

Reprinted from **JOURNAL OF EXPERIMENTAL SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY**, Volume 1, Number 2, May 1965
Copyright © 1965 by Academic Press Inc. *Printed in U.S.A.*

The Effect of Self-Esteem on Romantic Liking

ELAINE WALSTER¹
University of Minnesota

Does a person's momentary self-esteem affect his receptivity to the love and affection proffered by another? Does a person like an affectionate other more when his own self-esteem is high or when it is low?

The author hypothesized that when a person's self-esteem was *low* he would be more receptive to (better like) a person offering affection than when his self-esteem was high. The rationale for this prediction was two-fold.

First, a person with high self-esteem (who feels he has much to offer another) is likely to feel that he, in turn, deserves a more attractive, more personable friend than does a person with low self-regard. [Goffman (1952) makes a proposal consistent with this notion: "A proposal of marriage in our society tends to be a way in which a man sums up his social attributes and suggests to a woman that hers are not so much better as to preclude a merger or partnership in these matters."] In other words, the more highly a man evaluates himself and his own social attributes, the more perfection he'll feel a woman must possess before she is acceptable as his friend or lover. If the above propositions are true, a given woman should appear more "acceptable" and desirable, and should be better liked by a man, when his self-esteem (and requirements) are *low* than when his self-esteem (and requirements) are high.

Second, a lowering of one's self-regard probably produces an increased need for the affection and regard of others. Thus, any affection offered by another person, and thus this person himself, should be more attractive to an individual when his self-esteem is low than when it is high. (A similar proposal made by Dittes (1959) will be discussed in detail later.)

Can we find any support for the above notions in the research literature? Information providing unequivocal support or rejection is not available.

Nearly all the literature treats self-esteem as an invariant. Authors speak of high self-esteem and low self-esteem *people*. The fact that

¹ This study was conducted at Stanford University, under a Ford Foundation grant. The help and support of Dr. Leon Festinger, administrator of this grant, is very greatly appreciated.

self-esteem can fluctuate, and the effect of these fluctuations, are discussed only by Reik (1944).

In order to find any relevant data, we must temporarily make the assumption that when a person's self-esteem is lowered (or raised) he behaves like the person whose self-esteem is habitually low (or high). Even then, we find that the theoretical literature offers conflicting suggestions as to the nature of the relationship between self-esteem and liking.

1. A very small portion of the literature suggests that people low in self-esteem are in special need of affection, and thus are especially receptive to, and especially prone to, like others. Reik (1944) says that it is when our feelings of self-dislike increase that we are especially susceptible to falling in love; Reik indicates that people are much more likely to fall in love after a rejection.

2. A far greater number of articles suggest that it is the *high* self-esteem person who will be most receptive to another's love.

For example, Rogers (1951) says that the person who accepts himself will have better interpersonal relations with others. Adler (1926) adds that those who themselves feel inferior depreciate others. Horney (1936) views love as a capacity. She sees love of self and love of others as positively related. Fromm (1939) too, agrees with this notion.

Studies supporting a positive relationship between self-esteem and liking or acceptance for others are reported in Berger (1952), Maslow (1942), Omwake (1954), and Stock (1949).

These studies demonstrate a relationship between self-esteem and liking opposite to the one we predicted. Do these data disconfirm our hypothesis, or are there reasons why, in these studies, the relationship existing between self-esteem and liking should be quite different from the one we expect? The situation with which these authors deal is dissimilar to the one we specified in three ways:

First, in these studies, a subject's "liking" or "acceptance" or "sexual love" is assessed by summing his responses to a number of questions. Sometimes these questions do seem to be measuring "liking," but often they seem to be measuring something quite different (e.g., general permissiveness). Since it is the total index that is correlated with self-esteem, it is always difficult to decide if the index is "mostly" measuring liking or not.

