COMPASSIONATE LOVE FOR SPECIFIC CLOSE OTHER

Reference:

Sprecher, S. & Fehr, B. (2005). Compassionate love for close others and humanity. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 22*, 629-651.

Description of Measure:

A 21-item measure of compassionate love toward a specific close other. Compassionate love toward a specific close others is defined as an attitude toward that close other that involves behavior, feeling, and thinking that is all focused on "caring, concern, tenderness, and an orientation toward supporting, helping, and understanding the other, particularly when the other is perceived to be suffering or in need (page 630)." This specific close other could either be a romantic partner or a close friend. Respondents answer each item on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (not at all true of me) to 7 (very true of me). Within each item, the "other" is left blank so the respondent can fill in the specific close other of their choice.

Abstracts of Selected Related Articles:

Sprecher, S. & Fehr, B. (2006). Enhancement of mood and self-esteem as a result of giving and receiving compassionate love. *Current Research in Social Psychology, 11*, 227-242.

> Compassionate love may be the type of love that leads to the most social good for those who are its recipients. However, self-benefits may also occur as a result of experiencing compassionate love for others. Three studies were conducted in which people were asked to recall a specific experience of compassionate love and to indicate how they were affected on several dimensions (mood, self-esteem, closeness to others). In Study 1, participants were asked to recall an experience of compassionate love without specification of target. A manipulation of the context of compassionate love (relational vs. non-relational) was included in Studies 2 and 3. A comparison of compassionate love given versus received was also included in Study 3. Overall, the results indicated that people reap many positive benefits of experiencing compassionate love for others. Differences in perceived outcomes to the self based on relational context and role (giver vs. receiver) were also found and discussed.

Sprecher, S., Schmeeckle, M., & Felmlee, D. (2006). The principle of least interest: Inequality in emotional involvement in romantic relationships. *Journal of Family Issues*, *27*, 1-26.

> Data from a longitudinal sample of dating couples (some of whom married) were analyzed to test the aspect of Waller's (1938) principle of least interest that states that unequal emotional involvement between romantic partners has implications for relationship quality and stability. Both members of the couples were asked multiple times over several years which partner, if either, was more emotionally involved. Perceptions of unequal emotional involvement were common and tended to remain stable over time. Less emotionally involved partners perceived themselves as having more control over the continuation of their relationships. Equal emotional involvement was associated with greater relationship satisfaction and stability. Concurrent and retrospective perceptions of relative emotional involvement were associated with several aspects of relationship breakup within the subsample of those who broke up during the study. Perceptions of emotional involvement have many implications for dating couples, including being linked to relationship satisfaction and other outcomes.

Sprecher, S., & Hendrick, S. (2004). Self-disclosure in intimate relationships: Associations with individual and relationship characteristics over time. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology 23*, 836-856.

Self-disclosure is an act of intimacy and serves as a maintenance strategy, and yet very little prior research has examined self-disclosure within relationships with data collected multiple times over an extended period of time and from both partners. With longitudinal data collected from both partners in young adult dating couples, we examined how self-disclosure is associated with both individual characteristics (e.g., responsiveness, self-esteem) and relationship characteristics (satisfaction, love, commitment). Overall, men and women indicated a similar high level of self-disclosure. As hypothesized, positive associations were found between self-disclosure and the individual characteristics of self-esteem, relationship esteem (confidence as an intimate partner), and responsiveness (as indicated by data collected at Time 1). Self-disclosure also was positively associated with relationship quality (satisfaction, love, and commitment). Similar positive associations were typically found at the follow-up waves, although in many cases the correlations were not significant and were more modest in magnitude. Level of self-disclosure was generally not predictive of whether the couple stayed together or broke up over time, although the more that women perceived their partner disclosed at Time 1, the less likely the couple was to break up by Time 2. It is speculated that the generally high level of self-disclosure at Time 1 for the entire sample limited the degree to which self-disclosure could predict which relationships stayed together and which broke up over time. In an analysis that involved the subsample of couples who stayed together throughout the study (many of whom married by time 3) no significant change was found in levels of self-disclosure.

Scale

1.) When I see _____ feeling sad, I feel a need to reach out to them.

not at all true of me 1   2   3   4   5   6   7 *very true of me*

2.) I spend a lot of time concerned about the well-being of _____.

not at all true of me 1   2   3   4   5   6   7 *very true of me*

3.) When I hear about _____ going through a difficult time, I feel a great deal of compassion for him or her.

      not at all true of me 1   2   3   4   5   6   7 *very true of me*

4.) It is easy for me to feel the pain (and joy) experienced by _____.

      not at all true of me 1   2   3   4   5   6   7 *very true of me*

5.) If _____ needs help, I would do almost anything I could to help him or her.
      not at all true of me 1   2   3   4   5   6   7 *very true of me*

6.) I feel considerable compassionate love for those _____.

      not at all true of me 1   2   3   4   5   6   7 *very true of me*

7.) I would rather suffer myself than see _____ suffer.

      not at all true of me 1   2   3   4   5   6   7 *very true of me*

8.) If given the opportunity, I am willing to sacrifice in order to let _____ achieve their goals in life.

      not at all true of me 1   2   3   4   5   6   7 *very true of me*

9.) I tend to feel compassion for _____.

      not at all true of me 1   2   3   4   5   6   7 *very true of me*

10.) One of the activities that provides me with the most meaning to my life is helping _____.

      not at all true of me 1   2   3   4   5   6   7 *very true of me*

11.) I would rather engage in actions that help _____than engage in actions that would help me.

      not at all true of me 1   2   3   4   5   6   7 *very true of me*

12.) I often have tender feelings toward _____when they seem to be in need.

      not at all true of me 1   2   3   4   5   6   7 *very true of me*

13.) I feel a selfless caring for _____.

      not at all true of me 1   2   3   4   5   6   7 *very true of me*

14.) I accept _____ even when they do things I think are wrong.

      not at all true of me 1   2   3   4   5   6   7 *very true of me*

15.) If _____ is troubled, I usually feel extreme tenderness and caring.

      not at all true of me 1   2   3   4   5   6   7 *very true of me*

16.) I try to understand rather than judge _____.

      not at all true of me   1   2   3   4   5   6   7 *very true of me*

17.) I try to put myself in _____'s shoes when he or she is in trouble.

      not at all true of me   1   2   3   4   5   6   7 *very true of me*

18.) I feel happy when I see that _____ is happy.

      not at all true of me   1   2   3   4   5   6   7 *very true of me*

19.) _____ can assume that I will be there if he/she needs me.

      not at all true of me   1   2   3   4   5   6   7 *very true of me*

20.) I want to spend time with _____ so that I can find ways to help enrich his/her life.

      not at all true of me   1   2   3   4   5   6   7 *very true of me*

21.) I very much wish to be kind and good to _____.

      not at all true of me   1   2   3   4   5   6   7 *very true of me*

Scoring

An average score is calculated for all 21 items. Scoring is kept continuous.