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Stacy L. Fitzpatrick

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**NOW THAT YOU KNOW WHY, THE QUESTION IS HOW? THE RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN REASONS AND METHODS IN ROMANTIC BREAKUPS.**

By

Stacy L. Fitzpatrick

A THESIS

**Submitted to
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ABSTRACT

**NOW THAT YOU KNOW WHY, THE QUESTION IS HOW? THE RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN REASONS AND METHODS IN ROMANTIC BREAKUPS.**

By

Stacy L. Fitzpatrick

This paper investigates the extent to which the reason an individual decides to end a romantic relationship influence the method s/he uses to accomplish the breakup. In Study 1 (n=118), Duck's (1982) reasons for breakups and Cody's (1982) breakup strategies were tested. With the addition of new categories, both typologies captured the data reasonably well. In Study 2, hypothetical scenarios were developed to represent the reasons for breakup from Study 1. Participants (n=245) were asked to rate how likely they would be to use the breakups strategies from Study 1, given the reason in the scenario. The results suggest that reason does not have a significant influence on choice of breakup strategy. One exception was that participants were less likely to use an "it's not you it's me" strategy when the breakup stemmed from partner violating a norm. Results, limitations, and suggestions for future research are discussed.

DEDICATION

I want to dedicate this to my mom, Debra Marilyn Boutell Fitzpatrick, who answered my middle of the night, stressed out phone calls with calm assurances that everything would be fine. Of course, she was right every time, and I wish she could have been here long enough to see that I finished this, like she knew I would.

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Now That You Know Why, the Question is How? The Relationship Between Reasons and Methods in Romantic Breakups.

Empirical research exists on nearly every facet of the development of romantic relationships. For example, initial attraction has been examined extensively, and large literatures exist on the roles of physical attractiveness, similarity and proximity in close relationships (Kahn & McGahey, 1977, Klohnen & Luo, 2003,). Research has shown how variables such as these influence the development of a relationship, from the type of relationship sought (e.g., Sprecher & Regan, 2002; Stewart, Stinnett, & Rosenfeld, 2000) to the strategies used to initiate both intimate and extramarital relationships (e.g., Clark, Shaveer, & Abrahams, 1999; Schmitt & Shackelford, 2003). Relational maintenance studies have shown how both desired (Baxter, 1993; Dindia & Canary, 1993) and undesired relationships (Hess, 2000) are maintained and have linked maintenance strategies with relational disengagement (Guerrero, Eloy, & Wabnik, 1993). The aftermath of relational termination and its effects upon the individual have also been addressed (e.g., Davis, Shaver, & Vernon; Kellas & Manusov, 2003; Sprecher, Felmlee, Metts, Fehr, & Vanni, 1998).

One part of this process that has received relatively less attention is that of the actual manner in which relational termination is instigated and negotiated. There is much variance in how and why relationships are terminated, and it is reasonable to expect that not every person approaches a romantic breakup in the same manner. There may literally be more than “50 Ways to Leave Your Lover,” (Simon & Garfunkel, 1982). Nevertheless, the research that does exist in the area of relational termination is both dated and often has not been empirically validated or replicated.

The purpose of the current study is threefold. First, this research seeks empirical evidence evaluating the dissolution reasons presented by Duck. To the author's knowledge, no empirical test of this model exists. Second, the relational termination strategies found in prior research (Cody, 1982; Baxter, 1985; Wilmot, Carbaugh, & Baxter, 1985; Banks, Altendorf, Greene & Cody, 1987) will be tested, given that existing research in this area is dated and often lacks empirical validation or replication. These first two goals are primarily descriptive. Third, the relationship between the reason for termination and the subsequent strategy employed is examined.

Process Approaches

Often the terms disengage, terminate, breakup, or dissolution are used when discussing how people exit romantic relationships, and refer only to the single instance in which one person, called the disengager, communicates to the other person that s/he wants the relationship to end (Davis, Shaver, & Vernon, 2003; Felmlee, Sprecher, & Bassin, 1990; Koenig, Kellas, & Manusov, 2003). Drawing distinctions between these terms, however, is useful. Duck (1982) referred to the overall process of exiting romantic relationships as “disengagement,” whereas “dissolution” and “termination,” used interchangeably, refer more specifically to the actual point in time at which the relationship ceased to exist. Dissolution and termination are also distinct from “breakdown,” which addresses dissatisfaction in a relationship that could potentially lead to termination or to a decline in intimacy, where the relationship is not actually terminated (Duck, 1982).

Relational breakups are often viewed either as a solitary and static event or as a precursor to the complexities that surround how people respond to the loss of a relationship (Busboom, Collins, Givertz, & Levin, 2002; Sprecher, Felmlee, Metts, & Fehr, 1998; Tashiro & Frazier, 2003). Stage models for relational termination address these critiques to some degree, but sometimes fail to approach relational termination as a unique process, instead likening it to other relational processes, such as initiation (Duck, 1982; Knapp, 1978).

Perhaps the two most well known process approaches to relational dissolution are Knapp’s (1978) stages and Duck’s (1982) phases. Knapp (1978) viewed relational termination as a reverse process of initiation. His stage model consisted of five stages:

differentiating, circumscribing, stagnating, avoiding, and terminating. During the first stage, the differentiating stage, the individuals' differences receive increasingly more attention, contrary to initiation, in which couples would focus on what they have in common. Collective pronouns, such as "we," "us," or "our" are more frequently replaced with "I," "you," or "my." The second stage, circumscribing, involves a marked decrease in both the number of topics the couple feels are acceptable for discussion, and the depth of those discussions. The third stage, stagnating, occurs when communication in a relationship comes to a standstill. Often, internal dialogues are carried out, as each person feels s/he already knows how the other person will respond. Avoidance, the next stage, entails actual physical avoidance of the other person. In the stagnating stage, the individuals may not be communicating, but usually still share the same physical space. This situation is remedied in the avoidance stage. Additionally, couples in the avoidance stage frame their communication with each other in such a way as to reduce the frequency of direct interaction (i.e., face to face or voice to voice). When communication does occur in the relationship, it is typically terse and inhospitable. If physical avoidance is not possible, the individuals conduct themselves as though the other person weren't present. Termination is the final stage in Knapp's (1978) model. According to this model, termination can occur at any point in a given relationship and in a number of ways. Termination dialogue consists of three essential parts; a summary statement, which indicates the reason for termination; physical behaviors that indicate the desire of one individual to no longer be in a relationship; and finally, a message that defines if there will be any future relationship, and if so, what type it will be.

Duck (1982) also presented a stage model of relational termination. His model

consists of four phases, and gives some consideration to how networks might influence termination. The first is called the intra-psychic phase. This phase begins at the point when an individual first views the relationship negatively. The intra-psychic phase involves an internal evaluation of the relationship, an assessment of the partner's behaviors, and a consideration of one's personal feelings in an attempt to determine if the most desirable course of action is to leave the relationship. If an individual reaches a point where exit from the relationship is the preferred option, s/he will enter the second phase, the dyadic phase. At this point, the individual voices his/her dissatisfaction with the relationship to the other person. The main focus of this stage is determining if the relationship should be salvaged, redefined, or terminated. A salvaged relationship would involve resolution of the problem, without a change in the level of intimacy in the relationship. Redefinition involves changing the level of relational intimacy. For example, the relationship might change from an exclusive one to one in which the partners are free to "see other people." Termination of the relationship would involve exit from the relationship with no negotiation of a future relationship. If the couple chooses to redefine the relationship, they move back into the intra-psychic phase, and continue to evaluate the relationship. If the couple cannot negotiate redefinition, they would move into the social phase, the third phase in Duck's model. In this phase network involvement is considered, and the social ramifications of the breakup of the couple are addressed. Three major issues are of concern here. First, the couple needs to adjust to a change in social status as a result of the breakup. For example, the ending of the relationship can be seen as a type of social failure, which could result in a negative status change. Second, the couple is left to negotiate what will happen with their mutual network (e.g., who will

side with whom.) Each partner must devise his or her account of the breakup which to relay to their respective networks which both attempts to place the blame for the breakup and to elicit public approval for the breakup. Finally, Duck proposes a fourth, often overlooked step in his relational termination model, the grave-dressing phase. This phase is less psychologically demanding than the other phases, and is primarily concerned with reflection on the relationship, from its inception to its demise. Attributions are made about why different events carried out the way they did and a more personal story of the breakup is created in order to make sense of the experience.

The primary difference between Knapp's (1978) stage model and Duck's (1982) phase model is the way in which individuals move through the stages or phases in the model. Knapp (1978) proposes that couples move either forward or backward through each stage in a quasi-linear fashion. The pace of movement varies; earlier stages and those that the couple has already been through experience quicker movement, whereas couples in which the partners have different desires for the direction of the relationship are slower. Conversely, Duck's (1982) model allows for more flexibility in the progression through each phase. Phases may occur in any order, may be skipped entirely, or even not occur.

These stage models represent an advance in the understanding of breakups because they allude to an underlying process in relational termination, rather than pointing to a specific point of breakup as an isolated event. What are important are the factors that precede termination and understanding of the underlying process. Despite the intuitive appeal of a process approach however, neither Knapp's (1978) nor Duck's (1982) models have been subject to a direct empirical test.

More general research exists consistent with a process theory perspective (Battaglia, Richard, Datteri, & Lord, 1998; Baxter, 1984; Cody, 1982; Duck, 1982; Gottman & Levenson, 1992). For example, Baxter (1984), in a study of the communication between the two parties involved in relational breakups, found significant variation in the negotiation of termination. Six key points in the dissolution process were highlighted; the onset of relational problems, the decision to exit, the development of plans to initiate exit actions, attempts to repair relationship (assuming exit actions were met with resistance), the negotiation of plans for exit actions with the other party, again attempting to repair relationship (once again, assuming exit actions were unacceptable). Baxter (1984) argued that the level of complexity of this portion of the breakup process supports Duck's (1982) view of relationships as a process. Similarly, in a study examining marital dissolution, Gottman and Levenson (1992) found support for marital dissolution as a process, and further argued that dissolution was not a unique event, but that it was likely linked to other processes such as decline in (marital) satisfaction (Gottman & Levenson, 1992).

