dimension and rarely mentioned their actual self-views.

The results of Study 2 point to several conclusions about the psychological antecedents of people's desire for positive evaluations on goal-relevant dimensions. First, people's positivity strivings clearly channeled their preferred appraisals on the physical attractiveness dimension; that is, people explicitly mentioned positivity strivings more than self-confirmation strivings when indicating why they wanted to be seen as exceptionally attractive by their dating partners. Second, although people are almost certainly aware that the appraisals they desire on high-relevance dimensions exceed their self-views, they regard such appraisals as highly accurate. Third, participants' self-confirmation strivings seemed influential when they were contemplating the types of feedback they desired on dimensions that were lower in relationship relevance. Finally, contrary to the findings reported by Buss (1988, 1994), we found no evidence that women were more concerned with receiving favorable appraisals of their attractiveness than were men. Because this could reflect the relatively small sample used in Study 2, we decided to explore gender differences further in Study 3.

STUDY 3

The results of Study 2 confirmed that people believe their highly positive desired appraisals are accurate. Apparently, our participants believed that they would confirm the idealized versions of themselves that they expected to enact (or felt they already had enacted) in the context of specific romantic relationships. Nevertheless, a critic could point out that we failed to test the idea that people actually elicited the positive appraisals they desired. The primary goal of Study 3 was to address this shortcoming by asking participants' dating partners how they perceived participants.

In this study, we were also interested in testing our assumption that it was participants' perceptions of the high relationship relevance of physical attractiveness

that caused them to seek unusually positive evaluations on this dimension. We accordingly asked participants to indicate how important attractiveness and the other dimensions were to the success of their romantic relationship, as well as how personally important each dimension was to them.

Method

PARTICIPANTS AND PROCEDURE

Both members of 39 heterosexual dating couples participated in exchange for either \$5 or credit toward a requirement in their introductory psychology course. We deleted two couples from the analyses because one or both couple members failed to follow instructions, leaving a total of 37 men and 37 women in the final sample. After being introduced to a study of "people's perceptions of their relationships and their partners," participants completed questionnaire packets in which they made ratings of themselves, their partners, their desired evaluations, the favorability of their typical self-presentations to their dating partner and to a close friend, and the personal and relationship importance of the SAQ dimensions.

Ratings of self and partner. Participants rated themselves on a modified version of Pelham and Swann's (1989) SAQ using the same 19-point scales used in Study 1. We modified the SAQ by adding "tendency to keep myself well-groomed" to the list of five dimensions used previously (intellectual, social, artistic, and athletic abilities and physical attractiveness). We included this dimension because Buss's (1988) work suggests that good personal hygiene is considered important in a mate by men and women alike; thus, we wondered if participants would consider grooming ability to be an additional high-relevance dimension. After rating their self-views, participants rated their partner, relative to his or her peers, on the same six dimensions.

Desired evaluations, self-presentations, and importance ratings. Also on 19-point scales, participants indicated how they would "ideally like" their partner to rate them on the six attributes. Next, participants indicated how favorably they typically presented themselves, to both their romantic partner and a close friend, on each of the six

dimensions. Self-presentation ratings were made on scales ranging from 1 (*not at all favorably*) to 7 (*extremely favorably*).

Finally, participants rated the importance of each dimension. First, they indicated how personally important each dimension was to their self-concept on scales ranging from 1 (*not at all important*) to 7 (*extremely important*). Next, participants used these same rating scales to answer, for each of the six dimensions, "How important is it, to the success of your romantic relationship, that your partner holds a favorable view of you on this dimension?"

Results and Discussion

DESIRED APPRAISALS

We first determined if we replicated the desired appraisals findings from Studies 1 and 2. Note that because we collected data from couples, men's and women's responses could not be considered statistically independent here. We thus treated the couple as the unit of analysis, with participants' sex as two levels of a within-subjects variable, in most analyses. The results of a 2 (dimension: attractiveness vs. others) \times 2 (appraisal type: self-view vs. desired) \times 2 (sex: male vs. female) within-subjects ANOVA revealed a significant Dimension \times Appraisal-Type interaction, $F(1, 36) = 23.13, p < .001$, that qualified main effects of dimension, $F(1, 36) = 18.29, p < .001$, and appraisal type, $F(1, 36) = 45.59, p < .001$. Simple effects tests revealed a whopping preference for more positive appraisals on attractiveness versus the other dimensions, $F(1, 36) = 49.04, p < .001$, that dwarfed a nonsignificant tendency for participants to rate themselves more favorably on attractiveness versus the other dimensions, $F(1, 36) = 1.78, p = .19$ (see Table 1).

