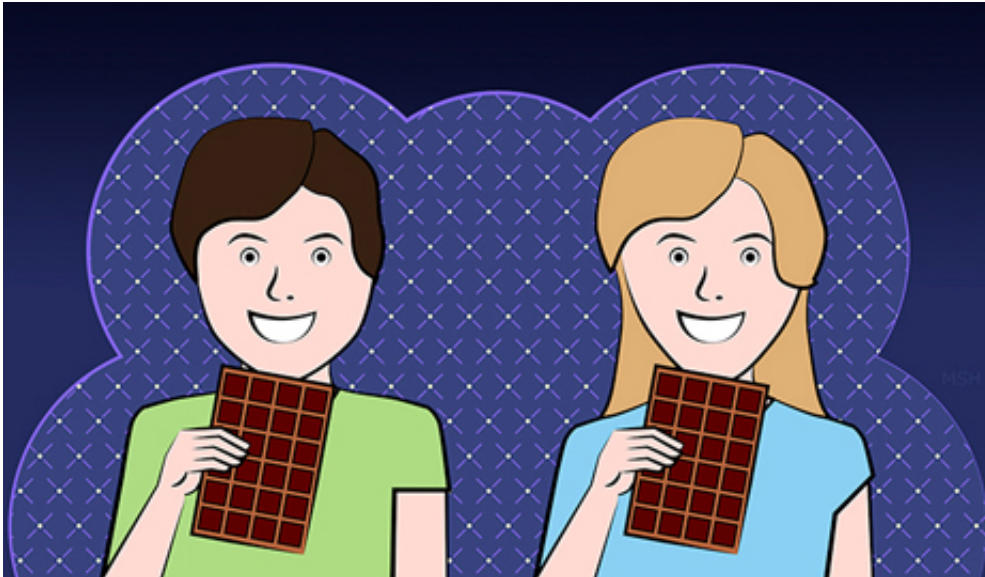


Chocolates and life sweeter when shared

September 10 2014, by Bill Hathaway



Credit: Michael S. Helfenbein

Chocolate, like sunsets and movies, may be more enjoyable when shared, a new Yale University study suggests.

Yale psychologists Erica Boothby, John Bargh, and Margaret Clark noticed that people regularly seek out others with whom to share [experiences](#). People summon partners outside to join them watching a beautiful sunset. They want friends to watch the same funny video.

The researchers wondered: Could sharing experiences like these—even when not communicating—change the way we experience things in our

day-to-day lives?

In a forthcoming issue of the journal *Psychological Science*, Boothby, Bargh, and Clark report that pleasant-tasting [chocolate](#) tasted better to an individual if a second person was eating the same chocolate at the same time. The participants reported this greater intensity of experience even though they did not communicate with the other person next to them.

The researchers next swapped the pleasant chocolate for an unpleasant bitter chocolate. This time, participants reported that the chocolate tasted worse when it was shared.

Exactly why remains a mystery.

The authors suggest that we might pay more attention to a stimulus while with somebody who is focused on the same stimulus, leading it to have a greater impact on us.

"Or there may be something to seeing the world through another person's eyes," Clark said. "When you and a partner experience something together, it may add to your own experience."

Social interactions are catalysts for making good experiences better and bad experiences worse, the authors suggest.

Provided by Yale University

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