

Episode IV: Relationships and Social Cognition



- **CEN 402**
- Zoom ID: [928 3110 3137](#)
- This presentation can be found at: <https://media.lanecc.edu/users/kime>, or (search for "Eric Kim" "Lane Community College")

Relationships



Good relationships are important in your

- professional life as a manager, coworker, or new employee, or
- personal life as a parent, neighbor, sibling or
- community or global citizen.

There are many factors that influence the quality of relationships. The quality of relationships is unrelated to whether or not you have arguments. It is related more to how you argue.

Kindness and generosity is related to	Criticism, contempt and hostility is related to
Good relationships	Bad relationships
	

Relationships

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There are many psychological factors that influence kindness and generosity and relationships including:

- sleep deprivation
- multitasking / divided attention
- attachment styles
- self-disclosure of personal information
- learning languages of love (how do we communicate love)
- **social cognitive processes and biases**

Social Cognition

How people select, interpret, remember and use social information to make judgments and decisions about themselves and others in the social world.

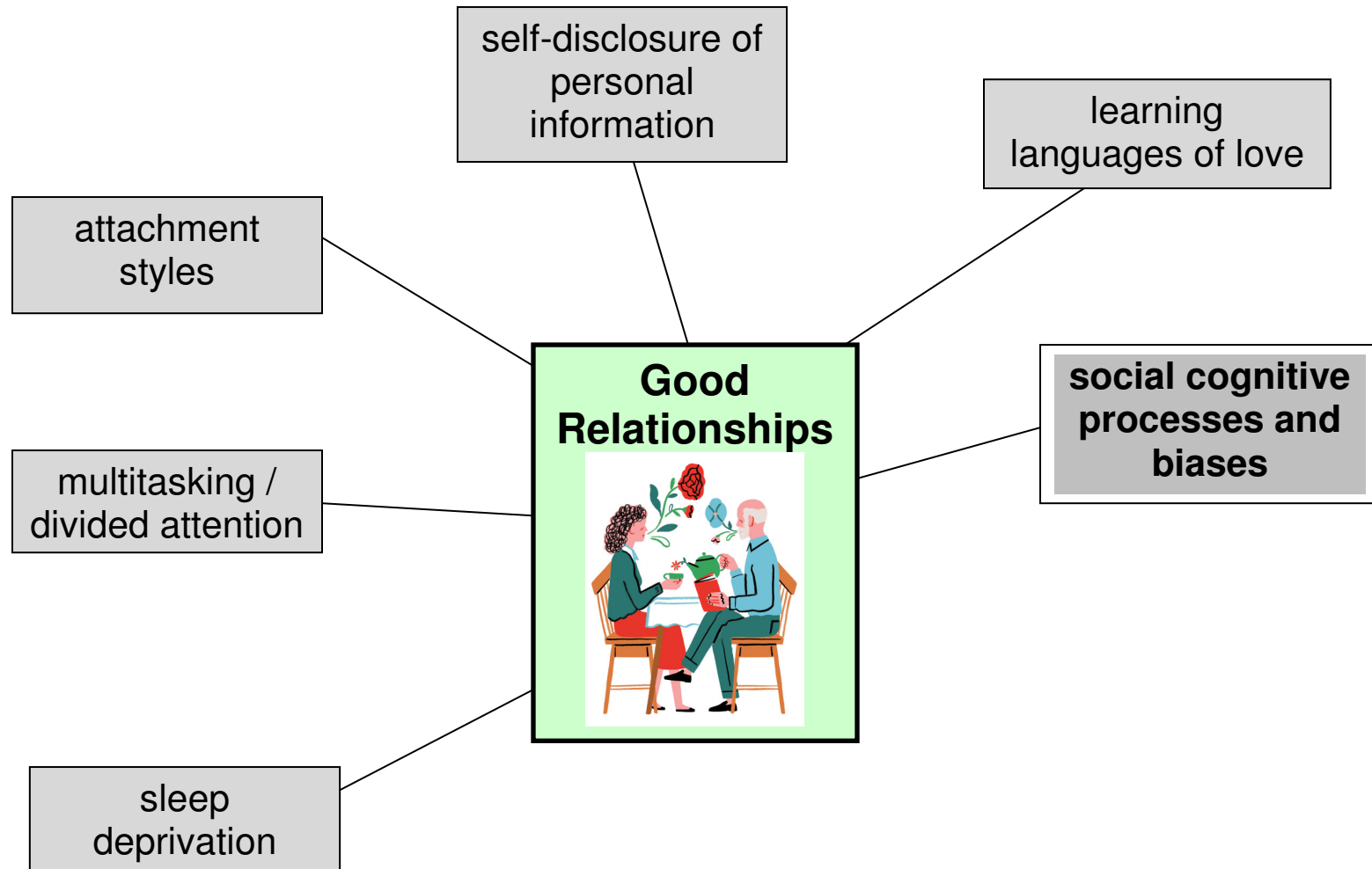
There are many cognitive biases and psychological processes in social psychology relevant for bringing kindness and generosity to relationships that can include