Second, all of these studies are correlational. Commonly the subject's self-rating on a test is correlated with his rating of others on either the same or a similar test. Both measures were made in the same place, at the same time. It is not possible to tell how much of the correlated variance is due to the "positive" effect of self-esteem on liking (or acceptance for others) and how much of the correlation is an artifact of the fact that

the same situational and personal "sets" partially determined responses to both sets of questions.

Finally, the kind of person the subjects had in mind when rating the "other" was never assessed. (The authors' interests were naturally enough different from ours.) It seems plausible to argue that the low self-esteem people might well be socially inept individuals, not usually offered love and affection by others. Thus, when asked to rate "others" they might very well be visualizing fairly unresponsive individuals. At the same time, the more socially skilled high self-esteem people might envision quite a different collection of individuals (warm, friendly, and responsive) when asked to evaluate "others."

Since we are interested in (a) the effect of a momentarily high or low self-esteem on liking for another (b) when that other is *proffering affection*, it is clear that the correlational studies differ from the situation we are considering in crucial ways.

3. The best support for our hypothesis comes from the group cohesiveness literature. Dittes (1959) suggests that self-esteem is sometimes positively and sometimes negatively correlated with amount of liking and attraction felt toward others (a group). Whether a positive or a negative correlation exists between self-esteem and liking for a group is said to depend on whether or not the group is perceived as accepting or rejecting. If the group is seen as accepting, the low self-esteem person is predicted to like the group better than a high self-esteem person would. If the group is seen as rejecting, the low self-esteem person is predicted to dislike the group more than a high self-esteem person would.

Although Dittes is, of course, referring to the effect of stable individual differences in self-esteem on liking, his rationale is similar to the one we proposed when discussing the effect of momentary gains or losses in self-esteem on liking. He says: "A person's attraction toward membership in a group . . . may be considered a function of two determinants: (a) the extent to which his needs are satisfied by the group, and (b) the strength of his needs."

Dittes assumes that the lower the level of one's own self-esteem, the greater one's need for acceptance from others. From this assumption, Dittes' predictions can be clearly derived: 1. When the other person is accepting, he satisfies a greater need in the low self-esteem person than in the high self-esteem person. Thus, the accepting person is better liked by the low self-esteem individual. 2. When the other person is rejecting, he frustrates a greater need in the low self-esteem person than in the high self-esteem person. Thus, the rejecting person is less well liked by the low self-esteem individual. An experimental study provides support for Dittes' proposals.

It is clear that the above literature does not provide a definitive answer to our specific question as to how a person's self-esteem at any time affects his receptivity to the affection offered by another. Therefore, an experimental design was set up in which we could test the following two relationships: I. The relationship between raised or lowered self-esteem and the liking for an affectionate other. (This was, of course, our main concern.) To assess this relationship, it was necessary to: (1) Introduce a female subject to a male confederate who would make clear his interest in and affection for the subject. (2) Experimentally raise the self-esteem of one half of the subjects by giving them authoritative positive information about themselves; experimentally lower the self-esteem of one half of the subjects by giving them authoritative negative information about themselves. (3) Ask subjects to rate the male confederate under conditions which would encourage them to give honest, frank replies. II. The relationship between *measured* ("stable") self-esteem and liking for various others. This was not our primary interest, but in order to get some information about this relationship, we needed to administer the California Personality Inventory to our subjects. This would allow us to correlate the subjects' esteem scores with their rating of the confederate and some less accepting others.

METHOD

Subjects were 20 women from Stanford University and 17 women from Foothill Junior College. Nearly all *Ss* were 18 or 19 years old. All *Ss* were paid for their participation, with the exception of 7 Stanford women, who participated in fulfillment of an Introductory Psychology course requirement.

