



What makes you attractive/attracted  
to others?

- Friends?
- Mates?

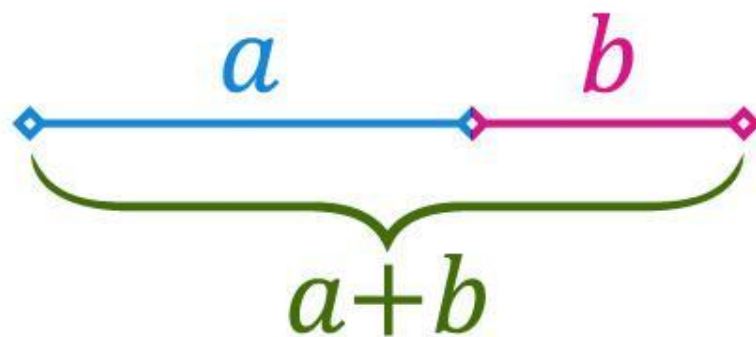
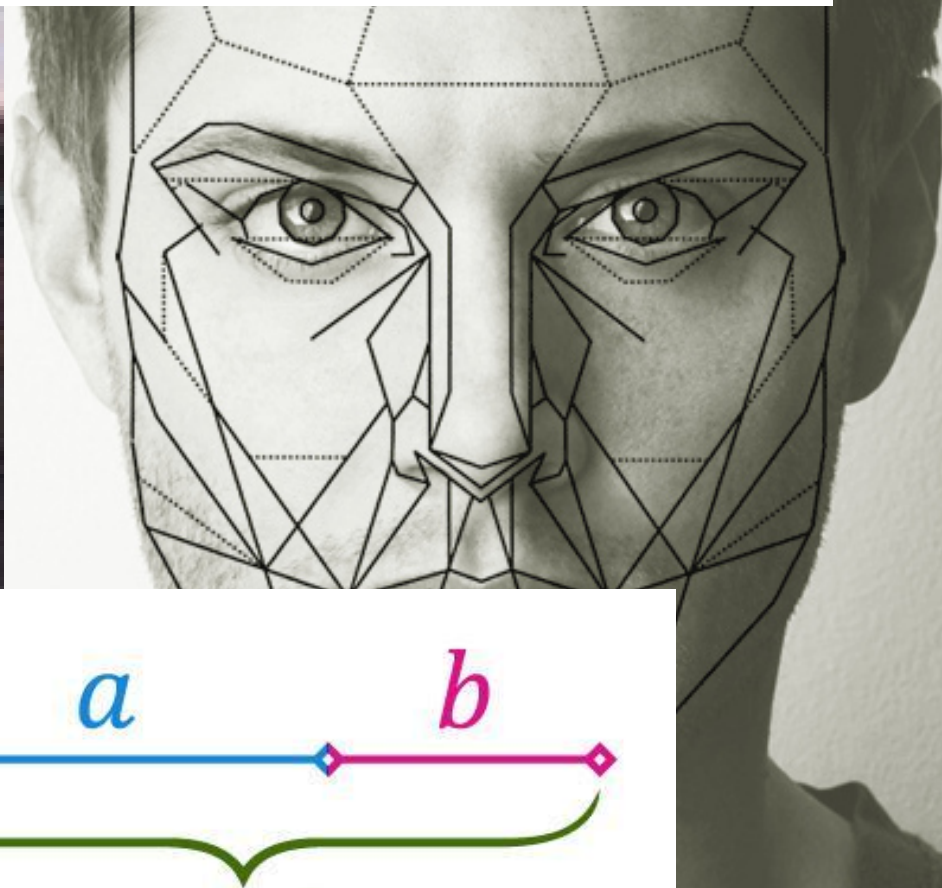
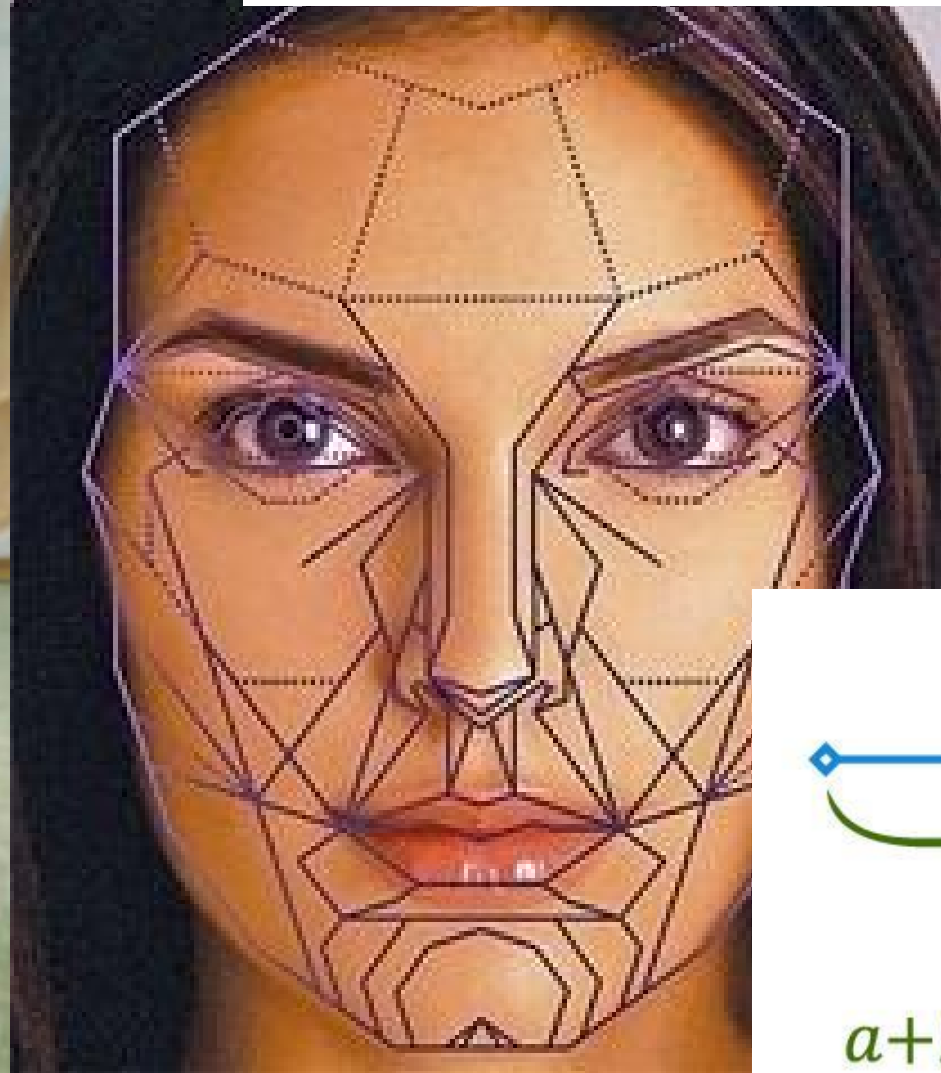
Sociology of the body  
Social Psychology

# What makes you attracted to others?

- For friends?
- For mates?



# Beauty = symmetry



$a+b$  is to  $a$  as  $a$  is to  $b$

# Attractiveness is universal

In both sexes, *all cultures symmetry, clear skin and vibrant hair is admired as a youth, vigor and good nutrition.*

<sup>19</sup>Diener, E., Wolsic, B., & Fujita, F. (1995). Physical attractiveness and subjective well-being. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology, 69*, 120-129.

<sup>20</sup>Dion, K.K., Berscheid, E., & Walster, E. (1972). What is beautiful is good. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 24*, 285-290.

<sup>21</sup>Dutton, D.G., & Aron, A.P. (1974). Some evidence for heightened sexual attraction under conditions of high anxiety. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 30*, 510-517.

<sup>22</sup>Eagly, A.H., Ashmore, R.D., Makhijani, M.G., & Longo, L.C. (1991). What is beautiful is good, but...: A meta-analytic review of research on the physical attractiveness stereotype. *Psychological Bulletin, 110*, 109-128.

<sup>23</sup>Efran, M.G. (1974). The effect of physical appearance on the judgment of guilt, interpersonal attraction, and severity of recommended punishment in simulated jury task. *Journal of Research in Personality, 8*, 45-54.

<sup>24</sup>Ellis, B.J. (1992). The evolution of sexual attraction: Evaluative mechanisms in women. In J. Barkow, L. Cosmides, & J. Tooby (Eds.), *The adapted mind*. New York: Oxford University Press.

# Why?

- Symmetry is an indication of health “good genes” explanation (Jones et al. 2001; Rhodes, Zebrowitz, et al., 2001).)
- People like symmetry in all things, from art to natural objects to faces.
- Serious genetic disorders lead to major asymmetry so people subconsciously avoid minor asymmetries because they've evolved to avoid major ones. (Pound, 2014)



## **Filippou, and Perret's (2011)**

- **Attractive students perceived as more intelligent rated highly on perceived friendliness and sense of humor (funnier)**

- **Foster and Ysseldyke (1976) also found the halo effect present in teachers' evaluations of children universal, beginning Kindergarten**

# Attractiveness & Success

## Dion and Berscheid study

- Each subject was given three different photos to examine (Attractive, average, unattractive)
- Participants were asked to predict the overall **happiness** the photos' subjects would feel for the rest of their lives
- Guess who ranked higher in ALL measures?