Contrary to the results of Study 2, sex interacted significantly with both dimension and appraisal type in this study, $F_s > 5.40, p_s < .05$. Follow-up analyses revealed that these interactions were driven by a tendency for men to rate themselves higher than women on the nonattractiveness dimensions, $F(1, 36) = 4.05, p = .052$, whereas women's desired attractiveness appraisals were more favorable than men's, $F(1, 36) = 5.55, p < .05$. No other sex effects emerged, $F_s < 1.46, p_s > .23$.

When we repeated the above analyses treating both attractiveness and grooming ability as high-relevance dimensions, we did not get the expected pattern. Thus, given that grooming ability behaved like the dimensions in the composite low-relevance item, we combined it with the remaining nonattractiveness dimensions as our measure of "other dimensions" in all analyses.

TABLE 4: Study 3: Means and *t* Values for Personal Importance and Importance to the Relationship

Sex/Dimension	Importance		<i>t</i> Value (df = 37)
	Personal	Relationship	
Men			
Intellectual competence	7.92 (1.51)	7.68 (1.19)	0.98
Social competence	7.42 (1.69)	6.45 (1.54)	3.92**
Artistic/musical ability	5.63 (2.29)	4.92 (2.78)	1.88†
Athletic ability	5.55 (2.46)	5.05 (2.39)	1.49
Physical attractiveness	6.39 (2.22)	6.97 (1.60)	-1.67
Grooming tendency	7.24 (1.84)	6.53 (2.32)	2.52*
Women			
Intellectual competence	8.29 (1.01)	7.68 (1.53)	3.46**
Social competence	7.29 (1.84)	6.32 (2.42)	3.32**
Artistic/musical ability	5.34 (2.21)	4.50 (2.46)	3.17**
Athletic ability	4.61 (2.19)	4.13 (2.54)	1.75†
Physical attractiveness	6.53 (2.20)	7.21 (2.12)	-3.20**
Grooming tendency	7.37 (1.95)	6.74 (2.23)	2.01*

NOTE: Scores can range from 1 to 9, with higher scores indicating greater importance of the dimension. Values in parentheses are standard deviations.

† $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

RELATIONSHIP IMPORTANCE VERSUS PERSONAL IMPORTANCE

We hoped to rule out the rival hypothesis that people wanted positive evaluations of dimensions they saw as personally important but verifying evaluations of dimensions they saw as unimportant. Evidence for this hypothesis would contradict self-verification theory's assumption that people want evaluations that confirm qualities of which they are highly certain and that they deem important (e.g., Swann, 1983). Our data offered little support for this rival hypothesis. As shown in Table 4, attractiveness was the only dimension that people considered less personally important than it was "romantically" important (for women, this trend reached significance, whereas for men it did not, $p = .10$). On most other dimensions—with the exceptions of intellectual and athletic abilities for men—participants' ratings of its personal importance at least marginally exceeded their ratings of its importance to their relationship, all $p_s < .09$. Moreover, the average personal importance rating of physical attractiveness was lower than that of grooming, social, and intellectual abilities, for both men and women. In contrast, when it came to relationship importance, both men and women rated attractiveness second only to intellectual ability ($p < .01$ for men, $p < .06$ for women), possibly because they did not want to seem shallow (i.e., preoccupied with appearances).

The results of these analyses make two points. First, there was no evidence that participants preferred excep-

tionally positive appraisals of their personally important dimensions and self-verifying appraisals of their other qualities. Second, participants did desire inflated appraisals in a domain that they acknowledged as being more important to their relationship than it was to their self-concept (i.e., attractiveness). In contrast, in the domain that people rated highest in both personal and relationship importance—intellectual ability—they did not desire exaggeratedly positive appraisals.