A few weeks before the experimental session, *Ss* were told that Stanford was conducting a research project on "personality and the therapy process." As part of this imaginary project, Foothill *Ss* were asked to complete the California Personality Inventory (CPI), and then to make a one and one-half hour appointment to permit further testing and interviewing. Since all Stanford students had taken the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory shortly before *E* contacted them, Stanford *Ss* were not asked to complete the CPI before making an interview appointment. However, the CPI was administered to nearly all the Stanford subjects seven weeks after the experiment.¹

Introducing Subject to the Confederate

Before *S's* self-esteem was affected in any way, we wanted to introduce her to a man we hoped she would perceive as an accepting, affectionate male friend. This "introduction" was effected in the following way: When *S* arrived for her interview, *E* was not in the assigned room. A short time after *S's* arrival, a male confederate (GD) arrived.² This confederate was slightly older than our *Ss* and quite handsome.

¹ Patricia Hatfield Rich, Anthropology Department, Berkeley, California, administered the test to *Ss*, ostensibly as part of an anthropology survey.

² The assistance of Gerald Davison, our confederate, and of Gerald Bracy, who worked as a confederate in pretesting, is appreciated.

He claimed that he had been sent to the interview room by Miss Turner, who was "running another experiment," and had merely been told that Dr. Walster would explain what he was to do when she arrived. After speculating in a friendly way with *S* about what the interviews were like, and why *E* was late, GD began telling *S* a little about himself. (He claimed either to be a former Harvard student now spending a year at Stanford, or a former Foothill student now at Berkeley, as was appropriate.) For approximately 15 minutes, GD talked to *S* with the intention of (1) conveying to *S* that he was personally interested in her, and (2) asking *S* for a dinner and show date in San Francisco, the following week. If *S* was hesitant about accepting a date at any of the proposed times, GD stated that he would call *S* again at a later date.

*Self-Esteem Manipulation**

Soon after GD and *S* made a date, *E* entered the experimental room, explaining to *S* and GD that she had been held up by the unexpected absence of her co-interviewer, and confusion as to where Miss Turner had sent GD.

Then *E* informed *S* that in addition to the MMPI or CPI test, which she had already taken, she would be given the Word Association and the Rorschach tests. Since "the project required that a different administrator give each test," *E* asked GD to take the place of her co-interviewer, and read the 15 words that comprised the Word Association test. Then *E* explained that this was the reason GD had been sent down to the experimental room. GD read the words and was then instructed to return to Miss Turner's experiment.

Then *S* was told that her test results would be filed anonymously, but that if she desired she could see her CPI results as soon as she finished taking the Rorschach test. Three Rorschach cards were given to *S* and *E* administered the test in the usual way. Once the Rorschach test was completed, *E* handed *S* either an extremely flattering or an extremely disparaging analysis of her personality.

(All *Ss* were told that this analysis of their personality was made by a therapist in San Francisco.) Which prepared "analysis" *S* received was randomly determined.

For those *Ss* assigned to the Low-esteem condition, the analysis stressed the *Ss*' "immaturity" (e.g., "Although she has adopted certain superficial appearances of maturity to enable her to temporarily adjust to life situations, her basically immature drives remain."), her "weak personality, anti-social motives, lack of originality and flexibility, and lack of capacity for successful leadership."

In a sub-section of the report, dealing with conventionality and conformity, *S* was informed that she undoubtedly "lacked openness in her dealings with other people," that her feelings of inadequacy in the presence of others contributed to this lack of openness, that she undoubtedly felt it was necessary to cover her weak points in order to gain social acceptance, and that this led her to consistently over-estimate many of her own characteristics."

For those *Ss* assigned to the High-esteem condition, the report stressed *Ss*' great maturity and originality, her probable underestimation of her own attributes, and stated that *S* presented "one of the most favorable personality structures analyzed by the staff." The conventionality sub-section stressed *Ss*' sensitivity to peers, personal integrity, and originality and freedom of outlook."

While *S* was reading the bogus MMPI report, *E* pretended to score her Rorschach profile. Then *E* explained to *S* how the Rorschach was scored, commenting that the

*This esteem manipulation is adapted from material utilized by Dr. Dana Bramel (1962).

test was a completely objective measure, with results unaffected by the tester's preconceptions.

