

## **Advance Course in Social Psychology**

### **Lecture 09 : Interpersonal Attraction : Part-I**

Hello friends, welcome back. Today I will start the third module that is interpersonal attraction. This is a very interesting module of the subject where we will understand that how two people are attracted to each other and what are the factors responsible towards attraction, mutual liking and friendship. So, there are several factors that why people tend to affiliate, why people are attracted to each other, there are some factors which are interpersonal in nature and at the same time when we are in a group then sometimes we tend to affiliate with every member of the group, but at the same time we have different kind of relationship or liking for everyone in the other in the same group. So in this module, I will discuss that how one's own characteristics and other person's characteristics tend to influence the process of establishing social relationships based on attraction, similarity, liking, disliking, dissimilarities and quality of relationship. So before getting more into deep into the discussion about interpersonal attraction, let us define that what is interpersonal attraction.

There has to be some basic understanding that why people are attracted to each other and there is one specific factor that leads to this process is attitude of oneself and others. So interpersonal attraction refers to one's attitude toward other person and such interpersonal evaluation falls along a dimension that ranges from like to dislike. It can be liking, it can be strong liking, it can be mild liking, it can be disliking and it has a range from mild disliking to strong disliking. So whenever there is some kind of similarity in one's own thought with that of others, then there is some sort of liking or attraction towards the other person and it is but obvious.

If two people are talking to each other, they are interacting with each other and we will realize that the person is not matching at any point on our thoughts, emotions, beliefs, values. We tend to get refrain from that person and we are not attracted or we do not feel like to interact with the same person in future. But on the contrary, if there is some percentage of similarity also, then we will realize that there is some kind of attraction and there is some possibility of further interactions. So the process of social interaction starts with initial contacts and is concerned with emotional responses, similarities and present interaction. Just now as I mentioned that when we are interacting with the other person, then there is some initial contact that is established with the other person. With the gradual process of establishing that contact, our interaction levels also increases and based on those interactions, we will realize that to what extent our emotions, values, belief system is matching with the other person to what extent and that defines the range that where and to what extent we are liking or disliking that person.

So this is the process of interpersonal interaction. So it is a natural feeling to be drawn to other individuals and desire for their company. The more we are similar in the attitude, the more we have a desire to interact with that same person. The less we are matching with our thoughts and emotions, the less we have the desire to interact with the same person or have his or her

company. So this table will help us to understand that what kind of interpersonal attractions can be experienced and we tend to evaluate those attractions leading to some interaction or relationship.

For instance, we have a very strong liking for a friend because we are matching very much similar based on certain emotions, feelings, ideas and beliefs. So we have that kind of desire to spend some time together and make some joint plans. Similarly if we have a very mild liking for the other person, maybe just exchanging greetings in the hallway, maybe or in the neighbourhood building, then it becomes a close acquaintance. That is all we can define the other person based on interpersonal attraction. And we just try to just to say hi and hello to that person.

We will interact for a minute or a second and then we tend to disband. So this is mild liking for instance a close acquaintance or a neighbourhood. At the same time there can be some neutral feelings for one particular person and that acquaintance is superficial that we know that person by face that is it. And we just tend to know that the person is living in the neighbourhood building. So we tend to recognize each other and maximum to certain extent we will just exchange greetings not beyond this.

Even for mild liking we can stop by and just talk for a second for a while. But if the feelings are neutral we would just say hi or exchange greetings in the hallway. So these are the neutral feelings for another person in the situation. Now this neutral feeling will be in a way that we have no idea, we have no knowledge, we have no clarity about the attitudes and perceptions of that person, the belief of that person and that interaction sometimes becomes very much novice or novel in nature. At the same time there can be a mild dislike also where the acquaintance become annoying.

