CHAPTER 25

Foundations of Interpersonal Trust

JEFFRY A. SIMPSON

Trust: "confidence that [one] will find what is desired [from another] rather than what is feared."

—DEITSCH (1973, p. 148)

According to Morton Deutsch, who many consider the founder of modern theory and research on trust, trust involves the delicate juxtaposition of peoples' loftiest hopes and aspirations in relation to their deepest worries and darkest fears. For this reason, situations in which trust is relevant often generate strong approach-avoidance gradients, particularly when individuals feel vulnerable and must count on the benevolence of their partners to receive important outcomes. Although not a complete definition of the construct, Deutsch's crisp observation captures the quintessential features of interpersonal trust, which is the topic of this chapter.

Trust is one of the most important components—and perhaps the most essential ingredient—for the development and maintenance of happy, well-functioning relationships (Fehr, 1988; Regan, Kocan, & Whitlock, 1998). Several lifespan theories, ranging from Bowlby's (1969, 1973) attachment theory to Erikson's (1963) theory of psychosocial development, contend that early exposure to relationships defined by strong trust lays the foundation on which most future relationships are constructed. Without some basic level of trust, individuals are reluctant to initiate, invest in, or sustain most voluntary relationships (e.g., with friends, recreation partners, and romantic partners). Indeed, trust appears to be crucial for the emergence of healthy and secure relationships (Holmes & Rempel, 1989; Larzelere & Huston, 1980), and the betrayal of trust is one of the most commonly mentioned reasons for the demise of relationships (Miller & Rempel, 2004). Outside the realm of relationships, trust acts as a social lubricant that promotes cooperation between group members, sustains social order, and permits beneficial long-term exchanges that otherwise might never occur (Cook & Cooper, 2003; Ostrom & Walker, 2003).

Given the central importance of trust in interpersonal affairs, one might suspect that it has received widespread theoretical and empirical attention. Though there have been significant pockets of theory (e.g., Holmes & Rempel, 1989; Kelley & Thibaut, 1978) and research (e.g., Mikulincer, 1998; Rempel, Holmes, & Zanna, 1985) on trust, surprisingly little is known about how trust develops, how it is maintained, how it shapes and interacts with major interpersonal processes (e.g., the development of intimacy and closeness) and outcomes (e.g., relationship satisfaction and stability), and how it unravels when betrayed.

Why has trust received such limited attention? There are a variety of viable reasons. To begin with, trust is a complex, multidimensional construct, rendering it amenable to diverse interpretations in different social situations (Kramer & Carnevale, 2001). Second, trust might be construed differently and take on varying importance at different stages of relationship development (Fletcher, Simpson, & Thomas, 2006; Larzelere & Huston, 1980). Views about what constitutes sufficient trust in a partner/relationship during the initial stages of relationship development (such as a partner's general reliability and predictability) may be quite different from those used to gauge trust in long-term relationships (such as a partner's
dependability and one’s confidence that he or she will remain loyal and supportive over time). Third, trust develops and changes in situations that are notoriously difficult to observe and study, such as in “strain test” situations (Holmes, 1981; Kelley, 1983). Creating or simulating these situations in the lab is challenging, especially when one wants to study partners in established relationships. Fourth, relationship satisfaction has often been treated as a proxy for many conceptually related yet distinct relationship constructs, including trust (Huston, 2000). The failure of researchers to clearly define, measure, and conceptually tease apart relationship constructs that are correlated with yet theoretically distinct from interpersonal trust—constructs such as satisfaction, love, commitment, passion, and intimacy—has hampered our understanding of trust.

This chapter addresses a series of fundamental questions central to understanding interpersonal aspects of trust. What is interpersonal trust? When, how, and why does it develop? What are the dispositional, relational, structural, and situational factors that instigate, facilitate, inhibit, or destroy it? Why do some people repeatedly experience greater trust in their close relationships than others? Why are certain relationships characterized by greater or more mutual levels of trust? What happens when trust is seriously questioned or betrayed? Provisional answers to these and other questions are offered.

The first section of the chapter reviews basic definitions, conceptualizations, and operationalizations of interpersonal trust. After reviewing some of the linguistic origins of trust, both individualistic (dispositional) and interpersonal (dyadic) definitions and conceptualizations of trust are presented. The second section highlights some of the major theoretical foundations and bases of trust at different levels of conceptual analysis. At the ultimate level of analysis, traditional genetic evolutionary models relevant to trust as well as multilevel selection/cultural coevolutionary models are showcased. At the ontogenetic level, some prominent lifespan models of social and personality development that are most pertinent to interpersonal trust are highlighted. At the ultimate level, a few of the most significant social and psychological processes bearing on trust are outlined. Following this, major models specifying the normative (i.e., typical or modal) and individual-difference processes believed to govern the development, maintenance, and deterioration of trust in close relationships are discussed. The third section provides a selective yet representative overview of research on trust, with most attention focusing on interpersonal (rather than intergroup) trust. This overview begins with the seminal contributions of Deutsch and the early Prisoner’s Dilemma Game (PDG) studies conducted prior to the mid-1960s, progresses to the dispositional movement that was popular from the late 1960s through the mid 1970s, and concludes with more recent dyadic formulations of trust. In the final section, six core principles of trust are identified. Following this, important constructs from different interpersonal models are merged to form an integrative process model, which suggests how trust might develop and be maintained in relationships.

DEFINITIONS AND CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF TRUST

As alluded to previously, the study of interpersonal trust has been constrained by several interrelated factors. Two of the greatest hindrances have been the complex, multifaceted nature of the construct and the tendency of investigators to define and operationalize trust differently in different studies. Another part of the problem, however, stems from how trust is defined and expressed in different languages. In French, for example, the word for trust indicates that one merely has “confidence” in someone or something. Several other languages either do not have specific words for trust or have created new words only recently. For instance, there is no noun in Norwegian that corresponds to the English definition of trust, and the Japanese invented a new word to capture the construct merely a century ago (Hardin, 2003). Even in English, which contains more words than any other language and has a fairly nuanced definition of trust, the origins of the word come from the root “tryst,” which refers to “an agreement . . . to meet” or “an appointed meeting or meeting place.” Thus, even languages that have a clear word or phrase connoting trust might have derived the term from slightly different roots.

Most of the confusion surrounding trust, however, emanates from disparities in, or the lack of precision with which, trust has been defined and operationalized in different studies by different investigators. Some of the earliest research-based definitions of trust adopted a dispositional view of human nature (e.g., Rotter, 1971; Sato, 1988; Wrightsman, 1991). According to this perspective, trust entails generalized beliefs and attitudes about the degree to which other people are likely to be reliable, cooperative, or helpful, independent of the specific context or situation in which an interaction with them might take place. This global, context-free conceptualization of trust, which is assessed by measures such as the Machiavellianism Scale (Christie & Geis, 1970) and Wrightsman’s (1974) Philosophies of Human Nature Scales, conceptualizes trust as a stable dispositional orientation toward the world and the people in it. As a rule, individuals who score higher on dispositional trust have warmer, more communal, and more benevolent perceptions of others, whereas less dispositionally trusting individuals harbor colder, more individualistic, and more cynical views of others (Wrightsman, 1991).

In the early 1980s, conceptualizations and measures of trust started to become more partner and relationship specific (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978; Lewis & Weigert, 1985; Rempel et al., 1985). According to this more dyadic (interpersonal) perspective, trust is a psychological state or orientation of an actor (the trustor) toward a specific person (the trustee) with whom the actor is in some way interdependent (i.e., the trustee needs the trustor’s cooperation to attain valued outcomes or resources). What makes trust a particularly complex construct is that it has three components (e.g., “I trust you to do X”; Hardin, 2003). Accordingly, trust is a function of properties and characteristics of the self (I), the specific partner with whom one is interacting (you), and the unique features,
requirements, or constraints of the current situation (to do X). When any one of these components changes, an individual's thoughts, perceptions, feelings, and actions with regard to trusting a particular other may also change.

To complicate matters, individuals also vary in how broadly they define what "X" is or could be. For some people involved in certain relationships, "X" might constitute almost anything (e.g., to do the shopping, to be helpful and considerate, or to offer emotional support in times of need). Individuals who define "X" broadly should think, feel, and behave in a more stable manner across different trust-relevant situations, at least with reference to the same partner. For other individuals, however, "X" may be limited to a small set of circumscribed behaviors or activities (e.g., to do the shopping, or to be helpful and considerate, or to provide emotional support, but not all three). Individuals who subscribe to a more activity-specific view should adjust their trust-relevant thoughts, perceptions, feelings, and actions as situations and events change. Elements of Hardin's (2003) tripartite definition of trust can be found in many definitions and conceptualizations of the construct that have been proposed by various interpersonal and intergroup scholars.

Several scholars have also advanced more content-specific definitions of trust. Intergroup researchers, for example, have defined trust as a specific set of socially learned expectations that people hold about various social systems, ranging from other people to social organizations to the larger moral social order (Barber, 1983). Trust has also been defined as a constellation of beliefs regarding the extent to which others are or will be concerned about one's personal welfare and best interests (Pruitt & Rubin, 1986), and as a set of attributions that individuals routinely make when inferring motives beneath the actions of their partners (Tyler, 2001). According to this attributional perspective, trust is evident when individuals repeatedly presume that specific others are concerned about their welfare, will take their views and personal interests into account when making decisions, and will work toward fair and equitable outcomes.