Then *S* was handed a card which summarized the personality characteristics which the Rorschach indicated she possessed. Low-esteem condition *Ss* were given an analysis saying their responses indicated a "constricted and unimaginative mind, and a non-creative approach to life problems." High-esteem condition *Ss* received an analysis describing their capabilities for "breaking through the stereotypes and rigidities so common among her peers." Their cognitive freedom and the appropriateness of their responses was also stressed. After *S* had read these reports, *E* told her all testing was complete and her tests were filed away.

Assessing Subject's Emotional and Cognitive Attitudes

When they arrived for interviewing *Ss* knew that they were to take some psychological tests and be interviewed in connection with a therapy project. Once *S's* test results were filed away, *E* indicated that she would like to get a little help from *S* in setting up a forthcoming research project.

This project supposedly dealt with small changes that occur in people's attitudes as a result of thinking about things and people in new contexts and new ways. Some studies were cited in which large changes occurred in the attitudes of juvenile delinquents, as a result of "therapy sessions," in which no therapist was present, and in which the delinquents merely expressed their feelings into a tape recorder.

Then *E* explained that *S's* part in the project was simply to indicate how she presently felt about four people *E* would name; *S* was told that after she completed these ratings, she would be asked to think about one of the four people privately, considering how that person would react in certain novel situations *E* would describe, and indicating whether or not she noticed any changes in her feelings as she thought about that person.

The post-rating portion of the project was described very quickly. Then *E* explained that she knew *S* was probably unclear about exactly what she was to do, but that things would become clear as she went along. (It is only the initial ratings by *S* in which we are interested; the post-ratings were never obtained. The therapy "project" was devised solely to disassociate the ratings from the previous testing and to provide a plausible context for securing honest rating from *S* concerning her feelings toward *GD*.)

A questionnaire was then handed *S*, who was shown how to indicate her feelings on the rating scales, and told not to sign her name or code number. It was very important, *E* explained, that *S's* answers be anonymous, explaining: "Usually when you ask someone what they think about Joe Smith, and hand them a questionnaire so they can indicate their feelings, they think that they really should tell you how they ought to feel about Joe—how it is reasonable or fair to feel—or how they usually feel, even if they don't feel that way right now."

It was stressed by *E* that the project was not interested in such cognitive judgments, but in the same kind of honest, spontaneous emotions people express in therapy.

Then *S* was handed a large envelope, told to put the questionnaire in it when she was done, and mail it to the place indicated. *E* reiterated that she would never see it or be able to identify it as *S's*.

As sort of an afterthought, *E* said "Oh, there's one change we have to make in your booklet. The first person the questionnaire asks about is the therapist who administered the Word Association test. Since he wasn't here tonight, you obviously

can't rate him. Instead, rate the fellow from Miss Turner's experiment who administered the Word Association test to you."

Then *E* went to the other side of the room and sat with her back to *S*, so that *S* could answer the questionnaire privately but still ask any questions she might have. The questionnaire asked about *S*'s feelings concerning GD, the "person she was most attracted to at the present time," *E*, a specified teacher, and *S* herself.

Once *S* completed this questionnaire, the actual purpose of the experiment was explained to her. Debriefing was continued for approximately 45 minutes, or until *E* was sure *S* was happy about having participated, and in no way disturbed by the false personality report or the "broken" date.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Effectiveness of the Experimental Induction

On the last page of the questionnaire, the *S* was asked to rate herself on 11 traits. A positive characteristic was indicated on one end of each trait-scale, and its polar opposite on the other end. Thus, a rating was secured of how original, attractive, perfect, optimistic, interesting, mature, independent, competent, cheerful, and strong the *S* felt herself to be, and how much "self-esteem" she felt she possessed.

