

The background features a light gray gradient with several realistic water droplets of various sizes scattered across the surface. A faint, circular, textured pattern is visible in the upper center of the image.

SOCIAL PENETRATION THEORY

OF IRWIN ALTMAN & DALMAS TAYLOR

JON LOCKHART

SOCIAL PENETRATION

THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING DEEPER INTIMACY WITH ANOTHER PERSON THROUGH MUTUAL SELF-DISCLOSURE AND OTHER FORMS OF VULNERABILITY.



SELF DISCLOSURE

- SELF DISCLOSURE – THE VOLUNTARY SHARING OF PERSONAL HISTORY, PREFERENCES, ATTITUDES, FEELINGS, VALUES, SECRETS WITH ANOTHER PERSON (97).
- DEPTH OF PERCEPTION – THE DEGREE OF DISCLOSURE IN A SPECIFIC AREA OF A PERSON'S LIFE (98).
- LAW OF RECIPROCITY – A PACED AND ORDERLY PROCESS IN WHICH OPENNESS IN ONE PERSON LEADS TO OPENNESS IN THE OTHER; “YOU TELL ME YOUR DREAM; I’LL TELL YOU MINE” (99).
- BREADTH OF PENETRATION – THE RANGE OF AREAS IN AN INDIVIDUAL’S LIFE OVER WHICH DISCLOSURE TAKES PLACE (99).

THEORY IN 50 FIRST DATES



THE ONION MODEL

- ALTMAN & TAYLOR COMPARED PEOPLE TO ONIONS AS A DEPICTION OF THE MULTILAYERED PERSONALITY STRUCTURE (97).
- PERSONALITY STRUCTURE – ONION-LIKE LAYERS OF BELIEFS AND FEELINGS ABOUT SELF, OTHERS, AND, AND THE WORLD; DEEPER LAYERS ARE MORE VULNERABLE, AND CENTRAL TO SELF IMAGE (97).
- THE MODEL IS DIVIDED INTO SECTIONS; IN WHICH EACH SECTION MAPS OUT THE SUBJECT OF WHICH ONE MOST FREQUENTLY DISCLOSES WITH ANOTHER PERSON.
- THE MORE ONE DISCLOSES TO ANOTHER THE DEEPER THAT SECTION GOES THROUGH TO THE CENTER.

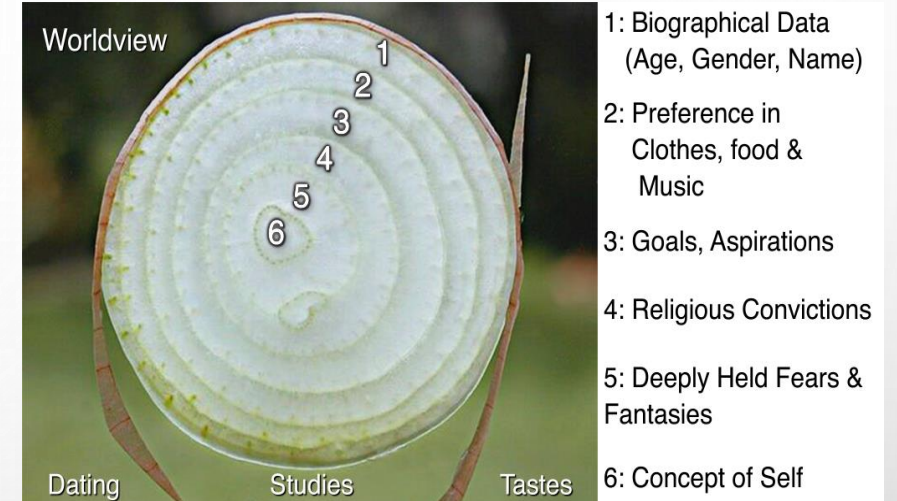
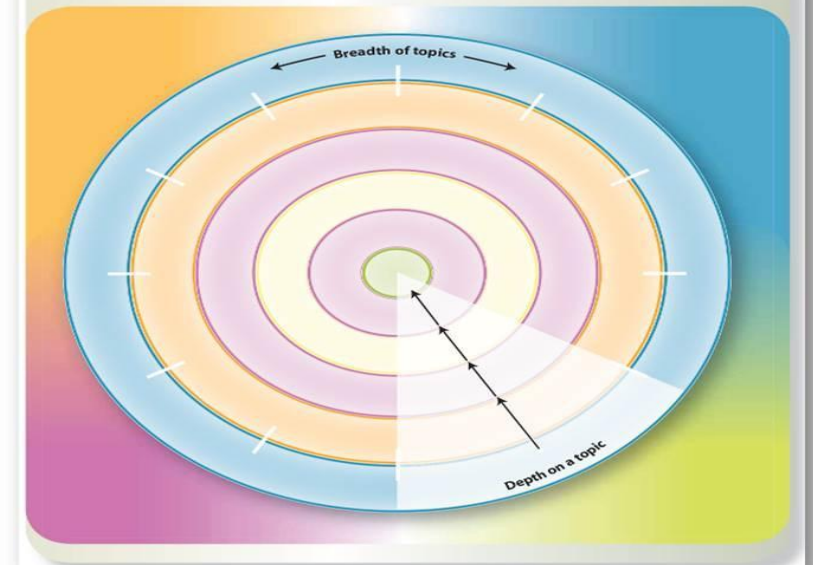