# Success in School study: Halo effect

## Landy and Sigall's (1974)

**Students rated the quality of written essays, which included both well-written and poorly written samples.**

- **One third of the participants were presented with a photo of an attractive female as an author, another third were presented with a photo of an unattractive female as the author, and the last third were not shown a photo.**

- **Guess what?**



On measures of affect and mood, physically attractive people score higher than less physically attractive people<sup>70</sup>.

People perceive physically attractive people as smarter, more successful, more sociable, more dominant, sexually warmer, mentally healthier and higher in self-esteem than their physically unattractive counterparts<sup>13,22,26,43</sup>. While this “beauty is good” effect is moderately strong<sup>22</sup>, studies show that attractive people are neither more nor less intelligent than less attractive people<sup>26,43,63</sup>.

Physically attractive people are more relaxed and socially adept and less socially anxious and lonely than less physically attractive people<sup>26,32</sup>.

We prefer to interact with people who are physically attractive<sup>28</sup>. For instance, physically attractive people are generally liked more than less physically attractive people<sup>13</sup> and they have greater social popularity<sup>26</sup>.

We are more likely to divulge personal information about ourselves to physically attractive people than we are to divulge less physically attractive people<sup>6</sup>.

We are more likely to help a physically attractive person than we are a physically unattractive person<sup>13</sup>.

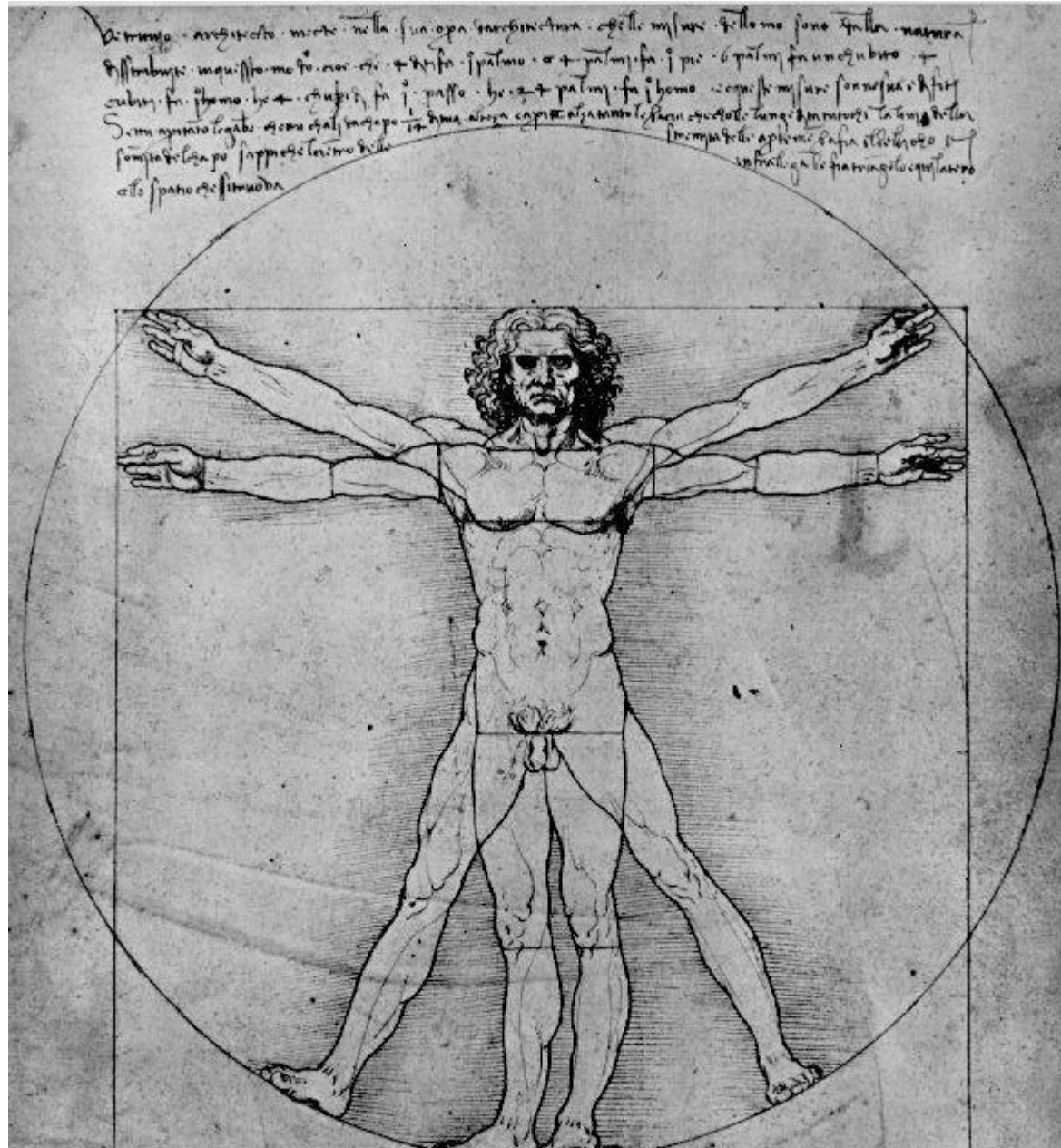
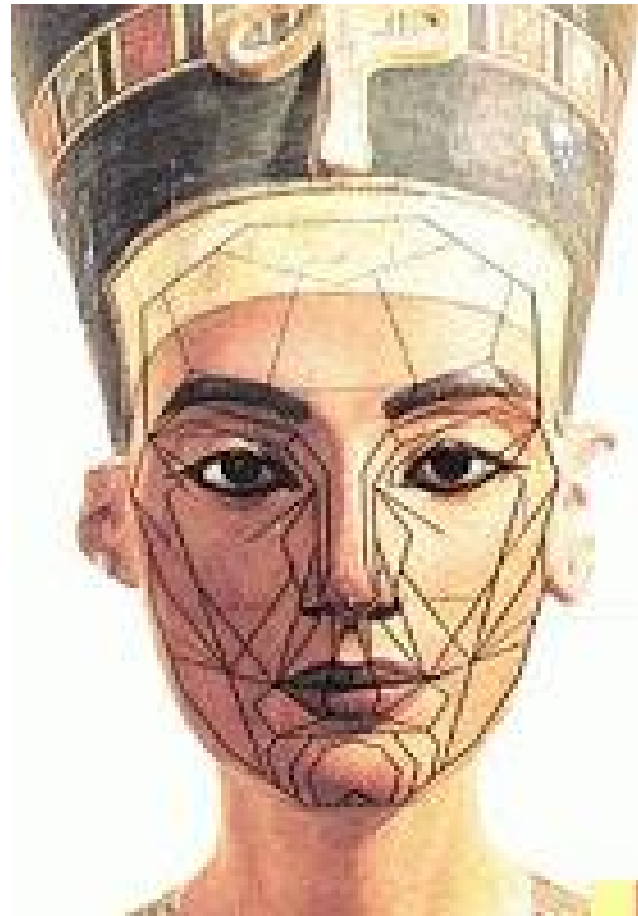


# Importance of physical attractiveness

1. Survival (pretty babies get more attention)
2. Predictor of Success
3. More opportunity for friends
4. Halo effect (beauty=goodness)
5. Mating purposes? (5:26)



# Universal and Timeless: 3000 years ago still follow the “Golden ratio rule” Davinci saw it too







## Theory #2

[Bhakti Ananda Goswami](#), 2012:  
“Birds do it”



- Gay and lesbian couples pair bond following the same rules of attractiveness\*
- Pair bonding sex-signalling communication between the individuals doesn't seem to care if they can mate