SELF-PRESENTATIONS

Did participants claim to present themselves in an especially favorable manner to their romantic partners on the dimension of attractiveness? To explore this question, we submitted participants' self-presentation ratings to a 2 (dimension: attractiveness vs. others) \times 2 (relationship partner: dating vs. friend) \times 2 (sex: male vs. female) within-subjects ANOVA. A main effect of relationship partner, $F(1, 37) = 13.03, p < .001$, was qualified by a Relationship Partner \times Dimension interaction, $F(1, 37) = 14.73, p < .001$. As shown in Table 2, participants claimed to present themselves more favorably to their dating partner than to their close friend on the attractiveness dimension, $F(1, 37) = 15.55, p < .001$, but they claimed to present themselves equally favorably to both relationship partners on the other dimensions, $F < 1$. A significant Sex \times Dimension interaction, $F(1, 37) = 23.08, p < .001$, clarified this finding. Men claimed to present their attractiveness less favorably than their other qualities to their friend, $F(1, 37) = 14.67, p < .001$, but they reported no differences in their self-presentations of attractiveness versus the other qualities to their dating partner, $F < 1$; women reported presenting their attractiveness and other qualities equally favorably to their friend, $F(1, 37) = 1.19, p = .28$, but they claimed to present their attractiveness more favorably than their other qualities to their dating partner, $F(1, 37) = 20.14, p < .001$.

PARTNER'S RATINGS OF PARTICIPANTS

Participants' desired appraisals appeared to translate into their partners' actual appraisals of them. A 2 (dimension: attractiveness vs. others) \times 2 (appraisal type: desired from partner vs. actual from partner) \times 2 (sex: male vs. female) within-subjects ANOVA revealed a main effect of dimension, $F(1, 36) = 82.26, p < .001$. Overall, desired and actual partner appraisals in attractiveness were more favorable than desired and actual partner appraisals in the other dimensions. In addition, a significant Sex \times Dimension interaction, $F(1, 36) = 11.00, p < .01$, revealed that on nonattractiveness dimensions, men's and women's desired and actual partner appraisals did not differ, $F < 1$, but on attractiveness, women's desired and actual partner appraisals were more favorable than were men's, $F(1, 36) = 11.09, p < .01$. No other effects were significant, $F_s < 2.08, p_s > .15$. Figure 2 illus-

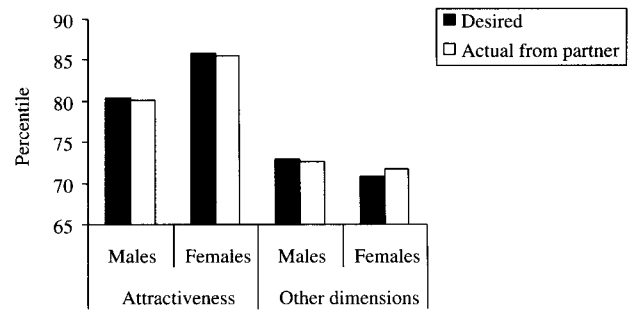


Figure 2 Study 3: Desired and actual appraisals from dating partner on attractiveness versus other dimensions, split by gender. NOTE: $N = 37$ couples.

trates the significant elevation in desired and actual appraisals on the dimension of attractiveness as well as the similarity between participants' desired appraisals and partners' appraisals of them.

MEDIATIONAL ANALYSIS

To bolster our argument that people behaved so as to elicit partner appraisals that matched their desired appraisals on high-relevance dimensions, we explored the extent to which self-presentations mediated the relation between desired and actual attractiveness appraisals from partners (see Baron & Kenny, 1986). In these regression analyses, we treated the individual as the unit of analysis so as to increase N ; to control for gender effects, we always entered participants' sex as a predictor.⁵ First, desired attractiveness appraisals predicted actual partner appraisals, $\beta = .23, t(72) = 2.07, p < .05$. Second, desired appraisals predicted our proposed mediator, self-presented attractiveness, $\beta = .37, t(72) = 3.30, p < .01$. Third, when desired attractiveness appraisals and self-presented attractiveness were entered simultaneously into a model predicting partner appraisals, self-presentation was a marginally significant predictor, $\beta = .22, t(71) = 1.88, p = .064$, but desired appraisals was not, $\beta = .15, t(71) = 1.28, p = .20$. Finally, the results of a Sobel (1982) test indicated that the path between desired and actual partner appraisals was marginally significantly reduced when self-presentations were entered into the model, $z = 1.71, p = .087$. Thus, self-presentations partially mediated the relation between desired and actual partner appraisals of attractiveness.⁶