Battaglia et al. (1998) developed a "script" for romantic breakups and outlined ten cyclical "steps" individuals move through as they end a relationship, referred to here as "the breakup process." Here, the process of breaking up begins when at least one partner feels dissatisfied with the relationship in general, or the other person in particular. From that point, the script parallels Duck's stage model of dissolution (Duck, 1982). Both Duck (1982) and Battaglia et al., (1998) indicate that the initial stages of the breakup script involve more introspective thoughts on the relationship that are not conveyed to the partner. During the dyadic and social phases in Duck's model, the disengager broaches

the topic of dissatisfaction in the relationship to the partner and possibly a third party. Once again, the breakup script closely follows these phases, involving discussion of relational dissatisfaction with partner and involving third parties to attempt to reconcile the issues at hand. Finally, Duck's grave-dressing phase involves getting over the breakup and creating personal accounts of events. The final steps in the "ordered script" approach also concern the termination (actual breakup) of the relationship, though there is little discussion of the events following termination. One significant difference is that in Battaglia et al.,'s script, individuals are highly aware of and focused on alternative partners and relationships.

Definitions, Components, and Perspective

This paper takes the view that relational disengagement is a process involving reasons for seeking disengagement, methods employed to achieve disengagement, and outcomes, which include breakups. The reason for breakup in this research refers specifically to what factors lead one individual in a relationship to decide that it is necessary to terminate his/her current relationship. This research approaches breakups from the perspective of the partner who initiates the breakup rather than attempting to provide a complete picture of relational termination using both participants' views. This does not exclude mutually agreed upon breakups. Instead, breakups are approached from a one-sided perspective, focusing on a single individual's reasons and methods of termination.

Once the decision to terminate the relationship is made, the partner who made that decision, whom this paper refers to as the initiator, can either enter into negotiation of the status of the relationship with his/her partner, or choose to avoid negotiation and

terminate the relationship. Similar to Duck's (1982) dyadic phase, the negotiation portion of the process can involve attempts to salvage or redefine the relationship, or a decision to move into the termination part of the disengagement process. The termination part of the disengagement process includes the specific verbal and/or non-verbal methods of communicating to a partner that a relationship is no longer desired. Cody (1982) and Banks et al., (1987), referred to these as breakup strategies and used cluster analysis to detail different types of breakup strategies.

Reasons for Termination

Duck (1982) proposed a four category model to explain the underlying reasons, or reasons for dissolving a relationship. The categories, pre-existing doom, mechanical failure, process loss, and sudden death each describe the circumstances that might cause an individual to decide it was time to end a romantic relationship. This model, and much of the ensuing literature in relational termination, incorporates theoretical observations made about the initiation and growth of relationships and applies those observations to both the termination of the relationship and the post-termination effects on individuals (e.g., Duck, 1982; Baxter, 1985; Guerrero, Elvov, & Wabnik, 1993; Sprecher, Felmlee, Metts, Fehr, & Vanni, 1998; Schmitt & Schackelford, 2003). Specifically, Duck reasons that if certain characteristics are necessary for a relationship to begin, then lack of these characteristics would be reason to end the relationship.

Duck's conceptualization of pre-existing doom focused on the intrinsic features the individuals in a relationship, such as physical attractiveness, intelligence, introversion or extroversion, and similarity in various personality traits. If people are more likely to enter a relationship if they have similarities in such traits, then it should follow that those

lacking similarity along those dimensions should either fail to enter a relationship or would seek to terminate such a relationship relatively quickly. This reason for dissolution is not dependent on the interaction between the participants in the relationship. Rather, the relationship was “doomed” from the beginning because the two individuals were inherently incompatible. Statements such as “we were just too different” and “we had nothing in common,” typify dissolutions due to pre-existing doom.

Mechanical failure is characterized by either incompatibility with each other or poor conduct on the part of one or both of the partners. The incompatibility between the partners is not apparent initially, but rather arises as the couple spends more time together. In line with both Murstein’s Stimulus-Value-Role Theory (Murstein, 1970) and Social Penetration Theory (Taylor, 1968), as a relationship progresses, increasingly more intimate information is revealed (Baxter, 1983). With pre-existing doom, inherent personal factors such as physical attractiveness or socioeconomic status are cited as reason for the breakup. Conversely, with mechanical failure, the reason for breakup is attributed to incompatibility on values rather than inherent personality traits. Shared knowledge of individual values in a relationship emerges as the depth of information shared increases, rather than initially, as would be the case for pre-existing doom. For example, it is uncommon for couples to share information about religious beliefs or political views during their initial interactions (i.e., first dates). Statements such as “We just weren’t compatible anymore,” or “The more I learned, the less we had in common,” would signify this type of relational failure.

Process loss, as described by Duck, diverges from mechanical failure in that the individuals are compatible, but do not make use of available resources, causing the

relationship to fall short of its maximum potential. The individuals are either not cognizant of resources that would improve the relationship, or they may not divulge to their partner that such resources are available. When the individuals are aware that there is potential, but continually fall short of achieving that potential, they may become dissatisfied with the relationship altogether and opt for termination. What differentiates process loss from both pre-existing doom and mechanical failure is that it focuses specifically on the interaction process between the individuals in the relationship. Such losses are not a result of inherent incompatibility. Instead, process loss indicates that compatibility existed, but was not obtained, either through lack of maintenance or ignorance of resources. Statements that would typify a process loss would be “We don’t work well together,” or “We’re at different points in our lives.”

The final category, sudden death, is perhaps the most common conception of a breakup scenario. In this instance, one partner receives negatively charged information about the other partner of which s/he was previously unaware. This could be news of a partner’s infidelity or betrayal, a negative revelation about a partner’s character, or even complaints made by the partner about the relationship. This information could come from the “guilty” partner, a third party, or be discovered independently by the “offended” partner. There are problems with sudden death, however, in that such events do not always incite reason to terminate a relationship. In such instances, other factors such as dyadic integration or network pressure may have greater influence upon the decision to terminate a relationship than the newly acquired negative information. Network overlap has been found to influence the manner in which a person chooses to terminate a relationship, such that greater network overlap increases the likelihood to use positive

tone strategies, gradually decrease intimacy in the relationship, or give explanations for the termination (Banks, Altendorf, Greene, & Cody, 1987). Therefore, it is likely that high levels of network overlap could not only influence strategy choice, but also the reason to terminate a relationship.

One primary purpose of this paper is to empirically test Duck's (1982) conceptualization of the motivating factors to break up with a partner. Specifically, this study seeks to identify and categorize commonly cited reasons for breakups. These reasons will be compared to Duck's model to determine if it is a useful and exhaustive account of reasons for relational termination. The following research questions will be advanced.

RQ1a: What are the common types of reasons for breakups?

RQ1b: Do the common types of reasons for breakups correspond to Duck's (1982) reasons?

Breakup Strategies

An important distinction should be made about the difference between strategies and tactics. Wheelless, Barraclough, and Stewart (1983) defined tactics as "...specific [verbal] acts used in support of an overarching strategy." In romantic breakups, both verbal and nonverbal acts may be used to convey desire to terminate the relationship; subsequently, breakup tactics can be described as single instances of verbal or nonverbal communication which assist in attaining the ultimate goal of ending a relationship. Whereas strategies are commonly defined as a group of techniques, Wheelless et al., (1983) note that strategies are more than merely groups of similar tactics or groups of frequently employed tactics. Instead, a strategy "...is the principle (or policy) underlying

the use of tactics.” More simply stated, a strategy is a plan of how to achieve an intended goal, and tactics are the steps required within that plan. For example, a strategy may be to terminate a relationship on amicable terms with one’s former partner. This may be accomplished by tactics such as direct communication about the reason termination of the relationship is being sought, paired with giving one’s partner the actual reason termination is being sought.

The distinction between tactics and strategies is important for a couple reasons. First, the focus of this research is reason for termination and subsequent strategies employed. The tactics employed could prove to be an important link between reason for termination and breakup strategies. Second, in light of this distinction between tactics and strategies, the tactics detailed by Cody (1982) and Banks et al. (1987) could be utilized in conjunction with each other in order to achieve the ultimate goal of termination of the relationship.

Multiple strategy taxonomies exist and conceptual definitions of strategies are often inconsistent with labels found in other research. Different strategies are given the same label, the same label is given to different strategies, and lists are typically neither mutually exclusive nor exhaustive (Kellerman & Cole, 1994). The problems Kellerman and Cole observed in categorizing compliance gaining strategies in general are also apparent in taxonomies of breakup strategies. Further, Kellerman and Cole argue that this conceptual overlap is problematic, causing common elements to exist across multiple strategies in addition to any unique, differentiating elements. Clearly, care is needed in defining and categorizing tactics and strategies.

Several researchers have investigated how individuals break off relationships.

Cody (1982) examined breakup strategies used in romantic relationships. Five general breakup strategies emerged: *behavioral de-escalation*, *de-escalation*, *positive tone*, *negative identity management* and *justification*. Behavioral de-escalation strategies are typically avoidance and/or withdrawal from the other party. In such instances, the disengager terminates the relationship by making himself or herself unavailable to the other person, either in a gradual or sudden manner. De-escalation strategies often cite a relationship fault, and may offer the offended party some hope of future reconciliation. For instance, a disengager might say “We’re too young to for a relationship right now. Maybe in the future, things could work out.” Positive tone strategies typically do not place blame for relationship failure on the offended party. Instead, either the disengager takes the responsibility or fate is the culprit. Care is taken with this strategy to address the other party’s feelings. Negative identity management, on the other hand, places the blame on the other party, and the disengager does not address that person’s feelings. Finally, justification involves offering explanation for why the disengager sought to end the relationship.

Subsequent research on relational breakup strategies found that in general, different conceptualizations of and labels for breakup strategies had similar characteristics (Banks et al., 1987; Baxter, 1984; Baxter, 1985; Wilmot, Carbaugh, & Baxter, 1985). Banks et al., (1987) data were consistent with Cody (1982) and extended Cody’s work by establishing a link between breakup strategy selection and subsequent outcomes of the disengagement. Specifically, 30% of the variance in depression and “felt freedom” (in which disengagers felt less constrained by their former partners) could be attributed to the breakup strategy used, as could 17% of the variance in “stayed friends,”

(Banks et al., 1987).