## Theory #3

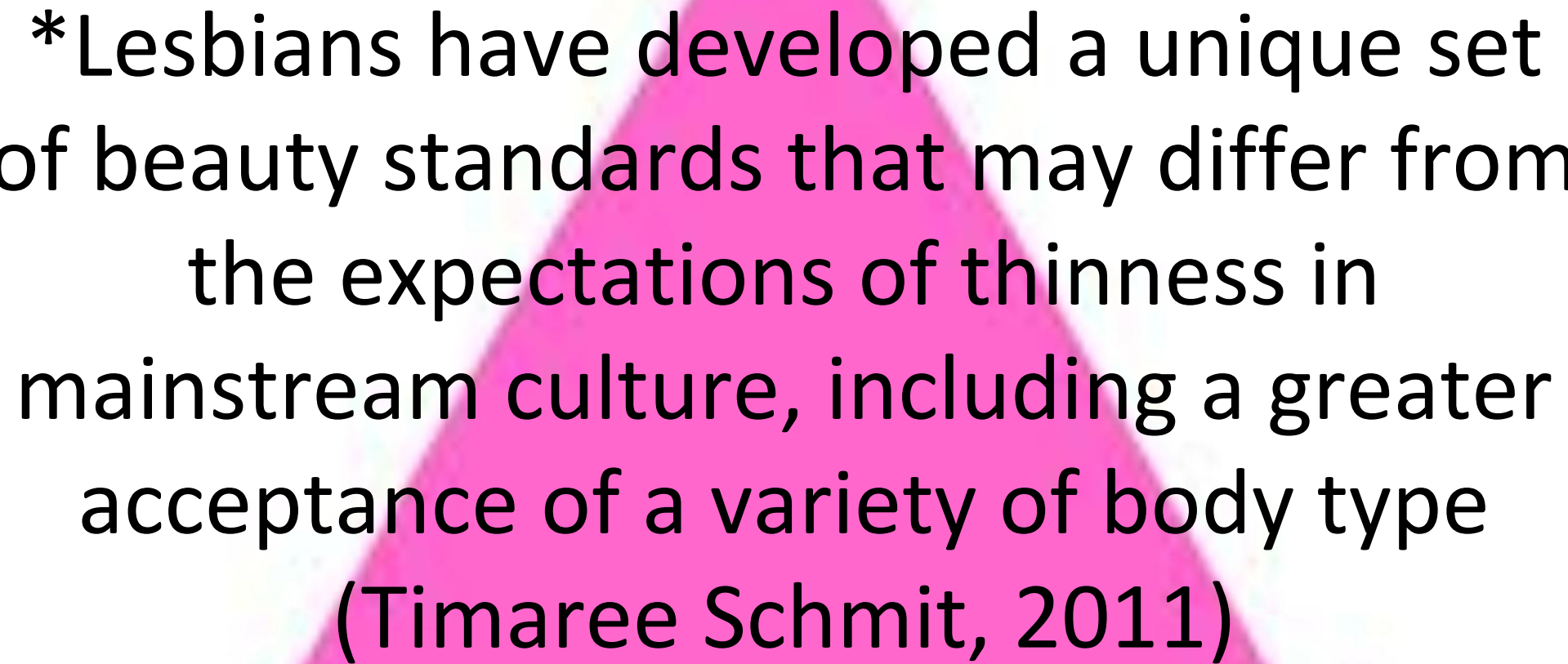
“Cross wired” (Goswami, 2012)

“If a physically feminized so-called male is putting-out receptive female sex-signals, mate reads those signals as ‘receptive female,’ they may be sexually attractive.”.

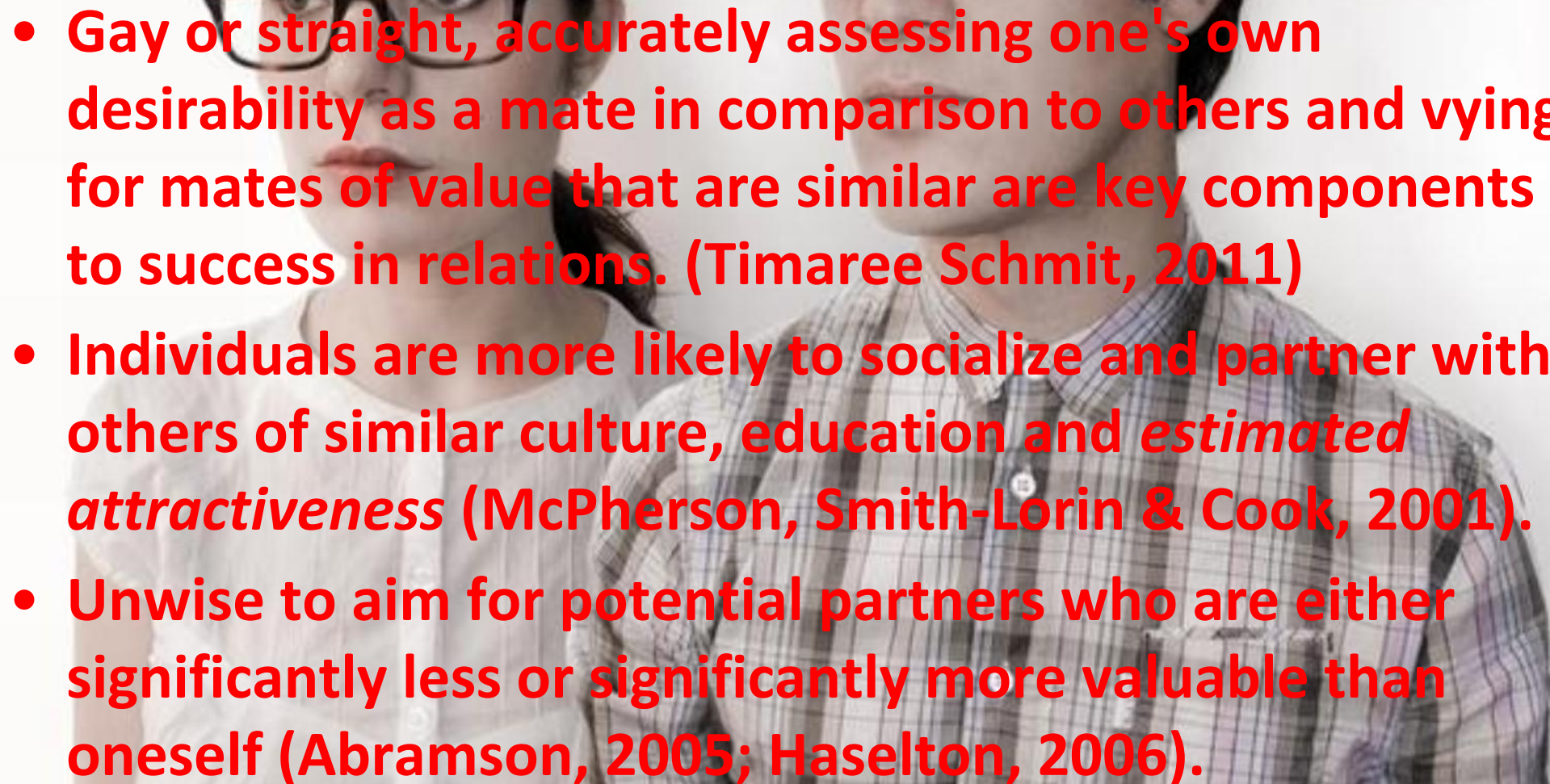
- biochemical receptive-feminine and mounting-masculine communications
- Hormones don't realize it's the same gender



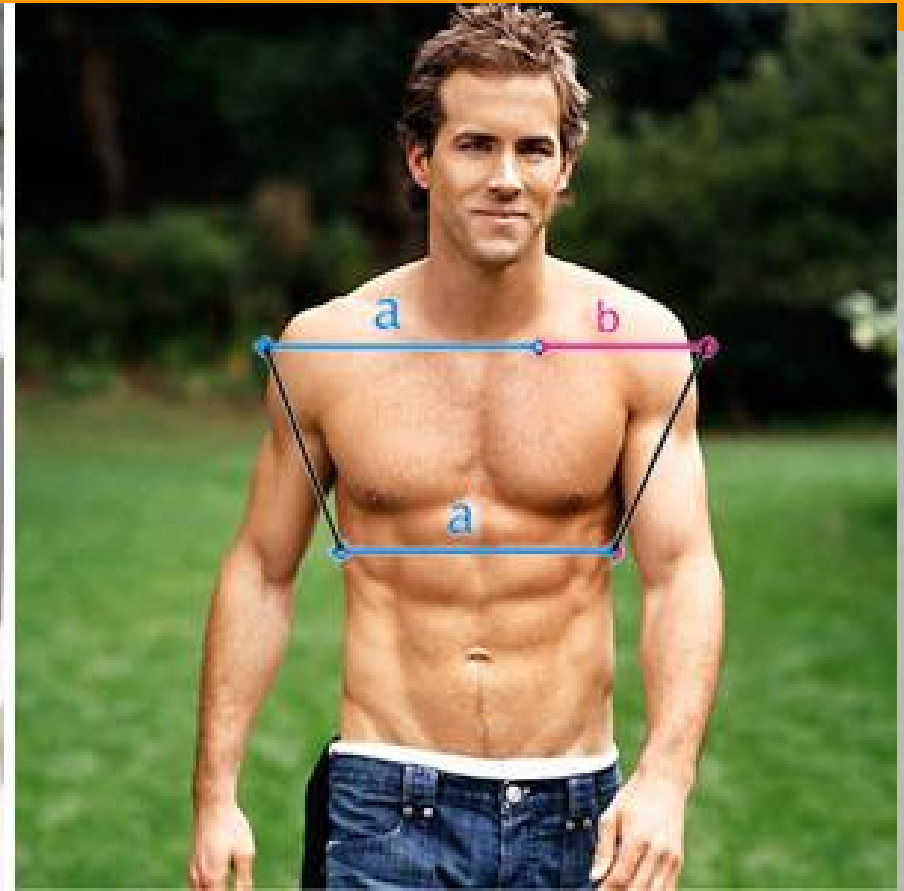


A large, solid pink triangle is centered on the page, pointing downwards. The text is overlaid on this triangle.

