Relationship Science Online

Accommodation: A way to Conceptualise Communication & Conflict Patterns

Thinking about Communication/Conflict Patterns

- Rusbult et al. (1982) **proposed the model of relationship accommodation**
  - A model communication that outline four types of responses people have when in conflict or dissatisfied with their relationship.
- **These four responses are based where people sit on two dimensions:**
  - Whether the response is destructive or constructive for the relationship
  - Whether the response is active or passive

Thinking about Communication Patterns

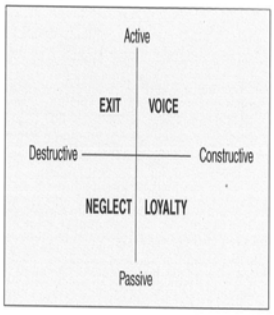


Figure 9.3 The exit-voice-loyalty-neglect typology
Source: From Rusbult *et al.*, 1986a; © 1986 American Psychological Association, Inc.

Thinking about Communication/Conflict Patterns

Exit includes active responses that are destructive for the relationship, such as ending or threatening to terminate the relationship, and abusing, criticizing, or derogating the partner (e.g. "When my partner behaves in an unpleasant or thoughtless manner, I do something equally unpleasant in return").

Voice incorporates constructive and active responses such as attempting to improve conditions, discussing problems and suggesting solutions, and engaging in efforts to alter problematic self or partner behavior (e.g. "When my partner is upset and says something mean, I try to patch things up and solve the problem").

Loyalty consists of pro-relationship responses such as passively waiting and hoping for improvement, forgiving and forgetting partner offenses, and supporting and maintaining faith in the partner in the face of hurtful actions ("When my partner is angry with me, I hang in there and wait for my partner's mood to change").

Neglect involves passive destructive responses such as allowing the relationship to deteriorate by ignoring or spending less time with the partner, avoiding discussing any problems, and criticizing the partner regarding unrelated issues ("When my partner is rude or inconsiderate, I ignore the whole thing and try to spend less time with my partner").

- **Often scores on all four response patterns are combined to yield a score on accommodation**
  - Accommodation: Tendency to inhibit destructive exit and neglect responses and reactive constructively with voice and loyalty