Breakup strategies can further be arrayed along more general dimensions, such as the level of directness or indirectness of the message and the degree to which the breakup message is self-focused or other focused (Baxter, 1984; Baxter, 1985; Wilmot, et al., 1985). The directness-indirectness dimension refers to whether or not the initiator of a breakup informs his/her partner of his/her desire to end the relationship (Baxter, 1985). More specifically, direct strategies expressly state this goal, whereas indirect strategies do not (Baxter, 1985). Self-other orientation refers to which party's face is attended to; self-oriented breakup strategies focus on the initiator's face and other-oriented breakups strategies focus on the other partner's face. A flow chart of the paths involved in breakup communication constructed by Baxter (1984) highlighted two distinct characteristics in breakup strategies; directness/indirectness and self/other orientation. Direct strategies involve explicit confrontation with a partner about the disengager's goal of ending the relationship (Baxter, 1985). Indirect strategies attempt to accomplish a breakup without directly expressing that ultimate goal to a partner, possibly through avoiding the partner or becoming more aloof with him/her (Baxter, 1985; Wilmot et al., 1985). Self-oriented breakup messages address the disengager's feelings and result in achieving the end goal (exit of relationship) relatively quickly (Baxter, 1985). Other-oriented messages on the other hand, address the feelings of the other party in an effort to avoid upsetting him/her (Baxter, 1985). Wilmot et al., (1985) found that directness/indirectness and self/other orientation was important in breakup communication and advanced a three factor model for breakup strategies, consisting of Verbal Directness (other party directly confronted with exact reasons why exit from the relationship is desired), Verbal Indirectness (decline

in both interest about partner and information offered about self), and Nonverbal Withdrawal (significant decline in touch, eye contact, or complete avoidance).

A second goal of this research is to formulate a comprehensive and updated enumeration of breakups strategies commonly used to negotiate exit from a romantic relationship. The existing literature on breakup strategies is, on average, nearly two decades old (Cody, 1982; Baxter, 1985; Banks, Altendorf, Greene & Cody, 1987). Increasingly widespread use of advancements in technology, including e-mail, cellular phones, instant and text messaging open a larger range of avenues to the negotiation of a breakup. In light of those considerations, the following research questions are advanced:

RQ2a: What are the breakups strategies reported?

RQ2b: How do the reported breakup strategies compare with existing literature?

RQ2c: What medium or channels do people report using to accomplish breakups?

Given that the reasons for termination are diverse, it might be expected that each of the different reasons would lead to different ways to accomplish the breakup goal. If reasons and strategies are indeed linked together as parts of the breakup process, then the part of the process that occurs first, reasons, should influence subsequent parts of the same process, namely choice of breakup strategy. Additionally, reasons for termination may influence the specific steps that comprise the breakup strategy chosen. The following research question is posed on this matter.

RQ3: Do the reasons for breakup influence the strategy chosen to terminate the relationship?

A small body of research exists associating sex differences with breakups, particularly in terms of emotions experienced during a breakup (e.g., Choo, Levine, &

Hatfield, 1996; Davis, Shaver, & Vernon, 2003). Some differences in coping behaviors following a breakup are a result of sex differences, though not all these differences were found to be statistically significant (Choo et al, 1996). Choo et al. note that women were more likely to place blame for the breakup on their partner.

Often, sex differences in romantic relationships are studied with respect to relational maintenance and equity (e.g., Canary & Stafford, 1992, Prins, Buunk, & VanYperen, 1993, Ragsdale, 1996) or in light of infidelity or extramarital relationships (Glass & Wright, 1992, Shackelford, LeBlanc, & Drass, 2000, Wiederman & LaMar, 1998). However, often these sex differences are examined post hoc and are not discussed in terms of a rationale for why the differences occur, only whether or not they exist. Little can be gained from the knowledge that sex differences exist (or do not exist) if there is a lack of understanding as to why that is the case.

Buss (2000) argues from an evolutionary perspective that universal sex differences must exist due to differences in the investments required in raising offspring. Women are the higher-investing sex, and therefore should be more selective in their choice of mate. Men, the lower-investing sex, should experience more competition with other men to gain access to women. However, this logic would be applicable only when individuals are seeking a long-term relationship. Buss (2000) noted that men and women have strategies from long-term mating as well as for short-term mating. Short-term mating is used by each for different purposes. Men use short-term mating to attempt to fertilize a number of women so as to produce as many offspring as possible. Buss proposed that women, on the other hand, used short term mating strategies as a means of assessing potential long term partners, clarifying their preferences for a long-term

partner, or as an attempt to increase commitment of a desired partner to develop a long-term relationship. Sex differences in what is sought from a relationship might lead to sex differences in reasons to initiate a breakup, as what is desired at the time is not being attained.

Hill, Rubin, and Peplau (1976) examined sex differences in the process of breaking up from a functional perspective in a study on premarital breakups. Previous research indicated that men tend to fall in love more quickly than women, while women fell out of love more quickly (Rubin, 1973). If women fall out of love more quickly, it is logical to assume that women would initiate a breakup more often than men. In relationships in which they were the more invested partner, women were almost twice as likely to terminate the relationship, compared to men who were more the more invested partner (Hill et al., 1976), suggesting that women are more pragmatic in their approach to relationships than men. Hill et al. (1976) present two possible interpretations of this phenomenon. The first is a more “economical” approach, appealing to an evolutionary perspective. Women are frequently defined by their associations with men, and have more to lose if they do not choose an appropriate partner, for example, economical support. The second interpretation is called “interpersonal sensitivity” (Hill et al., 1976). Hill and colleagues note that in most cultures, women are socialized to be “social-emotional experts,” meaning they are more attuned to the quality of their interpersonal relationships. Subsequently, if the current or projected quality of a woman’s relationship is low, she may be more inclined to terminate that relationship.

Perhaps differences in the amount of information disclosed by men and women would influence which breakup strategy is chosen. In a study examining sex roles and the

ethic of openness, Rubin, Hill, Peplau, and Dunkel-Schetter (1980) found differences in disclosure between men and women with regard to specific content. Men and women were both highly likely to disclose information to their partner, provided that specific topic was suited to traditional sex role beliefs. Men for example, were more likely to disclose information about political views, or areas that emphasized their strengths, while women were more likely to disclose information about their feelings or how their day went. Additionally, Rubin et al. (1980) found that men were more likely than women to share information about what they liked best about their partner.

At first, this seems to contradict the idea that women share more intimate information. However, this may support a functional perspective in that women are more reserved about indicating exactly how they feel about their partner early in the relationship, which is consistent with the belief that women are more cautious and practical about mate selection. If women are more selective in choosing a mate, their approach to breakups may be influenced as well. In light of this information, the following research questions are advanced.

RQ4a: Are there sex differences in reason for relational termination?

RQ4b: Are there sex differences in strategy choice for relational termination?

RQ4c: Are there sex differences in the associations between reasons and strategies?

Study 1

To the author's knowledge, Duck's (1982) model of reasons for dissolution and Cody's (1982) breakup strategy typology has not been replicated, nor has Duck's model been empirically tested. Study 1 was conducted to provide empirical evidence for or against Duck's (1982) model of reasons underlying relational dissolution and for Cody's (1982) breakup strategy typology. The goal of this study was to determine if both Duck's and Cody's models are current, accurate, and reasonably exhaustive accounts of the reasons and methods employed in the dissolution of romantic relationships.

Method

Participants.

Participants in Study 1 were 118 undergraduate students enrolled in an introductory communication course at a large Midwestern university and received credit in the course for their participation. Sixty-one were male, fifty-five were female, and two did not respond. The participants ranged in age from 18 to 24 ($M = 19.34$, $SD = 1.15$). Of this number, 72.9% had initiated a breakup in at least one relationship and 27.1% had never initiated a breakup.

Procedure.

The participants were each given an open-ended questionnaire which asked them to recall the most recent relationship in which they initiated a breakup. Almost 73% of the participants had initiated a breakup at least once, whereas 27% had never initiated a breakup. Men initiated the breakup 52.3% of the time, and women 46.5% of the time. The questionnaire then asked the reason(s) why they decided it was time to terminate a relationship and the manner in which they communicated to their partner that they

wanted to terminate the relationship, including which mediums were used. Additionally, each participant was asked how long they had been in that relationship prior to the breakup and how much time had passed since the breakup. Participants who had never initiated a breakup were asked, hypothetically speaking, if they were in a relationship that they wanted to terminate, how they would communicate to their partner that they wanted to terminate the relationship.

Coding.

All completed questionnaires were coded independently by the author and a trained coder. Each item was compared to existing reasons for breakup and breakup strategies, and coded as present or absent. Reasons or strategies which were evident in the data but not mentioned in the literature were organized into additional reason or strategy categories. After coding was complete, intercoder reliability was calculated for reasons (Scott's $\pi = .74$, Raw agreement = 92.49%), breakup strategies (Scott's $\pi = .52$, Raw agreement = 85.86%), status of current relationship (Scott's $\pi = .91$, Raw agreement = 94%). All disagreements were discussed and resolved by the author and coder. Post resolution data were used for the results section.

Results

Research question 1 asked (a) what typical reasons for breakups were and (b) whether those reasons corresponded with the existing model of reasons for breakups. These results were compared to Duck's model of the types of, or reasons for, relational failure (see Table 1). Whereas general support was found for each of Duck's reasons, two additional reasons emerged; loss of personal freedom and geographic distance. Loss of personal freedom was characterized by comments such as "S/he was too controlling,"

or “We spent too much time together.” The second additional reason was geographic distance between the individuals in the relationship. This referred both to existing physical distance, as well as imminent distance, such as knowing that a partner would be moving away for college soon.

Research question 2 concerned breakup strategies and (a) what breakup strategies are used, (b) how these strategies compared with Cody’s (1982) typology, and (c) what mediums or channels people report using to break up. Breakup strategies were compared to Cody’s (1982) typology of breakup strategies (see Table 2). Cody’s typology consisted of five types of breakup strategies, behavioral de-escalation, de-escalation, positive tone, negative identity management, and justification. Results showed evidence of the use of behavioral de-escalation strategies in the form of avoidance of a partner. Therefore in this research, this strategy is referred to simply as avoidance. De-escalation strategies were also in evidence. These consisted of employing indirect methods, such as spending less time with partner and disclosing less information about self to partner. In the current study, such strategies are referred to as indirect strategies. The justification breakup strategy was found in the data, although in two distinct forms. The first, justification of actual reasons entailed telling partner the real reason for the breakup. Justification of false reasons involved telling partner reasons other than those which actually prompted the initiator to break up with his/her partner. Both justification of actual reasons and justification of false reasons contained elements of Cody’s positive tone and negative identity management strategies. The results found that the positive tone and negative identity management strategies were not mutually exclusive and many of the breakup messages constructed could be representative of either strategy type. For example, both a

positive tone message and a negative identity management message may contain message elements which indicate the true motivation for the breakup as well as those which convey a fabricated motivation for the breakup. Use of a third party was another breakup strategy reported in Study 1. This strategy involves an initiator seeking another person outside the relationship to inform the partner that the initiator wants to break up. The defining feature of this strategy is that since the initiator is using a third party to deliver the message, s/he relinquishes control over how the breakup is communicated to the partner. This differs from simple avoidance strategies in that there is no absence of communication of desire to break up. Instead, this communication is accomplished by an outsider to the relationship. Direct breakup strategies included those in which the initiator sought communication with his/her partner for the express purpose of communicating desire to break up, as opposed to breaking up with partner spontaneously, such as during an argument. Such breakups should consist of at least a small measure of forethought as to what was to be said or done in order to accomplish the breakup.