\*Lesbians have developed a unique set of beauty standards that may differ from the expectations of thinness in mainstream culture, including a greater acceptance of a variety of body type (Timaree Schmit, 2011)

- 
- A young woman with dark hair and glasses is on the left, and a young man with dark hair and glasses is on the right. They are both looking slightly to the right of the camera. The background is a plain, light color.
- **Gay or straight, accurately assessing one's own desirability as a mate in comparison to others and vying for mates of value that are similar are key components to success in relations. (Timaree Schmit, 2011)**
  - **Individuals are more likely to socialize and partner with others of similar culture, education and *estimated attractiveness* (McPherson, Smith-Lorin & Cook, 2001).**
  - **Unwise to aim for potential partners who are either significantly less or significantly more valuable than oneself (Abramson, 2005; Haselton, 2006).**

Qualities desirable in men include substantial height, square jaw, wide brow, wide shoulders, strong arms, defined chest and a waist-to-hip ratio of about 1 -0.7



# Males

- Many of these features indicate that a man is healthy and is a good protector.
- Women and men tend to be attracted to men who are taller than they are, have facial symmetry, broad shoulders, and V-shaped torso (indicates can protect their mate)



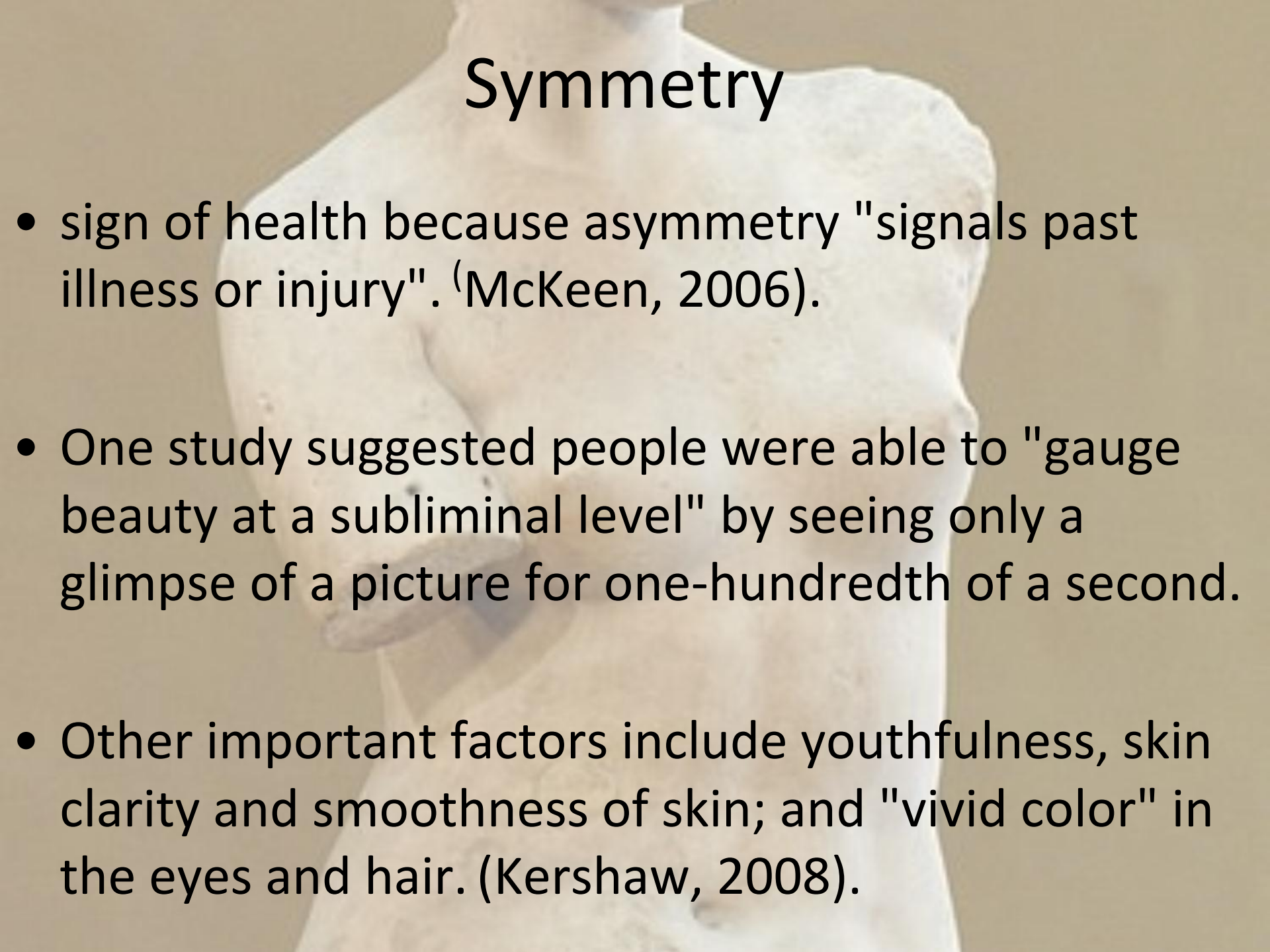
# Females

A woman is shown from the waist up, wearing a blue bikini. A green grid is overlaid on her torso, with horizontal lines at the bust and waist, and vertical lines on either side. A red rectangular box is drawn around her hips. The background is a blurred indoor setting.

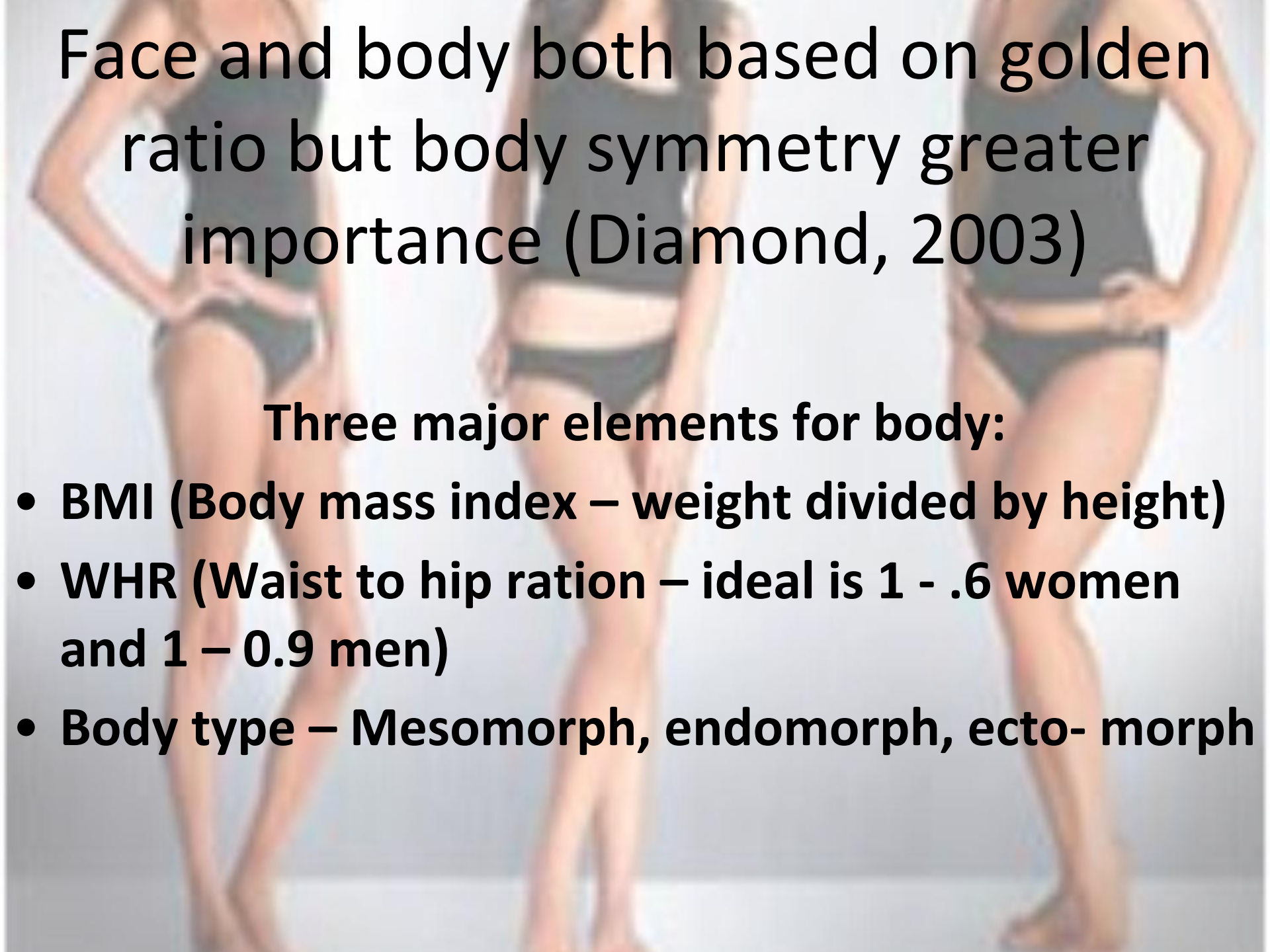
- **Qualities desirable in women include full, red lips, large breasts, waist-to-hip ratio of between 0.6 - 0.7 and voluptuous buttocks.**
- **These features indicate that a woman is able to produce healthy children**



# Symmetry



- sign of health because asymmetry "signals past illness or injury". (McKeen, 2006).
- One study suggested people were able to "gauge beauty at a subliminal level" by seeing only a glimpse of a picture for one-hundredth of a second.
- Other important factors include youthfulness, skin clarity and smoothness of skin; and "vivid color" in the eyes and hair. (Kershaw, 2008).