For instance there is a person in the neighbourhood I do not like this person because of his certain habits which is disturbing to me and we would not exchange greetings just recognize that I know this person and I do not like this person. So this kind of evaluation for that person will be based on superficial acquaintance and we recognize each other we prefer to avoid interacting. That means that the person we know but still the interaction we had in past were not very much pleasant and it was very much unpleasant with that result of the interaction is that there is mild liking and two people try to avoid each other for not interacting with the same person. And at the same time there can be a strong disliking where the two people are absolutely uncomfortable and experience unpleasantness to interact. So there is activity actively avoiding a contact to interact with that person.

May be it can be a meeting also where we will not even try to recognize that person to us to that extent that we are expressing a strong disliking for the same person. So this is how we evaluate any interpersonal attraction based on range of liking and disliking right from strong

liking, mild liking, neutral, mild dislike and strong dislike. Based on this evaluation of that category of liking and disliking we tend to interact accordingly and that actually defines interpersonal attraction that we have a category. There are 10 people in any social situation it is not possible to have all these strong liking for all the 10 members in the group or in any social situation. Our evaluation for every 10 member in that group or social situation will vary on different different categories right from strong liking to strong disliking based on our relationship that is attraction.

So this is how we tend to define that what is interaction based on attitudes, similarity in beliefs, shared ideas, motives and emotions. Next comes factors responsible for interpersonal attraction. It is not that we just encounter any person in any social situation and we are attracted to that person. There are certain factors that fosters this kind of social process. So the social psychologists have identified certain factors where they define that how this process is been determined.

The first factor is the power of proximity as the term implies the more we are close to the other person based on spatial or geographical location then there is more chances that people will interact to each other. They will have more chances to share their ideas, opinions, beliefs, values and motives and interest. They come to a common ground and that proximity actually leads to interpersonal attraction. This is one way to understand in terms of proximity. The other can be that whenever we are interacting with the same person every now and then and we are exposed to that person every now and then that means there is repeated exposure then there are chances that either that exposure can be mildly negative, neutral or positive which results in an increasingly positive evaluation of that stimulus.

Because even when we are repeatedly exposed to even a negative stimulus with the gradual process of interaction even that negative stimulus or person can also become a positive stimulus because we are getting more chances to interact and the more we interact the more we get space to understand the other person in a more elaborative fashion. So repeated exposure is very important when we talk about factors responsible for interpersonal attraction. So the more we are exposed to the stimulus or the person the more there are chances that we have positive stimulus or liking for that person. The other is the effective basis of attraction. Now here the effective basis here means the emotional state of an individual that whether we are liking that person based on the strength of the emotion or the direction of the emotion that is negative or positive.

So when we are talking about the effective basis of attraction then it becomes very much imperative to understand that what is an effect. We have to define it. So effect is an individual's emotional state that it talks about the feelings and moods of an individual that is the person is happy, sad, grieved, melancholy, state of mind or depressed. So effect influences perception, motivation, cognition, decision making and interpersonal attraction. When we are in a happy mood definitely we tend to perceive the whole environment in a very positive manner.

When we are in a sad or in a negative mood then it happens that we tend to perceive the whole environment to be very much negative. That is how effect influences interpersonal attraction. Now take it as another example that I have a toothache and it is really disturbing to me right now. So that toothache is so disturbing that the whole environment also becomes negative for me because that pain that toothache is negative we are perceiving. There is a spillover effect on the perception of the environment and everything seems to be negative.

Similarly, if we are in a happy mood maybe we have earned a bonus at the work then the employee is so happy that every employee is being perceived to be a positive person in that work environment. So this is how effect influences interpersonal attraction even your perception, your motivation and decision making. So effect is very important when we talk about interpersonal attraction because this forms the basis of establishing social relationship in long run. So the two most important characteristics of effect are intensity that is the strength of the emotion and the direction whether the emotion is positive or negative. Positive emotion is there but what is the degree? Strong or mild.

Similarly, negative emotion strong or mild negative emotion that defines an individual's process of further establishing relationship with the other person. So this is how power of proximity and effective effect influences interpersonal attraction. Effect also influences attraction in four different ways direct, indirect, associated effect and stigma. So direct, indirect and associated effect I will continue in the next slide where I can explain you very well based on the diagram. But at the same time I will continue with the stigma that is it refers to the personal characteristics that at least some other individuals perceive negatively.

