Abstract

The objective for conducting this research is to understand what makes a successful intimate coupling relationship and what connects them, disconnects them, and reconnects the couples. The study was conducted by interviewing two couples in their home and asking them a series of 20 questions about how they have connected. Each couple gave examples and details of how the used, or did not uses these aspects in their relationship and how it affected them. It is clear to see that in order to have a successful intimate coupling relationship, positive variables of connection is needed, and without it there would be disconsensus among the couple. By asking these questions I was able to I was able to come to the conclusion that there are three key variables that make a successful intimate coupling relationship: communicating effectively with an intimate coupling partner to allow caring and consensualizing interactions, genuinely making an effort to compromise and make commitments to a partner, and valuing one another unconditionally.
Methodology and Research Design

Four interviews consisted of two intimate couples who are married were conducted for this research. All of the interviews were done at the homes of the intimate couples. These interviews reflect the diversity of intimate couples in society that allows researchers to create a conclusion that appeals to all people. There is an apparent difference between the intimate couples regarding age, gender, race, ethnicity, employment status, and health. The student asking the questions to the interview is also a “participant-observer”; this means that the student will also look around and observe the living environments of the intimate couples. A consent form was given and signed to all participants. This consent form also stated that the identity of the interviewee will not be revealed. This agreement assures honest and secure answers. The interviewee’s names were replaced with acronyms that label their gender, age, ethnicity, marital status, and employment status. The research paper includes the for interviews as labeled

1. Female, age 47, Hispanic-Pacific Islander, Married, Disability-F47HPIMD
2. Male, age 49, Pacific Islander, Married, Employed-M49PIME
3. Female, age 50, White, Married, Employed-F49WME
4. Male, age 51, White, Married, Employed-M51WME

Analysis
Hypothesis #1 of the Social Uniting Process:

“The higher the degree and number of defined conscious (open awareness) consensualizing (mutual) unconditional positive valuing, caring, communicating, committing, collaborating, compromising, connecting, and confirming interactions between participates in any given social world, the higher the probability of those participants constructing defined social uniting selves, giving, trusting, inclusivizing, equalizing, empowering, productive, and peaceful relationships.”

In each interview, the first hypothesis was apparent in each intimate couple. Each couple was able to explain how they were able to connect with one another in order to have a successful intimate coupling relationship. F47HPIMD and M49PIME both showed the role of the first hypothesis in their intimate coupling relationship by having the same religious practices and having a common faith. In question #8 F47HPIMD explains how religion helps bring them together in their relationship by saying, “we use our faith to keep us close because we believe in the same things, and in difficult times we pray for what we need and are thankful for.” This shows that their common beliefs in religion brings them together, “connect”, and that they are always on the same page spiritually which ties into the first hypothesis. M49PIME also explained that having children has helped bring them together in a positive way. He says that having good communication on how to parent the children helped build their relationship and bring them closer together. F47HPIMD also expanded on this by saying that having children brought them closer together in their intimate coupling relationship because their children have made the enjoyable lives they have now. The couple has bonded and learned together from parenting children which is also part of the first hypothesis by “committing” to being good parents, “collaborating” together on how to parent the children, and “communicating” to become better parents. The intimate couple also says that their illnesses have brought them together.
F47HPIMD said that her being on disability showed them that to get through their tough time they needed to love each other unconditionally, physically and emotionally. M49PIME also stated that he had Crohn’s Disease and during his time in the hospital the love and support of his wife, F47HPIMD, helped him get through his illness. In both cases of their illnesses they needed to depend on one another and “trust each” other to help them in their state of illness. Their unconditional love for each other, “unconditional positive valuing”, caring, and trusting each other are all major aspects that bring them together for their relationship that ties into the first hypothesis. They also needed to have an “open awareness” of each other in their times of sickness in order to take care and help support each one another. F47HPIMD also says that her family and therapist have helped support her intimate coupling relationship. She says, “My family has given me unconditional support”. This “unconditional positive valuing” that her family has given her has helped her become closer with her significant coupling other. She talked about her therapist and said, “My therapist has given me an alternative view to situations.” Her therapist has helped her “compromise” issues with her husband by offering a different view on their situations which has helped bring them together.