If the self-esteem manipulation was effective, *S*s in the low-esteem condition should see themselves as possessing less maturity and less originality (the traits disparaged in the false personality report) and lower self-esteem than do *S*s in the high esteem condition. This was in fact the case. High-esteem condition *S*s rate themselves significantly higher on a combined measure of these three trait-ratings than do *S*s in the low-esteem condition ($t = 2.98$ with 30 *df*, $p > .01$, 2-tailed). On all 11 traits, in fact, low-esteem *S*s place themselves closer to the negative end of the scale than do high-esteem *S*s.

We can now turn to the finding in which we are most interested. How

TABLE 1
MEAN LIKING FOR GD BY WOMEN IN VARIOUS SELF-ESTEEM CONDITIONS

Person rated	(<i>N</i>)	Low-esteem condition	(<i>N</i>)	High-esteem condition
Accepting, affectionate confederate (GD)	(16)	14.8 ^a	(16)	13.1
Others				
Female <i>E</i>		15.3		15.8
Teacher		12.1		12.0
Person to whom attracted ^b		8.3		9.3

^a The higher the number, the more the person indicated is liked by the subject.

^b This rating scale was scaled differently than the ones on which GD, *E*, and a teacher were rated, to allow for the inclusion of a "love" designation.

much do women in the high-esteem and low-esteem conditions like GD?

As was predicted, women whose self-esteem has been temporarily lowered like GD significantly better than do women whose self-esteem has been temporarily raised. Low-esteem condition women rated GD at 14.8 (in between "I like him extremely much" and "I like him fairly much"). High-esteem condition women rated him at only 13.1 [in between "I like him fairly much" and "I like and dislike him equally"—but much closer to the former designation than to the latter (See Table 1. $t = 2.9$, 30 *df*, $p > .01$, 2-tailed)].

Initially, this study was run using only 20 Stanford women as Ss. As in the total group, the Stanford women in the low-esteem condition rated GD significantly higher than did women in the high-esteem condition ($t = 2.5$, 18 *df*, $p < .02$, 2-tailed). Twelve⁵ Foothill students were then added to the sample, in order to replicate the Stanford finding with another group of women, and to increase the number of Ss. Though in both esteem conditions GD was liked slightly less by Foothill women than he had been by Stanford women, the difference between the average rating of GD in the low- and the high-esteem condition is of the same magnitude and in the same direction at both schools. With great consistency, we find greater liking for GD by students whose self-esteem has just been lowered.

Possible Alternative Explanations for the Data

It will be recalled that we hypothesized a negative relationship between self-esteem and liking for an affectionate other for two reasons: (a) A person probably demands less perfection in an "acceptable" friend when he himself feels imperfect. (b) When a person's self-esteem is low he has an increased need for acceptance and affection. Thus the affectionate other will satisfy a greater need and will therefore be better liked when Ss self-esteem is low.

At this time we were interested only in finding out whether the relation-

⁵ Actually, 17 Foothill women were run as Ss. During the first week of Foothill interviewing an attempt was made to follow *exactly* the procedure used with Stanford women—i.e., GD indicated he was from Stanford. To our surprise (since all SU women had accepted dates), 3 of our first 5 subjects refused a date, often questioning GD about *why* he wanted to take them out, and in one case stating to *E* that something must be wrong with GD because he wanted to take her out. For these reasons, the three initial Ss were discarded, and GD began stating he was from Foothill, talking about his experiences there instead of at Stanford. This change apparently made the situation a more acceptable one for Ss, since nearly all FC women then began accepting dates. After this procedural change, only two women rejected a date with GD—a high-esteem S who liked GD 11.8 and a low-esteem S who rated him 13.8. Though GD said he would call these Ss, they were also excluded from our sample.

ship we hypothesized in fact existed; we did not attempt to secure the additional evidence as to precisely which of these factors produced the effect we hypothesized. However, there were still other possible explanations for our findings that we did want to rule out. Evidence relevant to these alternatives is available.