The results of this analysis support the idea that participants wanted especially positive appraisals of their attractiveness, sought to elicit such appraisals through their behavior, and thus caused their partners to develop correspondingly positive appraisals of them. Having said this, we acknowledge that our evidence of mediation should be considered tentative for a couple of reasons.

First, two of the crucial associations only reached marginal significance. Next, because our measure of self-presentations consisted of self-reports rather than observable behavior, and our data were correlational measures collected during one slice of time, alternative patterns of causality could potentially explain our findings. For instance, because of similarity between couple members' levels of attractiveness (e.g., Berscheid, Dion, Walster, & Walster, 1971), partners' appraisals of participants' attractiveness may have been driven more by partners' attractiveness self-views than by participants' self-presentation behaviors. At a minimum, however, the results of Study 3 suggest that people's preference for positive evaluations on relationship-relevant dimensions is not simply "all in their heads." Rather, our participants apparently elicited (or at least found partners willing to give them) appraisals on the physical attractiveness dimension that were every bit as positive as their desired appraisals.

Contrary to the findings we reported in Study 2, many of Study 3's findings were qualified by participants' gender. Women, relative to men, desired and received more favorable attractiveness appraisals, rated attractiveness as more important to the success of their romantic relationship, and claimed to present their attractiveness more favorably than their other qualities to their partner. While these findings are consistent with Buss's (1988) theory, it is not clear why a similar pattern of gender differences did not emerge in Study 2. One possibility is that the current study had a larger sample size, and thus greater power, than Study 2. Still, the fact that our gender effects were inconsistent across studies makes us hesitant to draw firm conclusions about gender differences in this paradigm.

STUDY 4

This study was designed to test the possibility that the tendency for participants to prefer evaluations of their physical attractiveness that exceed their self-ratings may be peculiar to the opposite-sex relationships or to the unique qualities of the attractiveness dimension. We accordingly examined same-sex relationships and two very different dimensions—athletic ability and artistic ability.

Method

PARTICIPANTS AND PROCEDURE

Participants included 128 undergraduates (45 men, 81 women, and 2 who did not report their gender) who participated for credit in their introductory psychology course. Participants first completed the five-item version of the SAQ (intellectual ability, social skills, artistic abil-

ity, athletic ability, physical attractiveness). Participants then completed two measures of their desired appraisals. One desired appraisals measure asked participants to imagine that they were on a sports team (e.g., soccer, flag football) and to report how they would ideally like to be viewed on each of the five SAQ dimensions by the other members of their team; the other measure asked participants to imagine that they were taking an art course (e.g., drawing or sculpture) and to report how they would ideally like to be viewed on each dimension by their art instructor. Half of participants reported their self-views before their desired appraisals and half reported their desired appraisals first (neither order nor sex qualified our conclusions and thus will not be discussed further).

Results

We expected that participants would desire exceptionally positive appraisals of their artistic ability from their art instructor and exceptionally positive appraisals of their athletic ability from a teammate. To test this hypothesis, we entered participants' preferred appraisals into a 2 (dimension: athletic ability vs. artistic ability) \times 3 (appraisal type: self-view vs. desired from teammate vs. desired from art professor) within-subjects ANOVA. Main effects of dimension, $F(1, 127) = 3.74, p = .055$, and appraisal type, $F(2, 127) = 45.11, p < .001$, were qualified by a Dimension \times Appraisal interaction, $F(2, 127) = 50.14, p < .001$. Simple effects tests revealed that from a teammate, participants desired more positive evaluations of their athletic ability than of their artistic ability, $M_s = 78.09$ and 63.67 , respectively, $F(1, 127) = 46.65, p < .001$. In contrast, from an art professor, they desired more positive appraisals of their artistic ability than of their athletic ability, $M_s = 79.88$ and 59.10 , respectively, $F(1, 127) = 97.02, p < .001$. Finally, there was no difference between participants' self-views in athletic versus artistic ability, $M_s = 53.83$ and 57.03 , respectively, $F(1, 127) = 1.88, p > .17$.