F47HPIMD and M49PIME said that the main thing that brings them together in their intimate is their friendship. Having a good friendship has allowed them to “connect” with one another through laughter and “communicating” about how their day was.

The next couple that was interviewed was F49WME and M51WME. They also had a common religious practice which they said brought them together. F49WME says, “We look to God for guidance and support in our lives. Religion also brings us closer together by going to church every Sunday together.” By “communicating” with their God, it allows them to “connect” in their common faith which is in hypothesis 1. They also “commit” to each other and their religion
by attending their church services every Sunday together in order to get closer to their spiritual beliefs. M51WME also says that they connect by “going on walks and traveling to make new memories.” By going on walks it helps them “connect” by “communicating” on about their day so that they are on the same page as each other. The couple also explained that they have grown closer to each other by raising two children together. M51WME says they have gotten closer by, “raising children and talking about how to raise them and the challenges that they bring.” He also said that they had to compromise on how to deal with certain issues that they children brought. The couple had to “communicate” effectively in order to work together and parent efficiently. The couple also had to “compromise” on the style of parenting they wanted to use with their children. F49WME said that they also try to go out on a date at least once a month. She said that date nights allow them to connect and spend quality caring time together. Getting out of the house and away from their children lets them “connect” by themselves and shows that they truly “care” about each other by making an effort to be together. F49WME also talked about how her family and counseling has helped their intimate coupling relationship. She said that her grandparents helped support their marriage when her parents did not fully approve. F49WME said that without her grandparents support she doesn’t know if she would have gotten married. This support helped her “connect” with her intimate coupling partner by encouraging them to get married. The couple was also able to “compromise” together about her parents’ disapproval and get married. F49WME said she also has a therapist which has helped support her in her intimate coupling relationship. She said that her therapist has helped her find an “open awareness” to her partner and to support her partner even when times are hard.
Hypothesis #2 of the Social Uniting Process:

“The lower the degree and number of defined conscious (closed awareness) consensualizing (mutual) unconditional positive valuing, caring, communicating, committing, collaborating, compromising, connecting, and confirming interactions between participants in any given social world, the higher the probability of those participants constructing defined social disuniting selves, getting, giving to get, distrusting, exclusivizing, dis-equalizing, disempowering, less productive, and more conflicting relationships.”

Although both of the intimate couples gave examples for positive connections that showed social uniting, the couples also gave examples of social disuniting. Both intimate couples have faced obstacles that have disconnected them in their intimate coupling relationship. F47HPIMD stated that while having children brought them together, there were times where it was challenging that disconnected them. She said that when they first became parents they were disconnected because while F47HPIMD was at home with the child alone, M49PIME had to work which caused stress. Learning on how to deal with being new found parents caused them to “disunite” and had a “closed awareness” to each-others problems which ties into the second hypothesis. F47HPIMD also said that dealing with their illnesses caused them to disconnect from one another in their intimate coupling relationship. She said that having to take care of each other caused stress and were sometimes not able to collaborate well. The stress of having to take care of each other constantly “disunited” them because they had a “closed awareness” about their needs and how to attend to them. M49PIME also said that when he was sick they were not able to stay on common ground on his needs because “could not collaborate” and had a “lack of communication.”

The other couple of F49WME and M51WME also had obstacles that disconnected them in their intimate coupling relationship. M51WME said that money was an issue that caused a lot of fights
between them. Not being able to "compromise" on how to spend their money and not "valuing" the same things the other partner thought was important caused a "disconnection" between the couple. F49WME said that their work schedules don't always line up which causes them to "disunite." She said that since her husband always works late that she feels like there is a lack of "mutual caring" and "valuing". F49WME also said, "We have not been able to find a good way around our conflicting work schedules." Since they have not been able to find a "compromise" to this problem it has increased the "devaluing" and has caused more "disuniting" between the intimate couple. Another thing that caused the couple to "disconnect." A common obstacle that both couples faced was raising children. F49WME said, "Raising teenagers has also caused us to disunite because we could not collaborate and communicate well on how to deal with them."