1. It could be argued that since the low-esteem *S* had failed on so many personality measures, she was probably simply trying to prove to herself, and to *E* (if the *S* somehow expected *E* to see the questionnaire) that at least she was a friendly person who likes others.

However, if this explanation were true, the increased liking that *S* displayed for GD would have been shown toward any person *S* was asked to rate.

It will be recalled that in addition to GD, *S* was asked how much she liked three other people: *E*, a teacher, and "the person to whom she was most attracted at the present time."⁴ When we examine the ratings of these people (Table 1) it seems clear that the low self-esteem women are not simply indicating an increased liking for *everyone*. When the ratings of any persons besides GD are considered, the liking indicated by low self-esteem condition women does not differ significantly from that indicated by high self-esteem condition women.

In addition, even when we test the difference between differences (by an analysis of covariance) we find that the between condition difference in liking for GD is significantly greater than the between condition difference in liking for *E*, the teacher, or the "person to whom most attracted." (For example, the difference between liking for GD in the low-esteem and high-esteem condition controlled for liking for the *teacher* is significant $F = 8.19, 1/29 df, p < .01$.)

2. It could also be argued that the increased liking low-esteem subjects express for GD is a result of dissonance-reduction processes. The dissonance argument goes like this: Subjects come to the experiment with normally high self-esteem. In the low-esteem condition, they succeed with GD, but fail on the personality tests. One way of reducing the dissonance arising from this unexpected failure is to convince themselves that the area of their failure (maturity and originality) really isn't very important . . . that the most important skills for a woman are the social ones. Thus, the argument continues, low-esteem condition women exaggerate their abilities as exciting, attractive date-getters, increase the

⁴ When asked in debriefing about the identity of the person to whom they were most attracted, a very few *Ss* indicated they had rated cultural heroes (e.g., Albert Schweitzer); several indicated they had rated attractive men they had observed in class or at school or athletic events, but had not met; and many indicated they were rating a person they had dated.

importance of dating, and consequently increase their liking for GD, who is living evidence of their success with men.

If such a hypothesis is correct and is producing our experimental results, we would expect low-esteem women to in fact see themselves as much more interesting, and attractive, or more successful with men (especially GD) than do the high-esteem women.

The data suggest that distortions of this type do *not* take place. On the self-ratings, low-esteem women rate themselves as less "interesting" ($p < .10$) and less "attractive" (though not significantly so) than do high-esteem women.

In addition, the questionnaire given to Foothill women contained two questions directly relevant to this alternative explanation: (1) "How much do you think (GD) liked you?" and (2) "How attractive are you to the men that you're interested in?" The six Foothill women in the low self-esteem condition rated themselves as slightly *less* attractive in answer to both questions than did the six high-esteem women (though these differences are not significant).

It is clear then that this dissonance-reduction explanation is not supported by our data. The tendency is for women in the low-esteem condition to see themselves as less personally desirable than they normally would, rather than to exaggerate their attractiveness.

Additional Comments on the Correlation between "Stable" Self-Esteem and Liking for Others

When working with fairly global personality variables such as self-esteem, one usually has to choose between two unacceptable alternatives: one can try to measure the variable as it exists in the world, accepting the fact that the crucial variable will be confounded with several others; or one can try to manipulate the variable in the laboratory, making the somewhat peculiar assumption that the state produced in one hour in the laboratory is isomorphic with its more slowly developing counterpart.

For our experiment, which examined only the effect of *temporary* self-esteem on liking for others, it was unnecessary for us to make the second assumption (that manipulated self-esteem is essentially identical to more slowly developing self-esteem). But it could be argued that we might well have made that assumption; that our experiment could well be considered as an experimental replication and extension of the Dittes proposals. Our data do, in every way, fit neatly into the Dittes framework.