As in Study 1, we supplemented these ANOVA results with correlational analyses. First, the association between people's self-views and their desired appraisals from a teammate was stronger on nonathletic as compared to athletic dimensions, $r_s(126) = .55$ and $.33$, respectively, $p_s < .01, z = 2.43, p < .01$. Similarly, the association between people's artistic self-views and their desired artistic appraisals from an art teacher was stronger on nonartistic as compared to artistic dimensions, $r_s(126) = .52$ and $.28$, respectively, $p_s < .01, z = 2.65, p < .01$. Our findings thus offer converging evidence that people desire exceptionally positive appraisals on high relationship-relevance dimensions and that this effect is

not limited to dating relationships or to the dimension of physical attractiveness.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

As the traditional individual is thrust into an ever-widening array of relationships, he or she begins increasingly to sense the self as a strategic manipulator. Caught in often contradictory or incoherent activities, one grows anguished over the violation of one's sense of identity. (Gergen, 1991, p. 17)

Gergen was not the first to lament the "anguished" antimony between a desire for successful social interactions and a need for authenticity. E. E. Jones and Gerard (1967) voiced similar concerns a quarter of a century earlier. Our participants, however, did not appear to experience such anguish at all. Instead, it seems that our participants evaded this antimony by capitalizing on the very process that Gergen highlighted: the tendency for people to "be" different people in different settings. Apparently, as long as people can honor the identities that they negotiate in different contexts by "acting the part," they will feel that they have behaved authentically and that the reactions they elicit are accurate—even when they elicit evaluations that are much more positive than the ones they believe they ordinarily merit.

Our data thus provide an empirical foundation for a reconciliation of self-presentation and self-verification theories. In support of self-presentation approaches (e.g., Schlenker, 1984), on dimensions that were critical to the survival of the relationship, participants wanted evaluations that were considerably more positive than their self-views. Apparently, people recognize that positivity on relationship-relevant dimensions is needed for their relationships to work; as one man put it, "I want [my girlfriend] to be physically attracted to me . . . 'cause if you're not physically attracted . . . to them, you really can't go anywhere else." In support of self-verification theory, dating participants apparently succeeded in either locating relationship partners who found them attractive or brought their partners to see them this way. Thus, our data suggest that the man quoted above was not merely engaging in wishful thinking when he mused about the importance of attraction between romantic partners—instead, he was planning actually to "be" highly attractive to his partner. Presumably, it was the conviction that they had behaved in highly attractive ways that made our participants with negative self-views feel deserving of highly positive evaluations. In this instance, people appeared to be seeking verification of their highly circumscribed ideal selves rather than of their "typical" selves (e.g., Markus & Nurius, 1986)—a phenomenon that Swann and Schroeder (1995) dubbed

"strategic self-verification." In contrast, on dimensions that were personally important to participants but not of paramount importance to the survival of the relationship, people preferred and elicited evaluations that were much more congruent with their self-views.

The strategic self-verification process is related to the Michelangelo phenomenon—the tendency for close partners to encourage one another to approximate his or her ideal self (Drigotas, Rusbult, Wieselquist, & Whitton, 1999). We suggest that the strategic self-verification process highlights the motivational dynamic underlying the target's contribution to this phenomenon. One difference in the two approaches, however, is that the strategic self-verification process is focused specifically on relationship-relevant domains and the Michelangelo phenomenon does not make this distinction.

Our findings also are related to the suggestion by Murray and her colleagues (e.g., Murray & Holmes, 1996) that people want to be seen highly favorably by their romantic partners. Although there is certainly overlap between our position and theirs, our position is unique in that we assume that people are not motivated to create positive illusions; that is, although our participants seem to have recognized that their preferred appraisals were more positive than their chronic self-views, they appear to have behaved in ways that elicited highly positive reactions. Therefore, our participants created idiosyncratically skewed realities that validated their highly positive desired selves.