This shows that there was a lack of "collaboration and communication" that brought the intimate couple to a "disconscious." This couple also had an obstacle from other relationship in the form of their family. Both of their parents disapproved of their marriage at first and caused a lot of fights. This caused stress on the intimate couple which in turn made it difficult to "commit" to each other in marriage.

**Hypothesis #3 of the Social Uniting Process:**

"The higher the degree and number of redefined conscious (reopening awareness) consensualizing (mutual) unconditional positive valuing, caring, communicating, committing, collaborating, compromising, connecting, and confirming interactions between participants in any given social world, the higher the probability of those participants constructing redefined social reuniting selves, giving, trusting, inclusivizing, equalizing, empowering, productive, and peaceful relationships."
Both couples were able to move from the second hypothesis to the third hypothesis and find common ground where they revalue each other. They were able to go from a stage of disconnection to a stage of reopening awareness. F47HPIMD says, "we were able to overcome the challenge of being parents by communicating and understanding what we both needed to do to parent our children." This shows that by "communicating" they were able to "reopen their awareness" and figure out a way to "collaborate" again to parent. M49PIME said that they were able to overcome their disconnection from each other due to illness by "keeping things light hearted, we remembered the vows that we took to remember why we loved and valued each other" this shows that they were able to move to the third hypothesis by "revaluing" one another "reopened their awareness" to the vows that they took to love and care for each other in times of sickness. F47HPIMD also said that her therapist helped her reconnect in her intimate coupling relationship. She said, "My therapist helped me look at things from a different view and helped me reconnect with my husband when we were not on the same page." The therapist was able to help F47HPIMD see a different point of view which "mutual" understanding and was able to resolve their problems.

The second couple that I interviewed was also able to find the third hypothesis and reunite. F49WME said that they were able to reconnect by, "We have been able to reconnect by looking towards God and prayer." By "communicating" with their sacred, the couple was able to find peace and "revalue" one another after prayer. M51WME also said that they were able to go into the third hypothesis by talking things out. "We have been able to reconnect by looking towards God and prayer, we have also found common ground by communication with one another to find a compromise to our problems." By "communicating" with each other they were able to find "compromises" in their relationship that brought them back together onto common ground.
F49WME was also able to reconnect with her husband by the help of her friends: "Friends were able to help us reconnect with each other by supporting us and making aware of the problem and not just one side of it." By talking to her friends, she was able to "reopen her awareness" to reunite with her intimate coupling partner.
Conclusion

Through the research process about the social uniting proses in successful intimate coupling, it was apparent that communication, collaboration, consensualizing, and connecting were all important to the successful intimate couples. Each couple gave examples and details of how the used, or did not use these aspects in their relationship and how it affected them. It is clear to see that in order to have a successful intimate coupling relationship, positive variables of connection is needed, and without it there would be disconsensus among the couple. It was made clear that when the couple felt devalued or disconnected from their partner that there was a low degree of successful intimate coupling. The couples also gave examples of how the partners were able to reconnect with their successful intimate coupling partner by having caring behaviors.

Through both of the interviews with the couples I was able to determine three recommendations that will help people succeed in their quest for successful intimate coupling: communicating effectively with an intimate coupling partner to allow caring and consensualizing interactions, genuinely making an effort to compromise and make commitments to a partner, and valuing one another unconditionally. By communicating efficiently, intimate coupling partners are able to be in consensus with one another. Communication allows for an intimate couple to connect, compromise, and open awareness. Secondly, by making a genuine effort to compromise and make commitments makes the partners feel supported and valued. Lastly, valuing one another unconditionally acknowledges the fact that the partner loves and cares for the other one sincerely which leads to successful intimate coupling.
Appendix A