- negative information is more salient than positive information
- fundamental attributional error
- belief-bias
- self-serving bias
- cognitive dissonance
- outgroup homogeneity effect
- ego-centric bias
- better than average belief

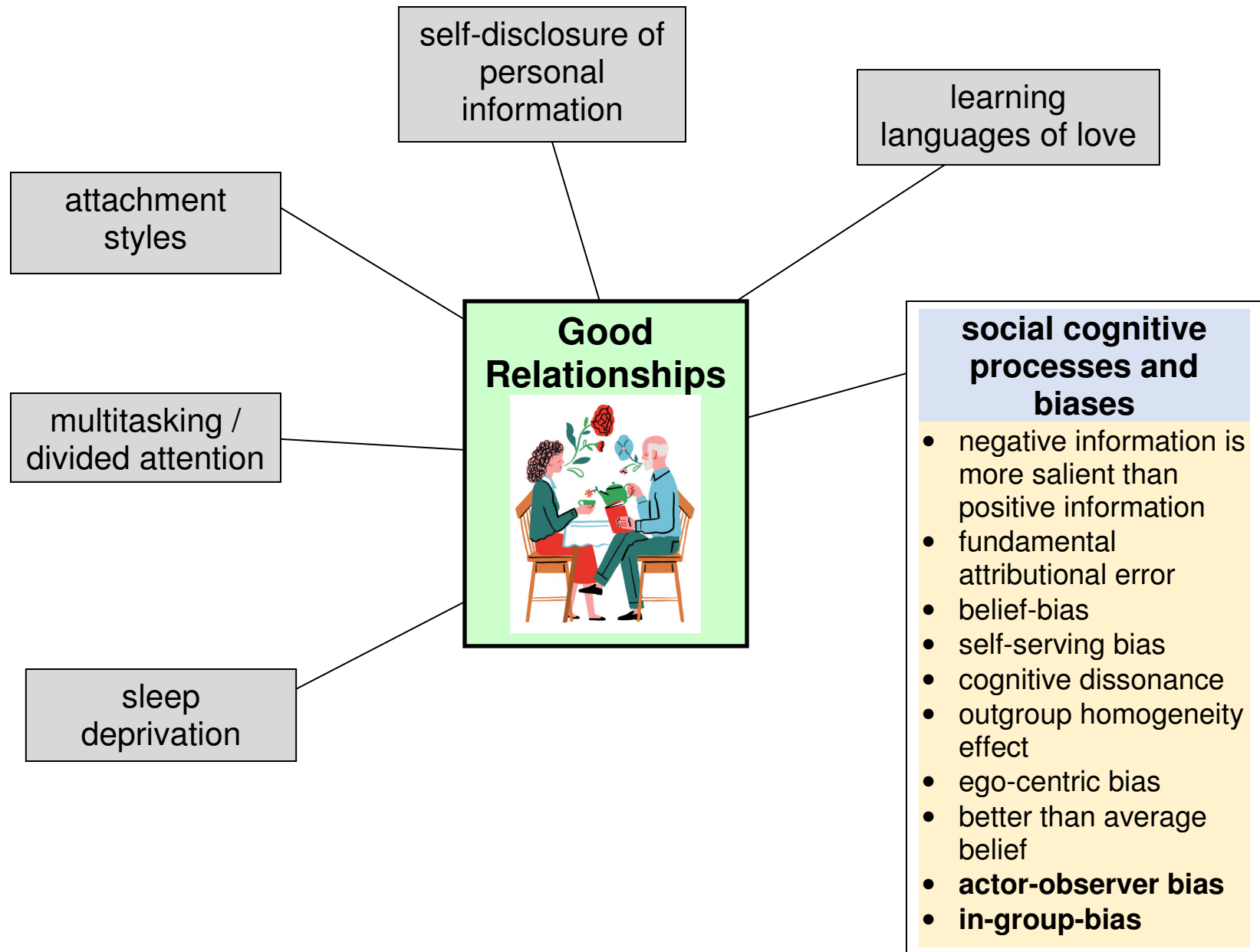
Psychological processes that influence how we think about individuals and groups for today are the