Of course, some might contend that although our participants may not have personally entertained positive illusions, they persuaded their partners to maintain illusions for them. Such an objection, however, overlooks the fact that partners' perceptions seem to have been quite accurate within the confines of that particular relationship. From this vantage point, although partners' perceptions of participants may have been inaccurate in a global sense (involving predicting the target's behavior in general), they were most likely high in circumscribed accuracy (involving predicting the target's behavior in the presence of the perceiver; Swann, 1984). We maintain, then, that neither our participants nor their partners were entertaining beliefs that were not supported by reality.

Our suggestion that dating partners work to verify highly positive, situation-specific self-views may seem incompatible with Swann et al.'s (1994) claim that married people strive to attain verification for their characteristic self-views. This contradiction, however, may be more apparent than real. The notion that people want verification for their characteristic self-views is predicated on the assumption that people behave in line with these characteristic self-views. Presumably, if consider-

ations such as relationship goals cause people to enact relationship-specific selves, they will come to prefer verification for these specific selves. In fact, Swann's (1984) analysis suggests that identity negotiation processes may be specifically designed to maximize the verification of situation-specific selves because people care most about the behavior of relationship partners in their own presence. Support for this idea has come from recent evidence that people are more committed to their romantic relationships insofar as their perceptions of their partner are high in circumscribed accuracy (Gill & Swann, 2001).

This reasoning also could illuminate the relation between the present work and evidence that people with negative self-views are less committed to relationships in which they are perceived positively (e.g., De La Ronde & Swann, 1998; Ritts & Stein, 1995; Swann et al., 1994; Swann & Pelham, in press). Note that these researchers have examined how people with negative self-views react to positive appraisals on several dimensions, only some of which are high in relationship relevance. This is critical because the results of the present research indicate that people do not necessarily present themselves in an exceptionally positive manner on traits that are relatively low in relationship relevance. Presumably, then, people with negative self-views do not feel that they deserve highly positive evaluations on low-relevance dimensions, and receiving favorable evaluations on these dimensions could foster feelings of fraudulence that would encourage them to withdraw from the relationship (e.g., Swann, 1983, 1996). From this vantage point, the relationship relevance of self-views may explain why people with negative self-views embrace or eschew positive evaluations.

This approach also may explain why Murray and her colleagues found that people with negative self-views embraced positive evaluations (e.g., Murray & Holmes, 1996; Murray, Holmes, & Griffin, 1996). An examination of the items in the self-concept scale used by Murray and her colleagues reveals a strong focus on qualities related to the success of the relationship (e.g., "moody," "patient," "tolerant," "complaining"). This raises the possibility that Murray's participants were interested in highly positive evaluations because they had behaved in ways that merited such evaluations. To be sure, there are other differences between the self-views measured by Murray and her coworkers and those measured by Swann and his coworkers. Neff and Karney (in press), for example, have argued that the key is that the self-views studied by Murray were highly global and the self-views studied by Swann were relatively specific. Further research might test the relative appropriateness of the relationship relevance versus the globality specificity interpretations of these phenomena.

Our suggestion that people's desires for verification and positivity are adjusted to fit particular relationships may evoke a feeling of *déjà vu* from those familiar with Schlenker's (1984; Schlenker et al., 1996) self-identification formulation. According to self-identification theory, people automatically respond to social situations and relationships by revealing those sides of themselves that allow them to meet their objectives; in this sense, self-identifications are "edited, packaged version[s] of the self" (Schlenker & Weigold, 1989, p. 248). Moreover, whereas Schlenker noted that the contents of people's "situated identities" often differ from the contents of their chronic self-concepts, he also suggested that people feel that they are presenting themselves authentically. These points of similarity between Schlenker's (1984) and our approaches notwithstanding, we differ in our understanding of why people behave in an authentic manner. For Schlenker, people behave authentically because they know that their partners deplore inauthenticity and that their goals will be frustrated should inauthentic behavior be discovered. Relationship partners, then, are the final arbiters: As long as their partners perceive them as authentic, people will feel authentic. Although we agree with Schlenker that the reactions of people's partners contribute to their feelings of authenticity, we also believe that partners' reactions do not tell the whole story. Specifically, we suggest that feelings of authenticity also grow out of a realization that one's behaviors fit with an underlying representation of self. From our perspective, people are "honest brokers" whose honesty derives not only from the fact that they suspect that their partners are looking over their shoulders but also because they prefer their worlds to be sensible and coherent; that is, people are true to others not only because they fear being "caught with their interpersonal pants down" (i.e., failing to honor an identity they have negotiated) but also because they want to be true to themselves. This brings us to some qualifiers of our research.

