

Relationship Matters Podcast Number 04

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Presenter: From the studios of Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh, Scotland this is 'Relationship Matters'. Hello, and welcome to 'Relationship Matters,' the podcast of the Journal of Social and Personal Relationships. I'm your host, Dr Bjarne Holmes.

Welcome to our fourth podcast representing the August and November 2010 issues of the journal. Coming up on the podcast today, we'll speak with Dr Raymond Bergner about some new ideas on how we define the concept of love and what it might mean for us all. Then, later, we'll speak with Dr Eric Anderson about cheating and the concept of monogamy in our current society.

But first, the International Association for Relationship Research had its biennial conference this past July and I had an opportunity to speak with many of you about the podcast. I want to thank you for your kind words, positive feedback and support. If you haven't done so already, be sure to connect with 700 or so other listeners on Facebook. Just search for 'Journal of Social and Personal Relationships.' You can send us email at jsrprpodcast@gmail.com or follow us on Twitter, jsrprpodcast. You can also subscribe to the podcast on iTunes. Search for SAGE podcasts.

What is love? What does it mean to truly love someone? Are there different types of love and what do they have in common? How do we all come to define love the way we do? These are all the types of questions that my next honoured guest has explored over the years. Dr Raymond Bergner is Professor of Psychology at Illinois State University and a psychotherapist with other thirty years' experience in private practice. He's the author of three books and numerous articles, a founding member and past President of the Society for Descriptive Psychology and Founding Director of the Centre for Status Dynamic Therapy within the Descriptive Psychology Institute.

The article we'll talk about today is titled 'What is Love – an empirically-based essentialist account.' It appeared in the August issue of the Journal of Social and Personal Relationships and is free to download for a limited time from the website of the journal, courtesy of SAGE Publications.

Now, this article is first authored by a previous Masters student of Dr Bergner, Kevin Hegi. Mr Hegi suggested the Dr Bergner/Davis interview.

Dr Bergner, welcome to Relationship Matters.

Respondent: Thank you for having me.

Interviewer: First of all, could you explain to us in simplest terms what exactly is descriptive psychology?

Respondent: Well, it's a conceptual framework. It's like you think of our field and you go everywhere and you pick up a psychopathology book and in the first chapter it says, "Well, we really don't know what psychopathology is but here's a book on it," or, "We really don't know what personality is but hey, here's a book on it." And then we do research on things we haven't clarified concepts initially. That's one of the basics for us, just to get conceptual clarity, a pre-condition to doing anything else.

Interviewer: So descriptive psychology is basically a way of helping us get our concepts to be more clear, is that right?

Respondent: Correct, yeah.

Interviewer: So tell us a little bit about what you did when it comes to this paper and about how we define love.

Respondent: Well, it really deals with that old, old question, "What is love?" The idea has long been around that love is something very mysterious, murky, ineffable, not a lot you can say about it. And then we researchers came along and I think we improved matters by saying, "Well, you can't define it but there's this prototype, this model we can use and resembles that model and allows us to say, this is a case of love."

So I was a prototyper myself. I admired in particular Beverley Fair's work on this but it always nagged me, there's some things are essential to love. It's not a prototype, there's some things are essential and the number one thing was what I call investment in the well-being of the other for his or her own sake. This notion that there's such a thing or the concept is that people as a matter of fact become invested in others for their sake. They care about their child's well-being, not because there's something in it for them but it matters to them that their child is in the crib crying or a romantic relationship, it matters to them that their partner is in distress, even though there's nothing in it for them to help the partner.

So I wanted really to check this notion out of whether love is more an essentialist concept and whether investment in the well-being of the other is what I consider to be the primary essential factor in love. And I guess finally my thought was there's really two concepts here. One is love itself and the other is the notion of a good romantic relationship. They're not the same. The second one is a broader concept than the first and so along with a very gifted graduate student, Kevin Hegi, we decided to try and show this.