Chi-square analysis was used to determine the impact of direct experience on the preference for direct breakup strategies. Participants who had never initiated a breakup were significantly more likely to indicate a preference for direct breakup strategies, $\chi^2 (1) = 4.12, p < .05$. Those who had initiated a breakup were not more likely to prefer direct strategies to convey the actual reason for breakup, $\chi^2 (1) = 1.94, n.s.$, a false reason for the breakup, $\chi^2 (1) = 1.94, n.s.$, or to give no reason for the breakup, $\chi^2 (1) = 1.65, n.s.$

The mediums used in communicating the desire to break up with one's partner were also examined (see Table 3a). Participants were instructed to indicate all mediums that they used to communicate their desire to break up with their partner and were

provided with a list of different mediums, which included face to face conversation (n=67), e-mail (n=13), written letter (n=3), instant messenger (n=16), a third party (n=3), telephone call (n=50), and leaving a voicemail or answering machine message (n=5). They were also provided a place to indicate an “other” (n=1) medium (moved away) that was not listed above. Two participants did not respond to this question.

Of the participants who provided this information, 37% used two mediums to communicate their desire to breakup, approximately 15.6% used some combination of three mediums, and nearly 6% used a combination of four or more mediums to communicate their desire to breakup (see Table 3b). This strengthens the position that breakups are not a solitary event, but a process that involves the use multiple instances of communicating this desire to a partner.

Research question 4a concerned sex differences in reasons for breakups (see Table 4a). Of the male participants who had initiated a breakup (n=45), 14.8% gave sudden death as a reason, 3.3% cited mechanical failure, 8.2% said pre-existing doom, 27.9% said process loss, 14.8% cited loss of personal freedom, 11.5% cited distance or moving, and 18% cited other reasons. Female participants who had initiated a breakup (n=40) gave sudden death as a reason 12.7% of the time, mechanical failure 7.3%, pre-existing doom 5.5%, process loss 30.9% of the time, loss of personal freedom 18.2% of the time, long distance or moving 23.6% of the time, and other 20% of the time. Chi-square was used to determine if there was a difference between males and females in reason for breakup. No significant differences in reason for breakup were found for sudden death, $\chi^2(1) = 0.87$, *n.s.*, $\phi = -0.03$, mechanical failure, $\chi^2(1) = 1.00$, *n.s.*, $\phi = 0.11$, pre-existing doom, $\chi^2(1) = 0.32$, *n.s.*, $\phi = 0.06$, process loss, $\chi^2(1) = 0.20$, *n.s.*, $\phi =$

0.05, loss of personal freedom, $\chi^2 (1) = 0.25$, *n.s.*, $\phi = 0.05$, distance or moving, $\chi^2 (1) = 3.18$, *n.s.*, $\phi = 0.20$, and other motivation, $\chi^2 (1) = 0.24$, *n.s.*, $\phi = 0.05$.

Research question 4b concerned sex differences in breakup strategies (see Table 4b). Male participants ($n=45$) directly told their partners they wanted to break up 65.6% of the time, 3.3% of the time they avoided their partner, 4.9% of the time they had a third party inform their partner that they wanted to break up, they indirectly informed their partner 16.4% of the time, gave the actual reason they wanted to break up 44.3% of the time, and gave a false reason for breakup 8.2% of the time. Female participants directly told their partners 61.8% of the time, avoided their partners 3.6% of the time, had a third party inform their partner 1.8% of the time, indirectly informed their partner 12.7% of the time, gave the actual reason for breakup 47.3% of the time, and gave a false reason for breakup 16.4% of the time.

Chi-square was used to determine if there was a difference between males and females in breakup strategies used. No significant differences in reason for breakup were found for directly telling a partner, $\chi^2 (1) = 0.06$, *n.s.*, $\phi = -0.03$, avoidance, $\chi^2 (1) = 0.03$, *n.s.*, $\phi = 0.02$, third party, $\chi^2 (1) = 0.78$, *n.s.*, $\phi = -0.10$, indirect, $\chi^2 (1) = 0.24$, *n.s.*, $\phi = -0.05$, and gave a reason (actual or false), $\chi^2 (2) = 5.03$, *n.s.*, $\phi = .24$.

Some important conclusions can be drawn from these results. Whereas the data seem to reflect each of the reasons in Duck's (1982) model for reasons for relational dissolution, it is not an exhaustive account of the reasons behind seeking relational dissolution. Second, the data offer general support for some of the breakup methods proposed by Cody (1982), but the labels proposed by Cody have been changed to provide a more clear distinction between strategies. Again, the data suggest that Cody's breakup

strategy typology is not an exhaustive account of breakup strategies. Third, multiple mediums are often used to accomplish a breakup. Fourth, the data indicate that direct experience may influence strategy choice, as participants who had never initiated a breakup selected direct strategies more frequently than those who had initiated a breakup at least once. Finally, men and women do not significantly differ in their reason for breaking up. This suggests that contrary to existing research, women may not be more pragmatic in their approach to breakups.

The reasons for a breakup logically precede the use of breakup strategies. Now that a list of reasons have has been obtained, a reasonable way to test the association between reasons and strategies is to systematically vary the reasons and have participants report the likelihood of using various strategies given different reasons. This research strategy was used in Study 2 to answer RQ 3.

Study 2

Method

Participants. Participants were 245 undergraduate students enrolled in communication classes at a large Midwestern university. All participants were given credit in the course for their participation. One hundred and thirty five of them (55.1%) were female and 109 (44.5%) were male, and one did not respond to the sex question. The participants ranged in age from 17 to 29 ($M = 21.42$, $SD = 1.83$). Of this sample, 64.9% were Caucasian, 15.1% were Asian, 12.7% African American, 3.7% were Hispanic, and 2.9% indicated "other." Nearly 80% of participants indicated that they had initiated a breakup at least once in a past relationship. The number of times that participants had initiated breakups ranged from 1 to 13 ($M = 2.44$, $SD = 1.88$) and the time that had passed since the last breakup ranged from just a couple weeks to eight years ($M = 23.51$ in months, $SD = 20.41$).

Design. This study uses a one-way, six independent groups experimental design. Breakup reason was the independent variable and ratings of breakup strategies were the dependent variables. Six hypothetical scenarios (see Appendix B) were constructed on the basis of participant responses in Study 1 and Duck's research (1982). Forty-two participants completed the sudden death scenario, 40 completed the process loss scenario, 40 completed the mechanical failure, 41 completed the pre-existing doom scenario, 41 completed the loss of personal freedom scenario, and 41 completed the distance or moving scenario.

In each scenario, participants were asked to imagine that they have been in an exclusive relationship with their partner for one year. Next, each scenario described one

of the reasons for breakup found in Study 1 (sudden death, process loss, mechanical failure, pre-existing doom, loss of personal freedom, and distance or moving).

Participants were then asked, based upon that reason, to rate how likely they would be employ various methods to end the relationship (see Appendix C). Each breakup strategy was represented by multiple items in the questionnaire. Participants were then asked if they had ever been the partner to initiate a breakup with a romantic partner. This question addresses the differences found in Study 1 between participants who had initiated a breakup and those who had never initiated a breakup.

Measures. Three items were included to represent each type of breakup strategy. Each item was evaluated by participants on 5 point Likert scales (1 being very unlikely and 5 being very likely) reflecting how likely they would be to employ that method in breaking up with their partner. Avoidance was indicated with the items “I would just stop calling him/her,” “I would change my daily schedule around so I didn’t have to see him/her,” and “I would change my phone number and block his/her e-mail address.” Third party was indicated by the items “I would tell a friend and hopes/he tells him/her,” “I would have someone else tell him/her,” and “I would tell his/her family and ask them to explain it to him/her.” The items “I would be too busy to spend much time with him/her,” “I would tell my partner less information about me,” and “I would spend less time with my partner,” were used to indicate indirect breakup strategies. Justification of actual reasons was indicated by the items “I would tell him/her honestly why my reasons for wanting to break up,” “I would make sure I don’t lie or mislead him/her, and tell him/her exactly why I wanted to break up,” and “I would list the real reasons I wanted to break up for him/her.” Justification of false reasons was indicated by the items “I would

make up an excuse for why I wanted to break up,” “I would say whatever is necessary to make him/her understand why I want to break up,” and “I would blame myself even if that wasn’t why I wanted to break up so that I wouldn’t hurt his/her feelings.” Direct strategies seeking communication with the partner for the purpose of breaking up were indicated by the following items: “I would tell him/her that we needed to talk about breaking up,” “I would sit down and try to make him/her understand exactly why we needed to break up,” and “I would take him/her out and have a long talk about exactly why I am unhappy.” Strategies which involved getting the partner to break up were indicated by the items “I would make sure s/he found out I was unhappy,” “I would cheat on him/her and make sure s/he found out about it,” and “I would annoy him/her so s/he gets really mad at me.”

Results

Reliabilities were calculated for each of the breakup strategy items on the questionnaire (direct $\alpha = .75$, indirect $\alpha = .72$, justification of actual reason $\alpha = .51$, justification of false reasons $\alpha = .23$, get partner to break up $\alpha = .11$, have a third party tell them $\alpha = .60$, avoidance $\alpha = .64$). These reliabilities were unacceptable, suggesting that the intended measurement did not work as intended.

Therefore, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was done to determine if a better set of scales could be obtained. Principle axis factoring with an oblique rotation was used. The criteria used included all primary loadings greater than .40, and all secondary factor loadings less than half the primary (see Table 9). Five eigenvalues were greater than 1.0, but a scree plot suggested four factors. The first four factors of the four and five factor solutions were identical, but the five factor solution was rejected as the fifth factor only

contained one item.