- actor-observer bias and
- in-group bias.

Relationships



Relationships and Social Cognition



Actor-observer Bias

Behavior is influenced by internal and external factors.

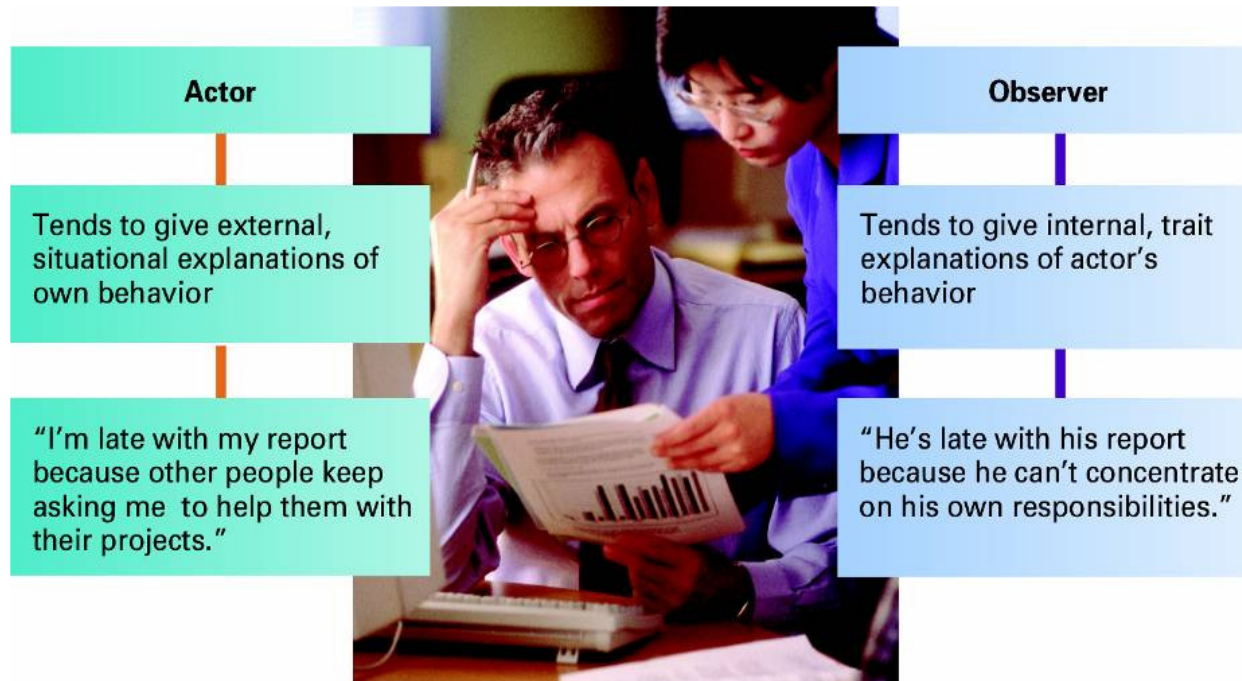
Internal factors	External factors
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When explaining behavior, we have different explanations depending on whether we are the actor (doing the behavior) or the observer (seeing the behavior). We aren't consistent.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">When we are the <u>actor</u> explaining our behavior, we tend to attribute it to <u>external causes</u>.		<ul style="list-style-type: none">When we are the <u>observer</u> of someone else's behavior, we tend to attribute it to <u>internal causes</u>.	
Internal factors	External factors	Internal factors	External factors

Actor-observer Bias



A report comes in late.