Trust has also been defined in relation to specific situational contexts. Bacharach and Gambetta (2001), for instance, conceptualize trust as involving situations in which an individual expects his or her partner to pursue a particular course action (i.e., to do X) and two conditions hold: (1) if the partner does not perform the expected action, the individual would have benefited more by doing something else; and (2) the individual encourages the partner to complete the expected action. This viewpoint suggests that trust should be highest when both partners' "raw" payoffs (i.e., the outcomes that are best for each of them personally) coincide with their "all-in" payoffs (i.e., the outcomes that are best, on average, for themselves, their partner, and the relationship). Trust should also be higher when both individuals believe that their partner will base his or her decisions and actions on what is best for the relationship (i.e., on joint-interest payoffs) in a given situation, even if the partner's "raw" and "all-in" payoffs do not completely coincide. Over time, self-expansion processes (Aron, Aron, & Norman, 2001) might help relationship partners transform their raw (i.e., selfish and self-centered) payoffs so they overlap more closely with their all-in (i.e., more partner- and relationship-centered) payoffs. Doing so could, in turn, generate better or more stable prorelationship outcomes (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978). Kelley and colleagues (2003) have recently proposed that trust can also be conceptualized as a particular type of interpersonal situation. In particular, trust situations involve the unique configuration of high interdependence between partners, a mixture of coordination and exchange as the basis for interdependence, and moderately corresponding interests. This new model is discussed in greater detail later.

Blending features of various definitions, Kramer and Carnevale (2001) claim that trust involves a suite of specific beliefs, expectations, and attributions that the actions of partners with whom one is interdependent will be beneficial (or at least not detrimental) to one's self-interest, especially in situations in which one must count on partners to provide unique benefits or valuable outcomes. They argue that trust-relevant situations elicit two interlocking cognitive processes: (1) feelings of vulnerability, which arise from uncertainty about the partner's true motives, intentions, or actions with regard to the self, and (2) perceptions and expectations about how the partner will behave across time, particularly in "strain test" situations in which an individual is highly outcome dependent and specific actions or decisions that would promote his or her own best interests are at odds with those that would maximally benefit the partner (Holmes, 1981; Kelley, 1983). When the partner promotes the individual's best interests over his or her own interests, both parties may experience heightened trust.

Scholars have also offered dyadic definitions of trust. Working within interdependence theory (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959), Wieselquist, Rubulst, Foster, and Agnew (1999) suggest that trust is evident when individuals believe that their partners are highly committed, harbor benevolent intentions, and are willing to undergo prorelationship transformations of motivation that result in self-sacrificial or accommodative behaviors (e.g., "voice" reactions during relationship conflict). Adopting a slightly different theoretical angle, Holmes and his colleagues (Holmes & Rempel, 1989; Rempel et al., 1985) propose that trust has three components, namely, the degree to which (1) partners are perceived as reliable (predictable); (2) partners are perceived to be concerned about one's welfare and are willing to support one's best interests, especially in times of need (high dependability); and (3) individuals are confident about the continued strength and permanence of the partner and relationship (faith). In recent years, these investigators have shifted their conceptualization of dyadic trust away from predictability and more toward dependability and faith (see Rempel, Ross, & Holmes, 2001).

Interpersonal trust can also be conceptualized in terms of the core motives that may drive and sustain it. According to McClintock (1972, 1976), five core social motives can shape the level or quality of trust that exists in a particular relationship. Specifically, an individual's inclina-
tion to trust another person can be motivated to advance (1) his or her own gain maximization (reflecting an individualistic or egoistic orientation), (2) his or her relative gain maximization (reflecting a competitive orientation), (3) his or her joint gain maximization (reflecting a cooperative orientation), (4) others’ gain maximization (reflecting an altruistic orientation), and/or (5) others’ gain minimization (reflecting an aggressive, spiteful orientation). Greater dyadic trust should be witnessed when individuals and their partners both display—or believe that they display—either joint gain maximization or others’ gain maximization social motives, depending on the specific social and situational circumstances.

Deutsch (1973) also has speculated that individuals trust others for assorted motivational reasons. Individuals may, for instance, trust others out of despair (when the possible consequences of not trusting someone could be worse than trusting them), social conformity (trusting to avoid ostracism or violations of social norms), innocence (trusting others due to lack of knowledge, information, or experience), or impulsiveness (failing to give proper weight to the future consequences of an act). In addition, individuals might trust others out of virtue (to affirm their core values), masochism (in the hope of eventually being betrayed), faith (hoping that dreaded consequences never unfold), confidence (when individuals believe they will get what they desire rather than what they fear), or a desire for risk taking (trusting as a way of taking greater risks).

Trust might also have further motivational foundations. For example, interpersonal trust that is based on important personal goals and motives (e.g., I trust you because I know that you love me and will always consider me) should be different from trust that is based on either moral goals/motives (e.g., I trust you because you are morally committed to fulfilling your promises to me) or structural goals/motives (e.g., I trust you because you have other relationships or valued possessions that would be damaged if you did not fulfill your obligations to me). Trust that is anchored in personal goals and motives should remain stable as long as personal goals and motives remain constant, even if moral or structural factors change. Trust that is grounded in moral or structural factors, on the other hand, should remain stable unless major moral or structural variables shift across time. Insufficient attention has been devoted to determining whether and how different motivational sources influence the nature, quality, and strength of trust in close relationships.

In summary, the multidimensional nature of trust makes the construct challenging to define, operationalize, and measure. The different definitions and operationalizations of trust that have been proposed do not constitute rival alternatives; rather, they highlight different facets and components of trust. Hardin’s (2003) tripartite definition of the construct—“I trust you to do X”—accentuates the complex, multidimensional, and very interpersonal nature of trust. This complexity is simply compounded by the fact that assorted social motives and personal needs can serve as the basis of trust with different partners and in different relationships.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS AND BASES OF TRUST

Virtually all constructs are situated within, and require explanation at, three levels of conceptual analysis (Sherman, 1988; Tinbergen, 1963): ultimate causation, ontogeny, and proximate causation. Questions of ultimate causation focus on the possible phylogenetic, evolutionary, or cultural/coevolutionary origins of a specific trait or behavior. Why, for instance, do many people trust total strangers, at least until they demonstrate that they are untrustworthy? Why do people continually enter complicated, long-term exchange relationships with so many different individuals? What genetic/evolutionary and cultural/coevolutionary forces might have instigated and sustained these propensities?

Questions of ontogeny address the experiential factors that shape how a given trait or behavior develops and changes across the lifespan. Ontogenetic questions fall into two categories (Tooby & Cosmides, 1990). Some address how or why certain early environmental experiences shunt individuals down different developmental pathways, culminating in the enactment of different behavioral strategies in adulthood. What early life events or experiences, for example, are associated with the tendency to develop more versus less trusting relationships in adulthood? Other ontogenetic questions focus on how and why specific developmental experiences produce different activation thresholds. What sorts of early social experiences, for instance, motivate certain people to value trust highly, to think about it often, or to respond more intensely when it is violated?

Questions of proximate causation deal with how and why specific stimuli or events in the current environment activate, maintain, or regulate a given trait or behavior. Which classes of situations or events, for example, activate working models (relationship schemas) relevant to trust? Which specific experiences or events make people more versus less likely to trust others at particular points during a relationship? Constructs cannot be fully understood unless cornerstone questions relevant to each level of analysis are asked and sufficiently answered.

Ultimate Causation Explanations

To comprehend the distal causal factors that might be responsible for the development of the capacity to trust others witnessed in humans, one must first look back to the most stable features of the environments in which humans most likely evolved. During more than 98% of human evolutionary history, our ancestors lived as hunters and gatherers (Hill, 2002; Kelly, 1995), most likely in small, cooperative tribes or bands (Richerson & Boyd, 2005). Many people in a tribe or band were biologically related (Foley, 1987), and complete strangers were probably encountered infrequently, most often during intertribal trading or war (Wright, 1994). Although some people migrated in and out of their original tribes/bands, most individuals probably lived in the same tribe/band their entire life. Children probably were raised with considerable help from extended family members and the
entire tribe/band, and older children—especially older siblings—most likely assumed important roles in socializing younger children (Eibl-Eibesfeldt, 1989). Both genders participated in securing food, with men doing most of the hunting and women doing most of the gathering (Konner, 1982; Richerson & Boyd, 2005). Thus, extensive cooperation with other tribe/band members—both kin as well as biologically unrelated individuals—was mandatory, particularly in light of the changing and precarious nature of the climate, competing tribes, and the food supply. These conditions happen to be ideal for reciprocal altruism to evolve (see Cosmides & Tooby, 1992). Brewer and Caporeal (1990) suggest that active participation in cooperative groups might have been the primary “survival strategy” of early humans. Willingness to enter and maintain mutually cooperative, long-term alliances with others, therefore, may have been essential for survival, successful reproduction, and adequate parenting.

Various gene-centered evolutionary models can explain how and why humans developed the capacity to trust others and become so disturbed when trust is betrayed. According to inclusive fitness theory (Hamilton, 1964), genes are replicated not only through one’s own reproduction but also via the reproduction of biological relatives who carry the same genes. Selection, therefore, should have favored individuals who invested in and made sacrifices for their relatives, provided that the average cost of giving benefits (C) was less than the value of the benefits to relatives (B) multiplied by their degree of genetic relatedness (r) (i.e., Hamilton’s rule, where C < rB). Although inclusive fitness theory can explain how and why altruism, cooperation, and the capacity for trust could have evolved with respect to biological relatives, it fails to explain the evolution of these traits with regard to interactions and social exchanges involving biologically unrelated individuals.

To solve this conundrum, Trivers (1971) developed reciprocal altruism theory. According to Trivers (1971), altruism is a “behavior that benefits another organism, not closely related, while being apparently detrimental to the organism performing the behavior, benefit and detrimental being defined in terms of contribution to inclusive fitness” (p. 55). According to this view, if two biologically unrelated individuals provide mutual benefits to each other that are greater than the costs each individual incurs by providing the benefits, both individuals should benefit through the economic principle of gains in trade. Consequently, genes that led our ancestors to recognize and selectively enter certain mutually beneficial transactions with nonkin (e.g., long-term tit-for-tat exchanges with highly resourceful and trustworthy partners) could have been preferentially selected.

