

Applied Positive Psychology

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Week 9

Lecture 26: Positive relationship and social support

I welcome you all to module 9 of this course. Module 9 is about positive interpersonal relationships. In this module, we examine the various aspects of positive relationships and their impact on overall well-being. So, today's lecture is lecture number 23, and it is titled "Positive Relationship and Social Support." We will explore some of the fundamental aspects of positive relationships and the various factors that contribute to their development. This is the first lecture of this module and the 23rd lecture overall.

Before we discuss today's lecture, let me provide a brief recap of the previous lecture, which is Lecture 22. This was part of an earlier module where we discussed the developmental changes in prosocial thoughts and actions, how prosocial behavior evolves, and the various developmental changes that occur in a child as they age. We discussed the different aspects of it in terms of thoughts and actions. We also examined how social learning influences prosocial behavior and thought processes. Ultimately, we discussed various strategies and interventions for promoting prosocial behavior and kindness. We discussed multiple factors that can facilitate prosocial behavior, which can be utilized as intervention strategies. These are a few key points that we discussed in the last lecture. Today's lecture will cover some key concepts, including a discussion on positive relationships and social support. We will also talk about the mechanisms of social support and well-being. We will discuss some of the other aspects that contribute to positive relationships, including capitalization, gratitude, and love. The following are some of the topics we will cover in today's lecture.

Let's begin today's lecture. When it comes to interpersonal relationships, as a field of psychological research, it is relatively young. However, significant progress has already been made in this context, where we now understand many aspects and have numerous empirical findings associated with various relationships and their influence on our lives, particularly in terms of well-being, mental health, and other related areas. A significant amount of research has also focused on negative processes related to relationships and the detrimental effects of poor-quality relationships. So, a lot of research is also available in the context of when there are poor relationships, when there is social isolation, how it leads

to various kinds of mental health problems, and in terms of detrimental impacts on well-being, and so on. However, particularly in the context of positive psychology, the more recent shift has focused on positive processes and relationships. What are the positive things that can contribute to good relationships? In this module and lecture, we will focus on various factors that promote high-quality relationships and their role in health and well-being. Now, suppose you look at empirical literature or research findings. In that case, research consistently demonstrates that relationships play a vital role in both physical health and well-being, as we are social animals. Our relationships with others play a crucial role in our emotional life, mental health, overall physical health, and well-being. These aspects continuously impact us from morning until we sleep and beyond. Epidemiological studies have shown that social isolation significantly increases the risk of all-cause mortality. A lot of research shows that people who have less social support and experience more social isolation have an increased risk of mortality; they die earlier.

Numerous studies indicate this very clearly. Poor-quality relationships or a lack of social ties are associated with impaired functioning of the cardiovascular, immune, and endocrine systems. So, that can impact social isolation; the lack of social, positive relationships can lead to numerous physiological impacts, such as an impaired cardiovascular system, a decrease in the immune system, and problems with the endocrine system, among others. So, there is very clear-cut empirical evidence available which shows that social isolation and lack of positive relationships could lead to various kinds of detrimental impacts on physical health, mental health, and even mortality. It increases the probability of early death, among other adverse effects.

Additionally, positive close relationships are strongly linked to happiness and life satisfaction. The other aspect of the coin is also true, which suggests that when people have more positive relationships and a better social support system, it contributes to higher happiness and life satisfaction. These findings are not limited to academic research alone. Even if you ask people in general, laypeople also recognize that the importance of close relationships often determines them as the most meaningful aspect of their lives. Even if you ask people randomly, they will say that one of the most critical factors contributing to the meaning of their life or happiness mainly comes from relationship aspects. So, both empirical evidence and everyday experience exist. Clearly indicates the importance of stable, positive relationships for health and well-being, as well as the necessity of understanding how the human mind evolved to develop and maintain these connections. These research studies clearly indicate that there is a wealth of evidence demonstrating the importance of positive relationships in human life, particularly in terms of enhancing quality of life.

In the context of positive relationships, this lecture will focus on key components or facilitators that contribute to or enhance the quality of our lives by improving our

relationships with the people around us. So, there are three aspects we'll be discussing in today's lecture. One is social support, the second is capitalization, and the third concept is that of love. Let's examine each of them in a bit more detail. When we discuss social support, it is very evident in everyone's life. We give support and receive support from other people around us, particularly the significant people in our lives. It includes both tangible and emotional support. During stressful times or in general, this is a key mechanism linking health and well-being. Social support encompasses providing tangible assistance, as well as offering emotional support, among other forms of support. But the definition and measurement of social support vary across the discipline. Also, people have various conceptualizations about it. So, we'll try to focus on a broad definition and concentrate more on the impact, and so on. So, if you look at human beings, we have already discussed that we are social animals. We are wired to bond with others. In normal circumstances, we all live in society, within families, and in various communities.