There is a discrepancy or bias when explaining the same behavior.

Quite often these discrepancies are not close in time which makes them difficult to detect. If we believe we are "fair" and "unbiased", we might be motivated NOT to detect these discrepancies.

Actor-observer bias

Your behavior (the actor)		You observe a behavior (the observer)
		
You use external or situational explanations		You use internal or personality explanations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When I come to the meeting unprepared and late, it is because something came up or traffic was bad. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When you come to the meeting unprepared and late, it is due to lack of interest in the job.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When I hit you, it is because I was provoked. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When you hit me, it is because you are aggressive.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I was driving poorly, but I was pressed for time. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You were driving poorly and are a reckless out-of-state driver.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When I'm unemployed, it is because of a bad job market. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When "you" are unemployed, it is because "you" are lazy.

What are examples of the actor-observer bias?

- Dr. Cox and Jordan (video clip from Scrubs), 1 min
- Jaquen H'gar and Arya Stark (video clip from Game of Thrones), 2:10 -3:10
- When I forget I was muted on Zoom...
- When you forget you were muted on Zoom...
- Your example

Explaining the Actor-observer bias

Why does the actor-observer bias occur?



- Motivational and Emotional factors

- People can be unconsciously motivated to think of themselves in a positive manner. It makes them feel better.



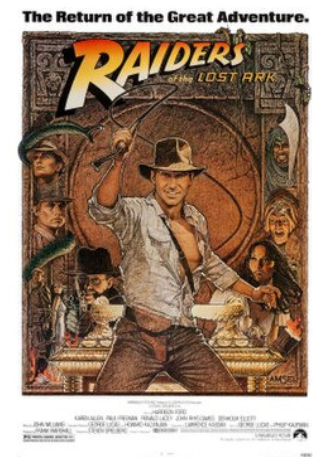
- Cognitive factors

- As the actor, the environment is more salient, while the person is more salient when we observe someone else act.
- We are more familiar with our own motives, as well as those we know.



