

# The Diversity of Love Journal

## We Love the Way We See and Hear Each Other

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Many people, both men and women, think that their appearance is the most important factor in finding love. For those who want to be attractive in love, the value of physical beauty seems universal. It is really true.

Physically attractive and good-looking people across many cultures are more likely to be asked out on dates and to behave confidently in romantic situations ([Hatfield & Rapson, 2000](#); [Hatfield & Sprecher, 1986](#); [Poulsen et al., 2013](#); [Walster et al., 1966](#), see for review, [Karandashev, Evans, et al., 2020](#)).

However, various sensory appealing physical characteristics of a partner can inspire romantic physical attraction and passionate love. Auditory sensory impressions—how they sound—are equally as significant as how they appear visually.

### Multisensory Interpersonal Attraction

Interpersonal physical attraction is the attraction of a man or a woman to another person that is based on the other person's physical traits and

appearance, whether it is someone's body, face, eyes, hair, attire, voice, odor, etc. Our perception of another person is multisensory and engages visual, auditory, tactile-kinesthetic, and olfactory modalities during romantic interaction ([Karandashev & Fata, 2014](#); [Karandashev et al., 2016](#); [2020](#)).

## **Visual Perception of an Attractive Partner**

The visual sensory modality of attraction is based on a partner's visually appealing physical traits. This includes, but is not limited to, his or her body type, form, and facial features, such as the nose, mouth, forehead, eyes, and the shape of his or her lips. Given the significance of vision for humans, the primary sensory qualities of a partner that influence our falling in love are visual.

Various aspects of the body and face that people find attractive in a partner come through the visual senses. Humans are primarily "optical animals." Therefore, in interpersonal relationships, people rely heavily on their visual perception of another person ([Grammer, Fink, & Neave, 2005](#)).

## **The Universal Qualities of the Visual Beauty of an Attractive Partner**

People in many cultures find low hip-to-waist ratios, facial symmetry, long hair, muscular builds, and clear skin attractive in a romantic partner (e.g., [Gangestad & Thornhill, 1997](#); [Patzner, 1985](#); see for review, [Karandashev et al., 2016](#)).

Men are especially visual in their romantic and sexual attraction (e.g., [Buss, 1989, 1994](#); [Ellis & Symons, 1990](#); [Feingold, 1990, 1992](#); [Greenlees & McGrew, 1994](#); [Landolt, Lalumiere, & Quinsey, 1995](#); see

for review, [Karandashev et al., 2016](#)). They place a high value on body weight, specific body types and shapes, physical fitness, and the length of a female partner's hair ([Nevid, 1984](#); [Hönekopp et al., 2007](#)).

## **Auditory Perception of an Attractive Partner**

Despite the prevalence of visual perception, people learn a great deal about one another through verbal communication. In many interpersonal situations, verbal and nonverbal channels are inextricably linked. The content of communication as well as the auditory perception of a partner's voice and other sounds are important factors in romantic attraction.

The auditory-sensory mode of attraction is defined as the attraction to a partner that is primarily based on the sense of sound. The tone of the partner's voice, the pitch with which they speak, the sound of their laugh, and the voice with which they sing are all distinguishing characteristics.

## **What in the Voice of a Partner Makes It Attractive?**

Many effects of an attractive voice determine mating value and romantic attraction. Men and women with attractive voices tend to have their first sexual intercourse at an earlier age. They also have a greater number of sexual partners and affairs. Men with attractive, lower-pitched voices have greater reproductive success ([Apicella et al., 2007](#); [Hughes et al., 2004](#)).

What qualities in human voices make them attractive? Studies have found that women perceive male voices as attractive when their vocalizations display general masculinity and maturity. Attractive men's

voices are less monotonous, medium to lower in average fundamental frequency, and medium to higher in variance of the fundamental frequency (Feinberg et al., 2006; Riding et al., 2006; Zuckerman & Miyake, 1993; Zuckerman et al., 1995).

## **What in the Voice Makes It Sexy?**

Women often prefer male voices that are dynamic, feminine, submissive, and esthetically pleasing. The sounds that give such an impression have increased or medium variance in the fundamental frequency and have high or medium pitch variation (Addington, 1968; Raines et al., 1990; Ray et al., 1991).

Men and women use a lower-pitched voice and a noticeable variation in pitch when they speak to an attractive person of the opposite sex. When they simulate a “sexy” voice, their voices become low (Hughes, Farley, & Rhodes, 2010; Tuomi & Fischer, 1979).

## **Cultural Differences in What People Perceive as Attractive in Partners**

People in traditional and modernized countries differ in what they look for in the appearance of prospective mates ([Karandashev et al., 2020](#)).

People in traditional societies (e.g., Russia, Georgia, Jamaica) with relatively conservative values, when they look at the physical qualities of a mate, pay attention to such visual qualities as beautiful facial features and body shape, good skin texture, and nice clothes. Men and women in traditional societies love their partners' abilities to do beautiful singing and dancing.

On the other hand, people in modernized societies (e.g., the USA, France, and Portugal) with relatively liberal values pay less attention to

the shapes and static features of their partner's face and body. They are rather interested in expressive qualities, such as expressive faces, beautiful smiles, meaningful gestures, and other expressive appearances and behaviors. In modern societies, men and women pay more attention to a partner's expressive eyes and voice as ways to learn about that person's personality ([see also another article for detail](#)).

## **Other Articles of Interest Associated with the Topic**

- [Sexual preferences for physical attractiveness](#)
- [What's an Ideal Age Difference in Dating?](#)
- [Physical Beauty of Men and Women Across Cultures](#)
- [What Is Beautiful Is Culturally Good](#)
- [Women and Men Who Are Physically Attractive in Different Cultures](#)

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See other articles on related topics in the rubrics of

[interpersonal communication](#), [interpersonal perception in love](#), [love attraction](#), [physical beauty](#).