So some things are prototype, there's nothing contradictory. It goes back to this work of Rosch and Wittgenstein where they said most concepts are not definable. So if you take something like the concept of a game, there isn't any feature that's common to all games, that's essential to all games. They all involve competition. Well, no, they're solitary. Are they all enjoyable? No, there's Russian roulette, to take a very extreme example.

So if something is a prototype concept, there's no such thing as a contradiction. However, if something does generate contradictions, you can say it's got to be an essentialist concept. For example, if I say, "John is a bachelor but he is married," it's a contradiction and right off the bat, it tells you something essential to being a bachelor is being single.

So what we did was basically to create a couple of tasks for our participants where we first gave them definitions of various relationship characteristics. These would be traditional ones like respect, trust, enjoyment, sexual desire and investment in the well-being of the other. So we give them a definition, then we give them sentences, for example, for romantic love we would say, "Jack and Jill are engaged," and we'd give them a sentence like, "Jack loves Jill but he doesn't trust her." And then we'd say, "How contradictory is this?" And we'd ask them to rate it all the way from totally contradictory to not contradictory at all, a five point scale. And we have them do the same thing for parental relationship, for a friendship relationship and for an altruistic relationship.

Basically the idea was if they said something was totally contradictory, then that would be saying in essence, "It's totally contradictory to say that this Jack loves Jill, for example, and that this characteristic is missing. If this is missing, it can't be love, it's contradictory to say it's love and that's missing." So the primary thing we're interested in which we found was the dis-variable investment in the well-being for his or her own sake was rated with extreme regularity as essential to the concept of love of any of the four types we studied.

In a second test, we had a way of discriminating, "Is it essential or is it a really important characteristic of a relationship?" and what we found is that they said there's a certain subset of things which were central to love relationships but there's a larger set which are very important but they're not essential. So if you say, "Jack loves Jill but he doesn't trust her," while it's really important the trust is missing, people would say, "No, that's not a contradiction. It's an important relationship characteristic, it's important in a romantic relationship but it's not a contradiction." So in that way, we generated two models for love itself and one for a good romantic relationship.

Interviewer: What do we know now that we didn't know before?

Respondent: I think the main thing is that love may be, pending further research, as a matter of fact definable. It's not a prototype concept. Certain things are indeed essential to each kind of love. Foremost among these is this characteristic that person A cares about the well-being of person B for person B's own sake. We found out that our data says people do have two distinct concepts when it applies to love. One is for love itself and the other is for a good relationship of whatever type, romantic, parental or whatever.

And I guess on more a research basis, we found that you can't pick this up with the usual method of asking people, "When you think of love, what characteristics do you think of?" You can't pick it up that way, you have to ask a different kind of question to get it.

Interviewer: So you're basically suggesting that any notion that you do things out of love or that love comes out of selfishness is contradictory?

Respondent: That is correct. The cynical notion that people will say, "Love is a disguised form of self interest," if that is the case that people in fact have this kind of relationship to each other, that would not be the case. Even to say that would be a contradiction in terms. In other words, to say that love is disguised self interest is in effect to say there's no such thing as love.

Interviewer: What can the everyday person take away from your findings? How can people use this way of thinking or this knowledge about how love can be defined in their everyday life?

Respondent: One is just this general thing that it might not be quite so mysterious and indefinable as we've long supposed. Secondly, I think if you look at these various relationship characteristics like investment in the well-being of the other and others we looked at like commitment, respect, trust and so forth, you have a set of dimensions for evaluating relationships. Maybe the person's a therapist or maybe they're just a friend and their friend is saying, "Hey, I have this new relationship and gee, check me out on this. What do you think?" It's a whole way of thinking about, a whole way of identifying where deficiencies might be.

And I guess the third thing is I think there's a lot of problematic views of love. One of them is that cynical one of, "There really is no such thing. Everybody's just looking out for number one at the end of the day," but there's others like the notion that love is just a feeling. If you take this research seriously, what you come out with - and this would apply to research of people like Fair too - is, "No, it's not just a feeling, it's a complex relationship."