This includes race, physical disability or way or any other factors. So stigma is something we connote to another person, associate the other person with some negative feelings and emotions. For example, based on racial discrimination or physical disability. So if for example if I say that racial discrimination then definitely there is some stigma based on black or white. So these are the factors which exist in society, in human society and how people tend to stigmatize the other person based on skin color.

So this is the stigma. Based on this people tend to define that whether they will establish a relationship with that person or not, whether the person is attracted to that person or not. So this is stigma which are certain characteristics which we attach to any particular person and tend to perceive the same person based on those negative characteristics as a negative person. And we tend to refrain, we tend to avoid interacting with the same person. So this is one way to understand that how interpersonal attraction is being influenced based on stigma. And that stigma sometimes carry from one person to another belonging to the same category.

So the liking or disliking also carries from one person to another based on those stigma. The next comes that when we are talking about effect influences attraction based on direct, indirect and associated effect. So let us discuss about this diagram where direct, indirect and associated effect is being considered about factor responsible for interpersonal attraction. So this diagram basically talks about direct, indirect and associated effect based on negative and positive feelings. So let us discuss about the positive feelings we connote.

So if I say that the effective state of an individual is positive based on arousing stimulus that is the cake. We are at a cake shop, cake I like the cake and this particular cake is very delicious. So that is arousing positive emotions within the person. The person is elated, the person is happy to see his favorite sweet or dessert in the shop. And immediately we tend to perceive the whole environment as positive and maybe we tend to perceive one particular person in a very positive perception that I like this cake or I like this person.

Now this is a very direct effect. I oh this is a cake and I like cake a lot. So this is a direct effect. Positive stimulus is there or any stimulus which is arousing positive emotions within the person and there is a positive evaluation regarding the same stimulus that cake is there, I like cake and evaluation is also positive. So this is a direct effect. Now what can be the associated effect of this particular stimulus which is arousing positive emotions that even a neutral person who is standing in the shop is being perceived as a positive person because that stimulus a positive emotion or stimulus has a carry over effect on the perception of an individual of that stranger.

So even the stranger is also perceived as a positive person and immediately our evaluation for that person is that I like this person a lot. So association between the positive emotion and the neutral stimulus is associated and the evaluation is also indirect in the way that we are evaluating that person as a positive person. So all the three effective basis are existing in this positive situation where stimulus is positive, the stranger is also positive and the evaluation of that stranger is also positive. So direct, indirect and associated effect are existing with this positive feeling. Again I repeat whenever any stimulus arouses positive effect or emotion the person also excused positive emotions itself.

Another neutral stimulus that exists in the same situation is also perceived as positive person and the evaluation of that person is also positive. So there is a chain of positive emotions because positive feelings are associated with every stimulus in the environment. So this is the effective base of interpersonal attraction. Similar thing also happens when the person experiences some negative feelings. For example, effect arousing stimulus for example severe toothache.

This is a negative stimulus in the environment and our assessment of oneself and the situation is that I do not like toothache. This is the direct effect. This is but obvious that because that

toothache has disturbed the person to an extent that his perception is also getting affected and the perception of the whole situation and oneself also becomes negative. So this is a negative effect of negative feelings. Now when we are associating this negative feeling or stimulus with the stranger then again the idea is that the person will also assess or evaluate that person as the neutral stimulus as negative itself.

So a neutral stimulus which is present when the tooth is also aching. In that situation tooth is aching and the perception of the situation is negative the person is also evaluated as a negative person. So this is how a carryover effect of negative feeling can also be experienced which actually determines whether the person will be able to establish any relationship with that person in a situation or not. So personal characteristics or interpersonal factors also play a major role when we talk about factors influencing interpersonal attraction.

So if I go just go back to the slides. Interpersonal attraction in four different ways direct, indirect, associated and stigma. Had it been in the same situation we substitute a stigmatic person in place of neutral stimulus then person with some stigma will also be perceived as negative. So this is how we tend to define interpersonal attraction based on the factors available in the environment. Now this availability can be in the form of proximity where the person is repeatedly exposed to one kind of stimulus. It can be based on the strength and intensity of the emotions.