The four factors that resulted were interpreted as consisting of open communication, indirect strategies, avoidance, and it's not you, it's me strategies (see Table 1). First, open communication, involves an initiator directly addressing his/her partner about the desire to break up. Open communication strategies are marked by communication with a partner in some way, either via a discussion or simply just telling a partner that the initiator wants to break up. The second factor comprises a more indirect approach to breakups. Indirect breakup strategies consist of two styles. The first is the actions that an individual does to sabotage, or deliberately harm the relationship and the second, the involvement of a third party to inform a partner of the initiator's desire to break up. An example of relational sabotage might be cheating on one's partner, so s/he initiates the breakup. An example of the second style might be asking a mutual friend to express the initiator's desire to break up. In both instances, the initiator is not directly communicating to his/her partner the desire to break up. The third factor involves both physical and/or emotional avoidance of the partner as a means of breaking up. For example, the initiator might change his or her daily schedule around so s/he is always "too busy" to spend time with his/her partner. Or, s/he may withhold increasing amounts of personal information that one would normally disclose to his/her partner, such as plans for the future. The fourth factor is characterized by the initiator taking responsibility for the cause of the breakup, even if s/he believes his/her partner to be the reason for the breakup. This is called the "it's not you, it's me" strategy. Initiators using this strategy appear to have a high level of concern for their partner, and communicate the breakup message in such a way as to avoid hurting their partner's feelings. This may include

making up fatalistic excuses, such as “We were never meant to be” or taking all responsibility for the breakup, which often heard as the ‘it’s not you, it’s me” line.

The distributions for each of the four strategies were examined to find out how likely each of the strategies were to be utilized. The open communication strategy had a slightly negatively skewed distribution. Indirect breakup strategies had a significantly positively skewed distribution. Both the avoidance and it’s not you it’s me strategy had relatively flat distributions.

Univariate analysis of variance was used to determine if there was a difference in the overall frequency with which the four strategies were used. Overall, the preferred method reported to break up with a partner was open communication ($M=3.85$, $SD=.71$), followed by avoidance ($M=2.64$, $SD=1.05$), and then it’s not you, it’s me ($M=2.33$, $SD=1.03$). Indirect strategies were the least frequently selected ($M=1.34$, $SD=.59$). Paired sample t-tests were performed to determine if each of the strategies was significantly different from the others (see Table 5). Each of the strategies was found to be significantly different from the other three.

Open communication strategies were negatively correlated with all other strategies, indicating that people who selected open communication strategies were not likely to select indirect, avoidance, or it’s not you it’s me strategies. Indirect strategies were positively correlated with both avoidance strategies and it’s not you, it’s me strategies. This could indicate that those who selected these types of strategies may select more than one type of strategy to accomplish a breakup.

Research question 3 concerned whether the reasons for breakup influenced the strategies chosen. A one-way analysis of variance with Tukey B for each strategy was

done to determine if the reason for breakup had a significant effect on strategy choice (see Table 6). Participants were significantly less likely to select an it's not you it's me strategy when sudden death was the reason for the breakup ($M=1.56$, $SD=0.71$) than when the reason was loss of personal freedom ($M=2.32$, $SD=1.07$), distance or moving ($M=2.35$, $SD=.98$), pre-existing doom ($M=2.89$, $SD=.89$), mechanical failure ($M=2.60$, $SD=.93$, or process loss ($M=2.28$, $SD=1.09$), $F(5, 239) = 8.90$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .16$. When the reason for breakup was distance or moving, participants were significantly less likely to select avoidance as a strategy to breakup ($M=2.28$, $SD=1.02$) than when the breakup stemmed from loss of personal freedom ($M=2.54$, $SD=.99$), sudden death ($M=2.94$, $SD=1.18$), pre-existing doom ($M=2.97$, $SD=.92$), mechanical failure ($M=2.48$, $SD=1.07$), or process loss ($M=2.63$, $SD=.95$), $F(5, 128) = 2.64$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .09$. This may be a result of the fact that there is already physical distance between the couple, so seeking additional distance might not be necessary.

Research question 4c pertained to sex differences in the association between reasons for breakup and strategies used. Independent samples t-tests were used to determine what effects, if any, sex had on the association between reasons for breakup and strategies selected. Men ($M=1.72$, $SD=.76$) were significantly more likely than women ($M=1.34$, $SD=.37$) to prefer indirect strategies when sudden death was the reason for the breakup, $t(40) = 2.17$, $p = .036$. None of the other reasons were significantly associated with breakup strategy choice nor were other sex differences observed (see Table 7).

Additionally, the correlation between age and sex and strategy preference within each scenario was tested (see Table 9). For men, the correlation between indirect breakup

strategies and sudden death reasons for breakup was significant, $r(15) = .48, p = .053$. A preference for indirect breakup strategies was positively correlated with the sudden death scenario. Also for men, there was a positive correlation between avoidance breakup strategies and distance or moving reasons for breakup, $r(13) = .55, p = .034$. A preference for avoidance breakup strategies was positively correlated with the distance or moving scenario. No other significant correlations were found. These results should be interpreted with caution, as they may be due to sampling error. In addition, the narrow age range of the sample limits the generalizability of these findings.

Discussion

This research focused on the process of breakups in romantic relationships. There were three main purposes for this study; first, to empirically test Duck's (1982) model of reasons for breakups, second, to compare currently reported breakup strategies to those in Cody's (1982) typology, and third, to determine the influence of reasons for breakup on the subsequent strategy chosen to break up.

Two separate studies were performed. The first was an open-ended design survey, which asked participants to recall a past breakup and explain why they decided to break up and how they accomplished that breakup. This survey tested research questions 1a, and 1b concerning reasons for breakup, 2a and 2b, concerning strategies used to break up, and 2c, which concerned the mediums used to break up. Additionally, the breakup stories provided in Study 1 were used to develop hypothetical breakup scenarios used in Study 2. In Study 2, participants were presented with one of six hypothetical breakup scenarios and were asked to rate how likely they would be to use a particular breakup strategy. Each breakup strategy was represented by three items on the survey and finally, an open-

ended question asked if there was anything else they would do in that situation.

Research questions 1a and 1b concerned the reasons why people wanted to break up in romantic relationships and how these reasons compared to Duck's model of reasons for breakups. Study 1 found that Duck's model was accurate, but not complete. In addition to sudden death, process loss, mechanical failure, and pre-existing doom, participants also indicated that a loss of personal freedom (their partner was demanding too much of their time) and distance or moving (their partner had moved away or would be moving away soon) were reasons they decided to break up with their partners.

The four reasons in Duck's model focus on the interaction between the two individuals, and how different disruptions to this interaction (i.e. a violation of norms, faulty process, incompatible values, or inherent incompatibility) may incite one partner to end the relationship. Distance or moving and loss of personal freedom are unique in that the influences of factors outside the interaction are what prompt the breakup. For example, when one individual moves away, the quality of interaction between the partners is changed. The geographical distance may limit the amount of physical interaction the couple engages in, which can result in less satisfaction in the relationship. When an individual demands too much of a partner's time, such as with loss of personal freedom, it can infringe upon other social activities, time with friends, or even time alone. The quality of interaction may be satisfactory, but the amount of interaction may leave little time for activities outside the relationship, causing discontent with the relationship. The addition of these reasons to Duck's model broadens the focus of the model from primarily a couple-centered perspective to one that allows personal and external factors to impact the relationship.

Similarly, data relevant to research questions 2a and 2b showed that Cody's typology of breakup strategies was supported, though not complete. Other strategies people used to break up included asking a third party to tell partner and attempting to get one's partner to initiate the breakup. As previously mentioned, Cody's typology consists of five general breakups strategies; behavioral de-escalation, de-escalation, positive tone, negative identity management, and justification. The data from Study 1 suggested an additional strategy not included in Cody's typology; getting the partner to initiate the breakup. Participants indicated that they would behave in ways they thought would cause their partner to be so dissatisfied that s/he would initiate the breakup instead. This strategy differs from those in Cody's typology because the initiator manipulates the cause of the breakup to make his/her partner initiate the breakup instead. Breakup strategies are not necessarily an action begun by the partner who desires the breakup, but can result from manipulation of one's partner. The addition of strategies in which the initiator tries to get his/her partner to break up to Cody's typology provides a more comprehensive typology of strategies.

In Study 2, the measures of Cody's strategies, plus the addition of getting one's partner to break up did not work as intended, leading to further analysis of these breakup strategies. Exploratory factor analysis yielded four strategies, each significantly different from the others in terms of likelihood of use rating. These included open communication, indirect strategies (consisting of both relational sabotage and third party inclusion), avoidance, and it's not you it's me strategies. The differences in these strategies are similar to dimensions presented by Baxter (1985). Baxter noted that regardless of how the breakup is accomplished or how it is labeled, the data "point consistently to a basic set of

disengagement strategies which appear to vary on two underlying dimensions: directness and other-orientation,” (Baxter, 1985, p. 247). Those who prefer direct strategies clearly convey to their partner the desire to end the relationship. However, this research showed that direct and indirect strategies were significantly different from each other, not opposites, as Baxter found. This would indicate that directness and indirectness lie on separate continuums, each varying in the degree to which it is direct or indirect, independent of the other. Additionally strategies can vary in their level of other-orientation, or amount of facework performed. Open communication and indirect strategies may be very low in other-orientation, performing very little if any facework, or they may be very highly other-oriented. Avoidance strategies may contain very little other-orientation, as when no face concerns of one’s partner are addressed, or they may be indicative of a high level of other orientation, as when contact is avoided in an effort to avoid inadvertently delivering a face damaging message. It’s not you it’s me strategies may vary in their level of directness or indirectness, and are primarily highly other-oriented. The dimensions of breakup messages detailed by Baxter (1985) provide a useful framework for understanding the characteristics of types of breakup strategies.

Research question 2c inquired what mediums were used in communicating breakup strategies. More mediums are available for communication, including e-mail, text messaging, and instant messenger. Research in other areas of communication has found that when more channels are available, people tend to use newer mediums in conjunction with prior mediums, instead of in place of them (Kraemer, 1982, Rice & Case, 1983). Consistent with this finding, nearly half (41.5%) of all participants used more than one medium to communicate their desire to break up (see Tables 3 and 6).