Simulation research has confirmed that tit-for-tat strategies (whereby positive partner overtures are immediately rewarded and negative ones are immediately punished) tend to develop quickly and remain stable as long as interaction partners continue to make cooperative choices, at least in two-person experimental games (Axelrod, 1984). Moreover, all the conditions necessary for the evolution of reciprocal altruism in humans—important benefits can be conferred, individuals have repeated interactions with the same people, individuals can remember whom they have given benefits to and received benefits from, and exchange decisions are based on the outcomes of earlier interactions with certain people—were probably present during much of evolutionary history.

Among others, Kurzban (2003) suggests that the need for cooperative hunting could have been one of the major selection pressures that jump-started reciprocal altruism in humans. Moreover, delayed exchanges of goods and resources may have been more common in evolutionary environments than simultaneous exchanges, requiring that trust in others be carefully and judiciously placed. Interestingly, tit-for-tat strategies require a willingness to trust partners and to be cooperative on the first “move” (trial), after which decisions are governed by whether partners behave cooperatively or noncooperatively on subsequent trials. Extending these ideas, Clutton-Brock and Parker (1995) propose that spite (i.e., the inclination to punish or ostracize defecting or uncooperative individuals, even when such actions are costly to the self) could have evolved to “back up” trust if partners reneged on important promises. Tooby and Cosmides (1990, 1992) conjecture that certain specialized cognitive abilities in humans (e.g., cheater detection and superior memory for faces) may have evolved to help individuals identify and envision new ways in which valuable resources could be exchanged, further fueling the evolution of reciprocal altruism. Certain cognitive adaptations, therefore, might have accelerated the evolution of trust, including humans’ specialized abilities to discern when trust is warranted and well-placed and when it might be violated (see Kurzban, 2003).

Other ultimate-level accounts of trust have been formulated in response to the fact that gene-centered evolutionary models do not fully explain the pervasiveness and depth of human altruism. These accounts, which are collectively known as multilevel selection or gene-cultural coevolutionary models, claim that humans are unique among species in their tendency to display “strong reciprocity” (Fehr & Fischbacher, 2003). Strong reciprocity is evident when individuals assume the costs of rewarding or punishing others in situations in which cooperation is required to secure vital resources or good outcomes, even if “enforcers” receive no personal benefits or incur major costs. Unlike reciprocal altruism, which presumes that individuals should reward or punish others only if tangible benefits are likely to be received (Axelrod & Hamilton, 1981), strong reciprocity indicates that individuals are willing to enforce important social rules or norms to ensure that cheaters and noncooperators do not destroy cooperation and goodwill within groups. Laboratory studies using the Ultimatum Game have confirmed that most individuals closely monitor and quickly punish people who behave unfairly (e.g., who cheat or fail to reciprocate cooperation) or who offer others unfair outcomes, even if providing sanctions harms their own rational self-interest (Fehr & Fischbacher, 2003). Research using intergenerational Ultimatum Games has also revealed that receiving advice from previous players increases altruistic punishments and rewards enacted by
current players, and that players who receive advice achieve greater cooperation from others over time.

What might explain this strong willingness to make personal sacrifices in the service of maintaining cooperative norms and behavior? The answer probably lies in how easily cooperation can disintegrate. Because a very small percentage of free riders or chronic cheaters can destroy cooperation in most groups, cooperative systems usually fail unless a clear majority of group members vigilantly monitor and sanction norm violators, even if they have no personal stake or investment in a given interaction (Fehr & Schmidt, 1999). Individuals who regularly police and enforce important rules and norms, however, may also gain personal benefits through being seen as highly altruistic, which either could enhance their reputation within groups (Alexander, 1987; Nowak & Sigmund, 1998) or signal that they are sufficiently capable to withstand the costs of engaging in altruistic acts (Gintis, Smith, & Bowles, 2001; Zahavi, 1995).

Advocates of gene–cultural coevolutionary models have also questioned whether tit-for-tat strategies could have been responsible for the evolution of reciprocal altruism in humans. Although the results of repeated two-person interactions suggest that tit-for-tat strategies develop readily and remain fairly stable (Axelrod, 1984), these strategies are less stable in n-person PDGs unless nearly all group members cooperate on every trial (see Boyd & Richerson, 1988). Moreover, tit-for-tat strategies typically stipulate that individuals cannot “leave the game” (exit) and that third parties cannot intervene unless they can personally benefit from rewarding fair players or punishing unfair ones. These conditions rarely exist in most real-world settings.

In summary, gene–culture coevolutionary models posit that traditional genetic selection models (e.g., inclusive fitness theory and reciprocal altruism theory) cannot fully explain the evolution and existence of strong reciprocity, whereas theories of cultural group selection (Henrich & Boyd, 2001) and gene–culture coevolution (Gintis, 2003) can. These latter models propose that certain norms and institutions (e.g., food sharing, hunting, and serial monogamy) could have been maintained only if nearly all group members monitored and sanctioned important norm violations. This propensity may have spawned altruism in humans, which might have launched the capacity for trust and the need to gauge the trustworthiness of others.

Ontogenetic Causation Explanations

Ontogenetic explanations address when, how, and why a particular trait or behavior develops and changes across the lifespan. The earliest ontogenetic theoretical accounts highlighted the critical role that experiencing trust with a primary caregiver assumes in social and personality development. In his psychosocial theory of development, for example, Erikson (1963) posits that all individuals encounter a series of basic conflicts at different stages of social development. The first major conflict, which takes place in infancy and early childhood, involves issues of basic trust versus mistrust. During this stage, highly dependent children first learn whether their basic needs will be met, ignored, or overindulged by their primary caregivers. Children who experience sufficient levels of satisfaction relative to frustration typically develop a sense of hope and confidence that their needs will be met in the future, which then influences how they perceive and behave when later psychosocial conflicts are encountered. Children who are ignored or overindulged tend to experience mistrust, which sets the stage for maladaptive responses to later life conflicts. Trust, therefore, serves as the foundation of personality and social development.

In developing attachment theory, Bowlby (1969, 1973, 1980) argued that children who receive warm, supportive, and situationally contingent care when distressed develop positive working models (relationship schemas) of themselves, significant others, and the world in general. One cardinal component of positive working models of others is having confidence in their availability and responsiveness, particularly during times of acute need. This core feature of attachment security is also a defining feature of trust. According to attachment theory, having trusting and supportive relationships early in life instills a sense of felt security (Sroufe & Waters, 1977), which provides an “inner resource” that allows individuals to take leaps of faith and place greater trust in significant others. Children who are subjected to rejection, unpredictable care, neglect, or abuse typically develop negative working models of others, which should retard or hinder the development of trust in later adult relationships (cf. Simpson, Ickes, & Grif, 1999).

Family systems theory (Bowen, 1976, 1978) has also been invoked to explain the development of interpersonal trust. According to this perspective, individuals who develop more differentiated self-concepts based on interactions with family members in the past should be able to establish and maintain emotional ties with future significant others more readily. Highly differentiated individuals tend to feel both connected to yet independent from significant others (Allison & Sabatelli, 1988; Shapiro, 1988). Because their self-concepts are more diversified, well balanced, and fully integrated, highly differentiated people can achieve closeness and intimacy without overidentifying with partners or becoming enmeshed with them (Bartle & Sabatelli, 1995). These characteristics should facilitate interaction patterns that result in greater trust, partly because highly differentiated people may feel more comfortable taking the risks necessary to forge deeper levels of trust.

Recent life-history models might also explain some of the developmental antecedents of dispositional trust. Adopting an evolutionary-based lifespan perspective, Belsky, Steinberg, and Draper (1991) contended that certain early experiences provide children with diagnostic information about the kinds of environments that they will most likely encounter in adulthood. As they develop, children implicitly use this information to adopt an appropriate reproductive strategy—one that is most likely to increase their inclusive fitness—in future environments (see also Hinde, 1986). According to this model, contextual factors in the family of origin (e.g., the amount of
stress, spousal harmony, and financial resources) systematically affect early childrearing experiences (e.g., the degree of sensitive, supportive, and responsive care). These experiences then influence children’s psychological and behavioral development (e.g., their attachment patterns/styles and the nature of their working models), which in turn influence the rate of somatic development (how quickly individuals reach sexual maturity) and the mating orientation that they adopt in adulthood (short term vs. long term). Belsky and colleagues (1991) surmise that high levels of early stress and family dissension are associated with less sensitive parenting, which leads children to develop more negative working models of themselves and/or others and, therefore, more insecure attachment patterns. This information ostensibly signals that future pair-bonds may be short term and unstable, which prompts insecure individuals to mature more quickly and adopt a short-term, opportunistic orientation toward mating in which sexual intercourse with multiple partners occurs earlier in life and parental investment in children is lower. One central feature of short-term mating orientations is lower dyadic trust. The Belsky and colleagues model, therefore, suggests that the seeds of distrust may be planted early in life when individuals first learn about the world, primarily in their families of origin. Chisholm (1993, 1996) has proposed a similar lifespan model but argues that mortality rates in local environments are the focal cues that shunt individuals toward different adult mating orientations (see Simpson, 1999).

Proximate Causation Explanations

Various theories and models have outlined the proximal factors and processes that might facilitate or impede the development of trust in relationships.

Kelley and Colleagues (2003)

Informed by interdependence theory (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978), Kelley and colleagues (2003) have proposed that the development and deterioration of trust in relationships can be understood via the properties of the social situations in which relationships are embedded. They argue that "trust situations" reflect the unique combination of high interdependence between partners, coordination (the need to synchronize interactions), and exchange (the need to receive good outcomes from the partner) as the basis for interdependence, and corresponding (similar or joint) interests. Prototypical trust situations, therefore, entail both mutual partner control (e.g., quid pro quo situations) and corresponding mutual joint control (e.g., situations that require synchrony of choices).