We continue to connect with others, and we are naturally programmed to bond with one another. This is an unavoidable and essential aspect of human life. So, this is a fundamental need. There is also a need to bond with other people, which does not fade with age. It is a constant thing that prevails in our lives from birth to death. It doesn't diminish with the passage of time. This has profound implications for both our mental and physical health, which we will also explore in some of the literature. It profoundly affects us, both emotionally and physically. Now, when we talk about social support, it can be very broadly defined as the soothing impact of friends, family, and acquaintances. So, the kind of support we get from the people close to us. Therefore, receiving support from others has a soothing impact. It helps you, relieves your stress, and has a relaxing effect when you receive support from others, particularly friends, family, and acquaintances. Broadly speaking, we can refer to it as a social support system, the kind of support we receive from the people around us. It could be tangible support, emotional support, or something else. Therefore, the need for a strong social relationship with others is a powerful and fundamental motivation. This need for social relationships and support is a powerful motivator within all of us, driving us to connect with others. It helps us to establish a network of close, caring individuals who can provide social support in times of distress, sorrow, and fear. That plays a vital role, particularly when we experience a life crisis and so on. This social support is a crucial personal resource because it helps provide access to additional resources beyond those we already have. Why is it important, particularly when dealing with crises or coping with difficult times, adversities of life, and challenges of life? The primary reason is that one individual has limited resources to address the situation. However, when you receive support from others, your resources expand. Now you have the resources of three, four, and five people. Now you can manage a situation in a much better way because you have more resources from other people. You may not be able to do many things in your life. We can accomplish many things in our lives thanks to the support

of others. When we receive social support, the resources of other people are added to us. As our resources increase, our capacity and ability also increase, which you probably could not achieve on your own. So that is what social support does, particularly in a crisis. Therefore, people receive support from multiple sources, including parents, friends, relatives, and loved ones. Sometimes people say that pets can also be a source of support for many people. Pets, whatever we choose, include various animals such as cats, dogs, and others, especially in modern life, where our social connections are not as strong. When people struggle to connect with others, they often find emotional support in pets. When you have a pet, you form a significant emotional bond with it, which can also benefit the person who owns it. Keeping pets, among other things, can also serve as a form of social support, particularly emotional support. There are different forms of social support, which refer to the various categories or types of support that we receive from other people. It can take different forms. These are some of the different forms that are prominently seen in social exchanges.

One is tangible support, which includes material support such as services, finances, or goods. So, when people support you with services, or they give you goods or financial help, and so on. So, basically, it's a very tangible thing. You can say somebody gave me something very tangible, which is called tangible support. Often, people require tangible support, and when they receive it from others, we can refer to it as tangible social support. Another form of support that people receive is informational support, which essentially involves receiving guidance, advice, or suggestions during times of need or crisis. Sometimes, you may not have all the necessary information to address the problem. So, some of your friends or other people, whoever your acquaintances may give you some information, advice, or suggestions on how to go about in a particular situation, so that is also an essential support because you don't have the information and understanding about a problem, someone else may help you in that situation, so that's called informational support.

Another very prominent form of emotional support that plays a vital role in our lives is emotional support. So basically, you know, in terms of words or actions that make people or a person feel cared about, understood, and affirmed. So emotional support may include empathy, caring, love, trust, and so on. Whenever someone faces a difficult situation, someone may offer emotional support by listening to them, understanding their situation, and simply making the other person feel cared for, understood, affirmed, and validated. So those are called emotional support. There is another form of support that may include various forms, but it is often referred to as invisible support. So, what happens here? So, when somebody receives help from others but is unaware of it. Therefore, this type of assistance is most likely to benefit the recipient. So, you receive help from someone, but you do not know who gave you that help. So, it's like someone is helping you anonymously.