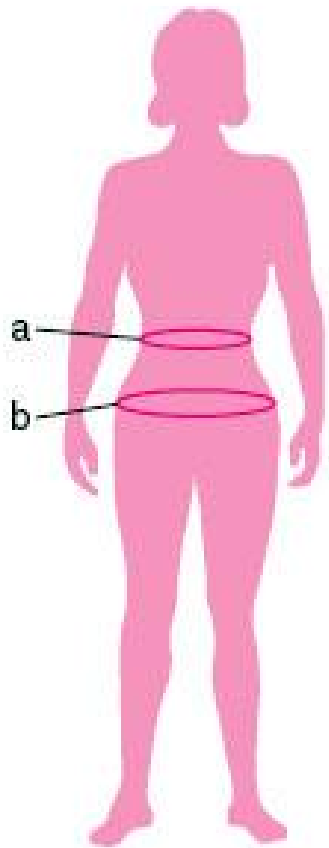
Face and body both based on golden ratio but body symmetry greater importance (Diamond, 2003)

**Three major elements for body:**

- **BMI (Body mass index – weight divided by height)**
- **WHR (Waist to hip ration – ideal is 1 - .6 women and 1 – 0.9 men)**
- **Body type – Mesomorph, endomorph, ecto- morph**

# WHR - Same for male and female?

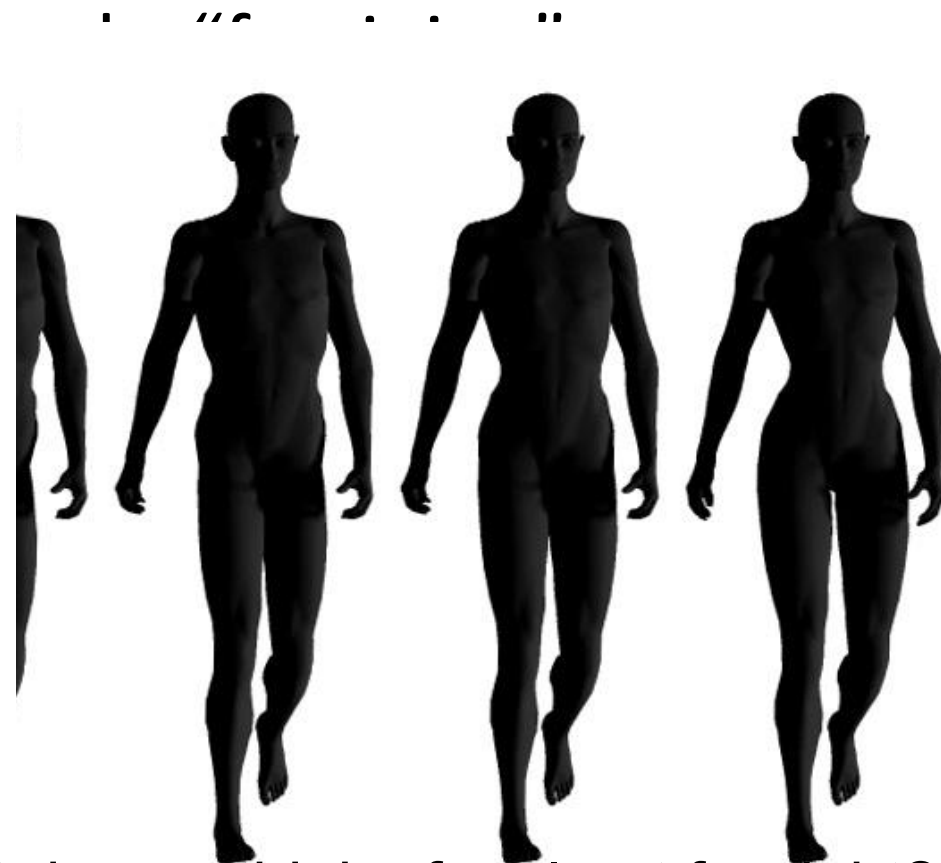
- Males are traditionally larger (0.9 versus 0.7)



WHR 0.7



WHR 0.9



What do you think of male at far right?

# BODY TYPES

An illustration of a female figure with a rounded, pear-shaped body. She has a prominent belly and thick thighs, characteristic of an endomorph body type.

ENDOMORPH

An illustration of a female figure with a muscular, athletic build. She has a well-defined waist, broad shoulders, and visible muscle tone, characteristic of a mesomorph body type.

MESOPMORPH

An illustration of a female figure with a very thin, elongated body. She has a narrow waist, long limbs, and a delicate frame, characteristic of an ectomorph body type.

ECTOMORPH

Which of these body types is healthier?

# Universal

- Cross-cultural investigations show agreements in facial aesthetic preferences were shown by Asian-American and Caucasian females (Wagatsuma & Kleinke, 1979)
- Chinese, Indian, and English females judging Greek males (Thakerar & Iwawaki, 1979)
- South African and American males and females (Morse, Gruzen, & Reis, 1976)
- Blacks and whites judging males and females from both races (Cross & Cross, 1971).