Figure 25.1 depicts the unique 2 × 2 pattern of payoffs (benefits and costs) associated with choices that partners can make in prototypical trust situations. If both partners choose option 1 (they work on a difficult but important task together, reflected in the a1/b1 cell), each partner receives 20 units of benefit because the task gets accomplished while partners share the pleasure of each other’s company. If both partners select option 2 (neither works on the task, represented by the a2/b2 cell), neither partner receives benefits because nothing gets accomplished. If partner A chooses option 2 (not to work on the task: a2) whereas partner B chooses option 1 (works solo on the task: b1), partner A benefits by 10 units because some progress is made on the task, but partner B experiences a net loss of 10 units because he or she is saddled with all the work. The reverse pattern exists when partner A chooses a1 (to work on the task) and partner B chooses b2 (to not work on the task).

Trust situations have several special properties. First, they involve collective rationality in that cooperative behavior by both partners (a1/b1) always yields superior outcomes compared to when partners fail to cooperate (a1/b2 or a2/b1). Second, the best outcome always occurs when both partners make the cooperative choice (a1/b1). Third, cooperative choices are risky because if one’s partner decides to make a noncooperative choice, a cooperative choice generates the worst possible outcomes given that one has been exploited. Kelley and colleagues (2003) suggest that cooperation is undermined primarily by fear in trust situations and that, when individuals fail to make cooperative choices, they frequently do so for competitive or self-protective reasons. Partners who repeatedly enter or find themselves in trust situations and make joint cooperative choices should not only receive superior outcomes over time but also should develop greater trust. The “added value” that comes with joint cooperative decisions (i.e., the 10 additional units of benefit that accrue when both partners complete a valued activity together) is crucial to understanding what makes joint cooperative decisions so powerful and transforming. Though not much is known about what “added value” represents, most individuals find it intrinsically rewarding when, rather than taking advantage of their vulnerabilities, their partners repeatedly make choices that are beneficial to themselves or the relationship (Holmes, 1981). Tit-for-tat tactics may generate trust more rapidly in newly formed relationships because they encourage rela-
tionship partners to gravitate toward $a_1/b_1$ decisions. When using tit-for-tat tactics, individuals remain cooperative until their partners make the first noncooperative move, after which they respond noncooperatively until their partners revert back to cooperative choices. Because individuals never make the first noncooperative move, they are not perceived as aggressive or exploitative by their partners. Because noncooperative behavior is always responded to with noncooperation, partners also quickly learn the importance of cooperative norms. And because individuals immediately switch to cooperative choices when their partners do, they convey a willingness to forgive, which is likely to strengthen the inference that the individual yearns to establish and maintain cooperation. The strongest trust, however, may be forged in somewhat asymmetrical relationships in which one individual has power over the partner but consistently makes decisions that benefit the low-power partner at the expense of his or her own self-interest. In these situations, both the low-power partner and the high-power partner should perceive the benevolent and caring motives harbored by the high-power partner. These perceptions might contribute to the “added value” of $a_1/b_1$ decisions discerned by both partners.

Holmes and Rempel (1989)

Holmes and Rempel (1989) have proposed a dyadic model of trust that contains both normative (i.e., typical or modal) and individual difference components. According to their model, trust should be enhanced when relationship partners successfully resolve basic concerns regarding dependency issues, such as what happens when partners encounter noncorrespondent or conflictual payoff structures. The normative component of the model specifies the progression of events and psychological processes that should promote or diminish trust in relationships in general. The individual-difference component clarifies how these normative features may be qualified by the level of trust (high, medium, or low) that characterizes a current relationship.

From a normative standpoint, Holmes and Rempel (1989) suggest that the development of trust involves a process of uncertainty reduction as individuals gradually migrate from having confidence in their partner’s general predictability to having confidence in their benevolent relationship values, motives, goals, and intentions. During the initial stages of relationship development, individuals typically project their hopes and ideals onto their partners. These projections tend to be vague and rarely challenged, usually because partners are not highly interdependent, their interactions are positive and limited in scope, they are well mannered, they want to view one another in the best possible light, and they have not yet experienced major conflicts. At this stage, trust is based chiefly on individuals’ hopes that their partners will, over time, live up to these idealized images.

As individuals become increasingly dependent on their partners, concerns about being vulnerable to loss, exploitation, and rejection begin to surface. To assuage the anxiety associated with this predicament, individuals try to quell relationship uncertainties by searching for evidence that their partners truly care for and are genuinely concerned about them, a process that Holmes and Rempel (1989) term “reciprocal reassurance.” Reassurance should be strongest when partners make costly personal sacrifices for the individual, take bold risks such as providing costly “no strings attached” outcomes to the individual, or adopt more vulnerable positions than the individual has previously taken (Pruitt, 1965). Trust is not likely to grow, however, unless exchanges between relationship partners are reasonably reciprocal and balanced, and partners view one another as being neither overly anxious nor overly reluctant to venture interpersonal risks. Indeed, Holmes and Rempel contend that equal and gradually increasing mutual involvement by both partners should facilitate greater trust by further dampening relationship uncertainties. Equal involvement ensures that both partners are similarly dependent and, therefore, equally vulnerable. For this reason, equal involvement may function as a temporary substitute for trust until genuine trust can develop.

As relationships move into the accommodation stage, resolved relationship uncertainties allow individuals to take greater leaps of faith and to place increasing confidence in their partners. Gradually, most individuals begin to amass an “economy of surplus,” which enables them to ignore, discount, or excuse minor partner transgressions that, if committed during earlier stages, could have shaken the emerging foundation of trust. During the accommodation stage, however, individuals start to view their partners more realistically, which can reignite relationship uncertainties as partners become increasingly interdependent and their self-interests occasionally diverge. To resolve this dilemma, individuals begin to view the relationship prospectively, whereby the costs of remaining in the relationship are weighed against the prospect of future rewards (Huesmann & Levinger, 1976; Kelley & Thibaut, 1978). Individuals also contemplate whether they are in the best possible relationship and can count on their partners to fulfill their fundamental needs. As a result, decisions to invest further in the relationship become more contingent upon subjective forecasts about what the future may hold. At this point, trust becomes less highly correlated with other markers of relationship quality such as love (Larzelere & Huston, 1980).

When relationship uncertainties resurface at the accommodation stage, individuals may enter or create “strain test” situations (Holmes, 1981; Kelley, 1983) to gauge their partner’s true degree of commitment and devotion. If the partner (1) demonstrates care, concern, and responsiveness when the individual is highly vulnerable or dependent and (2) takes actions that run counter to his or her own best interests, trust should increase. Trust should also be enhanced if partners repeatedly acknowledge an individual’s core needs and reaffirm his or her self-worth, if partners’ actions are perceived as being unconditional, if partners are willing to relinquish control to individuals in important situations, if they have behaved fairly and benevolently in difficult (e.g., noncorrespondent) situations in the past, and if they engage in acts that lead individuals to make positive, intrinsi-
ally motivated attributions for the partner's behavior (Holmes & Rempel, 1989; see also Kruglanski, 1971). Holmes and Rempel (1989) also elucidate how individual differences in trust may alter or qualify these normative stages and psychological processes. Individuals involved in relationships characterized by greater trust should have more benevolent, long-term views of their partner's motives and actions. They also should harbor more positive, well-integrated, and well-balanced working models that instill more benevolent expectations and, therefore, more constructive, problem-focused styles of resolving relationship difficulties.

Individuals involved in relationships containing moderate levels of trust should have more suspicious and guarded views of their partner's motives and behavior. Because they possess chronically accessible relationship uncertainties, "medium trust" individuals should closely monitor and frequently test their partner's care and responsiveness, even if such tests might confirm their darkest fears. Given their hypervigilant, emotion-focused style of coping with relationship problems, these individuals may unwittingly amplify or create the very outcomes they wish to avert by constantly questioning and testing their partner's trust and commitment, effectively driving the partner away.

Individuals involved in relationships defined by low trust have minimal confidence in their partner's ability or willingness to ever be caring or responsive. As a consequence, they hold highly cynical and negative views and expectations about relationships. This tendency may generate distress-maintaining attributions, whereby the implications of possible negative partner behaviors are accentuated and positive partner actions are disregarded or dismissed. These cognitive tendencies should lead "low trust" individuals to display heightened anger or to withdraw when major relationship problems arise. Because a fair amount of research has addressed some of these speculations, we revisit the individual-difference component of Holmes and Rempel's model in the next section.

**Wieselquist, Rusbult, Foster, and Agnew (1999)**

Guided by the investment model (Rusbult, 1983), Wieselquist and colleagues (1999) claim that trust is most evident when partners display large prorelationship transformations of motivation, which are indexed by the discrepancy between a partner's initial self-interests (captured in the given matrix) versus his or her final, transformed outcomes and observable actions (represented in the effective matrix). Individuals who make larger transformations from purely self-interested outcomes (e.g., MaxOwn) to either partner (e.g., MaxOther) or relationship (e.g., MaxJoint) outcomes should and do have relationships characterized by greater trust (Yovetich & Rusbult, 1994). Given that commitment generates so many crucial relationship-maintenance acts (e.g., disparagement of alternative partners, willingness to sacrifice, accommodative behaviors, positive partner and relationship illusions, and a sense of cognitive interconnectedness), Wieselquist and colleagues believe that commitment should play a central role in both the generation of and changes in dyadic trust. According to their mutual cyclical growth model, shown in Figure 25.2, greater dependence by one partner in a relationship should in-

![FIGURE 25.2. Wieselquist et al.'s (1999) mutual cyclical growth model.](image-url)
still greater commitment, which should then launch prorelationship actions that yield MaxJoint outcomes. These behaviors should then be witnessed by the other partner who should experience greater trust. This, in turn, should promote greater dependence, greater commitment, and more prorelationship acts, which are witnessed by the first partner, who subsequently experiences greater trust. According to the model, the process then begins again, at least to some asymptotic level. As we shall see, although cross-sectional data support certain paths in the model, most of the antecedent variables do not predict temporal changes in the downstream variables.