Research question 3 asked what relationship, if any, there was between the reasons for breakup and the strategies used to break up. Overall, with the exception of it's not you it's me strategies used when sudden death is the reason for breakup and avoidance strategies when the reason for breakup is distance or moving, the data suggest that reasons for breakup don't have a substantial influence on the strategy chosen to break up. There was a general preference for open communication as a breakup strategy, and those who used open communication breakup strategies are not likely to use indirect, avoidance, or it's not you it's me strategies. However, the negative correlation between open communication and indirect, avoidance, and it's not you it's me strategies suggests that those who use those strategies would not use open communication. Avoidance, indirect, and it's not you it's me strategies were positively correlated to each other however, indicating that people who prefer one also prefer the others. This suggests that choice of breakup strategy could be influenced by something other than reason for breakup. In a study on roommate conflicts, Sillars (1980) noted that in selecting conflict strategies, participants considered attributions about a partner's intent to cooperate, the cause of the conflict (self, other, or external factors), and the stability of the conflict (is the cause of conflict something that can be changed or not). Furthermore, the projected outcome of use of a particular strategy may influence strategy choice. Perhaps breakup strategy choice is influenced by these same factors. For example, if a person believes future interaction with his/her partner is likely, s/he may be less likely to use avoidance or indirect strategies. Another reason breakup strategy choice may not be influenced by reason for breakup could be found in attachment styles or love styles. For example, people with secure attachment orientations may be more likely to use open

communication to express desire to breakup.

Research questions 4a, 4b, and 4c concerned sex differences in reasons, strategies, and the associations between reasons and strategies in breakups. Contrary to an evolutionary perspective of sex differences, there were no significant differences between men and women in either reasons for breakup or strategies used to break up. Both men and women were less likely to use it's not you it's me strategies when sudden death was the reason for the breakup, however the effect size for women was more than double that for men. This suggests that though neither men nor women are likely to use an it's not you it's me strategy in response to a sudden death scenario, women are much less likely to place the blame for breakup on themselves when sudden death was the reason for the breakup. The sudden death scenario provided in Study 2 referred to a partner who had unfaithful sexually to his/her partner. This is one type of sudden death reason for breakups. However, this situation might suggest that men are less likely to be direct in discussing a partner's sexual infidelity than women.

Limitations

Data were collected via surveys and hypothetical scenarios, which is an important limitation in this study. In Study 1, individuals who had never initiated a breakup indicated they would be open and direct nearly 97% of the time, but of those who had initiated a breakup, 87% used open communication, and only 63% indicated their actual reasons for breakup. This suggests that situational factors and/or experience with breakups may influence choice of breakup strategy. Hypothetical scenarios, than, might result in higher ratings for strategy choices that are socially appropriate, or ideal strategies, instead of strategies that a person may ultimately choose when faced with a

particular situation.

A second limitation of this study also related to the survey data collection format. Participants in Study 2 were given closed ended surveys, which could result in higher ratings for strategies that are more socially desirable. This survey style could also lead participants to indicate they would be likely to use strategies they might not have thought of on their own. In an attempt to compensate for these issues, an open ended design was used in Study 1 to inform the strategies which were provided in Study 2. In addition, an open ended question was included on the instrument for Study 2, allowing participants to add any additional strategies they might use.

Open ended and closed ended survey designs offer different benefits at different costs. Open ended allow a person to answer in his/her own words and do not carry the potential of leading a person to answer in a way s/he might not have thought of alone. In closed ended surveys, participants “code” themselves into predetermined categories. Boster, Stiff, and Reynolds (1985) note that the two types of methods complement each other, each compensating for where the other may lack. Similarly, Visser, Krosnick, and Lavrakas (2000) note that closed ended surveys are most efficiently used when they are preceded by an open ended survey, as this ensures a more comprehensive checklist of choices. Study 1 used deductively derived breakup strategies in order to test Duck’s (1982) model of the reasons for breakup and Cody’s (1982) typology of breakup strategies. The deductively derived responses indicated that though each model was accurate, neither was complete.

Another limitation of this study is the hypothetical scenarios that were created. For example, sudden death describes a situation in which a partner discovers highly

negatively charged information about his/her partner. This could be sexual infidelity, a violation of trust, withholding vital personal information, such as already having a significant other or spouse or having children, or a number of other situations. Likewise with any of the other reasons, factors that define a situation and make it unique to the people involved may not necessarily be represented in the hypothetical scenarios provided. Until a person is faced with a particular situation, s/he may not know how s/he would handle it, causing him/her to report using strategies that she might not actually use. In an effort to make the scenarios as generalizable as possible, they were created based on the most frequently reported situations for that reason from Study 1, and a limited amount of situation specific details were included.

The homogeneity of the participants in this study also limits the generalizability of the findings. Participants ranged in age from 17 to 29, and were all college students, which represents a narrow portion of the population. At this time in their lives, they may not be seeking a potential spouse, or even a long-term relationship. Instead, they may be more focused on short term relationships. This may explain why no significant sex differences were present in the current study. The positive correlations found for men between sudden death scenarios and a preference for indirect breakup strategies and between distance scenarios and a preference for avoidance strategies may also be affected by the limitations of the current sample. Additionally, since the current sample was largely Caucasian, potential cultural differences could not be examined accurately in this study.

Direction for future research

Although reasons, with the exception of sudden death reasons and the decreased

likelihood of it's not you it's me strategies, did not have a significant influence on choice of breakup strategies, there was a definite preference for open communication strategies. The least preferred were indirect strategies. Avoidance, indirect, and it's not you it's me strategies were positively correlated with each other, but negatively correlated with open communication. This suggests that a factor other than reason may influence which breakup strategies an individual is likely to use. Theoretically, this can contribute to an increased understanding of the "big picture" process of relationships. It might be useful for future research to examine other factors which may influence choice of breakup strategy. Research on conflict styles may provide more insight into what factors influence breakup strategy selection. Or, perhaps individual factors such as attachment style orientation may influence strategy choice, causing people to create breakup strategy repertoires that they refer to when they decide to initiate a breakup. More research on breakups as a process in a bigger picture of the progression of romantic relationships would further our understanding of both what happens after a breakup and how breakups might influence the direction of future relationships.

Empirical studies on breakups which account for both sides of a breakup would provide a great deal of insight into the breakup process. To the author's knowledge, no empirical studies exist on breakups which provide both partner's recounting of the breakup. This leaves a significantly one-sided picture of the process, which is useful in understanding the motivations of the person who initiated the breakup, but is not generalizable to both partners. Additionally, it might be beneficial to explore how dyadic interaction might influence the breakup process, particularly in light of the use of multiple mediums found in this study. Multiple medium use provides support for the

view of breakups as a process as opposed to a static event. This research approached breakups from a one-sided perspective, and as such only examines an earlier portion of the process. Dyadic interaction may influence the decision to use multiple mediums later on in the breakup process. As previously noted in conflict literature, people often consider the other party's response when choosing how to approach the conflict. For example, the use of multiple mediums in a breakup may be necessary if a partner is resistant to the idea of breaking up, if s/he does not understand a previously given breakup message, or attempts to pursue an alternate relationship the initiator does not want.

Further, how might the increase in available communication mediums influence the breakup process? As previously stated, past research suggests that when more mediums are available, people tend to use them with each other rather than in place of each other. Why might someone use more than one medium to inform his/her partner of the desire to break up? Another question that might be asked is how people might respond when more informal or indirect mediums are used to break up. If only an e-mail and/or text message is sent, how might the rejected partner's sense-making or grieving process be different from that of someone who was directly informed of his/her partner's desire to break up and was given an opportunity to respond to that desire? Practically speaking, this may be useful in negotiating exit from not only romantic relationships, but friendships or professional relationships as well.

Third, as discussed above, breakup strategies can vary in their levels of directness/indirectness, and self/other-orientation. While it may seem logical that the most effective method of negotiating a breakup would be to select a strategy that is high

in its degree of directness and its degree of other-orientation, such strategies are not always selected. It might be prudent to ask what factors might influence individual differences in the selection of breakup strategies.

Another direction for future research might be to examine why there are no significant sex differences for reasons, strategy choice, or even frequency of initiation for breakups. This finding is contrary to functional perspectives on sex roles, which reason that women are more pragmatic in their approach to relationships and to evolutionary perspectives which would argue that women seek to maintain relationships for economic reasons. Perhaps sex roles have changed to a point where women are more confident that they are not dependent on men for economic support. If this is so, what differences might we see in women's mate selection processes compared to that in past research? Again, this is interesting in that social expectations of men and women may have evolved to the point where some stereotypes of the evolutionary perspective may no longer apply. Another possibility is that sex differences do not exist for the sample's particular age range, but instead emerge later on, when long term relationships are sought.

Finally, future research should consider measuring perceptions of equity in the relationship that is ending. The more invested party in a relationship may choose to end the relationship if s/he feels their feelings are not reciprocated (Hill, et al., 1976). Hill et al. also noted that while men were found to be very likely to end a relationship they weren't highly invested in, they less likely than women to break up with their partner when they were more invested in the relationship. How might differing levels of investment in a relationship influence the reasons for breakups and strategy preference? Unequal investments in the relationship may also influence dyadic interaction between a

couple during the breakup process. A more highly involved partner may be more resistant to a breakup, perhaps causing his/her partner to use multiple strategies or even less preferred strategies, if such strategies seem to be more effective at accomplishing the breakup.

The current research examined the process of romantic relationship termination with respect to the relationship between the reasons that a breakup was desired and the strategies used to accomplish the breakup. When more is learned about the process of termination of romantic relationships, greater understanding of the coping process and possibly interaction in future relationships might be gained. Furthermore, research in this area could extend to that of more formally committed relationships such as marriage, and subsequently divorce mediation.

Appendix A

Breakup Study

Please answer each question in as much detail as possible. You will not be judged in any way by your answers. Your responses will be kept anonymous and confidential. You may choose to not answer any question you do not feel comfortable answering.

For the following questions, romantic relationships are relationships in which you and your partner have an exclusive, established relationship.

1. Have you ever been in a romantic relationship where you initiated the breakup? (Circle One)

Yes, at least once

No, never

****If no on item 1, please skip to questions 9-13.****

If yes, please answer questions about the most recent instance where you initiated a breakup.

2. Why, specifically, did you decide to end the relationship? In other words, what were your reasons for wanting to break up?