This really bugs me, these people who are taking young college students who just fell in love, they're having them look at a picture of the beloved and they're taking whatever MRIs or certain kinds of vital

chemical samples, and they're saying, "We're looking at love on an MRI." It drives me crazy! It's a complex relationship and you can't pick up ... it's not just a feeling.

Interviewer: And central to that, to the complexity of that relationship is the idea that to be love or to understand something as true love means that you care in some ways about another person very deeply, more than you care about yourself?

Respondent: The last part of that, 'more than you care about yourself,' I wouldn't say that's essential. I would say sometimes that's the case and sometimes it's not. Sometimes people sacrifice their lives for others but the main thing is you have a genuine care and concern about their well-being. That, in our research, emerged as the primary essential thing and the only thing that transcended the four kinds of love that we looked at.

I think it's a problem if people are thinking about it as just a feeling. Feelings are effeminate, feelings are in the common case, in the beginning of a relationship, feelings run high and then they tend to wane somewhat over time. We all know this but it's just problematic to think about, "If I love somebody, I'm going to have this feeling all the time." You think about cases, for example, John Bailey who was the husband of Iris Murdoch, the novelist. She gets Alzheimer's. He cares for her for years. Is he having feelings of romantic bliss? No! Is he enjoying himself? No. Does he love her? He sure as heck does. I think it's just a more mature view of love that doesn't trivialise it to it's something as simple as a feeling. And as I said, I think there's real problems with people thinking that way about love in their lives.

Interviewer: Well, Dr Bergner, this has been very illuminating. I want to thank you for your time today.

Respondent: You're welcome, thank you for highlighting our article and for our talk today.

Interviewer: Good, well I wish you a good day.

Respondent: Thank you, same to you.

Interviewer: Bye-bye.

Respondent: Bye-bye.

Presenter: You're listening to 'Relationship Matters.' I'm your host, Dr Bjarne Holmes. Most people in Western societies would claim to be monogamous, yet cheating seems prevalent behaviour. As early as 1953, Alfred Kinsey raised alarm by publishing that half of all married men and a quarter of all married women had committed adultery. If

anything, those numbers have only risen over the years with some research suggesting that as much as seventy percent of us have cheated at some time and that two to four percent have cheated within the past year.

My next guest, Dr Eric Anderson, is critical of the concept of monogamy and raises concerns about the discrepancy between what we claim to be and how we actually behave. Dr Anderson is a Lecturer in Sociology at the University of Bath in England. He's well known for his research on masculinities, sexualities and homophobia. He writes on his web page, and I quote, 'I believe it is just important to publish research as it is to share my results with the public, helping to challenge homophobia, heterosexism and improve standards of equality for everyone.'

The title of his paper is somewhat cryptically entitled, 'At least with cheating, there is an attempt at monogamy – Cheating and monogamism among undergraduate heterosexual men.' It appears in the November 2010 issue of the Journal of Social and Personal Relationships and it's also free to download for a limited period of time from the website of the journal, courtesy of SAGE Publications.

Dr Anderson, thanks for joining us on 'Relationship Matters.'

Respondent: It's a pleasure to be here.

Interviewer: Could we start off by having you define monogamy?

Respondent: Well, that's rather difficult to do and it really depends on the individual that you ask because I think first of all, there's two general definitions of monogamy. One is the notion of only one married partner versus polyamory or polygamy but the way I'm discussing monogamy and the way it's used to do is because it's expected you will only have one legal spouse, monogamy therefore reserves restriction to sex with just one partner. That is completely dependent upon the person that you ask because some youths say that it's ok to masturbate to Internet pornography and their partners are fine with that. And some youths say, "No, my partner's not fine with that. They consider that a breach of their monogamous relationship."

Interviewer: So that gets into how people also may differ and how they define the concept of cheating.