Deutsch (1973)

Deutsch (1973) has proposed one of the most detailed proximate-level accounts of trust. He suggests that trust is evident when individuals select an "ambiguous path" in which the strength of their positive motivations to pursue a course of action is less than the strength of their negative motivations. In addition, individuals' subjective estimates of positive outcomes occurring must be greater than their subjective estimates of negative outcomes occurring, and they must have sufficiently high "security" to take the action. Subjective estimates ought to be based on past experiences in similar situations, past experiences with or beliefs about specific partners, more global working models of self and others, and one's confidence in being able to achieve positive outcomes or avoid negative ones.

A series of specific hypotheses can be derived from these central premises. Deutsch claims, for instance, that the longer the time frame in which events that would have negative motivational significance might take place, the more individuals should make trusting choices and decisions in their relationships. After an individual has made a trusting choice, he or she should then seek reasons that justify and support the wisdom of the choice, especially if the choice was originally difficult to make. Furthermore, an individual's perception of his or her partner's intention to perform a future action or behavior should depend on the partner's presumed strength of motivation to engage in the action or behavior, the partner's commitment to engaging in it, the source of the partner's motivation (e.g., internal vs. external or altruistic vs. exchange focused), and the individual's own attentional focus.

In terms of perceiving altruistic or trust-promoting intentions in others, Deutsch speculates that positive intentions should be more likely to be inferred when individuals believe that others (e.g., their partners) like them. Liking, in turn, should depend on the amount, frequency, and diversity of benefits that an individual has received from a partner in the past. It should also be greater if individuals are aware that their partners were not forced to provide benefits and if individuals believe that partners knew a priori that their actions would have positive consequences. Liking should also be heightened if the partner is perceived as having little to gain by providing benefits to the individual, if the partner's actions provide greater gains to the individual than to the partner, and if the partner knows that his or her benevolent actions would be costly from the start.

In terms of perceptions of power, Deutsch claims that individuals who perceive that their partners have relatively greater power should be either more trusting or more suspicious (i.e., an amplification effect). More powerful individuals should be less inclined to infer altruistic motives and intentions in their partners and, hence, less likely to trust them. These perceptions should be easier to change, however, if individuals enter interactions or relationships with the belief or goal that mutual trust is possible. Deutsch argues that communicating a desire for cooperation (which can be conveyed by expectations, intentions, or reactions to norm agreements and norm violations) should increase dyadic trust and the communicator more trustworthy.

In sum, more theoretical attention has been paid to the proximal processes that might facilitate or impede interpersonal trust than to ontogenetic processes. Models of proximate causation have viewed the antecedents of trust as anchored in how relationship partners routinely make choices in certain types of critical situations (e.g., prototypical trust situations; Kelley et al., 2003) and the typical manner in which trust usually unfolds as relationships develop, enter new stages and partners grow more interdependent (Holmes & Rempel, 1989). Proximate models have also highlighted the important role that commitment and the responses of relationship partners may assume in the development of trust in relationships (Wieselquist et al., 1999) and some of the more detailed psychological processes and mechanisms that might guide specific decisions to enter situations or make decisions that could promote or stall the development of trust (Deutsch, 1973).

A REPRESENTATIVE REVIEW OF RESEARCH ON INTERPERSONAL TRUST

Though there was a smattering of theory and research on trust prior to the late 1950s, Morton Deutsch was largely responsible for launching interest in the topic. In his early work, Deutsch (1960) marshaled evidence that the development of mutual trust between interaction partners was essential for cooperation to emerge and be maintained. He argued that mutual trust should develop when interaction partners adopt a positive and benevolent orientation toward one another's welfare. Using the PDG as the primary investigative paradigm, Deutsch confirmed that people who enter single-trial PDGs with a cooperative orientation tend to make more cooperative choices that yield greater gains for both interaction partners. On the other hand, those who have a competitive orientation frequently make noncooperative choices that culminate in losses for both partners. Deutsch also found that cooperative individuals do not necessarily communicate to enact cooperative choices, whereas competitive individuals often convey motives or behaviors that block or subvert trustworthy communication. Later studies
(e.g., Ellison & Firestone, 1974; MacDonald, Kessel, & Fuller, 1972; McAllister & Bergman, 1986) revealed that more intimate self-disclosure, which frequently includes expressions of vulnerability and willingness to trust others, generates greater liking for and trust in partners who also disclose personal information.

Unfortunately, there were problems with this early line of experimental work (see Cook & Cooper, 2003). First, Deutsch did not operationalize and measure trust directly in these initial studies. Cooperative behavior was treated as an indirect proxy of trust. Second, this initial wave of research confounded trust and cooperation, which are distinct constructs. Third, the early studies were grounded in a social exchange perspective, which left little room to explain cases in which trust develops in the absence of direct exchanges. Fourth, the majority of the early PDG studies examined single-trial interactions between strangers. By not permitting multiple interactions over time between people who shared a past or a future, it proved difficult to generalize the results of early PDG experiments to everyday interactions and relationships. Consequently, these early single-trial PDG studies produced outcomes that tend to be different than those found when iterative, higher-stakes games are used (e.g., Fehr & Fischbacher, 2003).

The rise of dispositional views of trust in the late 1960s and early 1970s was a reaction to these shortcomings. Rotter (1967), in fact, developed self-report scales of generalized (dispositional) trust directly in response to Deutsch's initial program of trust research. Rotter believed that single-trial PDG studies generated situation-specific results that were confined to a small set of competitive situations not representative of everyday interactions. Once dispositional measures of generalized trust were developed, trust research in the 1970s identified systematic differences between people who reported being more versus less trusting of people in general. This body of work revealed that individuals who score higher in dispositional trust are more trustworthy partners in different types of social interactions, find it more difficult to lie, are more well liked by others, contribute more to philanthropic projects, are better at judging whom to trust and whom not to trust, and are more willing to trust strangers (Rotter, 1971). Although greater dispositional distrust was initially tied to poorer psychological adjustment and greater antisocial behavior (Rotter, 1980), later research indicated that links between dispositional trust, maladjustment, and distress are modest (Comrey & Schriebel, 1985; Folkman, Lazarus, Gruen, & DeLongis, 1986; Wrightman, 1974). When highly distrustful individuals have problems, they usually report greater interpersonal difficulties, especially with excessive competitiveness, envy, resentfulness, vindictiveness, and lack of feelings or concern for others (Gurtman, 1992). Highly trusting persons, in contrast, adopt more kind and benevolent orientations toward others. However, they are not more gullible or exploitable than less trusting persons (Rotter, 1980), perhaps because more trusting individuals respond to partner transgressions by immediately withdrawing cooperation when partners behave badly in a tit-for-tat, situation-contingent manner.

In the early 1980s, research shifted toward dyadic conceptions of trust. Kelley (1980), for example, speculated that certain interpersonal traits (dispositions) might be systematically correlated with dyadic measures of trust. He surmised that people who score lower on dominance and nurturance might be particularly inclined to distrust relationship partners (for the theoretical reasons, see Carson, 1979). Testing relations between various interpersonal traits and dyadic trust, Gaines and colleagues (1997) documented that affiliative–dominance (e.g., extraversion) is the best predictor of high-faith scores on Rempel and colleagues' (1985) dyadic trust scale. Allofness–introversion, on the other hand, is the strongest predictor of low-faith scores.

Holmes (1991) also examined ties between dyadic measures of trust and global interpersonal orientations. He found that individuals who either yearn for extreme emotional intimacy or fear being too close tend to trust their current romantic partners less. Moreover, dyadic trust tends to be higher among people who value moderate amounts of autonomy in relationships and lower in those who place greater emphasis on being independent and self-sufficient. These effects might reflect the fact that the core motives underlying autonomy and affiliation are associated with different styles of coping with relationship uncertainty (Holmes & Rempel, 1989). They may also reflect the fact that these higher-level interpersonal orientations contain some of the cardinal features that define attachment security and insecurity (Bowlby, 1973; Mikulincer, 1998). Correlations between interpersonal traits (dispositions) and dyadic measures of trust, however, tend to be modest (Holmes & Rempel, 1989).

The principal drawback of the dispositional approach was that it did not address the inherently dyadic, partner-specific, and context-dependent nature of trust that characterizes many close relationships. For this reason, dyad-centered measures of trust (e.g., Johnson-George & Swap, 1982; Rempel et al., 1985) and dyad-centered programs of research (e.g., Rempel et al., 1985) rose in the mid-1980s, partially in response to theoretical advances spearheaded by Deutsch (1973), Kelley and Thibault (1978), and Holmes and Rempel (1989), and partially in response to landmark empirical studies that cast trust within a dyadic framework (e.g., Kelley & Stahelski, 1970; Larzelere & Huston, 1980). Several key findings have emerged from the dyad-centered approach, only some of which can be highlighted. Some of the most influential research has been guided by two of the most dominant theoretical perspectives in interpersonal relationships: interdependence theory (Kelley & Thibault, 1978; Thibault & Kelley, 1959) and attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969, 1973, 1980).

**Interdependence Theory-Based Approaches**

Working from an interdependence theory perspective, Holmes, Rempel, and their colleagues have engaged in one of the most systematic and sustained programs of empirical work on dyadic trust. While interested in both normative and individual difference components of trust, the bulk of their research has focused on how indi-
individual differences in trust are related to the way in which individuals appraise, construe, feel, and behave in situations when partners must grapple with dependency issues and their self-interests are discrepant. Their research has highlighted several crucial differences in how persons involved in high-, medium-, or low-trust relationships process information and respond when dependency issues are salient.