So, that is called invisible support. This type of support also benefits people significantly. As this kind of support may not involve any costs because you do not know who the person is, and you may not need to return the favor, and so on, since the person who gave support is an invisible, anonymous individual. Therefore, this could also be another type of support that may include other forms of assistance, but the person providing support may not be aware of their identity. So, that is called invisible support. Therefore, people can experience various forms of social support in their lives, and each can be helpful. But which type of support influences us? There can be different factors associated with it.

Now, just as we sometimes require different types of support, we may need various types of support at different times or in different situations. Some people are better suited to providing one kind of support than others. In our social network, some people are likely skilled at offering emotional support. Some people may be good at providing informational support. Some people may be good at providing tangible support. Therefore, different people may have other resources that enable them to provide that support. We may also require different types of support in various situations in our lives. So, social support is most beneficial when there is a match between what you need and what you receive from the support network; that is the best support system when you need it, if the support given to you and the need that you have match each other. For example, if you need tangible support and someone provides it, let us say you need financial support and someone gives you money, then there is a match. Now, let us say you need financial support and somebody is giving you emotional support; then there is no match. It may not really relieve you from stressful situations. Therefore, the best support we can receive is when there is a match between the need and what the recipient is offering or what the other person is offering. This is known as the matching hypothesis. So, when a person needs, for example, tangible support, providing emotional support may not be very helpful. This is about the various types of support systems we receive. Now, people also discuss or conceptualize social support in terms of other dimensions. For example, we can discuss social support in terms of structural support, which essentially refers to the number of social ties, their interconnectedness, or the density that an individual reports. When we discuss structural support, we refer to the number of ties or the number of people from whom you can expect support. That number determines your structural support system and the density of the individual reports. So, if I ask someone how many people you can count on, let us say, in the event of a crisis, and so on. So, that will determine the structural support. There is another aspect of social support known as enacted or received support, which essentially involves specific support transactions or actual assistance provided or received in response to a stressor. When passed, support means the exact assistance that you receive whenever you are in a crisis or stressful situation. A specific support transaction that you actually receive or the actual help you get in a stressful situation is called received support or enacted support. People also discuss social support in terms of what is known as perceived

support. Here, it relates to the belief that others will provide help if needed. So, what is your perception of what kind of support system you are likely to get when you are in a difficult situation? So, what is your perception? So, you may not receive actual support, but what you get is enacted support, and people may also have something on their minds. If I am in a crisis, I can count on, let's say, three, four, or five people, or whatever the number is. What is their perception? Do they think their support system is good enough or not? That perceived support system is something that exists in the mind of the person, representing their perception of others who are likely to help them, and so on. These are some of the dimensions in which we can also discuss social support. This dimension highlights the multifaceted nature of the social support system, which can impact both us and others. Let us examine some of the empirical literature on these various aspects of social support and their impact on us.

The outcome of social support can vary depending on how it is conceptualized, perceived, and enacted. So, what kind of support system do you get, and what kind of, you know, there can be different factors that influence the outcome of social support on individuals. It is not necessary that simply receiving social support will have a positive influence on a person. There may be many other factors involved. For example, research shows that perceived support refers to the perception of a person's support system, which is what they believe they have; thus, it is a mental construct. Therefore, this perceived support is primarily based on the belief that supportive others are available when needed. So, you believe that there are some numbers, or whatever number you have, available in times of need. So that is your perception. Whether you actually get it or not, that is the enacted support. But perception is about your belief system regarding how many people you can count on when a need arises. Now, research shows that this perceived support is a crucial predictor, as it is consistently linked to positive health and well-being outcomes. So, if you have a perceived higher support system, if you think many people around you will support you, or if there are people around you who can help you during a time of crisis. Therefore, this perception plays a crucial role in contributing to positive health and well-being. So, that plays a vital role. This perception is critical. For instance, research shows that it reduces anxiety and depression during stressful situations. It improves adjustment to diseases and lowers heart rate and blood pressure during stressful tasks because you feel more secure, knowing that someone will be there to help you. So, your stress level decreases, and so on. Perceived support plays a crucial role in terms of well-being and health indicators. Now, when we look at enacted support, the actual support that you receive in terms of exchange with other people, research often shows there is not much significant benefit or even adverse outcomes sometimes of enacted support, when you actually receive some support from another individual, it may not always have a positive impact on you; sometimes it may have no effect, neither positive nor negative; and sometimes it may even hurt the individual who is receiving it. Now, this is somewhat counterintuitive. To make sense of