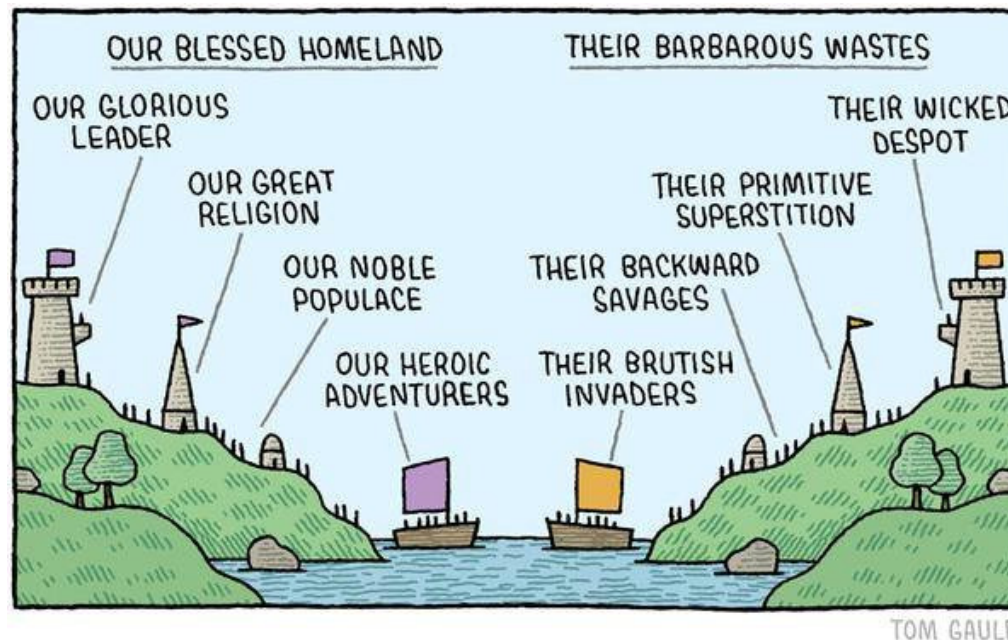
- Social and Cultural factors

- In an individualistic culture, we are socialized to focus our attention and attributions on individual factors and less on environmental factors.
 - **Spoiler:** According to Amy from the Big Bang Theory, Indiana Jones plays no role in the outcome of Raiders of the Lost Ark.



In-group Bias

In-group bias: The tendency to make favorable, positive attributions to members of the “in-group” and unfavorable, negative attributions to members of “out-groups”. You give the benefit of the doubt to members of your own “in-group” and not the benefit of doubt to members of the “out-group”.



Putting people into an out-group and identifying them as “enemies” can make it less likely you will treat them with respect and fairness and more likely that you will incur harm on them.

In-group bias

In-group	Out-group
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When we attack, it is because we were provoked.• We are successful because of hard work.• When we save money, we are being thrifty.• Our team won because we are very skilled.• We are taking a break.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When you attack, it is because you are aggressive.• They are successful because they are lucky.• When they save money, it is being stingy.• Your team won because they were lucky.• They are lazy.

Your example:



Actor-observer bias and the In-group bias

The actor-observer bias and in-group bias are inconsistencies in attributions. The inconsistencies occur at the individual level (actor-observer bias) or at the group level (in-group bias).

actor-observer bias	in-group bias
Inconsistencies at the individual level when explaining behavior	Inconsistencies at the group level when explaining behavior
Eric Kim versus Keanu Reeves	Psychologists versus actors
Eric Kim versus Gavin Newsom	Oregonians versus Californians
	Lane CC versus Chemekta CC

Why is knowing about the actor-observer bias or in-group bias important for relationships?