Interview #1 with F47HPIMD and M49PIME

1. What is your age?
   47 and 49

2. Are you employed? If yes, how many hours per week?
   No, disabled
   42 hours a week

3. Are you married or cohabitating?
   Married

4. Are you parenting dependent children who live with you?
   Yes 3 children.

5. Is English your first language?
   Yes

6. What is your ethnic-identification?
   Mexican and Filipino
   Filipino

7. How many years of formal education do you have?
   14
   13

8. Do you have a religious or spiritual preference? If yes, how does it support you in your quest for successful intimate coupling? Please give an example.
   Catholic, we use our faith to keep us close because we believe in the same things, and in difficult times we pray for what we need and are thankful for.
9. **What are the positive ways you have connected with your intimate coupling partner that have supported and sustained your coupling success and in what ways? Please give three examples. (Hypothesis 1)**

Childbirth brought us close because of the lives we have created.

Illness because we needed to love unconditionally, physically and emotionally support each other and come together to get through a challenging time.

10. **What are some of the relationship challenges and conditions you have faced and/or are facing that disconnected you from your intimate coupling partner and challenged your successful intimate coupling? Please give three examples. (Hypothesis 2)**

The same things that have helped bring us together have also had their challenges that have disconnected us such as children and dealing with illnesses They also could cause challenges if you don’t turn it into something positive.

11. **How have you been able to overcome some of the relationship challenges and conditions you have faced and/or are facing that disconnected you from your intimate coupling partner and challenged your successful intimate coupling? Please give three examples. (Hypothesis 3).**

we were able to overcome the challenge of being parents by communicating and understand what we both needed to do We have overcome illness challenges keeping things light hearted, we remembered the vows that we took to remember why we loved and valued each other
12. If you have not been able to overcome some of the relationship challenges and conditions you have faced/ and or facing that disconnected from your intimate coupling partner and that challenged your coupling success, why have you not been able to do so? Please give three examples.

N/A

13. What significant other relationships, for example family, friends, children, marriage and family counselors, etc. Have supported your intimate coupling relationship and in what ways? Please give three examples. (Hypothesis 1)

My family has given me unconditional support. My therapist has given me an alternative view to situations and my friends let me vent and get my feelings out.

14. What significant other relationships, for example family, friends, children, marriage and family counselors, etc. Have challenged your intimate coupling relationship and in what ways? Please give 3 examples. (Hypothesis 2)

N/A

15. What significant other relationships, for example family, friends, children, marriage and family counselors, etc. Have helped you reconnect with your significant coupling relationship? (Hypothesis 3)

My therapist helped me look at things from a different view and helped me reconnect with my husband when we were not on the same page.
16. What three conditions do you feel contribute to a successful intimate coupling relationship? Please list those three conditions in order of importance in your relationship.

Faith, laughter and friendship with one another.

17. What three conditions do you feel challenge a successful intimate coupling relationship. Please list those three conditions in order of importance in your relationship.

Illness, finances, and parenting.

18. What do you most value about your intimate coupling relationship? Please give three examples.

I value the fact there isn’t anyone else that knows me or understands me and what I have been through.

19. What do you least value about your intimate coupling relationship? Please give three examples.

Our combined autoimmune diseases, we don’t travel alone, and financial burdens.

20. What three recommendations based upon your research would you give to other couples in their quest for success in their intimate coupling relationships? Please give three examples.

You need a good friendship, good communication and have faith. Keep it positive and faithful.

Interview #2 with F49WME and M51WME

1. What is your age?

50 and 51
2. Are you employed? If yes, how many hours per week?
   Yes, 40hrs a week as a teacher
   Yes, 50 hours a week

3. Are you married or cohabitating?
   yes

4. Are you parenting dependent children who live with you?
   Yes, two children

5. Is English your first language?
   yes

6. What is your ethnic identification?
   White

7. How many years of formal education do you have?
   18
   18

8. Do you have a religious or spiritual preference? If yes, how does it support you in your quest for successful intimate coupling? Please give an example.
   Yes, protestant we look to God for guidance and support in our lives. Religion also brings us closer together by going to church every Sunday together.