It can be also based on direct, indirect, associated effect or stigma. So this is how factors are responsible for interpersonal attraction. Another factor is the need to affiliate. Before starting the discussion in detail I mentioned one thing that when we are talking about interpersonal attraction then it is also not that why we are attracted to a person based on certain characteristics. It is also about there is some need to affiliate and to satisfy that need to affiliate or need for belongingness the person makes and the individual makes an effort to associate themselves with the other person based on certain motives as well.

So the need to affiliate is the most basic motive and seek to maintain interpersonal relationships. It is but obvious that every human being is a social animal. It is very difficult for a person to live all alone. So some kind of association is required and that becomes very basic need of a person. So the need to affiliate is a very basic motive and there are two interpersonal patterns which are likely to be followed that is superficial acquaintance and closed acquaintance.

That means even when the need to affiliation is a very basic motive but still this motive is being satisfied based on two types of acquaintances either close or superficial. So when we are talking about superficial acquaintances it is about that we know a person but that person is not a close friend of mine. But whereas when we are talking about close acquaintance we understand each other's there are similarity in the attitudes. We know each other's ideas,

beliefs, motives, emotions and feelings and we tend to share our lives with each other. We tend to disclose some important information with the other person.

But in both the cases whether it is superficial acquaintance or close acquaintance affiliation is there. Even we do not talk to our neighbor but we tend to exchange greetings in the hallway that is also a way to affiliate that he or she is my neighbor. But yes another way is to have a close acquaintance and at the same time satisfying the need to affiliate then definitely there are more chances of interaction where we share our emotions, feelings, ideas, plans and we tend to disclose important information with each other. So, we are talking, we are helping, we are engaging in pro-social behaviors.

So, affiliative motives have three approaches. The need to affiliate that means have three approaches that is explicit motive, implicit motive and social comparison. So, explicit motive is a need for positive stimulation where our gestures give more open messages to the larger group of people where we require some support and encouragement from the other person in decision making. It can be implicit motive where we require some emotional and social support and people tend to interact in a close context. There is more proximity between two people which is very much effective or affectional in its own way where sense of belongingness is very deep. There are deep interactions between two people which is very much implicit or interpersonal in nature.

And the third motive is social comparison that when we are interacting with the other people then there when we interact with other people then there is more sharing of knowledge. The more we expand our knowledge, the more we compare our emotional state with the other person that gives us cognitive clarity to understand one's and other person's emotional states. So, in this emotion in this cognitive clarity there is more knowledge and understanding of the outward behavior of the other person which is for our own understanding. So, this is cognitive clarity. There is depth in this term that it is not only that we are gaining knowledge for ourselves, but we are also gaining knowledge for the other person to understand himself and then understand ourselves.

So, it is both the ways. So, cognitive clarity means expanding knowledge about the other person, comparing oneself with the other person and then making assessment about the other person. So, this is social comparison in order to recognize and understand their and others feelings. So, the need to affiliate has three approaches, implicit, explicit and social comparison. And all the three approaches the most important factor is one's own self. We want support, we want stimulation, we want encouragement from the outer world we will tend to interact.

If we have to be more intimate and interpersonal with the other person, then there is we want more social support, emotional support and we tend to interact and share more or disclose more information with the other person. At the same time it is social comparison. The more we are interacting, the more we are getting cognitive clarity to understand one's and own's emotions or effective state of an individual. And the third, fourth factor is observable characteristics

which straightforwardly talks about physical attractiveness. It is an inevitable aspect of an individual behavior that people are very conscious about their looks, how the world perceive me.