Respondent: Well, absolutely but before you even more into that terrain, the monogamy thing gets even more confusing because there's emotional monogamy and then there's sexual monogamy and both can cause relationship strife. There are actually more forms of types of monogamy than just that and yeah, there's multiple forms of cheating types as well. There's not only different acts that one can do when they cheat but there's also, "Is it cheating to think of somebody else

while you're having sex with your partner? Is it cheating to masturbate to Internet pornography? Is it cheating to have an Internet conversation with somebody who doesn't know you're masturbating? Is it cheating to have Internet sex with somebody? Phone sex, webcam sex? So there's a line that most people draw that says, "No, that's cheating," but that line isn't the same for everybody.

Interviewer: One of the things I tend to recommend to couples in my own work is to early on talk about what they define as cheating. Can I ask you, tell us generally what you did, why and how you did it?

Respondent: Well, I've always been interested in the concept of monogamy. It never made sense to me because when I came out of the closet at twenty five years of age and I noticed that all of my gay friends who so highly valued monogamy, none of them were actually doing it. The conversation was always about who cheated on who and cheating is thought to be this absolutely horrific act that you can do to your partner. It's tantamount to relationship murder, and I was quite interested in that.

And then at the University of Bath here, I was listening to my students talk the first day of the semester and they had to introduce something about themselves and one student said, "I hate people who cheat." And I thought, that's an interesting way to introduce yourself to the class! And the reality is, he came to that conclusion because everybody was cheating the first week of university, and so it really made me interested in how these students all say they value monogamy so much but how little they actually are doing monogamy and that led me into doing the formal research.

Interviewer: And what did you actually do?

Respondent: I started off for the article in the Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, I interviewed forty men and I was looking for not the percentage of men that cheat. That's really the terrain of large scale surveys. I was more interested in why men cheat, how they're led to cheat, how they view their cheating. And so what I looked to do was to find men who I thought would be most likely to cheat.

So I looked for men who were of course in a relationship and I made sure that they'd been in a relationship for at least six months because the chances of you cheating in the first couple of months probably aren't too good because the sex is still pretty exciting. But then I looked for male athletes because these are men who are sexualised, these are men who have the bodies and they draw the heterosexual gaze of women. And we know that the research says they have high rates of infidelity anyhow, so I thought I'm going to look to these guys and see how often they cheat, why they cheat, how they cheat, how they come to it and most important, how they rectify their cheating with their belief in monogamy.

Interviewer: What did you find out?

Respondent: Well, I found out that three fourths of them admitted to cheating. I didn't ask them because I wasn't really that concerned with exactly what did you do in bed, but I did define for my purposes that cheating was a physical act with somebody else, not an act on the Internet or whatnot. Three quarters of them had cheated on their partners in some physical capacity and I'm sure that if it comes to webcam sex, there's an even higher ratio.

But I also found out that these men didn't want to cheat. They believed in monogamy. In fact, when they got into the relationship, they often found their girlfriend so sexually attractive, they thought they would never want sex with somebody else and it makes it rather easy to commit to monogamy, not that they're ever given a choice because you don't get to start a relationship with somebody and say, "Hey, are you interested in being in a monogamous or open relationship?" That's not a choice. If you say that, that's the end of the relationship on day one.

And so the men believe they're going to be able to do monogamy, they believe in monogamy but as time goes by, the sex becomes less and less exciting, less and less thrilling with their partners. They do things to spice it up. They get into fights and they have make-up sex and they have the outdoor sex. They do things to extend the life of the sex but ultimately, they find themselves strongly desiring sex with somebody else while at the same time strongly emotionally not wanting sex with somebody else.

So on the one hand, they've got strong biological drives leading them towards sex and they have strong emotional drives saying not to cheat. And this creates dissonance, this creates some turmoil. What I found was these men didn't say, "Right, that's it. I'm going to give in. I'm going to go out and cheat." They put themselves in the positions and situations in which cheating was made more likely, almost always under the influence of alcohol, of course and that serves as their excuse. "Oh, it wasn't my fault, I was drunk," and maybe they're at a club and they see a girl and she catches his eye and they start to talk and it's just a little bit of flirtation, and then they start to dance a little bit and that's innocent enough, isn't it, dancing. And it slowly progresses.