that, we generally say that social support is beneficial for other things. However, when people actually receive support in many situations, it may not have a significantly positive impact on others. What could be the reason for it? Let us see. Research suggests that enacted support may carry costs, such as lowering self-esteem, highlighting incompetence, or creating feelings of indebtedness. This is particularly true when you receive actual support from someone, especially someone who is not very close. Therefore, a cost is involved. There is an expectation that you should return something, which may lower some people's self-esteem, as well as the notion that you cannot do something without the help of someone. In certain situations, people also experience a lower sense of self-esteem when they receive enacted support. Sometimes, people feel that they are incompetent to deal with a situation, so support is needed in those instances. That feeling of incompetence could also be experienced in certain situations or sometimes people feel a sense of indebtedness, as if there is a debt to repay someone because that person has served, and so on. These can be some of the reasons why, in certain situations, enacted support may not have a positive psychological impact on individuals. For example, some research, such as that of Bolger and colleagues, has found that invisible support, as we discussed, refers to situations where you are not aware of who is providing it. So, they were unaware that receiving support led to better outcomes compared to visible support when you know someone is giving it. So, invisible support, why did it lead to better outcomes? Because there is no cost involved. We don't know who is giving it to you. Therefore, all this pressure, psychological aspects, the feeling of indebtedness, and other factors could be significantly reduced in the case of invisible support, as you are unaware of who the person providing support is, and so on.

Research indicates that, in certain instances, enacted support may not have a significant positive impact; however, perceived support plays a vital and positive role in influencing mental health and overall well-being. Now, how does this social support influence well-being? In general, social support contributes positively to well-being, and so on. Obviously, the dynamics may also differ in the situation. However, let us examine the possible mechanisms behind this relationship and explore why social support enhances well-being. In considering the two potential hypotheses or models available, Cohen and Wills identified two models that link social support to well-being. One is known as the main effects model, and the other is referred to as the buffering model. This model, or hypothesis, can explain the relationship between social support and well-being. Let us examine the main effects model. The main effect model suggests that social support has a direct, positive impact on well-being, regardless of the level of stress. The main effect model suggests that social support consistently has a positive effect. It consistently has a positive impact on people's well-being. Not necessarily only during stressful crises. Whether you are in a crisis, a difficult situation, or a normal situation, regardless of the circumstances, social support has a direct, positive effect on people's well-being. So, what are the key features of this model? It is often noted that social support benefits individuals, not just

during stressful situations. It enhances mental and physical health by providing companionship and a sense of belonging, which is always required, not just during a crisis. People want to belong to a group, a friend circle. And they also need companions, and so on. By doing so, it fulfills the basic needs of people and contributes positively to their overall well-being. Social support encourages healthy behaviors, including exercise and adherence to medical regimens. So many times, when people care about you, they can kind of put pressure on you, either directly or indirectly, in terms of engaging in healthy behaviors like exercising or taking medicine on time, and so on. Often, we don't do these things on our own. However, when our loved ones compel us to do such things, we continue to do them because they are the source of this motivation.

Social support also boosts self-esteem and emotional stability in our lives. These are the factors that are required in every aspect of our lives, not just during crises. So social support provides all this. Therefore, regardless of the situation, it has a positive and direct effect. So just as an example, a person with strong friendships experiences lower depression levels even when not facing major stressors, simply due to regular positive interactions. Regular positive interactions with other people contribute to our emotions, well-being, and overall quality of life. The buffering model is another concept that posits that social support shields individuals from the adverse effects of stress, acting as a buffer. So, a buffer is like something that reduces the impact of something. So, we say the buffer; you know, our cars also have buffer springs, which basically take all the stress and whatever kind of stress comes to the vehicle. It absorbs all this stress; this buffer spring, and the people inside the car don't experience the full impact of the road because the buffer spring absorbs a lot of it. So that's called the buffer system. So social support is like a buffering system. It absorbs a lot of stress from all aspects of life, and when it reaches us, the intensity decreases. That is the idea behind the buffering model. So, it protects individuals by providing a buffer system where, when you have loved ones or a support system around you, whatever problem comes, they will also absorb it, so you are not alone. So, when the stress comes to you, it is of much lesser intensity because other people also help you to absorb all these things. So, they act like a buffer system. The key features of these models include social support, which is most beneficial during periods of high stress. It is generally applicable, but it is most helpful when one is experiencing stressful situations in their life. It mitigates stress by offering emotional comfort and providing practical help from others, which is often the source of stress. So, if the source of stress is, for example, financial problems, then those are causing stress. So, if somebody provides you with that help, it directly removes the source of the stress. Reframing stressful situations can help you view them more positively, and a social support system can also facilitate this reframing. For example, a student under examination stress copes better if they receive encouragement from friends or parents, whereas without stress, the same support may not have a noticeable impact. In stressful situations, the effect is much more visible. That's called the buffer model of stress and social support, and how it can be linked to well-being. Now, both hypotheses of the

model generally receive support in empirical literature. Social support has been found to predict better health among individuals in high-stress situations, such as those with chronic diseases, as well as among people in general, regardless of their level of stress. So, both models have their validity and empirical support.