# Universal

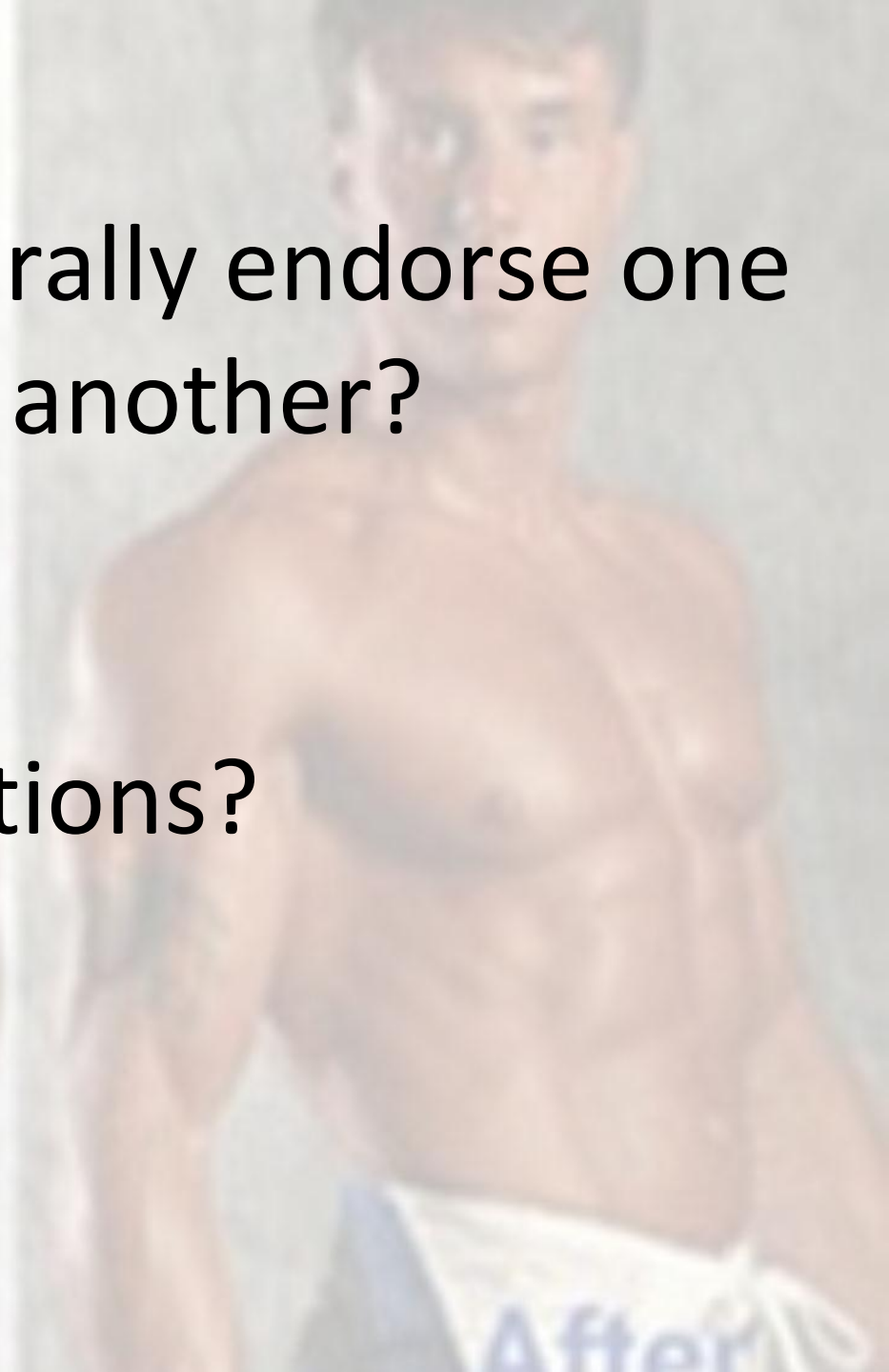
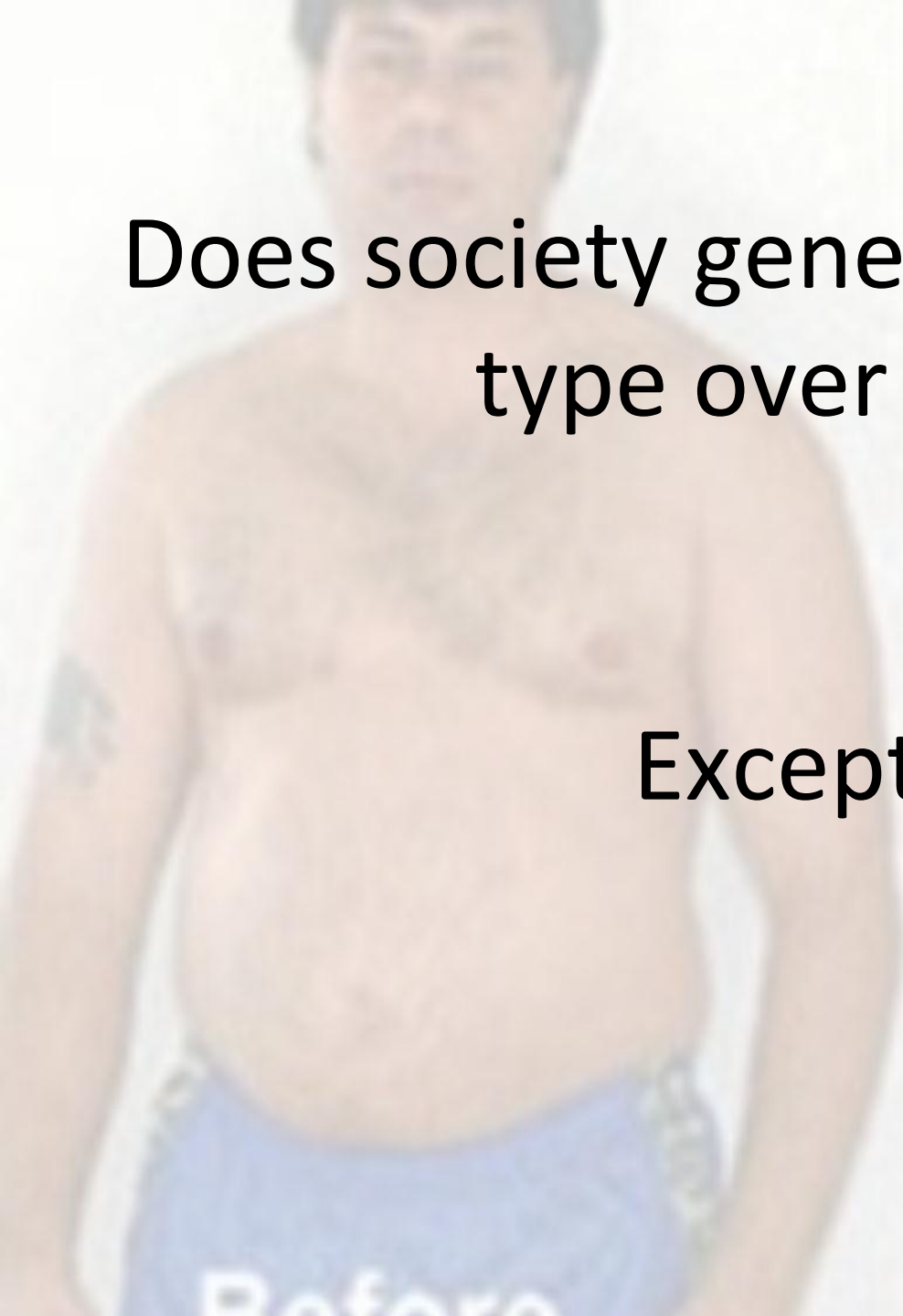


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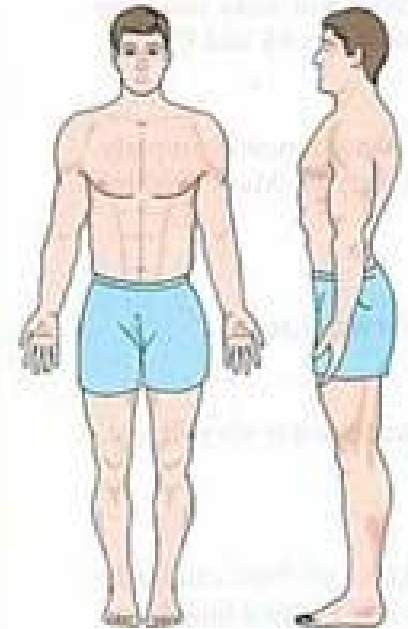
- Exception: ethnic groups vary with regard to their ideal waist-to-hip ratio for women, ranging from 0.6 in China, 0.7 for whites to 0.8 or 0.9 in parts of South America and Africa

Does society generally endorse one type over another?

Exceptions?



- A mesomorph has a large bone structure, large muscles and a naturally athletic physique. Mesomorphs are the best body type for bodybuilding. They find it quite easy to gain and lose weight.
- **Typical traits on a Mesomorph:**
- Athletic
- Hard body with well defined muscles
- Rectangular shaped body
- Strong
- Gains muscle easily
- Gains fat more easily than ectomorphs



# Mesomorphic women

- How do we feel about them?
- Why?



# Ectomorph

## Thin as youth - Youth as attractive

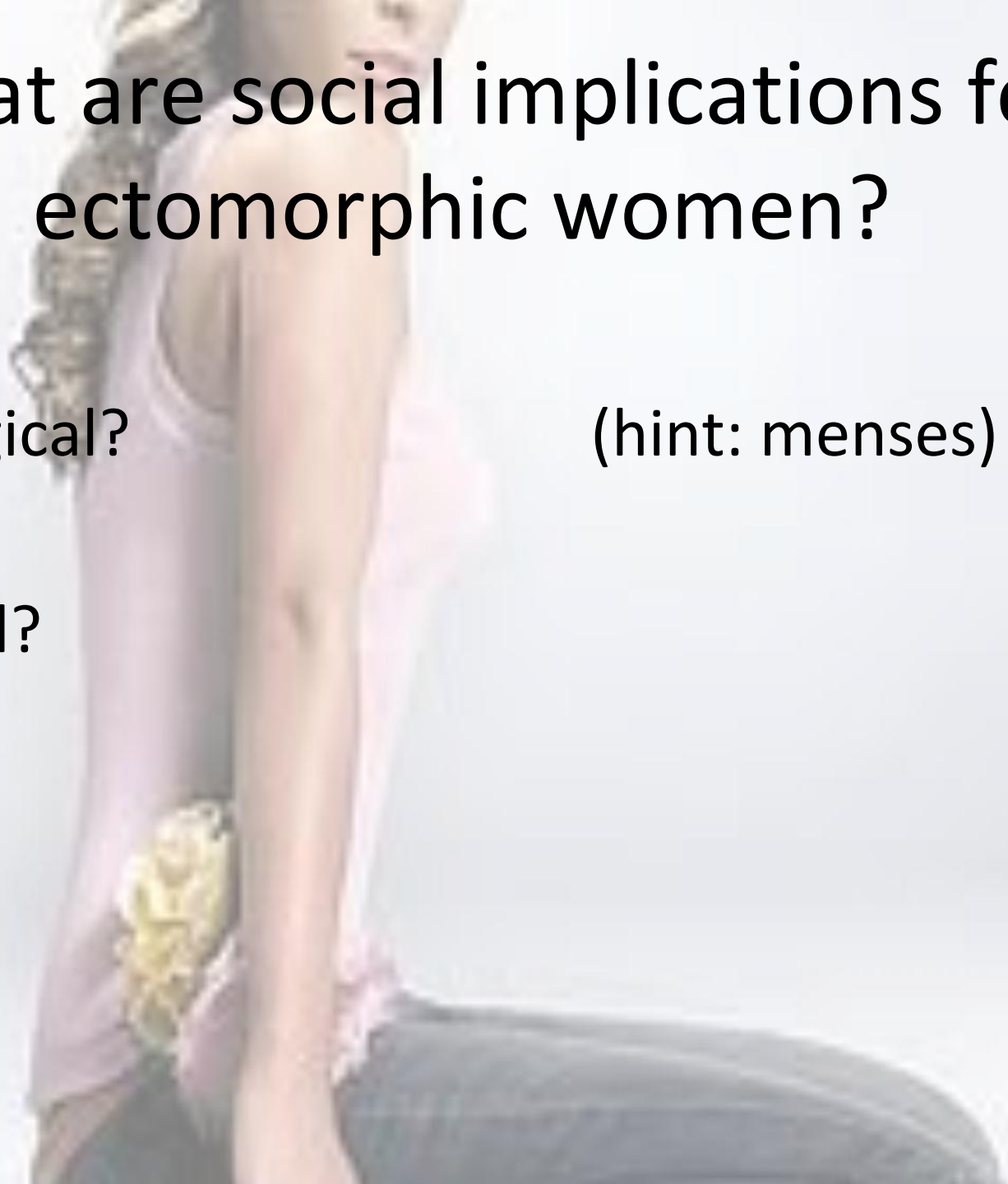
- Thinness has positive associations to youth (prepubescence)
- One study covering 37 cultures showed that, on average, a woman was 2.5 to 7.5 years younger than her mate
- 25% of eHarmony's male customers over the age of 50 request women under 40, 31 years-old male user search for women aged 22 to 35, while 42 years-old male searches for women 27 to 45.