3. How did you communicate your desire to end the relationship?

4. Did you explicitly talk to your partner about breaking up? Yes No

5. If yes, what did you say?

6. Is there anything else you did?

7. What medium(s) were used? (Check all that apply)

☐ Face to Face Conversation

☐ E-mail

☐ Written Letter

☐ Instant Messenger

☐ Had a friend tell him/her

☐ Phone Call

☐ Left Voice Mail/Answering Machine Message

☐ Other: _____ Please

explain

8. How long ago did this happen? _____ day(s) _____ week(s) _____ month(s) _____ year(s)

9. Prior to the breakup, how long had you been together?

_____ day(s) _____ week(s) _____ month(s) _____ year(s)

10. How would you describe your relationship with that person today?

11. Age (in years) _____

12. Sex: (Circle One)

male

female

13. If you have never been in a romantic relationship in which you were the partner to initiate the breakup, please imagine the following hypothetical situation: You are in a romantic relationship and have decided that you want to end that relationship. How would you go about communicating to your partner that you wish to end the relationship? Please be as detailed as possible.

Thank you for completing this survey!

Appendix B

Scenario 1: (sudden death)

You and your relational partner have been seriously dating each other for a little over a year. The two of you have an agreement date only each other and no one else. You go to visit your partner at his/her place early one afternoon and find him/her in bed with another person. Betrayed by your partner's infidelity, you decide that s/he can't be forgiven, and you decide to break up.

Scenario 2: (loss of personal freedom)

You and your relational partner have been seriously dating each other for a little over a year. The two of you have an agreement date only each other and no one else. For the past six months, your partner has been increasingly more demanding of your time, expresses strong jealousy when you hang out with anyone else, and constantly says negative things about these people. You feel smothered by his/her need to spend so much time with you and decide that you want to break up.

Scenario 3: (distance or moving)

You and your relational partner have been seriously dating each other for a little over a year. The two of you have an agreement date only each other and no one else. Your partner has taken a new job in a city about 800 miles from where you both live. S/he left to go work there about three months ago. At first, you visited each other, but that is happening less often now. A long distance relationship is not what you want and you have decided that you want to break up.

Scenario 4: (pre-existing doom)

You and your relational partner have been seriously dating each other for a little over a year. The two of you have an agreement date only each other and no one else. You started dating him/her because s/he was so different from you. You used to think these differences were attractive, but lately you've realized that those differences are the reason you fight so much. You just aren't compatible and you never were. You get irritated even just thinking about your partner and you have decided that you want to break up.

Scenario 5: (mechanical failure)

You and your relational partner have been seriously dating each other for a little over a year. The two of you have an agreement date only each other and no one else. You have begun to notice more frequently that you and your partner do not agree on many issues which are very important to you. You want a partner who has values more similar to your own, so you decide to break up.

Scenario 6: (process loss)

You and your relational partner have been seriously dating each other for a little over a year. The two of you have an agreement date only each other and no one else. In the past few months, your partner is always too busy with his/her own interests, and ignores your feelings. When s/he does spend time with you, you feel it's only because s/he feels s/he "has to." Annoyed that although there is potential, you can't make the relationship work, you decide to break up.

Appendix C

Breakup Study

Please read each of the following scenarios. Please respond to each of the following statements on a scale of 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). Your responses will be kept anonymous and confidential. You may choose to not answer any question you do not feel comfortable answering.

The six scenarios from Appendix B were placed here for each of the six forms of this questionnaire.

How would you break up with them?

1. I would just stop calling him/her. (avoidance)

1	2	3	4	5
Very unlikely				Very Likely
2. I would tell a friend and hope s/he says something to my partner. (third party)

1	2	3	4	5
Very unlikely				Very Likely
3. I would be too busy to spend as much time with him/her. (indirect)

1	2	3	4	5
Very unlikely				Very Likely
4. I would tell him/her the real reasons I wanted to break up. (justification of actual reason)

1	2	3	4	5
Very unlikely				Very Likely
5. I would annoy him/her so s/he gets really mad at me. (get him/her to break up with me)

1	2	3	4	5
Very unlikely				Very Likely
6. I would make up an excuse for why I wanted to break up. (justification of false reason)

1	2	3	4	5
Very unlikely				Very Likely
7. I would change my daily schedule around so I didn't have to see him/her. (avoidance)

1	2	3	4	5
Very unlikely				Very Likely
8. I would not tell my partner as much information about me. (indirect)

1	2	3	4	5
Very unlikely				Very Likely
9. I would spend less time with my partner. (indirect)

1	2	3	4	5
Very unlikely				Very Likely
10. I would cheat on him/her and make sure s/he found out. (get him/her to break up)

1	2	3	4	5
Very unlikely				Very Likely
11. I would make sure s/he found out that I was unhappy. (get him/her to break up)

27. What is your ethnic background?

____ Caucasian ____ African-American ____ Asian
____ Hispanic
____ Native American ____ Other

Appendix D

Factor 1: Open Communication

Open communication strategies are marked by communicating to a partner in some way, either via a discussion or simply just telling a partner that the initiator wants to break up.

- JA1: I would tell him/her the real reasons I wanted to break up.
- JA2: I would list all the reasons I wanted to break up for him/her.
- JA3: I would make sure I don't lie or mislead him/her, and tell him/her why I wanted to breakup
- D1: I would sit down and try to make him/her understand why we need to break up.
- D2: I would tell him/her that we needed to talk about breaking up.
- JF3: I would say whatever is necessary to make him/her understand I want to break up
- D3: I would take him/her out and have a long talk about exactly why I am unhappy.

Factor 2: Inflict Relational Damage (Sabotage and Third Party)

There are two aspects to the items for this factor. It consists of both actions that an individual does to sabotage, or deliberately harm the relationship as well as involving a third party to inform a partner of the initiator's desire to break up. In both instances, the initiator is not directly communicating to his/her partner the desire to break up.

- GT2: I would cheat on him/her and make sure s/he found out.
- A3: I would change my phone number and block his/her e-mail address.
- T2: I would have someone else tell him/her.
- T3: I would tell his/her family and ask them to explain it to him/her.

Factor 3: Avoidance

Items for this factor all use avoidance of the partner, either physically or emotionally, to accomplish the breakup. In this instance, the initiator doesn't communicate to his/her partner why s/he wants to break up, nor does s/he even communicate the desire to break up.

- I1: I would be too busy to spend as much time with him/her.
- I2: I would not tell my partner as much information about me.
- A2: I would change my daily schedule around so I didn't have to see him/her.

Factor 4: It's not you, it's me

Items in this factor are characterized by the initiator's attempts to "take the blame" for the breakup. Even if the true reason for the breakup is the partner, the initiator of the breakup will not attribute the breakup to the partner, instead shouldering that responsibility him/herself.

- JF1: I would make up an excuse for why I wanted to break up.
- JF2: I would blame myself even if that wasn't why I wanted to break up so that I wouldn't hurt his/her feelings.

Appendix E

Factor	Definition	Example	Mean	SD	α
Open Communication (Factor 1)	Directly express to partner the desire to break up; may or may not provide the partner the opportunity to give feedback	"I would tell him or her all of the reasons why I wanted to break up." or "I would sit down and try to make him/her understand why I wanted to break up."	3.84	0.71	0.76
Indirect - Sabotage and Third Party (Factor 2)	Deliberately harm the relationship, either by behaving in a manner to would get the partner to break up or through the involvement of a third party.	"I would cheat on him/her and make sure s/he found out." (sabotage) or "I would have someone else tell him/her." (third party).	1.34	0.59	0.73
Avoidance (Factor 3)	Avoid partner physically, emotionally, or both to indicate desire to break up.	"I would be too busy to spend as much time with him/her." or "I would change my daily schedule around so I didn't have to see him/her."	2.64	1.04	0.70
It's not you, it's me (Factor 4)	Claim responsibility for the breakup to avoid hurting partner's feelings.	"I would make up an excuse for why I wanted to break up" or "I would blame myself even if that wasn't why I wanted to break up so that I wouldn't hurt his/her feelings."	2.33	1.03	0.53

Appendix F

Rotated Factor Matrix(a)

	Factor			
	Open Communication	Indirect (Sabotage and 3 rd Party)	Avoidance	It's not you, it's me
d1	.759*	-.281	-.154	.155
d2	.676*	-.085	-.158	.058
ja1	.602*	-.274	-.064	-.192
d3	.531*	-.045	-.141	.199
ja3	.497*	-.129	.000	-.269
ja2	.493*	.115	.042	-.010
jf3	.452*	-.032	.208	-.137
gt3	.297	-.098	.252	.007
t3	.042	.752*	-.056	.057
gt2	-.157	.657*	.006	.044
a3	-.046	.626*	.150	-.137
t2	-.222	.547*	.145	.233
a1	-.268	.463	.368	-.151
t1	-.146	.399	.389	.078
gt1	-.158	.364	.171	.230
i3	.087	-.005	.671*	-.077
i1	-.145	.125	.638*	.059
i2	.028	.104	.635*	.163
a2	-.078	.293	.599*	.141
jf2	.049	.033	.079	.603*
jf1	-.196	.201	.176	.594*

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring. Rotation Method: Quartimax with Kaiser Normalization.
a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

Table 1
Study 1 Reasons for Breakup

Reason	Definition	Example	Freq	%
Sudden Death	New, negatively charged information is discovered about partner.	Carrie finds out that her partner has been having a sexual relationship with another woman, even though they had agreed to an exclusive relationship.	17	14.4%
Mechanical Failure	Partners have incompatible goals or values	Chris and Dan break up because Dan wants children someday but Chris does not.	6	5.1%
Pre-existing Doom	Partners are inherently incompatible	Jason is very introverted, and feels uncomfortable around his partner, who is very outgoing and sociable.	8	6.8%
Process Loss	Relationship does not reach full potential because one or both partners does not make use of all available resources.	Kevin and his partner have been spending a lot of time at work and in classes and don't make time for each other. Kevin says he doesn't feel like they have anything in common anymore.	34	28.8%
Network	Friends and/or family do not support partner or the relationship	Jennifer's father thinks her partner is too old for her, and tells her to end the relationship.	5	4.2%
Loss of Personal Freedom	Feeling that the relationship has become too restrictive; partner is controlling	Karen's partner is always calling her to make sure she is where she said she would be and is upset when she spends time with friends instead.	19	16.1%
Distance / Moving	Relationship is long distance or partner moved away or is moving in the near future.	Caroline decides to break up with Erik when she takes a new job in another state.	20	16.9%
Other	Reasons that do not fit into any of the above	Kate is attracted to other men and even though her relationship with Joe is ok, she breaks up to pursue relationships with the other men.	17	14.4%