But there are other data and another formulation (Berger's *et al.*) indicating that self-esteem is positively related to liking for others. Is the situation totally chaotic? If our results had come out in the opposite

direction, could it have as easily been said that the results fit "neatly" into the Berger *et al.* framework? If there is not predictive chaos, how do we decide when the Dittes predictions are to be applied, and when the predictions of Berger *et al.* should be applied? The crucial variable in deciding which formulation should be applied in a given situation seems to be whether or not the subject knows how the other he is rating feels about him.

The Dittes formulation would lead us to expect a negative relationship between a person's self-esteem and his liking for anyone who clearly accepts him. When the other is seen as rejecting, a positive relationship between self-esteem and liking is expected. Naturally, if the other was seen as midway between acceptance and rejection, call such a state "neutrality" or what you will, a zero correlation between self-esteem and liking would be expected by Dittes.

But what about when one does not know whether or not the other accepts or rejects him? It is just such situations with which Berger *et al.* inevitably deal, and it is just this situation that Dittes does not discuss. (It is very unlikely that Dittes would want to say that when people are unaware of how others feel toward them, that they assume that the other person is neutral.)

We suggested earlier that the most reasonable guess would seem to be that under ambiguous conditions, the high self-esteem person would expect more acceptance and less rejection than would the low self-esteem person. And the more one expects another to like and accept him, the more one would be expected to "reciprocate" liking for that other. Thus, under conditions when *S* has no information as to whether or not the other accepts him, and must guess, the Dittes formulation is inapplicable, and the Berger *et al.* formulation that there is a positive relationship between self-esteem and liking seems most reasonable.

A possible reconciling proposal, then, would be when the other's acceptance or rejection is *unspecified*, or when the other rejects *S*, self-esteem will be positively correlated with liking. When the other makes clear his acceptance of *S*, self-esteem will be negatively related to liking.

We have no data with which to definitively test the above proposal. We do have some data, however, which might give us some very weak evidence as to whether or not the above proposal seems to be reasonable.

We can compute a measure of "stable" self-esteem for all our subjects. And, we do have ratings by *S* of several people whose acceptance of *S* is either clearly known, or unknown to *S*. GD, for example, was clearly accepting of *S*. According to the above proposal we should expect a *negative* relationship between stable self-esteem and liking for him.

The degree to which the *E* and a *specified teacher* accept *S* should be

quite ambiguous. We know *E* made no statements to *S* of her personal feelings toward her; it is also unlikely that the teacher did so. Thus, according to the above proposal, we should expect a *positive* relationship between *S*'s self-esteem and liking for *E* and the teacher.⁷

Computing Stable Self-Esteem

All our *S*s had taken the CPI either some weeks before, or some weeks after, their participation in our experimental situation. From the CPI responses, a measure of stable self-esteem was computed in the following way.

First the girls CPIs were scored by Jerold Jecker, a student, who was not informed of our research interests.

Then, the *S*'s raw scores on the six CPI measures of Poise, Ascendency, and Self-Assurance (1. Dominance, 2. Capacity for Status, 3. Sociability, 4. Social presence, 5. Self-Acceptance, 6. Sense of Well-Being) were standardized and averaged together. The higher this average, the higher the *S*s stable self-esteem was said to be.

TABLE 2
CORRELATIONS BETWEEN STABLE SELF-ESTEEM AND LIKING FOR OTHERS

Person rated	Average correlation* between self-esteem and liking	<i>p</i> level ^b
Accepting confederate (<i>N</i> = 29)	-.17	<i>p</i> < .38
Teacher	.30	<i>p</i> < .11
<i>E</i>	.49	<i>p</i> < .01

* Product moment correlations between self-esteem and liking for others were computed separately for each experimental condition, and the two resulting correlations averaged together. This technique was used to prevent between-condition (or experimentally caused) differences in the ratings from influencing the correlation.

^b All *p* levels are 2-tailed.