So, this is the aspect of a person's appearance that people regard as visually appealing or unappealing. Whether people like my appearances, physical appearances or not, whether I look handsome, whether I look beautiful, whether I look graceful, whether I look presentable in a particular situation. So, when we are talking about observable characteristics as a factor responsible for interpersonal attraction, then physical attractiveness is one important thing. Because whenever two people are attracted to each other, then first thing that attracts an individual is based on the physical attraction, how a person appears to me. So, these are the appearances which a person regard as visually appealing or unappealing.

It is also a factor that highlights appearance anxiety. This is the undue concern with how one look. It is an individual discretion which leads to anxiety that when I am presenting myself to a group of people, then we are anxious at how people perceive me as appealing or unappealing. This leads sometimes to appearance anxiety and this apprehension about one's physical appearance is adequate or inadequate about the evaluation of other people. Why? This anxiety is existing with an individual because based on the physical attraction or attractiveness, people tend to evaluate you as a positive or negative person. So, when we are talking about interpersonal attraction, then physical attraction also plays a major role where the person is very much unduly concerned about one's own looks because based on those looks, people are being evaluated as positive or negative or appealing or unappealing.

So, there are four factors responsible for interpersonal attraction, the power of proximity, the effective ways of interaction, the need to affiliate and observable characteristics. Next comes moving towards friendship that is similarity and mutual liking. The idea is that once two people are attracted to each other based on proximity, based on physical attraction, based on effective basis of attraction or emotional state of each other, then people have another desire to take their level of attraction to another higher level in based on similarity and mutual liking. Attraction will not persist at that point. When attraction is there, then people tend to expand their interaction at different levels and how it is being transformed or raised to a level of further friendship based on similarity and liking.

So, it is a social process and a very gradual process that initially it is attraction, then it leads to friendship based on similarity and mutual liking. So, the next step of interpersonal attraction and closeness or proximity involves communication that is the degree to which individuals discover the areas of similarity and the extent to which they indicate mutual liking by what they say and what they do. Just as mentioned that interpersonal attraction is not the last stage, it moves on to another level that is a friendship which we can only take to that level whenever two people are expanding their interaction based on communication. Here communication means that people the more we communicate, the more we identify the areas of similarity



where we have common grounds of thinking, values, beliefs and ideas and the more we find out similarity in our attitudes, the more it will expand to mutual liking. Sometimes people tend to just expand their interaction and maybe they will find it only few areas are there where we are similar and that it will lead to only friendship.

But as soon as the area of similarity expands between two people, it is again taking to the another level that is mutual liking. So, when we are talking about friendship from interpersonal attraction to friendship, then it involves communication while discovering the areas of similarity and at the same time that is converting to mutual liking based on what we say and do. So, what are the determinants of similarity? How we identify that in what manner we are similar to each other? So, the first factor or determinant is attitude similarity. Attitude similarity causes attraction which is but obvious and expands or reaches to another level of liking. The extent to which two individuals share same attitudes about a range of topics is referred to as attitude similarity.

The more the two people are communicating with each other, the more they are getting a chance to discover the areas in which they are similar to each other and that determines friendship and mutual liking. And in practice, the term also includes similarity of beliefs, values, emotions and interest. Now the more we are communicating, we are interacting, the more we are discovering the areas of similarity. Now how to identify to what extent we are sure that two people are very much good friends based on certain proportion of similarities. We can never say that two people are friends to each other because they have attitude similarity.

That level of quality of friendship is also defined based on proportion of similarity that is the number of topics on which two people hold the same views divided by the number of topics on which they compare their viewpoints that is individuals holding same views evokes positive effect or vice versa. So, the more the proportion is high, the more there is liking, the more there is friendship and the more they are close to each other. So, not only talking about attitude similarity, proportion of similarity also plays a very important role in identifying the determinants of similarity. So this talks about on which two individuals hold same views divided by the total number of topics on which they compare their views.

The more there is similarity, the more the evaluation is positive. The less is the proportion of similarity, the less there are chances that the friendship will survive in long run or the higher the proportion of similar attitudes, the greater is the liking. This is but obvious. There is more attraction, people are more keen to share more information with each other because it will expand or increase the liking towards the other person. So when we are talking about determinants of similarity, it is not only about attitude and similarity, it is also about proportion of similarity.