Figure 8.2 The social penetration model



SOCIAL EXCHANGE THEORY

- ANOTHER THEORY BY ALTMAN & TAYLOR THAT SUGGESTS THAT A PERSON'S RELATIONSHIPS ARE LIKE A FINANCIAL INVESTMENT (100).
- SOCIAL EXCHANGE – RELATIONSHIP BEHAVIOR AND STATUS REGULATED BY BOTH PARTIES' EVALUATIONS OF PERCEIVED REWARDS AND COSTS OF INTERACTION WITH EACH OTHER (100).
- THIS THEORY IDENTIFIES THREE KEY COMPONENTS OF THIS MENTAL CALCULATION (100).
 1. RELATIONAL OUTCOME
 2. RELATIONAL SATISFACTION
 3. RELATIONAL STABILITY



KEY COMPONENTS

RELATIONAL OUTCOME

- OUTCOME – THE PERCEIVED REWARDS MINUS THE COSTS OF INTERPERSONAL INTERACTION (100).
- MINIMAX PRINCIPLE OF BEHAVIOR – PEOPLE SEEK TO MAXIMIZE THEIR BENEFITS AND MINIMIZE THEIR COSTS (100).

RELATIONAL SATISFACTION

- COMPARISON LEVEL (CL) – THE THRESHOLD ABOVE WHICH AN INTERPERSONAL OUTCOME SEEMS ATTRACTIVE (102).

RELATIONAL STABILITY

- COMPARISON LEVEL OF ALTERNATIVES – THE BEST OUTCOME AVAILABLE IN OTHER RELATIONSHIPS (102).

SOCIAL EXCHANGE OF A STAR ATHLETE

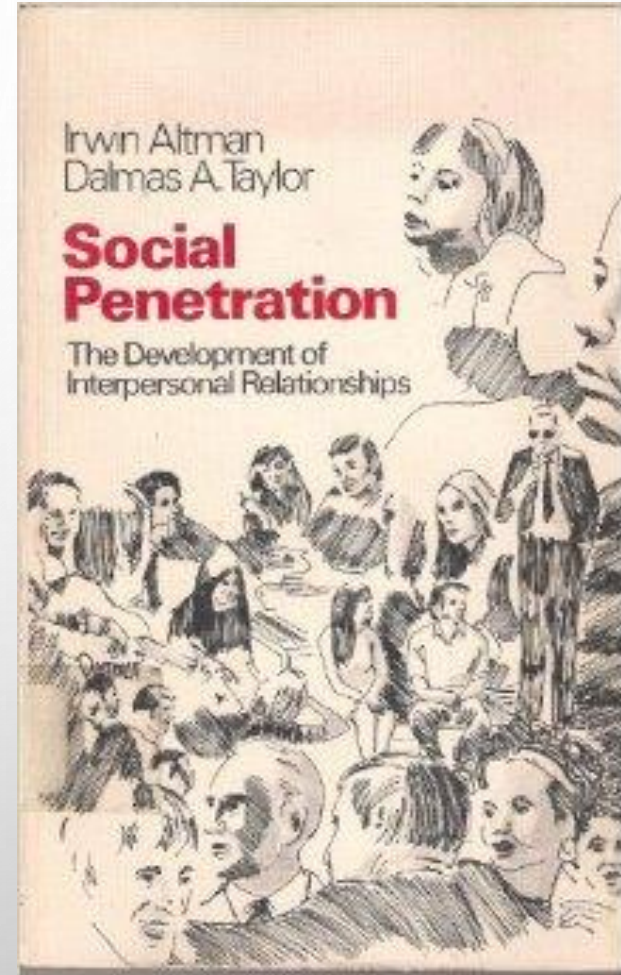
LET'S SAY THE SOCIAL EXCHANGE THEORY IS LIKE A TOP HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL PLAYER RECRUITED TO PLAY AT THE COLLEGE LEVEL. BECAUSE OF HIS OUTSTANDING ABILITY; HE IS OFFERED A FULL SCHOLARSHIP TO THE SCHOOL OF HIS CHOOSING. IN RETURN HE IS EXPECTED TO EXCEED THE EXPECTATIONS OF HIS COACHES AND THE PROGRAM. IF HE DOES NOT FULFIL THESE ROLES, THEN HIS SCHOLARSHIP WILL BE TAKEN AWAY. THIS IS A TWO WAY JUST LIKE THE SOCIAL EXCHANGE THEORY IS IN RELATIONSHIPS.

EXPLAINING THE THEORY

- MY GIRLFRIEND – “IT MAKES SENSE, BUT IT MIGHT NOT APPLY TO ALL PEOPLE. FOR SOME PEOPLE THEIR ONION COULD BE BACKWARDS. SOME PEOPLE LIKE TO DISCLOSE PERSONAL THINGS RIGHT AWAY. SOME PEOPLE ARE MORE OPEN THAN OTHERS.”

ORIGINAL TEXT

- SOCIAL PENETRATION: THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS.
- PUBLISHED IN 1973.



INTERVIEW OF THEORIST

- [HTTP://ALTMAN.SOCIALPSYCHOLOGY.ORG/PUBLICATIONS](http://altman.socialpsychology.org/publications)

REFERENCES

GRIFFIN, EM, ANDREW LEDBETTER, AND GLENN SPARKS. "MEDIA ECOLOGY." A FIRST LOOK AT COMMUNICATION THEORY. NINTH ED. NEW YORK: MCGRAW HILL, 2015. PRINT.