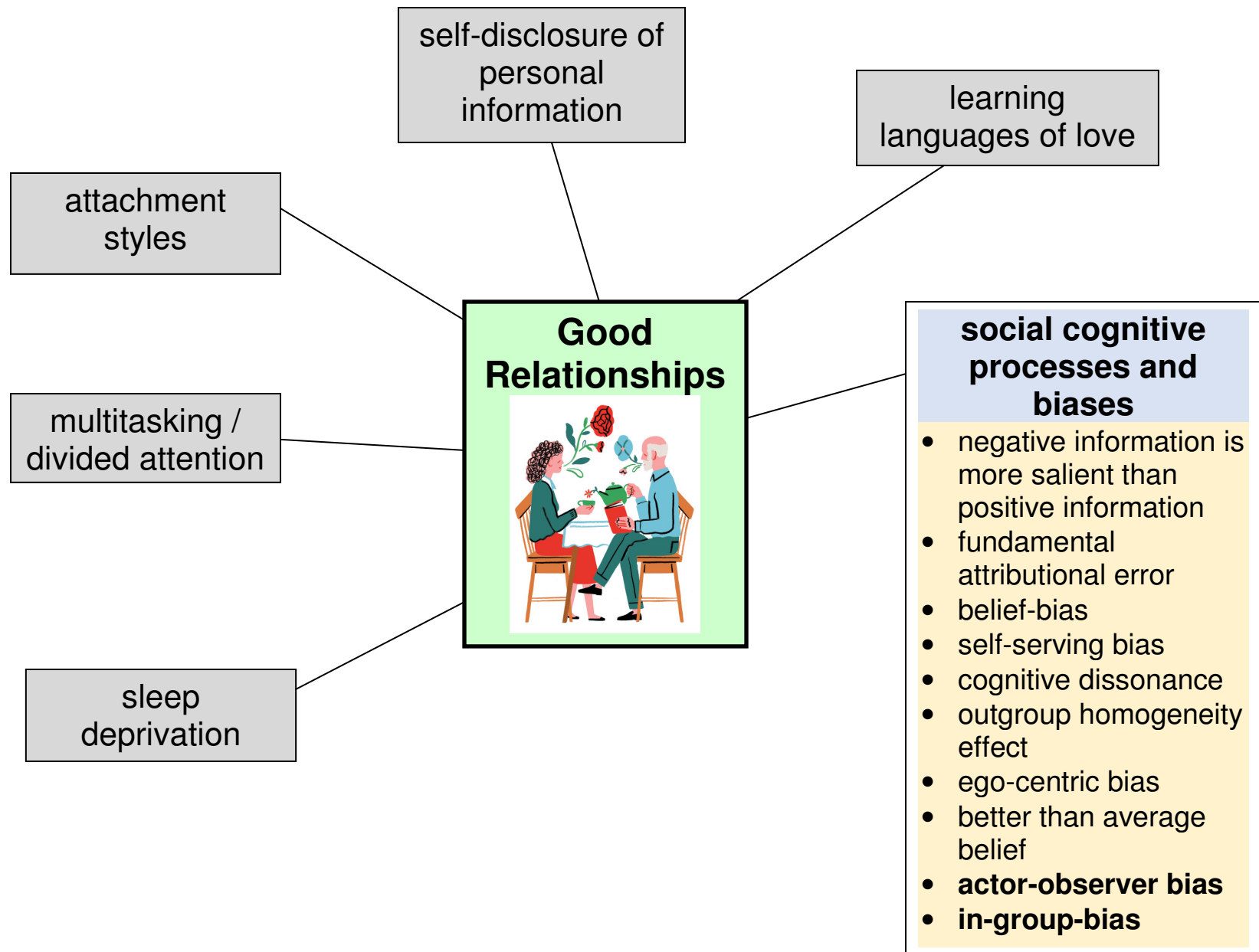
The quality of relationships is unrelated to whether or not you have arguments. It is related more to how you argue.

Kindness and generosity is related to	Criticism, contempt and hostility is related to
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Many factors influence the quality of relationships. Just knowing we need to improve relationships isn't enough to improve relationships.

We need to know specifically what factors improve or hinder relationships, so that we can take the right action to address the problem. If we don't, we might take the wrong action to address the problem and get nowhere.

"Just be kinder" unlikely to be effective.



Why is knowing about the actor-observer bias or in-group bias important for relationships?

In addition to good relationships having generosity and kindness, when there are arguments, they argue in a fair manner.

Knowing about the actor-observer bias or in-group bias can help us recognize these inconsistencies in ourselves and others when they occur.

- This can be difficult because these inconsistencies can occur far apart in time to notice or remember.

To reduce these biases, we need to consider alternative explanations for observed behavior, such as situational factors

- This may be challenging because seeing situations from different perspectives can be uncomfortable to "know what is real" with different points of view. It may require us to become familiar with other people or groups.
- Committing these biases can increase the risk of criticism, contempt and hostility and reduce kindness and generosity at the individual, group or global level.

- Knowing, recognizing and reducing these biases can increase kindness and generosity and reduce criticism, contempt and hostility at the individual, group or global level.
- The in-group bias doesn't necessarily lead to prejudicial attitudes, but can increase the likelihood. Prejudicial attitudes can justify discrimination, racism, sexism.

Group Activity

10 minutes:

In groups,

- Identify examples of the actor-observer bias or in-group bias in your life, work, or larger community
- In your example, how does the actor-observer bias or in-group bias harm relationships?
- How will you use this knowledge to improve relationships?

10 minutes:

Return to the larger class,

- share your examples with everyone.
- In your example, how can committing these biases increase the risk of criticism, contempt and hostility and reduce kindness and generosity at the individual, group or global level?
- In your example, how can knowing about these biases increase kindness and generosity and reduce criticism, contempt and hostility at the individual, group or global level?