The first three studies in this report examined the responses of college students in dating relationships. We suspect that such relatively short-term relationships encourage the strategic self-verification processes that we have focused on here and that these processes may be tempered in long-term, committed relationships (e.g., Swann et al., 1994). Also, we compared people's preferences for appraisals in dating relationships (opposite sex) with their preferences in friendship/roommate relationships (same sex). Although the results of the fourth study (which focused on relationships with teammates and art instructors) helped address both of these shortcomings, future research should examine the generalizability of our findings.

CONCLUSIONS

For decades, theorists and researchers have struggled to understand how people reconcile their conflicting desires for positive evaluations with subjectively accurate evaluations (e.g., S. C. Jones, 1973; Shrauger, 1975). Recent reviewers of the literature have concluded that people resolve these conflicting motives in favor of positivity strivings. For example, whereas some have suggested that the desire for positivity typically overrides the desire for authenticity (e.g., Baumeister, 1998), others have suggested that the desire for positivity subsumes all other self-related motives (e.g., Sedikides & Strube, 1997). Our findings suggest that people themselves experience no such compulsion to declare one motive the victor over the other. Rather, people seem to understand the importance of both motives and have devised ways of satisfying each without frustrating the other.

NOTES

1. Moreover, parallel analyses of Studies 2 and 3 revealed no consistent tendency for participants to want exceptionally positive appraisals on any dimension save attractiveness, and parallel analyses of Study 4 revealed that participants wanted exceptionally positive appraisals only on high-relevance dimensions.

2. We also required that participants had completed the Self-Attributes Questionnaire (SAQ) during a pretesting session at the beginning of the semester, with the intention of using this as our measure of participants' self-views. Unfortunately, this was the first time that the University of Texas Psychology Department used a Web-based pretesting system, and several problems rendered much of the pretest data that semester—including responses to the SAQ—unusable. We therefore administered the SAQ at the end of each experimental session to measure participants' self-views. This strategy is nonoptimal because it raises the possibility that the measure of self-views was contaminated by the responses that preceded it. Nevertheless, we were reassured by the fact that the key results of Study 2 (the desired appraisals) were very similar to the key results of Studies 1, 3, and 4. Also, in Study 1, we varied the order in which participants indicated their self-views and ideal appraisals and found that order did not affect either type of rating.

3. We first converted the SAQ ratings to percentage scores so that they were comparable to the scores presented in Study 1.

4. To ensure that these effects were not driven by a small number of participants who expressed very strong motives, we also looked at the overall frequency with which participants expressed each type of motive. In the dating partner condition, 47.8% ($N = 11$ out of 23) of participants mentioned a desire for self-confirmation of their attractiveness self-views, 82.6% ($N = 19$) mentioned a desire for positive evaluations of their attractiveness, 78.3% ($N = 18$) mentioned a desire for confirmation of their nonattractiveness self-views, and 95.7% ($N = 22$) mentioned a desire for positive assessments on nonattractiveness dimensions. In the roommate condition, 63.6% ($N = 14$ out of 22) of participants wanted confirmation of their attractiveness self-views, 59.1% ($N = 13$) wanted positive evaluations of their attractiveness, 90.9% ($N = 20$) wanted confirmation of their nonattractiveness self-views, and 81.8% ($N = 18$) wanted positive evaluations on nonattractiveness dimensions. Thus, the majority of participants expressed both self-confirmation and positivity strivings when indicating their desired appraisals.

5. Participant sex was a marginally significant predictor of partner appraisals, $\beta = .21$, $t(72) = 1.89$, $p = .064$, such that women received more favorable attractiveness appraisals than did men, but was not related to self-presented attractiveness.

6. There was no evidence of mediation on the nonattractiveness traits.

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