Individuals involved in relationships defined by high levels of trust (whom Holmes & Rempel, 1989, term “high-trust” people) harbor more optimistic and benevolent expectations about their partner’s motives, make more positive and global attributions about their partner’s behaviors, and have more integrated and well-balanced working models that remain open to assimilating new information (Rempel et al., 2001). High-trust individuals also disregard or downplay their partner’s negative relationship-relevant actions, which isolates and minimizes the potential negative impact of particular indiscretions. When resolving relationship conflicts, high-trust individuals display more positive affect and less negative affect (Holmes & Rempel, 1986), and their evaluations of their partners and relationships are less strongly tied to the emotions they experience during these intense discussions. High-trust individuals also evaluate their partners more positively, not only when they are asked to recall positive or neutral relationship experiences but particularly when they recount negative relationship experiences (Holmes & Rempel, 1989). That is, when high-trust individuals encounter relationship threats, they step back and contemplate their partner’s probable benevolent goals and motives within a broader, long-term perspective (Holmes, 1981).

On the basis of these and other findings, Holmes and Rempel (1989) suggest that the working models of high-trust individuals (e.g., their trust-related hopes and fears vis-à-vis the current partner and relationship) should be more unified and better integrated than those of medium- or low-trust persons. This greater integration might result from several cognitive mechanisms, including limiting or dispelling the implications of negative relationship actions or events when they occur (Rempel, 1987), altering the meaning of negative actions/events so positive perceptions of the partner and relationship can be maintained (e.g., using “yes, but . . . ” refutations; Murray & Holmes, 1993), or framing negative actions/events within the broader constellation of past positive relationship experiences (Murray & Holmes, 1993).

Holmes and Rempel (1989) also surmise that greater trust should enhance felt security, which might liberate high-trust individuals from having to monitor their partners and relationships and could motivate them to err on the side of benevolence when interpreting ambiguous partner behaviors. In addition, high-trust individuals may have higher thresholds for perceiving relationship threats, they might experience or construe negative events as less aversive, or they may recover from adverse relationship experiences more quickly (see Holmes & Rempel, 1989).

Individuals involved in relationships that contain moderate levels of trust (termed “medium-trust” individuals) have less coherent and more fragmented working models in which trust-relevant hopes and fears are intermingled in strange and sometimes contradictory ways (Holmes & Rempel, 1989). These individuals are often trapped in strong approach–avoidance situations in which positive partner behaviors are viewed as hopeful signs of possible relationship improvement but any negative behavior is taken as clear evidence that relationship dissolution could be imminent. For this reason, medium-trust individuals continually monitor and test for signs of their partner’s care, concern, and responsiveness. Ironically, this hypervigilance may lead medium-trust individuals to perceive or unwittingly create the negative relationship outcomes they wish to avoid, given their likely overreliance on the diagnostic value of negative relationship information (see Reeder & Brewer, 1979). Moreover, when medium-trust individuals recall positive relationship events from the past, they judge their partner’s behavior positively yet make cynical attributions about the motives behind their partner’s actions (Holmes & Rempel, 1986; Rempel et al., 2001). In other words, medium-trust individuals superficially acknowledge their partner’s positive actions but fail to infer that their partner’s motives might be constructive and benevolent. As a result, positive partner actions may trigger latent worries about what could eventually “go wrong” in the minds of medium-trust people, a process that might impede or derail the development of what they crave—deeper intimacy and greater security.

Thus, contrary to high-trust individuals, who probably adopt a promotion focus toward relationships (Gable & Reis, 2001), medium-trust people adopt a risk-averse, prevention-focused strategy, one that is revealed by their chronic feelings of vulnerability, their incessant worries about mistakenly making positive attributions for their partner’s actions, and their lingering concerns about eventually being hurt by their partners. These defensive, self-protective tendencies should reduce the likelihood that constructive partner behaviors will be accepted as evidence of the partner’s genuine care and concern. To compound matters, medium-trust individuals also have more poorly integrated views of their partners and relationships (Holmes & Rempel, 1989). Memories of hurts and fears in the minds of medium-trust individuals, therefore, could be more sharply segregated from memories of positive relationship experiences. In addition, medium-trust individuals are likely to possess negative relationship models and memories that are more easily activated, and they may experience more volatile emotional swings in their relationships across time, perhaps owing to the greater compartmentalization or the haphazard connections that define their working models (see Mikulincer, 1998).

Individuals involved in relationships characterized by low trust (termed “low-trust” persons) have minimal confidence in their partner’s care and responsiveness. These individuals are convinced that their partners will not take their needs or concerns into account when important decisions are made, and they are least likely to attribute their partner’s positive actions to either benevolent or altruistic motives (Holmes & Rempel, 1989). Instead, low-
trust people exhibit distress-maintaining attributions (Holtzworth-Munroe & Jacobson, 1985), accentuating the ramifications of negative partner behaviors and ignoring or downplaying positive partner behaviors. When trying to resolve relationship problems, low-trust individuals consciously report having more specific (i.e., less global) neutral or slightly negative attributions regarding their partner's actions. However, more indirect measures suggest that they actually harbor strong negative attributions about their partner's real underlying motives (Rempel et al., 2001). These destructive attributional patterns may sustain the cynical and suspicious working models of low-trust persons. Because they believe that their partners cannot be trusted and will never be responsive to their basic needs, low-trust individuals rarely take the interpersonal risks necessary to build greater trust and felt security. In fact, they typically disengage or withdraw from interactions in which greater trust could be forged (such as in initially noncorrespondent situations with their partners; Rempel et al., 2001), possibly to protect themselves from the anguish of further rejection.

Testing the dependency regulation model (Murray, Holmes, & Griffin, 2000), Murray and colleagues (2005) have confirmed that, before they can fully trust their partners, low-self-esteem people may first need to either view themselves more positively or view their partners less positively to believe that their partner's love and benevolent actions are genuine, justified, and valid. Specifically, when low-self-esteem individuals are given feedback that they are more desirable as romantic partners than most people or that their current partners have treated them badly, they report greater felt security and more positive views of themselves and their romantic partners. Furthermore, the connection between the low-self-esteem/negative feedback experimental condition and improved self-perceptions is mediated by enhanced felt security. These psychological processes may play a critical role in nurturing trust.

Extending Rusbult's (1983) investment model, Wieselquist and colleagues (1999) have found that the degree of dyadic trust in relationships is likely to be contingent on aspects of the self, the partner, and the relationship (see Figure 25.2). In two longitudinal studies, they have shown that greater trust is concurrently associated with greater dependence on the partner, which in turn forecasts greater concurrent commitment. Heightened commitment concurrently predicts the enactment of more prorelationship behaviors (e.g., accommodation and personal sacrifice), which is perceived by the partner. These partner perceptions are then linked to a string of positive relations between the partner's level of trust, dependence, commitment, and prorelationship actions, which subsequently predict the partner's perceptions of these actions.

Wieselquist and colleagues (1999) propose that perceiving greater prorelationship accommodation and sacrifice by one's partner might be responsible for promoting trust. Indeed, when individuals perceive that their partners have experienced a major transformation away from purely self-interested outcomes (MaxOwn) toward partner-centered outcomes (MaxOther) or relationship-centered outcomes (MaxJoint), they do report greater trust (see also Yovetich & Rusbult, 1994). If, however, one partner has an anxious-ambivalent attachment style (i.e., chronically worries about whether partners love or will stay with him or her), lower levels of trust tend to be reported by both relationship partners. Wieselquist and colleagues also suggest that partners may occasionally use "diagnostic" or "strain test" situations to test the strength of their partner's prorelationship motives or demonstrate their own prorelationship motives. Trust is less likely to develop or grow if partners never experience these situations, if one or both partners fail these critical tests by not showing expected transformation tendencies, or if one or both partners do not perceive or fail to infer the other's genuinely positive, prorelationship motives. Wieselquist and colleagues also conjecture that trust may be more likely to develop and grow if mutual (similar) levels of vulnerability, mutual changes in commitment, and reciprocal positive behaviors are exchanged between partners. Sometimes, however, trust may grow stronger if partners do not reciprocate evenly, at least over short time periods (see Drigotas, Whitney, & Rusbult, 1995).

Miller and Rempel (2004) have extended this line of work by testing whether charitable attributions might be responsible for increasing dyadic trust. Noting that Wieselquist and colleagues (1999) found little evidence for which variables predict actual changes in trust over time in relationships, Miller and Rempel conjecture that partner-enhancing attributions regarding the motives behind a partner's relationship-relevant actions and behaviors might predict actual increases in dyadic trust. Studying married couples, they found that partner-enhancing attributions (e.g., the belief that one's spouse has good intentions when discussing a conflict) predicted significant gains in trust 2 years later. Increases in trust also predicted increases in the tendency to make partner-enhancing attributions, suggesting that both processes may operate in a mutually reinforcing fashion. Changes in trust, therefore, do not appear to be driven by attributions about a partner's specific interaction behaviors; rather, they arise from the more global attributions that individuals make regarding the motives that guide a partner's habitual relationship-relevant actions.

Attachment Theory-Based Approaches

Additional research on trust has been informed by attachment theory. The earliest work linking adult attachment styles to dyadic trust (e.g., Simpson, 1990) indicated that more securely attached people (who have positive models of themselves and relationship partners) report greater dyadic trust than either more avoidantly attached people (who have variable self-views and predominately negative views of partners) or anxiously attached people (who have negative self-views and hopeful yet guarded views of partners). More secure people also sustain higher levels of trust in their relationships across time than do their insecure counterparts (Keelan, Dion, & Dion, 1994). The working models of more securely attached individuals may partially explain their stronger in-
clination to trust others. Baldwin, Fehr, Keedian, Seidel, and Thompson (1993), for example, have found that more secure people expect hypothetical partners to behave more benevolently in situations that call for trust. They also respond more rapidly to words connoting positive relationship outcomes (e.g., care), whereas more insecure individuals react more quickly to words suggesting negative relationship outcomes (e.g., hurt). Highly secure individuals also possess more available and accessible positive relationship exemplars, whereas highly avoidant and highly anxious individuals have more available and accessible negative relationship exemplars (Baldwin, Keelan, Fehr, Enns, & Koh-Rangarajoo, 1996).