I compare it to a dog that's sniffing the garbage and he knows he's not allowed to dig in the garbage. He just thinks, "I'll have a little sniff," and then he puts his nose in there and it smells so good and then eventually he pulls a little piece out and then he thinks, "Oh, I'm already in trouble. I've pulled a little piece out of the garbage, I might as well pull another piece out." And then before long, the garbage can is dumped over and the trash is strewn everywhere.

And that's exactly what these men did. "I just kissed her. If my girlfriend finds out that I just kissed her, I'm in real trouble. She'll probably break up with me anyhow so if I'm already in trouble, I might as well go a little further," and it progresses and it often progresses into obviously full intercourse.

Interviewer: Now it strikes me that we have concepts for monogamy. We have concepts such as open relationships or polyamory but we don't really have a concept for those people who are monogamous or call themselves monogamous but don't actually practice it.

Respondent: You're right and that is the majority of people and that's interesting, isn't it?

Interviewer: Why do you think that is, though, we don't have concepts for those people?

Respondent: Well, the technical word is hegemony and that is to say that the notion of monogamy is so strong that to say you're anything other than monogamous is highly stigmatised in this culture and as ridiculous as that is, anything other than monogamy is just socially condemned. So people have to latch onto that term 'monogamy' and it stifles our freedom to create other terms and to have other ways of opening up to relationships.

So I find this with gay men too who are in open relationships. They have an agreement, they call it. They're afraid to call it an open relationship because there's such stigma around that word. There's the belief that if you have sex with somebody other than your partner, it means you don't love your partner and that is an absolutely ludicrous belief and at a fundamental level, everybody knows that it's ridiculous to think that if you want sex with somebody else or even if you act on that sex with somebody else, it means you don't love your partner.

And one of the reasons I wanted to publish this research and I've expanded this research into a book that'll be out in a few months with Oxford University Press by interviewing gay men and more straight men, 120 men in total ... one of the reasons that I really want the media to pick up on this is that our notion of monogamy fails almost all of the time and when it fails, it drags otherwise perfectly good relationships down and usually leads to break-up.

So the fact that men cheat and women cheat is used as a reason to break up with a partner who you've got history with and love with and you've built a relationship with. The punishment doesn't fit the crime, so I really want to get the word out there that when your partner cheats ... now if they have an affair, that's a different story, but when your partner just cheats, they've just gone out and sought recreational sex from somebody they don't even know, that doesn't mean they fail to

love you. It means that ironically, they actually do love you. They love you enough to want to stay with you. If they didn't love you, they would break up with you but they do love, especially these men. These are eighteen, nineteen year old kids. They can break up with their girlfriends any time they want. They don't have houses and mortgages and kids together with them. If they didn't love their partners, they would leave their partners but what they tell me over and over again is, "I do love her, I love her a lot but I want sex with somebody else."

Interviewer: Now is this all about sex? What if people are desiring to be emotionally intimate with others?

Respondent: Well, that's a very interesting question and that brings us right back to the notion of there being two types of monogamy, sexual and emotional. One of the things that I do in my class and it serves as a very powerful example is I say, "Ladies," for example, and I'm not picking on women because I think ... one of my graduate students is doing the same research I've done on this group of boys on girls and finding that they cheat at even higher rates, so I'm not pretending that women are all about monogamy and men are not. But I would say to the women, "Women, what do you value more in your relationship, the sexual relationship you have with your partner or the emotional relationship you have with your partner?" And they all say 'emotional.'

And I say, "That's interesting because you police the sexual. If he cheats on you, you'll break up with him but meanwhile, how many of you turn around and tell your girlfriend things, deep secret emotional things about yourself or about your relationship with your partner that you don't tell your partner?" And they all do and that's good, I'm not against that. We all need people to talk to in confidence about our relationships, things we don't talk to our partners about, and they all do and I say, "So therefore, you're emotionally cheating on your partners and because you tell me that emotional is more important than sexual, your cheating is more egregious than just going out and having sex with a random stranger."