Bolger and Zuckerman describe two other processes through which social support can interact with stressful situations. One way of looking at it is called the exposure process, which means social support reduces the frequency of the stressors; that's called the exposure process. The second is called the reactivity process, which mitigates the emotional or physiological reaction to stress. So, the intensity decreases when you have a social support system. Your intensity of stress decreases because people often take on a significant amount of this stress themselves. It does not come directly to you or come with a lesser intensity. Additionally, having a better support system reduces your exposure to stress. Many stresses you may not directly experience simply because the other people around you will mitigate that, and you may not even experience it. According to the exposure, the frequency will also decrease, and the physiological reaction to the stress will decrease as well. So, these are the other two ways social support can interact with stressful situations. Social support can reduce the number of perceived stressors and help individuals cope more effectively, as we have already mentioned. For example, I will provide some examples of empirical evidence. One study found that the presence of a friend, whether real or imagined, reduced the perceived difficulty of a task. Other studies have shown that supportive relationships help individuals manage both major life events and daily hassles. These are some of the supports for these models. Social support also enhances self-efficacy and goal fulfillment, as demonstrated by studies by Brunstein and colleagues, who found that support predicts personal goal achievement, aligning with many other models, such as the direct effect model.

Now, let us look at another concept related to positive relationships, called capitalization. Let's examine it in the context of social relationships. When discussing capitalization, it is about sharing positive events with others to amplify their benefits. Capitalization is mostly about sharing positive things that have happened in our lives; when we share them, it amplifies the positive impact, making it much higher, so that's called capitalization. People have also conducted research in this direction. Such experiences, when shared, enhance their impact on well-being, relationship quality, and other aspects of life. This process involves sharing positive personal experiences, such as achievements and good news, with others and receiving an enthusiastic, supportive response. When you receive a supportive response to some positive news you share with others, it amplifies those positive emotions. If you have positive news, you are likely to be happy; there is no doubt about it. However, when you share it with other people, and they also respond positively, the Positive aspects of the news or the positive aspect of the event actually multiply, that's called capitalization. This concept highlights that relationships can actually thrive when there is capitalization

involved in them as well. Many positive events occur in our lives. Many negative things also happen in life. Perhaps, if you look at them, positive events are probably more numerous. So people often share this with other close friends. Sharing also plays a crucial role in contributing to relationships, fostering positive relationships, and overall well-being. Now, some key findings on capitalization reveal that people frequently share positive events, with 70 to 80 percent of individuals reporting that they share their best daily experiences with at least one person in their life. Most people share positive things with at least one person. That's a widespread occurrence. When people share positive events, it enhances positive emotions, well-being, and self-esteem and reduces loneliness. Greater benefits are observed when events are shared with more people. So that impact is amplified. So, it increases your positive emotions and overall well-being. People generally say that when we share our positive experiences, the positive aspects tend to multiply as well. On the other hand, when we share negative things, negativity actually reduces. So, negative emotions reduce. Sharing has numerous positive impacts in this sense. When we face negative things in our lives and share them with others, the negative aspects tend to decrease due to the sharing process. However, positive things actually increase when we share them with others. So, these close relationship partners, such as friends, family, and romantic partners, are the primary recipients of this disclosure 97 percent of the time.

We share our positive experiences with friends, family, partners, and others. Now, when we share something, particularly positive news or events in our lives, with other people, the impact it has on you depends on the other person's response and how they are responding to you. Listeners' responses are critical. According to the literature, there could be four possible responses; these responses are discussed in a questionnaire that examines perceived reactions to capitalization attempts, categorizing people's responses to others' positive news and similar situations. One is called an active constructive response. So, when you share your positive news with someone else, one possibility is that the other person responds in an actively constructive way. What that means is that the response is one of great enthusiasm and engagement, validating and amplifying the event. That person also becomes highly excited, optimistic, and responds to and validates what you are saying. For example, someone says, "That's amazing! Tell me more about it." So, the person is engaged and enthusiastic about it. So, that's called an active constructive response.