When individuals feel more secure in a given relationship, they report heightened trust, above and beyond any effects associated with their chronic (dispositional) attachment style. Pistole (1994) suggests that the lower trust displayed by more insecurely attached people might also be attributable to how these individuals regulate important social interactions. Highly anxious individuals, who crave emotional closeness and intimacy, may smother their partners, unwittingly pushing them away. Highly avoidant individuals, who desire self-reliance and emotional independence, may erect barriers that create and maintain emotional distance, a tendency that could launch or exacerbate destructive "distance/pursuer" interaction cycles.

The most detailed research linking adult attachment styles and dyadic trust has been conducted by Mikulincer. Mikulincer (1998) claims that confidence in and positive expectations of a partner's availability and responsiveness are core elements not only of dyadic trust but of secure working models as well. He argues that in response to the quality of previous care and support they have received (or perceive they have received), individuals with different attachment styles should have different trust-related goals. More securely attached persons ought to organize their interpersonal behavior around creating and maintaining greater closeness and intimacy in their relationships, partly because they do not have to worry about attaining felt security. Achieving greater intimacy may, in fact, be essential for developing greater trust. According to Mikulincer, the tendency of securely attached individuals to be more trusting should facilitate their quest for greater intimacy because heightened trust should serve as an "internalized secure base" that permits more secure people to take the interpersonal risks and leaps of faith necessary to build deeper trust. Many of these risks are likely to include the disclosure of personal goals, hopes, feelings, and fears.

The central interaction goals of insecurely attached individuals, by comparison, should mirror the defenses that insecure people use to combat attachment-related distress (Bowlby, 1988). Given their unrelenting concerns about receiving deficient care, attention, and support (Bowlby, 1973), highly anxious people should adopt interaction goals that are geared toward attaining what they desire the most—greater felt security. In light of their prolonged history of rejection and subsequent desire to avoid emotional entanglements (Crittenden & Ainsworth, 1989), highly avoidant people should adopt goals to attain what they ultimately desire—gaining and maintaining control and autonomy in relationships.

Mikulincer (1998) has provided compelling evidence for the existence and operation of these goals in people who have different attachment styles. More securely attached people do have more accessible memories of trust-validating experiences, they feel more positive affect when remembering these experiences, and they report more trust-validating experiences. They also place greater importance on trust-validating experiences and view them as being attributable to the benevolent traits and motives of their partners. More secure individuals also talk more openly with their partners about trust-violation events, they have less accessible negative trust-related memories, they react less negatively to negative memories, and they do not attribute trust violations to their partner's stable dispositions or enduring motives (i.e., they make situation-specific and transient attributions for negative partner behaviors). Although more secure individuals tend to be involved in more satisfying relationships with perhaps better adjusted romantic partners than many insecure individuals (Simpson, 1990), the cognitive and emotional tendencies documented by Mikulincer ought to accentuate positive views of partners and relationships and curtail negative ones, possibly fueling greater trust.

More insecure individuals, in contrast, report less trust and have more accessible negative trust-related memories (Mikulincer, 1998). In addition, they view trust as a means to achieve security-based goals (in the case of highly anxious people) or control/autonomy-based goals (in the case of highly avoidant people). More insecure individuals also exhibit more maladaptive coping strategies when distressed. Highly anxious persons, for instance, use more emotion-focused coping strategies, whereas highly avoidant persons use more avoidance/distancing coping strategies. Finally, highly anxious individuals respond to negative trust-related experiences with greater negative affect and place more weight on these negative experiences.

Other Theoretical and Empirical Approaches

There have been other notable studies of dyadic trust. Several, for example, have documented that trust tends to be high during the initial stages of relationship development (Fletcher et al., 2000), after which it gradually declines once the honeymoon phase is over (Larzelere & Huston, 1980). What is not known, however, is whether relationship partners define and weigh trust similarly at different stages of relationship development. Other research has indicated that individuals who engage in more self-disclosure and communicate greater trust often have partners who are more trusting (Butler, 1986; Haas, 1981; Larzelere & Huston, 1980). Trust may be especially facilitated by the combination of intimate self-disclosures and reciprocated trust from partners (Deutsch, 1960; Ellison & Firestone, 1974; McAllister & Bergman, 1986), though some research has questioned the importance of reciprocity (Bartle, 1996). Other lines of work have discovered small but stable gender differences in dyadic
trust. Women typically score slightly higher than men on trust measures (Butler, 1986; Canary & Cupach, 1988), perhaps because certain family-of-origin experiences may affect women and men differently (see Cooper & Grotevant, 1987). These gender differences might also stem from how men and women are socialized in Western cultures. Given that most men are taught to value independence and autonomy (Block, 1983; Gilligan, 1982), many men may eschew the greater dependence on others that higher levels of trust entail. Given that most women are socialized to be interdependent and relationship-oriented, many women may feel more comfortable entering and maintaining more dependent relationships that involve greater trust.

Work conceptualizing trust from family systems theory (Bowen, 1976, 1978) suggests that women who are less empathetic, who are poorer at solving relationship problems, who are less likely to take responsibility for their actions, and whose families-of-origin did not express thoughts and emotions accurately tend to be less trusting (Reeves & Johnson, 1992). In addition, Bartle (1996) has found that greater emotional and behavioral reactivity to emotion-evoking events involving one's parents predicts less dyadic trust of one's current romantic partners. Men's trust, however, correlates most highly with their level of emotional/behavioral reactivity (such that less reactive men report the most trust), whereas women's trust is most strongly tied to their comfort with making intimate self-disclosures to significant others. Borrowing principles of family systems theory, some research insinuates that the lack of sufficient self-differentiation from significant others (e.g., parents, romantic partners, and close friends) may foreclose the kinds of social interactions needed to develop stronger trust (Ryder & Bartle, 1991). According to this view, if an individual's self-concept is more diversified, he or she should be more willing to risk placing deeper confidence and faith in others. If relationships fail, the self-concepts of these "well-diversified" individuals should be buoyed by the other sources that define and contribute to their sense of self-worth (see Crocker & Wolfe, 2001).

The most recent wave of research on dyadic trust is starting to identify the specific brain structures and processes implicated in the psychological experience of trust. The amygdala, one of the primary centers for processing emotions, becomes more active when people view faces that they later rate as untrustworthy relative to faces they rate as more trustworthy (Winston, Strange, O'Doherty, & Dolan, 2002). Although little is known about the facial cues that signal untrustworthiness, some evidence suggests that expressions of anger and sadness or the absence of happiness might be systematically tied to perceptions of untrustworthiness, at least from photographs (Adolphs, 2002). In addition, bilateral damage to the amygdala tends to impair judgments of untrustworthy faces (Adolphs, Tranel, & Damasio, 1998). Adolphs (2002) suggests that seeing untrustworthy people may trigger automatic, largely unconscious processing in the amygdala, which launches more conscious processing in the orbitofrontal area of the brain. This secondary processing may then generate the cognitive and somatic changes that individuals sense as negative emotional responses.

Other recent research has revealed that people are more likely to trust others who resemble them in physical appearance (DeBruine, 2002), and they systematically reward partners who trust them and punish those who do not (Fehr & Rockenbach, 2003). Though preliminary, some research suggests that levels of the hormone oxytocin rise when individuals who are playing monetary games against others receive information that their interaction partners trust them (Zak, 2003). Individuals who have higher baseline levels of oxytocin are also more likely to reciprocate signs of trust, and women who are ovulating are less inclined to trust others compared to when they are not ovulating (Zak, 2003). When oxytocin is administered experimentally to people, they are more willing to trust strangers (but not machines) in trust games that involve real monetary stakes (Kosfeld, Heinrichs, Zak, Fischbacher, & Fehr, 2005).

In conclusion, a reasonable amount of research, much of which has been informed by interdependence theory or attachment theory, has investigated various aspects of trust in close relationships. The first wave of seminal work was structured around single-trial PDG experimental paradigms involving strangers (e.g., Deutsch, 1960). Largely in response to problems with this research, the second wave of research conceptualized trust as a fairly stable disposition relevant to others in general. The most recent wave of research, which was launched in the 1980s, has conceptualized trust in more dyadic (interpersonal) and process-oriented terms (e.g., Holmes & Rempel, 1989; Mikulincer, 1998; Wieselquist et al., 1999). Most of the extant research, however, has focused on individual differences in trust (e.g., the way in which individuals who differ in the degree of trust within a relationship differentially think, feel, and behave in trust-relevant situations) rather than the more basic normative processes that, over time, might promote or inhibit the development of trust in relationships. Future research needs to test and delve more deeply into the normative components of models that attempt to explain the growth and decline of trust in established relationships across time.

**MAJOR PRINCIPLES AND A DYADIC MODEL OF TRUST IN RELATIONSHIPS**

One of the goals of the current volume is to identify overarching principles that capture the core essence of a given psychological construct or set of processes. Based on the preceding review, at least six fundamental principles of trust are apparent.

- **Principle 1**: The desire to view partners positively and to want to trust them (i.e., enhancement motives) plays a larger role in guiding relationship and social interaction processes during the early phases of relationship development.
- **Principle 2**: The desire to view partners more accurately and objectively (i.e., accuracy motives) becomes more important in guiding relationship and social inter-
action processes in latter stages of relationship development.

* **Principle 3:** Individuals assess the degree to which they can trust their partners by observing whether partners display proper transformation of motivation in trust diagnostic situations (e.g., in potentially noncorrespondent "trust" or strain test situations in which partners make decisions that work against their own self-interest and support the best interests of the individual and/or the relationship).