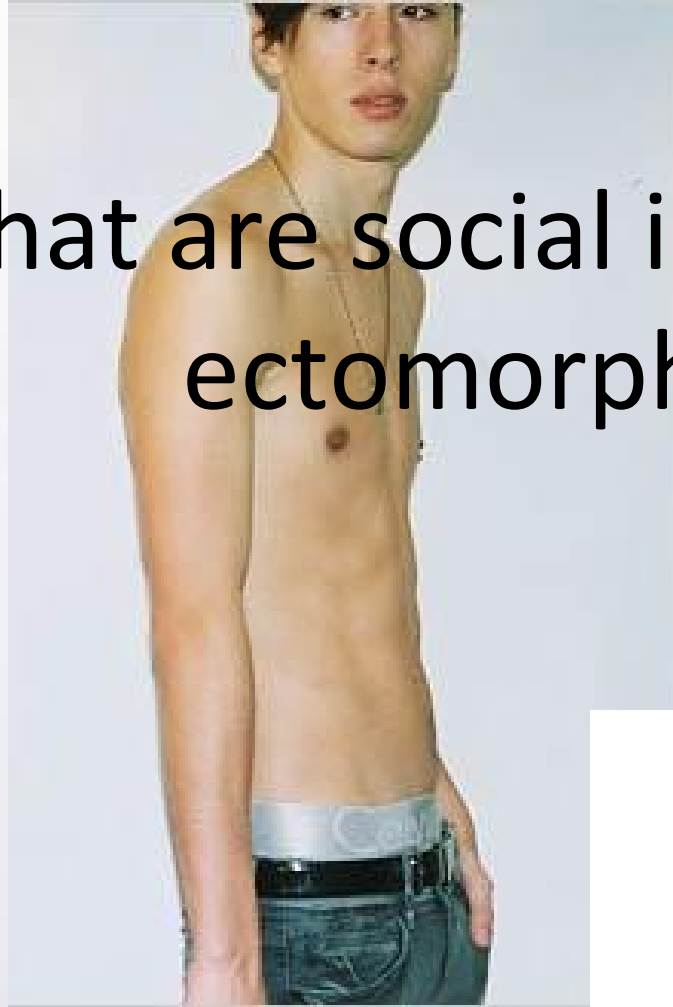
nathania observations on asian culture - Anime

# What are social implications for ectomorphic women?

- Biological? (hint: menses)
- Sexual?



# What are social implications for ectomorphic men?



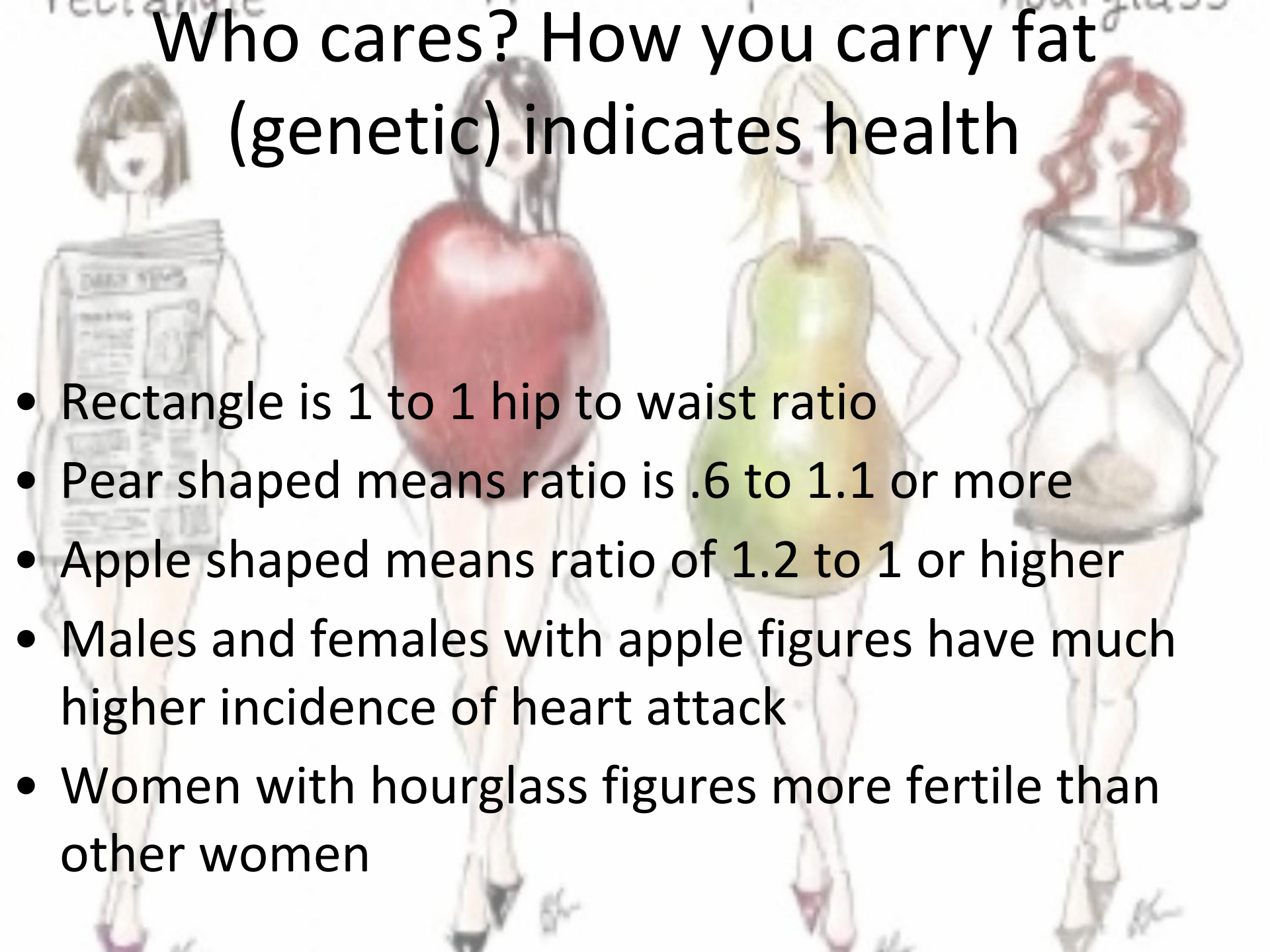
Biological?

Sexual?



# Who cares? How you carry fat (genetic) indicates health

- Rectangle is 1 to 1 hip to waist ratio
- Pear shaped means ratio is .6 to 1.1 or more
- Apple shaped means ratio of 1.2 to 1 or higher
- Males and females with apple figures have much higher incidence of heart attack
- Women with hourglass figures more fertile than other women



# Any (or all) of these factors led to distorted body image



- Dysmorphia: disorder in which the affected person preoccupied by a perceived defect in his or her physical features (male or female).