The other is effective or emotional basis of similarity. This is one way where we are disclosing maximum information and finding similarity in those informations we are sharing. The other aspect is effective or emotional basis of similarity. This factor can be explained based on

balance theory by Newcomb and Heider in the year 1958 according to this theory, two people can have similarity in their attitudes based on emotions or effect. So, the more the people are naturally organizing themselves based on the likes and dislikes, there can be a symmetrical or asymmetrical way of liking and disliking. That is when two people like each other and find that they are similar in some specific aspects, they represent balance.

In certain aspects, two people are very much similar that maintains a balance between two people based on the emotions. Two people tend to understand their emotions and feelings in one particular aspect, they tend to maintain that balance and that balance is emotionally pleasant because it is giving some emotional support to each other. There is some kind of pleasant and support and when two people like each other but they find that they are dissimilar in certain aspects, then they experience some kind of imbalance. And people make efforts to restore that balance while sacrificing something or changing their own attitudes or the other person's attitudes so that that balance can be maintained. So, the imbalance is restored based on striving a balance while changing one's own or the other person's attitudes in order to be more similar and restore that balance else they tend to dislike each other in some aspects.

So, the first is balance, the other is imbalance and the other is non-balance when two people experience that they are completely dissimilar to each other based on their attitudes, beliefs, emotions, interests and ideas. And whenever they are interacting, they are not having any pleasant feeling rather they are more they experience more unpleasantness in that interaction and feel indifferent about each other then this leads to non-balance. So, therefore, we can say that effective or emotional basis of similarity is can be explained based on balance theory by Newcomb and Heider that there can be three emotional aspects in similarity.

There is imbalance, imbalance and non-balance. The other factor is slime effect. This effect is something where the world knows about one person and the behavior of the other person that the person is not honest, he is not transparent but the person who is being targeted is indulging in different kind of behavior and is not being liked by that person. So, at the opposite extremes even a positive evaluation that is inaccurate or is clumsy attempt at flat tree in is much welcome. For instance, a person who is engaging in the behavior of flat tree that is while trying to impress the other person for their own good or for their own selfish motive, the other that person who flatters will try to impress the other person in a way that the whole world will perceive the person who has been flattered to be very much true, honest and transparent. But the associated person knows that what kind of person he is that that becomes very much undesirable. So, the idea is that when we are talking about friendship towards friendship then people understand very well that which behavior is likable or desirable for the other person and the person understands very well.

So, in slime effect when we talk about it is about something that the for example, an employee who is nice to his superiors but not to his subordinates. So, the person who is nice to his superior is actually trying to flatter the other the higher authority for his own personal interest

or selfish motive and the other co-workers understand this behavior very well. So, under such circumstances the person who is engaging in flattery is perceived as an unlikable person. So, this is known as the slime effect when we are talking about moving towards friendship in interpersonal attraction. The person who is engaging in ingratiation or flattery that is engaging in behaviors to satisfy one's own personal interest or self interest or motives then that kind of behavior or the person becomes unlikable for the other person in the environment.

So, this slime effect plays a very important role in moving from interpersonal attraction to friendship. In this kind of behavior it is obvious that the person who is engaging in flattery will not be liked by the other person and there can be no friendship with such type of people. So, this kind of behavior is termed as slime effect an employee who is nice to his superiors and not to his subordinates. He or she is just as extremely dislikable and this fact is known as slime effect.

Some other examples are flattery or ingratiation. Flattery trying to impress the other person by using good words to satisfy one's own interest or making the other person or compelling the other person to comply with what the person wants from that authority. This is slime effect. So, by doing so things that will please people specially people who might be useful to you. It is in simple layman language we say that we tend to do buttering to a person who is very useful to us.

This is flattery that is known as slime effect. So, these are the factors which we which I have discussed just now that what factors leads to friendship based on similarity and mutual liking that is attitude similarity, effective or emotional basis of similarity and slime effect. Next I will continue in the next discussion. Thank you so much. Thank you.