And that floors them, they don't want to believe it but it puts it in their face of, if we value our emotional relationships more than our sexual, why do we police the sexual and not the emotional?

Interviewer: We can go back to the work of Kinsey to tell us already back in the Fifties that what people actually do in their romantic and sexual lives isn't necessarily so simple. It's quite complicated, so what is it that's new about what you're saying or is it simply that some of the work that Kinsey did point out for us originally hasn't really seeped into culture? People still have more simplistic definitions and are not quite looking at how complex people are in terms of their sexual lives and relationships.

Respondent: Well, there's a couple of questions there and yes, Kinsey certainly pointed out that what went on behind doors was completely different than what went on in public and that still occurs and I think you're right. In that capacity, we haven't really learned the lessons of Kinsey and maybe we began to learn them in the Sixties and Seventies but the 1980s, particularly with AIDS and the moralist majority backlash, was such a conservative period of time, it sent us back into that hyper conservative, hyper sex negative mode and we're only now starting to slowly emerge from it.

But even still, look at the big headline stories that have no right to be headline stories. Some professional athlete cheated on his girlfriend or his wife. Who cares? It goes on all the time. So I think you're right, those lessons haven't been learned yet.

What my research adds that's new, however, is to suggest that cheating might actually be good in a relationship and the reason is these men, they experience a dissonance. They experience a tension. I call it cognitive dissonance between their bodies strongly desiring sex and their brain saying, "No, I want to be faithful and monogamous." And what happens is, they get angry at their girlfriends because ultimately, it's their girlfriends who are preventing them from having sex with somebody else.

So essentially, the girlfriends are standing in the way of a biological imperative and that angers them and they find themselves taking out their anger on their girlfriends so that they can then give themselves an excuse to cheat. And so men who do cheat feel less frustration in their relationships than men who don't and this was an entirely new finding and I think it adds a seriously new and interesting element to the dynamics of cheating, that those who cheat on their partners may have better and happier relationships than those who remain monogamous. Maybe not as happy as those who are in open relationships but certainly more than remaining monogamous.

Interviewer: Can you elaborate a little bit on what you meant there with open relationships being happier?

Respondent: Sure, of course. I'm in an open relationship myself and that is that my partner and I, we've been together for thirteen or fourteen years. We are each other's all, emotional and intimate and we're building a life together and we are partners in every sense of the word. But we realised that sex with other people makes each of us quite happy and that sex between us of course has died long ago because that's what sex does. The novelty is lost, the thrill of the new body is lost, it's the same old same old.

And so we have sex with other people as a way of enjoying our relationship. Sometimes it's a threesome and we bond over having sex with somebody together. I might be working on a book one day and

he's horny and he calls up and says, "I'm going to go over to so-and-so's house for sex," I say, "Great." And it's not a threat to the relationship, it's not a problem in the relationship in any capacity. In fact, if anything, it draws us closer together. The reality is if my boyfriend wants sex with somebody and he gets that sex, that makes him happy and when my partner's happy, that makes me happy.

And I think if we begin to move to this understanding at a cultural level of taking joy when our parents have success and achieve something that makes them happy, then we're going to do a lot better as a couple than preventing our partners from having something that they desperately want.

Interviewer: Now the way you just talked about your own partner and sex, can we think of it in similar terms when it comes to emotional 'infidelity'?

Respondent: I hope that people take the lesson and realise that there is no such thing as emotional fidelity. If that was the case, you wouldn't put up a Facebook status. You and your partner would get a tent and move to the wilderness together because you're so content with each other, that's all you ever need. But the reality is, we are social creatures. You ever wonder what your dog thinks of you? My partner and I, we sit around and we yap, yap, yap and from his perspective, he must just think, "These creatures never shut up."

And we are such social creatures that we are not content to have just one other person in our life, that would be torture. So I hope that we realise that opening up emotionally is also a healthy aspect to a relationship.

Interviewer: So can you love more than one person?

Respondent: Yes, of course you can and anybody who says you can't shouldn't have more than one child.