# Why is it so important?

- Dysmorphia can reach point of severe depression and anxiety, development of other anxiety disorders & social withdrawal
- 76% will become clinically depressed

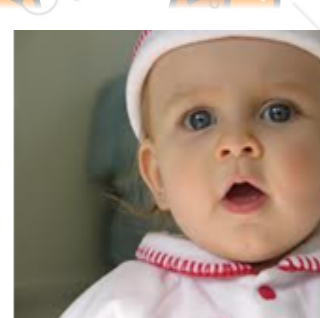
British Psychological Society & The Royal College of Psychiatrists, 2006)



Men will resort to steroid use and 10% of all cases of Bulimia and Anorexia are men

# Why is attractiveness Important?

- Pretty babies get more attention than ugly ones
  - Pretty kids get better grades than average ones
  - Pretty people will make more money in their lifetime
  - Pretty people have more partners (good or bad?)
- 
- DISCUSS last one



# Attractiveness Important in friendship?

- We tend to attempt to bond with people at our own attractiveness level – similarities attract)

1) Romance (pair bonding)

2) Friendship – can you be attracted to either gender without wanting sex (DISCUSS)



# How do we know if others like/are attracted to us?

- a person does know, upon meeting someone, whether he or she is in fact liked.

## HOW?

- This perceived liking draws us toward the other (Sprecher and Hatfield 1992).



# Attractiveness Important in friendship?

- We tend to attempt to bond with people at our own attractiveness level – similarities attract)

- 1) Romance (pair bonding)
- 2) Friendship – can you be attracted to a friend of the opposite gender without wanting sex (DISCUSS)



Many men and women report having experienced romantic passion in the absence of sexual desire (Tennov, 1979), and even prepubertal children, who have not undergone the hormonal changes responsible for adult levels of sexual motivation, report intense romantic infatuations (Hatfield, Schmitz, Cornelius, & Rapson, 1988).



## Love doesn't always lead to sex

Furthermore, extensive cross-cultural and historical research shows that individuals often develop feelings of romantic love for partners of the “wrong” gender (i.e., heterosexuals fall in love with same-gender partners and lesbian and gay individuals fall in love with other-gender partners, as reviewed in Diamond, 2003).

“Friend Crushes”

Discussed in popular culture - “How I met your mother”

Other examples?

Lee, L., Loewenstein, G., Ariely, D., Hong, J. & Young, J. (2008). If I'm not hot, are you hot or not? Physical-attractiveness evaluations and dating preferences as a function of one's own attractiveness. *Psychological Science*, *19*(7), 669-677.

- “Hot or not site”: 1,386,267 rating decisions by 16,550 members looking for meeting
- The researchers also confirmed the well-worn finding that people sought out dates of similar attractiveness levels (or people who slightly more attractive).
- Their findings should surprise no one — more attractive people tended to prefer potential dates who were also rated as more attractive.

# Friendships based on physical attractiveness

Attractiveness and Rivalry in Women's Friendships with Women" from Human Nature, Volume 21, Number 1 / March, 2010 <http://www.bakadesuyo.com/2010/05/do-women-become-friends-based-on-similar-level>

- Women's self-ratings of physical attractiveness were positively correlated with that of their close friends.
- Independent raters' ratings of physical attractiveness were also positively correlated and even more strongly than above (others judged them as similar).
- Pairs of friends are often roughly equal physical attractiveness, BUT the less attractive women found their friends as mating rivals

**“Birds of a feather ...”**

# Attractiveness gets you there BUT once in Friendship you begin to negotiate :

- Do you have similar values
- Life experiences
- Goals



# Reciprocity of liking

- You like those who like you
- You don't like those who don't like you
- People are pretty good at spotting fake praise





## Method to test

One member of each pair was randomly chosen to receive some information from the experimenters about how the *other* student in the pair felt about the first member.

Target students were led to believe that the other students liked them

## Results

When met again, they were friendlier, disclosed more information about themselves, agreed with the other person more, and behaved in a warmer manner *if they had been told* that the other student liked them.

The other students came to like these students better as well, so liking produced liking.

# Interpersonal Attraction

Interpersonal attraction is our tendency to evaluate another person in a consistently positive way.

- We have positive attitudes toward individuals to whom we are attracted
- We judge them to be “right” more often

# Interpersonal Attraction

- Interpersonal attraction is normally expressed as a like/dislike BUT

1. We may have mixed feelings about a person
2. Several dimensions may contribute to liking/disliking
3. attraction actually exists in degrees



# Reciprocity of liking

- A likes B & B likes A
- If A likes or believes in something B doesn't like:
- B can change mind to agree with A
- B can convince A to change mind
- B can decide its not worth worrying about
- B can dump A

Examples?



There are two social motives  
underlying interpersonal attraction:  
affiliation and the need for intimacy

Why?

Most humans are social creatures  
who enjoy the company of others

# Affiliation

- To adopt or accept as a member or associate, employee, or member
- The need for affiliation (Naff) is our need to establish and maintain relationships with others.

provides:

- Emotional support
- A basis for social comparison
- Attention

O'Connor, S. C., & Rosenblood, L.K. (1996).  
Affiliation motivation in everyday experience: A  
theoretical comparison. *Journal of Personality and  
Social Psychology*, 70, 513-522.



# Affiliation

- Think sports team or clique (belonging)
- Individuals vary in their need for affiliation, some have a high need others have a low need (loners)
- Women have a higher need for affiliation
- We affiliate faster/stronger with others under fearful conditions (stressed)

McClelland, David C. (1978). "Managing motivation to expand human freedom". *American Psychologist* 33 (3): p.201.





# The Need for Intimacy (not same as affiliation)

- extends beyond merely being with others.
- The need for intimacy (Nint): form and maintain close affectionate relationships with others - share personal information.

# INTIMACY

- Relationships progress from shallow, narrow interactions to deeper interactions involving self disclosure.
- Women tend to have a stronger need for intimacy than men



# INTIMACY (CONT)

- Some confuse intimacy with sex or trade sex (Bleske & Buss, 2000).
- Public displays of intimacy can be awkward for outsiders
- more acceptable between two girls than two guys (why)



Does not have to be physical

Can be sharing secrets, personal information, feelings

Other examples?





# Need for Intimacy (NIInt) -Desire for warm, close, communicative relationships

- people communicate important feelings and information to another through the process of self-disclosure
- Risk of including another in your self-concept
- Have found that those who are "High" in NIInt have better emotional adjustment
- Those in Collectivistic societies tend to have higher NIInt
- Individualistic societies tend to have higher NAF

# Intimacy

- Revealing of personal information about oneself to other people
- Gradually move from a discussion of superficial topics to more intimate exchanges
- When people first meet, they're likely to discuss such impersonal topics as the weather, etc.
- If this superficial interaction is rewarding, they may broaden and deepen the social exchange, reveal more about selves
- Descriptive self-disclosure: Share facts about lives

# Loneliness

The needs for affiliation and intimacy foster the development and maintenance of interpersonal relationships

what emotions that stand in the way of forming close relationships?



# Loneliness (continued)

- Loneliness is a psychological state of **perceived** inadequacy in interpersonal relationships.
  - discrepancy between the relationships we would like to have and those we actually have
  - Can occur in a relationship if the need for intimacy is not being fulfilled (estranged marriages)



# Similarity

If you have many interests or traits in common, chances are that you'd be attracted to this person.

Similarity, or a match of personal aspects with those of another person, is one of the most powerful forces of attraction

# DISSONANCE THEORY

- Leon Festinger (1959) "An individual strives to produce consonance and to avoid dissonance."
- Cognitive dissonance: our actions contradict certain beliefs about ourselves.
- If I consider myself an honest person, that belief implies that I don't lie. Yet I catch myself in the middle of a lie. This is dissonant.
- People strive to avoid dissonance
- Interactions with others leads to dissonance

HOW? WHEN?



# Balance Theory

- Fritz Heider (1976, 1986) claims that we want to maintain psychological stability
- we form relationships that balance our likes and dislikes.

## **Example**

Your two best friends, Jenny and Gina, are fighting. This makes you feel uncomfortable. You feel like you are caught in the middle and have to choose between two things that you care about.

# Incongruence

- If we like people who don't like us it is possible we don't like ourselves
- This also applies to things – if you don't do well in a class, you will not like that class (or teacher)

Examples? Exceptions? (three minutes)





# Incongruence & Balance theory

- If we like people who don't like us it is possible we don't like ourselves
- Used to being rejected (examples?)
- Low self esteem



# Self esteem

- While those with positive self-esteem respond to reciprocal liking, those with negative self-esteem seem to prefer working with people who are critical of them.
- Groucho marx “I would never belong to a group that would have someone like me as a member.”
- Nathaniel Branden (1994) stated that "self-esteem creates a set of implicit expectations about what is possible and appropriate to us." If you can't accept someone likes you, you won't like them back.(Young, 1994)

# More Incongruence

## Ulterior motives

- What's in it for me?
- “Users”
- People generally are good at spotting this
- Dealing with this can lead to dissonance
- How?



Examples

## Loneliness (Revisited)

- Loneliness can be transient or chronic
  - Short term (new school)
  - Long term more permanent
- Self-fulfilling prophecy
- Physical unattractiveness
- Loneliness can lead to clinical depression





# Debate

- What rewards do others give us?
- Why do we seek out new friendships?
- What are some of the risks of developing new friendships?
- What are some of the dangers of affiliation?



- **What are some of the costs and benefits of maintaining old friendships?**



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