Table 2

Study 1 Breakups Strategies Used

Strategy Used	Definition	Example	Freq.	%
Avoided Partner	Abruptly stopped any form of communication with partner without warning.	Jennifer wants to break up with her partner, so she changes her phone number, block's her partner's e-mails and plans her schedule so she will not run into her partner by chance.	4	3.4%
Directly told Partner	Explicitly expressed desire to break up in a separate communication instance.	Justin wants to break up with his partner because he is going away to college and wants to be single. He sits down with his partner to have a conversation about wanting to break up.	75	63.6%
Use of a Third Party	Have another person break up with partner.	Kate wants to break up with her partner and asks her partner's best friend to tell him that she wants to break up.	4	3.4%
Justification - Actual Reason	Expressed actual motivation for breakup to partner.	Sarah's parents don't like her partner, and tell her to break it off. She does, telling her partner that her parents asked her to break up.	38	32.2%
Justification - False reason	Attributed breakup to an ulterior motivation instead of actual motivation.	Jason has found someone new that he wants to date, but tells his partner that he wants time to be single and think about their relationship.	17	14.4%
Indirectly informed Partner	Gave verbal or nonverbal "hints" expressing desire to end the relationship; Engaged in behaviors that would cause partner to break up.	Sean wants to break up with his partner, so he insults her a lot, and purposely shows up late or not at all for dates, hoping that she will break up with him.	17	14.4%

Table 3a
Study 1 Medium(s) Used to Breakup

Medium Used	n	% of sample	% of initiators
Face to Face	67	56.78%	77.91%
Instant Messenger	16	13.56%	18.60%
Voicemail / Answering Machine	5	4.24%	5.81%
E-mail	13	11.02%	15.12%
Third Party	3	2.54%	3.49%
Wrote a Letter	3	2.54%	3.49%
Phone	50	42.37%	58.14%
Other	1	0.85%	1.16%

Note. Total N for Study 1 = 118, n for initiators = 85

Table 3b
Study 1 Number of Mediums Used to Breakup

Number Used	n	% of sample	% of initiators
One medium	35	29.66%	40.70%
Two mediums	31	26.27%	36.05%
Three mediums	13	11.02%	15.12%
Four or more mediums	5	4.24%	5.81%

Note. Total N for Study 1 = 118, n for initiators = 85

Table 4a

Sex Differences in Reason for Breakup

	Men (n = 45)	Women (n = 40)	$\chi^2(1)$	φ	<i>p</i>
Sudden Death	9	7	0.09	-0.03	.769
Mechanical Failure	2	4	1.00	0.11	.318
Pre-existing Doom	5	3	0.32	-0.06	.569
Process Loss	17	17	0.20	0.05	.657
Personal Freedom	9	10	0.25	0.05	.619
Distance or Moving	7	13	3.18	0.20	.075
Other	8	9	0.24	0.05	.623

Table 4b

Sex Differences in Breakup Strategy

	Men (n = 45)	Women (n = 40)	$\chi^2(1)$	φ	<i>p</i>
Direct	40	34	0.06	-0.03	.862
Avoidance	2	2	0.03	0.02	.809
Third Party	3	1	0.78	-0.10	.379
Indirect	10	7	0.24	-0.05	.627
Gave Actual Reason	27	26	0.56	-0.09	.454
Gave False Reason	5	9	1.03	0.12	.310

Table 5
Study 2 Strategies Paired t-tests

Pairs	M	SD	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
open-indirect	2.51	1.03	38.15	<.001
open-avoidance	1.20	1.35	13.92	<.001
open-notyou	1.52	1.31	18.10	<.001
indirect-avoidance	-1.30	1.05	-19.24	<.001
indirect-notyou	-0.98	1.09	-14.11	<.001
avoidance-not you	0.31	1.26	3.88	<.001

Table 6

Mean scores on four types of breakup strategies as a function of reason for breakup

Strategy	Reason for breakup									
	Sudden Death		Personal Freedom		Distance Moving		Preexist. Doom		Mech. Failure	
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
Open communication	3.79	.71	3.94	.64	3.87	.72	3.77	.64	3.93	.80
Indirect	1.49	.58	1.28	.69	1.33	.65	1.22	.32	1.30	.67
Avoidance	2.94	1.18	2.54	.99	2.28	1.02	2.96	.92	2.48	1.07
It's not you, it's me	1.56 _a	.71	2.31 _b	1.07	2.35 _b	.98	2.88 _b	.89	2.60 _b	.93
									2.28 _b	1.09

Note. Means in a row sharing subscripts are significantly different. For all scores, higher means indicate greater likelihood of use of that strategy.

Table 7

Sex Differences in the association between reason and strategy choice

	Male	Female	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
<u>Sudden Death</u>				
Open Comm	3.66	3.87	-.95	n.s.
Indirect	1.72	1.34	2.17	.036
Avoidance	2.80	3.04	-.63	n.s.
It's not you	1.79	1.40	1.82	.077
<u>Personal Freedom</u>				
Open Comm	3.94	3.95	-.44	n.s.
Indirect	1.27	1.29	-.11	n.s.
Avoidance	2.44	2.69	-.76	n.s.
It's not you	2.29	2.35	-.18	n.s.
<u>Distance/Moving</u>				
Open Comm	3.59	4.03	-1.95	.058
Indirect	1.55	1.21	1.63	n.s.
Avoidance	2.29	2.28	.02	n.s.
It's not you	2.60	2.21	1.22	n.s.
<u>Pre-existing Doom</u>				
Open Comm	3.69	3.87	-.88	n.s.
Indirect	1.26	1.18	.77	n.s.
Avoidance	2.72	3.25	-1.86	.070
It's not you	2.82	2.95	-.46	n.s.
<u>Mechanical Failure</u>				
Open Comm	3.91	3.94	-.12	n.s.
Indirect	1.24	1.35	-.52	n.s.
Avoidance	2.43	2.51	-.22	n.s.
It's not you	2.47	2.70	-.75	n.s.
<u>Process Loss</u>				
Open Comm	3.78	3.78	-.03	n.s.
Indirect	1.54	1.36	.93	n.s.
Avoidance	2.71	2.63	.27	n.s.
It's not you	2.61	2.12	1.34	n.s.

Table 8

Means, Standard Deviations, and Rotated Factor Loadings for Breakup Strategy Survey Items

Item	M	SD	1	Factor Loadings		
				2	3	4
16	4.13	0.99	.759*	-.281	-.154	.155
17	3.89	1.10	.676*	-.085	-.158	0.58
4	4.24	0.95	.602*	-.274	-.064	-.192
20	3.60	1.21	.531*	-.045	-.141	.199
21	3.88	1.10	.497*	-.129	.000	-.269
12	3.25	1.27	.493*	.115	.042	-.010
18	3.92	1.04	.452*	-.032	.208	-.137
11	3.98	1.06	.297	-.098	.252	.007
19	1.28	0.72	.042	.752*	-.056	.057
10	1.33	0.77	-.157	.657*	.006	.044
14	1.47	0.96	-.046	.626*	.150	-.137
15	1.30	0.74	-.222	.547*	.145	.233
1	2.14	1.37	-.268	.463	.368	-.151
2	1.68	1.11	-.146	.399	.389	.078
5	1.76	1.02	-.158	.364	.171	.230
9	3.66	1.21	.087	-.005	.671*	-.077
3	2.76	1.28	-.145	.125	.638*	.059
8	2.77	1.39	.028	.104	.635*	.163
7	2.40	1.31	-.078	.293	.599*	.141
13	2.61	1.32	.049	.033	.079	.603*
6	2.04	1.16	-.196	.201	.176	.594*

Note. * indicates highest factor loadings. Descriptions of items found in Appendix D and item reliability found in Appendix E. Factor 1 = Open communication, Factor 2 = Indirect Strategies, Factor 3 = Avoidance, Factor 4 = It's not you, it's me Strategies.

Table 9

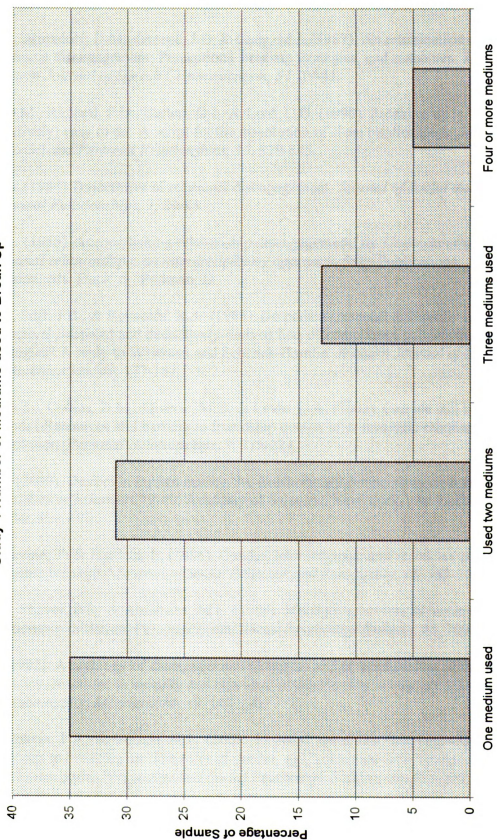
Correlation between age and strategy selection

	Open		Indirect		Avoidance		It's not You	
	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
<u>Male</u>								
1	.052	.842	.477	.053	.324	.205	.138	.598
2	.337	.116	.237	.275	.095	.665	-.081	.712
3	-.268	.333	.276	.340	.550	.034	.361	.186
4	.143	.526	.311	.159	.093	.682	-.121	.592
5	-.455	.066	.420	.093	.195	.454	-.250	.334
6	.240	.408	.445	.111	-.116	.693	-.026	.928
<u>Female</u>								
1	.022	.917	.059	.779	-.115	.584	-.152	.468
2	.168	.520	-.205	.429	-.067	.805	-.263	.308
3	-.148	.471	-.025	.902	-.048	.817	-.061	.768
4	.265	.273	.111	.650	-.328	.170	.281	.243
5	.159	.470	-.031	.888	.217	.320	-.238	.274
6	.142	.497	.152	.468	-.108	.607	-.053	.802

Note: Scenario 1 = sudden death; Scenario 2 = loss of personal freedom; Scenario 3 = distance or moving; Scenario 4 = pre-existing doom; Scenario 5 = mechanical failure; Scenario 6 = process loss.

Figure 1

Study 1 Number of Mediums used to Break Up



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