Interviewer: Right!

Respondent: That was good, wasn't it? I'm proud of that one there! Yes, of course you can love more than one person and that's not to say that love is infinite, I'm not saying that. But it also doesn't mean that if you give some of your love to another person that it detracts from the love that you have. In many ways, it may enhance the love you have with your primary partner.

Interviewer: Can I ask you a little bit about the work that you're doing with your graduate student or postgraduate student? You said that he or she, your student, was looking at similar work with females. Could you tell me just a little bit about that finally?

Respondent: Actually, he's an undergraduate student who's doing a year placement with me because he wants to be a researcher and because he's their age, he's interviewing women from various social networks about monogamy. And he's finding that actually, there is an openness with these eighteen and nineteen year old women that he's interviewing towards open relationships. This is something I find in my classes as well. I ask every semester before I talk to them about monogamy at all, I say, "How many of you would prefer to be in an open relationship compared to a closed relationship?" I make sure everybody understands what those terms are. Out of 85 students last semester, 14 said that they prefer to be in an open relationship. Nine of them were women.

A few years ago, I started to notice the balance shifting with women wanting open relationships more than men. And he's finding that women are cheating for different reasons, not just simply because of sex. He's finding that women are cheating for more emotional reasons, not necessarily that they're unhappy with their boyfriends but that some other guy turned them on because he's a big name athlete or because she was drawn to something about his character. He's finding that they're cheating is also sometimes purely out of sexual desire but that there's something a little bit more there. In my research it was just, "No, I'm horny. I don't care who she is, I don't want to know anything about her, I'm just horny." And they're turned on by other variables but ultimately, he's finding that they're cheating and it's too early to count the end but at least the same rate that boys are cheating.

Interviewer: And these are very select samples. Do you think that similar types of results would be found with older adults in more 'mature' relationships?

Respondent: Well, probably not but we do know that rates of cheating are still quite high amongst adults. There was some research done recently on millionaire Americans and they found that ... and I'm not going to give the exact percentage but millionaire female Americans cheated at higher rates than their millionaire male counterparts and they were something like 81 to 73 percent, something in those ranges. It was over three fourths.

So cheating doesn't necessarily end in university but what I will say is university students have much, much more opportunity to cheat. They go to social venues, they can bring people back to their dorms. They don't live with their girlfriends, they're not monitored like they are when you're forty years old and you're married and you've got two kids. It's just a lot harder to cheat when you're forty years old.

Interviewer: If you have one takeaway message for the audience to think about, perhaps in a way to have better relationships and strengthen their own relationships, what is it?

Respondent: I would say allow your partners to be honest with the fact that they need sex with other people. Whether you act on that sex or not, ok, you can have a negotiation about that but at least allow your partners to admit that they want sex with other people. Allow them to masturbate to the thoughts of other people, to use pornography. Allow yourself to understand that your partner doesn't base his love based off of sexual fidelity, that just because he wants sex with somebody else doesn't mean he's failed to love you. And if he cheats, it doesn't mean he's failed to love you. You may be making a big mistake by breaking up.

Interviewer: And do you have the same advice for the guys when it comes to the girls?

Respondent: Oh, it's identical for both, absolutely.

Interviewer: Ok. Well, Dr Anderson, it's been great speaking with you. Thanks for a very interesting paper and thanks for joining us on 'Relationship Matters.'

Respondent: Absolutely, and my pleasure.

Interviewer: Ok, take care.

Presenter: You're listening to 'Relationship Matters.' Before we end today, an announcement. The health, emotions and relationship initiative for the Frances McClelland Institute for Children, Youth & Families will be hosting the next International Association for Relationship Research mini conference at the University of Arizona on October 20-22 2011. This is a great place to present your research or to attend as an observer. If you want to take part, more information can be found on the newly updated web page of International Association for Relationship Research, iaar.org. Generally, this web page also serves as the first go for the latest information you might want about what's going on in relationship research. Check it out. That's iaar.org.

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[End of recorded material]