RESULTS

From Table 2 we can see that there is some support, though certainly very weak support, for our reconciling proposal. The correlation between

⁷ We have no information as to whether the person to whom the *S* was "most attracted" was accepting, rejecting, or neutral in his behavior toward the *S*. We can probably assume that those choosing a former date as the person to whom they are most attracted perceive themselves as being accepted by this person. However, those who choose a cultural hero or a school hero they had not met, might expect either neutrality or rejection from these attractive persons. For this reason, no prediction could be made as to how the *S*'s liking for the person to whom she was most attracted would correlate with the *S*'s self-esteem. For the reader's interest, the correlation between the *S*'s self-esteem and liking for the "attracted to" person is .03.

stable self-esteem and liking for GD is negative, as predicted, but it is not significant. The relationship between stable self-esteem and liking for the *E* and the teacher, as predicted, is positive and significant ($p < .02$, 2-tailed). The correlations between *Ss* self-esteem and liking for GD ($-.17$) is different from the correlation between self-esteem and liking for the teacher ($+.30$), $p < .07$ level, 2-tailed, and is significantly different from the correlation between *S's* self-esteem and liking for the *E* ($+.49$), $p < .002$ level, 2-tailed].

It should be reiterated that these results are only suggestive. We do not know for sure that students at various esteem levels did not receive information from their teacher as to how much he accepted them. We have no measure to demonstrate that all *Ss* saw GD as accepting, and that the *E* and the teacher were perceived as less accepting by low self-esteem students than by high self-esteem students, as we have suggested they would be. Furthermore, it is obvious that *E*, GD, and the teacher differ in many ways other than on amount of "acceptingness"—*E*, for example, is a woman. To make any reasonable test of the reconciling proposition, obviously a second experiment would have to be conducted.

SUMMARY

It was proposed that a person's momentary self-esteem affects his receptivity to the affection offered by another. People whose self-esteem was temporarily low were expected to like an affectionate, accepting other more than those whose self-esteem was momentarily high.

An experimental study was conducted to test this proposal. The self-esteem of one half of the *Ss* was raised by giving them false personality information; the self-esteem of the other half of the *Ss* was lowered by the same technique. Women then rated a male confederate, who had earlier asked them for a date. The *Ss* in the low self-esteem condition expressed significantly more liking for the confederate than did *Ss* in the high self-esteem condition.

The relationship between "stable" (or measured) self-esteem and liking for others was also discussed.

REFERENCES

- ADLER, A. *The neurotic constitution*. New York: Dodd, Mead, 1926.
- BERGER, E. M. The relation between expressed acceptance of self and expressed acceptance of others. *J. abnorm. soc. Psychol.*, 1952, **47**, 778-782.
- BRAMEL, D. A dissonance theory approach to defensive projection. *J. abnorm. soc. Psychol.*, 1962, **64**, 121-129.
- DITTES, J. E. Attractiveness of group as function of self-esteem and acceptance by group. *J. abnorm. soc. Psychol.*, 1959, **59**, 77-82.
- FROMM, E. Selfishness and self-love. *Psychiatry*, 1939, **2**, 507-523.

- GOFFMAN, E. On cooling the mark out: Some aspects of adaptation to failure. *Psychiatry*, 1952, 15, 451-463.
- HORNEY, KAREN. *New ways in psychoanalysis*. New York: Norton, 1939.
- MASLOW, A. H. Self-esteem (dominance feeling) and sexuality in women. *J. soc. Psychol.*, 1942, 16, 259-294.
- OMWAKE, KATHERINE. The relationship between acceptance of self and acceptance of others shown by three personality inventories. *J. consult. Psychol.*, 1954, 16, 443-446.
- REIK, F. *A psychologist looks at love*. New York: Rinehart, 1944.
- ROGERS, C. R. *Client-centered therapy*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1951.
- STOCK, DOROTHY. An investigation into the intercorrelations between the self-concept and feelings directed toward other persons and groups. *J. consult. Psychol.*, 1949, 13, 176-180.

Received July 29, 1964