Another possibility is called a passive constructive response. Here, the response is very subdued. In the case of active constructive, the person is very enthusiastic and very engaged. In the case of passive constructive, the response is not hostile toward the person. The response is very subdued and not very excited. Somebody may say that's very nice, but they are not really engaged with your news. So that's called passive constructiveness. Another possible response is called active destructive. In this case, the person has a very negative and critical response. You share something positive, but the news and the person are actively critical of the response. You know, a person may suddenly say, "So, what's so

great about it?" You see, there are other problems with it and so on. Something negative can counterbalance the positive news, causing the person to interpret the positive news in a negative light. That's called an active destructive response.

There is another possibility known as passive destruction. Here, the person is ignoring or dismissing the event. The person is not responding at all to the positive news that you are sharing. So, ignoring the aspect of ignoring it, or sometimes completely dismissing the event or the person, will not even allow them to properly listen to what you are saying and will likely change the subject to something else. So that's called passive destruction. Now, depending on the kind of response the other person gives, the outcome will also change. For example, research shows that an active constructive response, where the person is enthusiastically listening and engaging with you, is most strongly associated with increased relationship satisfaction, trust, and intimacy. In contrast, a passive or destructive response correlates with poorer relationships. Passive means you are not really enthusiastic about it, while destructive means you are just opposing it. In those cases, the relationship outcomes are obviously not positive.

Surprisingly, research shows that passive constructive responses, although seemingly benign, often predict adverse outcomes similar to those of destructive reactions. So, suppose you look at a passive constructive response, where the person neither says anything negative nor is very enthusiastic. In that case, they are simply passively responding to something. Research shows that such responses are, you know, they look like they should not be harmful, but they predict very adverse outcomes. Even though they are not showing anything negative as such, the passive response still has a very negative impact on the person sharing the news, almost similar to the destructive one. So dangerous and passive constructive in terms of outcomes are not much less; there is not much of a difference. So active constructive responses convey perceived responsiveness. Therefore, we only perceive that responsiveness is much higher when there is an active, constructive response. You feel understood by the person. You have been validated and cared for, and so on. So, it is one of the most important aspects of positive relationships. This active, constructive response amplifies the importance of positive events for the person to be disclosed, thereby enhancing their emotional impact. In contrast, a passive or destructive response diminishes this benefit. So, whenever there is a passive or destructive response, it reduces the positive impact of the event. Only an active constructive response enhances it. Whether sharing positive news with other people will have benefits or not depends on what kind of response the other person gives to you. Numerous experimental and observational studies have demonstrated that active, constructive responses foster a sense of responsiveness, whereas passive and destructive responses undermine it. This perceived responsiveness during the disclosure of positive events predicts long-term relationship quality, whereas responsiveness during discussions of adverse events does not.

So, essentially, when discussing capitalization, it is a robust interpersonal process that can enhance individuals' well-being and relationship quality, provided you receive the right kind of response: active and constructive. However, much more research is needed in this area to understand the subtler aspects of it. Another factor that can contribute to a positive relationship is gratitude, which plays a crucial role in close relationships. We have already discussed gratitude in detail in an earlier module, where we examined its significance in enhancing a person's well-being. Now, we will focus on the fact that there is obviously a significant positive impact on the person themselves. Still, it can also play a vital role in relationship aspects.

Recent research on gratitude in close relationships primarily focuses on its interpersonal aspects and the significant role it plays in these relationships. Grounded in the social functional model of emotions, researchers such as Algoe and colleagues have found that gratitude plays a critical role in relationship formation and maintenance. Their work highlights how gratitude fosters connection and strengthens bonds between individuals. Numerous studies suggest that gratitude fosters a deeper connection between people and strengthens the bond between them. When we talk about gratitude, we refer to a feeling of thankfulness or a sense of appreciation for the things in life for which one can be grateful. We have discussed the details of the concepts related to gratitude in the earlier module so that I won't repeat them here. We are examining the research findings in the context of relationships. Some of the key findings indicate that gratitude plays a crucial role in relational aspects. So, gratitude helps individuals notice positive qualities in their benefactors and increases their willingness to engage with them in the future. Whenever you feel grateful for something, people become much more open and then notice positive qualities as well, because you cannot experience gratitude when you have a negative attitude towards someone. Many of these positive qualities and other characteristics that people notice in others increase their willingness and engagement with others in the future. For example, participants who recalled gratitude-evoking events were more likely to report noticing new positive traits in their benefactor and expressed greater interest in spending time with them compared to those who recalled happiness-evoking events. The experiments on gratitude, where gratitude has been manipulated, also show that people notice more positive traits in others when gratitude is evoked in experimental situations.