9. What are the positive ways you have connected with your intimate coupling partner that have supported and sustained your coupling success and in what ways? Please give three examples. (Hypothesis 1)
Sex, going on walks and traveling to make new memories, raising children and talking about how to raise them and the challenges that they bring, and going on date nights to connect and spending quality caring time together.

10. What are some of the relationship challenges and conditions you have faced and/or are facing that disconnected you from your intimate coupling partner and challenged your successful intimate coupling? Please give three examples.

(Hypothesis 2)

work schedules that don’t align up well causes stress because it is less quality time that we spend together. raising teenagers has also caused us to disunite because we could not collaborate and communicate well on how to deal with them. money also has caused issues because we don’t always agree on what it should be spent on.

11. How have you been able to overcome some of the relationship challenges and conditions you have faced and/or are facing that disconnected you from your intimate coupling partner and challenged your successful intimate coupling? Please give three examples. (Hypothesis 3).

We have been able to reconnect by looking towards God and prayer, we have also found common ground by communication with one another to find a compromise to our problems.

12. If you have not been able to overcome some of the relationship challenges and conditions you have faced/ and or facing that disconnected from your intimate coupling partner and that challenged your coupling success, why have you not been able to do so? Please give three examples.

We have not been able to find a good way around our conflicting work schedules.
13. What significant other relationships, for example family, friends, children, marriage and family counselors, etc. Have supported your intimate coupling relationship and in what ways? Please give three examples. (Hypothesis 1)

Grandparents helped support us getting married, and counseling helped bring us closer together and made us connect.

14. What significant other relationships, for example family, friends, children, marriage and family counselors, etc. Have challenged your intimate coupling relationship and in what ways? Please give 3 examples. (Hypothesis 2)

Both Parents did not approve of our marriage at first.

15. What significant other relationships, for example family, friends, children, marriage and family counselors, etc. Have helped you reconnect with your significant coupling relationship? (Hypothesis 3)

Friends were able to help us reconnect with each other by supporting us and making aware of the problem and not just one side of it.

16. What three conditions do you feel contribute to a successful intimate coupling relationship? Please list those three conditions in order of importance in your relationship.

Respect, time together, and love.

17. What three conditions do you feel challenge a successful intimate coupling relationship. Please list those three conditions in order of importance in your relationship.

Money, sex, and challenge.
18. What do you most value about your intimate coupling relationship? Please give
three examples.

Very generous with time, common interests, and common faith in god

19. What do you least value about your intimate coupling relationship? Please give
three examples.

Lack of quality time together, and lack of money,

20. What three recommendations based upon your research would you give to other
couples in their quest for success in their intimate coupling relationships? Please
give three examples.

We would recommend to look for guidance in God, communicate with each other, and love each other no matter what.
Appendix B

**F47HPIMD and M49PIME**

I chose these interviewees because they are close friends to my family. I have known them since I was young because they always came to family events. The interview was conducted in their house. The interview lasted for approximately 40 minutes. The couple was able to understand all of the questions. When I asked questions about how they were able to connect with each other I saw smiles on their faces and when they talked about their marriage they held hand which showed their love for each other. On a scale of 1-10 on how comfortable they were asking questions I would give them an 8. While they were comfortable talking about what brought them together, I sensed tension between them when they talked about what disconnected them. I would also give myself an 8 about how comfortable I was asking the questions.

**Interview #2 with F49WME and M51WME**

I chose these interviewees because they were also friends of my family and I felt comfortable asking them about their relationship. The interview was conducted in their house. The interview lasted around 35 minutes. The couple found it hard to answer question #19. To overcome this, I explained to them that it meant ‘what they did not like the most in their relationship’. The couple was happy and smiled when they talked about what brought them together. On a comfort level of how they answered the question I would give them a 7. It took a while for them to open up to the questions but by the end they were comfortable. I would give myself an 8 because I was a little uncomfortable asking them about what disunited them.