* **Principle 4:** Individuals may at times intentionally enter or create trust diagnostic situations to test whether their current level of trust in a partner is warranted.

* **Principle 5:** Individual differences associated with attachment processes, self-differentiation, and/or self-esteem are likely to influence the growth or decline of trust at different normative stages over time in relationships (see the model presented below).

* **Principle 6:** Neither the level nor the trajectory of trust in relationships can be fully understood without considering the dispositions and actions of both relationship partners, especially in trust diagnostic situations.

These principles are by no means exhaustive. However, they capture six of the most central themes that anchor the major theoretical and empirical work that has focused on interpersonal trust.

Several theories and models of trust have been reviewed. How might their major features be integrated to highlight the most important situational and psychological processes through which trust is likely to develop and be maintained in close relationships? Figure 25.3 depicts one way of conceptualizing how some of the core constructs reviewed earlier in the chapter might be interconnected in trust-relevant social interactions. The dyadic model of trust in relationships contains both normative and individual difference components. The normative part of the model is shown in the five boxes (constructs) that form the middle of the figure. The individual difference portion of the model is displayed in the dispositions of each relationship partner and her or his respective links to each normative construct. To keep the figure simple, feedback loops from the terminal normative construct (each partner's perception of felt security) to the construct that should launch future trust-relevant interactions (each partner's decision about whether to enter the next trust-relevant situation) are not depicted, but they are presumed to exist. The model holds that, during interactions, each individual's perceptions of both his or her own and the partner's standing on each construct is necessary to explain what transpires for each partner in the downstream constructs of the model.

The model assumes that information about the dispositions of both partners (e.g., their attachment styles and working models, their typical relationship decision-making tendencies, and their attribution styles) is necessary to explain the growth of trust—or the lack thereof—in a given relationship across several interactions. Each

![FIGURE 25.3. The dyadic model of trust in relationships.](image-url)
Dispositional tendencies such as greater attachment security, a more differentiated self-concept, and/or higher self-esteem motivate and enable individuals to enter, elicit, or transform social interactions into ones that foster greater trust across time. Two types of situations should give individuals a particularly good opportunity to assess the degree of trust that is warranted in the partner/relationship at a specific point in time: (1) "trust situations" (Kelley et al., 2009) in which partners can repeatedly make or fail to make a\textsubscript{1}/a\textsubscript{1} decisions, and (2) "strain test" situations (Holmes, 1981; Kelley, 1989) in which partners can demonstrate or fail to demonstrate their willingness to make personal sacrifices for the good of the partner or the relationship. For these trust diagnostic situations to be entered or created, however, one or sometimes both partners must have sufficient confidence to take the interpersonal risks required to confirm or reaffirm that the partner truly can be trusted. Individuals and partners who have more secure, more self-differentiated, and/or more positive self-views should be in a better position to take these risks and leap of faith on a regular basis.

Once individuals find themselves in trust diagnostic situations, those who routinely display the transformation of motivation needed to carry out MaxOther or MaxJoint decisions in everyday trust situations or occasional strain test situations should be on the path toward experiencing greater trust and felt security. Moreover, individuals and partners who have more secure, more self-differentiated, and/or more positive self-views may engage in these transformations more often and more extensively. Given their stronger sense of security and greater promotion focus, these individuals should be more motivated to—and perhaps more capable of—steering trust-relevant social interactions toward a\textsubscript{1}/a\textsubscript{1} decisions. Once such decisions have been made, each individual's working models may then influence how he or she interprets the extent of transformation that both the self and the partner have undergone. As a consequence, highly secure, differentiated, and/or self-confident individuals may grant themselves and their partners "fuller credit" for each partner's willingness to maximize partner or relationship outcomes instead of each partner's more egocentric self-interests.

This process, in turn, may trigger more benevolent attributions regarding one's own as well as the partner's core relationship motives (Miller & Rempel, 2004). These positive attributions may then facilitate more constructive problem solving, more adaptive emotion regulation, and more optimistic expectations about what is likely to happen in future trust diagnostic interactions. These outcomes might also be affected by each partner's degree of attachment security, self-differentiation, and/or self-esteem. Patterns of attribution, emotion regulation, and situation-specific expectancies are displayed in a single box in the model because the temporal order of these processes is likely to differ depending on idiosyncratic features of the interaction (e.g., the specific topic being discussed), the dispositions of each partner, or unique emergent properties of the relationship itself. These positive outcomes should then increase perceptions of trust, which ought to make individuals feel more secure, at least temporarily (Holmes & Rempel, 1989). Once again, greater security, more self-differentiation, and/or higher self-esteem might facilitate perceptions of greater trust and felt security. Perceptions of felt security may then "set up" the next trust-relevant interaction, determining whether or when the next trust situation or strain test is entered.

Across time, individuals who repeatedly experience a\textsubscript{1}/a\textsubscript{1} outcomes with their partners should begin to perceive greater "added value" following these outcomes, especially when they occur in trust diagnostic situations. These mutually beneficial outcomes may also encourage individuals and their partners to perform additional relationship-maintenance acts (e.g., disparagement of alternatives, accentuation of partner or relationship attributes, or heightened cognitive interdependence) that might facilitate or reinforce a\textsubscript{1}/a\textsubscript{1} decisions in the future. These effects should diminish, of course, if one or both partners have dispositional vulnerabilities (e.g., an anxious attachment style; Wieselquist et al., 1999), fail to display proper transformation, repeatedly decide not to enter a\textsubscript{1}/a\textsubscript{1} agreements, or make chronically negative attributions regarding their partner's basic relationship motives.

It is important to emphasize that this model does not presume that dispositions are chiefly responsible for generating, sustaining, or short-circuiting trust in relationships. Certain dispositions most likely amplify or qualify the basic normative processes outlined in the middle section of the model. Individuals who are insecurely attached, have weak self-differentiation, or have low self-esteem can and do form trusting relationships. To achieve higher levels of trust, however, such persons may need to either (1) be involved with partners who help them suppress or change their destructive perceptual, emotional, and behavioral tendencies or (2) have unusually committed or mutually rewarding relationships that enable these "vulnerable" individuals and their partners to overcome their liabilities.

There is an interesting paradox surrounding the transformation of motivation and trust as relationships grow and develop. Early in relationship development, large amounts of transformation by both partners should be a good barometer of the amount of trust that is warranted in a partner/relationship, particularly when partners are equally dependent on one another for unique or important outcomes (Holmes & Rempel, 1989) or have similar levels of vulnerability and commitment (Wieselquist et al., 1999). As relationships progress, however, most individuals incorporate their partners and relationships...
more centrally into their self-concepts (Aron et al., 2001). This means that less transformation of motivation is likely to occur in well-established relationships. For this reason, partners in long-term relationships occasionally may need to identify new trust diagnostic issues or situations in which each partner's self-interests start out being slightly discrepant from what might be best for his or her partner or the relationship. If partners can jointly demonstrate that they are still willing to undergo large transformations in new trust diagnostic situations, this might reaffirm and sustain trust in well-established pairs.

As discussed at the beginning of the chapter, our knowledge of how trust is generated, sustained, and compromised in close relationships remains surprisingly limited. Future theory and research on dyadic trust will profit from addressing the following issues. First, we need to gain a better understanding of how the dispositions and behaviors of relationship partners affect how individuals (actors) think, feel, and behave in trust-relevant situations. Very few if any studies have investigated whether or how "partner effects" might affect these processes. Second, research should explore how and why certain within-dyad combinations of partner attributes (e.g., very different levels of power, dependence, or commitment in a relationship) promote or impede the development and maintenance of trust. Of particular importance will be learning whether, how, and why certain highly asymmetrical relationships (e.g., those in which partners have vastly different levels of power) occasionally generate very high levels of trust (see Drigotas et al., 1995). Third, research should examine whether the normative component of the model shown in Figure 25.3 holds with equal effect at different stages of relationship development (see Holmes & Rempel, 1989). Fourth, more needs to be understood about how normative processes and individual differences reciprocally influence one another across time in trust-relevant situations. For simplicity, the model depicted in Figure 25.3 does not show that normative processes may, over time, shape and revise dispositions within individuals, yet such reciprocal feedback is bound to take place. Fifth, greater attention should be devoted to understanding the events depicted in the middle box of the model (attributions/emotions/expectancies). Features critical to the development of intimacy in relationships, such as feeling understood, valued, and cared for by one's partner, may also promote trust and felt security (Deutsch, 1973; Mikulincer, 1998; Reis & Shaver, 1988), especially when these perceptions repeatedly occur in trust-relevant interactions. Sixth, more needs to be known about what "added value" entails and how it is generated. Though the prospect of receiving future rewards from one's partner may make joint a1/b1 decisions feel unusually good (Huesmann & Levinger, 1976), more than the prospect of rewards is likely to be involved in generating high "added value" perceptions.

In conclusion, there are few constructs in the field of interpersonal relationships that are more central or important to relationship functioning and outcomes than trust. Without trust, voluntary relationships are not likely to develop, let alone grow or be maintained. Experiencing trust in close relationships may be more important today than ever before when one considers that most Americans have fewer and less meaningful ties to friends, organizations, and community activities than was true 30 years ago (Putnam, 2000). This pattern of declining social capital may be exerting further pressure on people to establish stronger emotional connections, greater dependency, and deeper levels of trust with their intimate partners. Trust may, in fact, be a "cardinal construct" (cf. Asch, 1946) in relationships to the extent that it transforms the meaning of other accompanying attributes and descriptors of a relationship. The fact that so little is known about such a pivotal construct attests to the difficulty of operationalizing, measuring, and studying trust in close relationships. For the science of relationships to advance, however, we must develop a deeper and more sophisticated understanding of how trust emerges, operates, changes, and declines within close relationships.

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