Now, perceived responsiveness is another area where gratitude can play a significant role. Gratitude is strongly tied to perceived responsiveness. Feeling understood, validated, and cared for by the benefactor. Therefore, it can play a crucial role in all these aspects, which are essential for maintaining positive relationships. For example, in a study of sorority gift giving, new members who perceived their gifts as responsive reported higher levels of gratitude, which in turn predicted greater future closeness and liking to the benefactor. These are some of the empirical studies that clearly demonstrate the benefits of experiencing gratitude in a relationship context, promoting bonding and well-being, among

other effects. Another aspect of this is a 'find, remind, and bind' feature. Algoe and colleagues propose that gratitude includes finding means to notice positive qualities in others, reminding oneself to reinforce the value of the relationship, and binding, thereby strengthening the relationship bonds. Therefore, it fulfills all three essential functions that are key to a positive relationship. This process highlights the role of gratitude in fostering relationship growth and stability. In brief, we are discussing how gratitude can be a crucial aspect of positive relationships. I will not delve into too much detail about this, as gratitude has already been explored in much greater detail in an earlier module.

Now, another important concept that plays a significant role in relationships is the concept of love. Here, I will not delve into too much detail, but I will briefly discuss some of the research findings that explain why it is so important in the context of positive relationships. So, it's simple when you talk about love; it has many aspects and dimensions, which we cannot go into all of them. So, it's a central theme in human behavior, and it has been explored by poets, philosophers, playwrights, and psychologists who are also empirically trying to look at it, you know, in recent times with scientific evidence. A significant amount of psychological research by John Bowlby and Harry Harlow also highlighted the importance of love, attachment, and caregiving in the context of health and well-being. Some of these points have also been discussed earlier.

Now, when you talk about love in psychological literature, two primary forms of love have been discussed. One is called passionate love; another is called companionate love. These are two broad categories that are discussed in the context of love and their impacts. When we discuss passionate love, it is primarily characterized by intense excitement, attraction, and a profound sense of euphoria. Passionate love is typically associated with the early stages of a relationship, particularly in the initial phase. The nature of love is mainly characterized by sincere love, which is marked by intense excitement, attraction, and euphoric experiences. Now, evolutionarily, this is very important because it helps people connect and initiate relationships, and so on. Evolutionarily, it serves certain functions by fostering attraction and relationship initiation, often leading to changes in self-concept and self-esteem. So, it is evolutionary; it helps people connect and initiate relationships. Therefore, this plays a crucial role in the context of evolution. Neuro-emotive studies also show that passionate love activates the reward and motivation systems in the brain. Therefore, it plays a vital role in experientially providing numerous rewards and motivating people to connect with others.

When we discuss companionate love, we primarily refer to it in terms of affection and emotional bonding. Intimacy, or companionate love, is central to the maintenance and satisfaction of long-term relationships. In the initial stage, a relationship may be characterized by passionate love; however, in a long-term context, it is often characterized by companionate love, where the focus is on bonding, intimacy, and long-term factors that lead to lasting relationships. It is about defining the features of communal relationships,

where partners mutually respond to each other's needs, leading to the long-term maintenance of the relationship. It also serves an evolutionary function by promoting commitment and long-term bonding, offering evolutionary benefits through sustained partnerships, the propagation of species, and other similar processes.

Companionate love is highly predictive of relationship stability and satisfaction. Therefore, this is much more important in the context of long-term relationships. If this is the nature of love, you know, if it is associated with the companionate aspect of love, where the focus is on bonding, affection, intimacy, and there is long-term stability in it, and so on. Since love itself is a complex subject, I will not delve into too much detail here. This discussion focuses on the importance of maintaining healthy relationships through positive interactions. Both passionate and companionate love make our relationship much more positive, provide stability, and enhance well-being in our relationship context. These are some of the key factors that promote positive relationships. We will discuss some of the other aspects in the following lecture. With this, I will stop here. Thank you.