

A fear of getting dumped kills romance and commitment

November 28 2017



Credit: CC0 Public Domain

Can the fear of a relationship ending actually lessen love and cause a break-up? If yes, how does it happen? These were the questions that Simona Sciara and Giuseppe Pantaleo of the Vita-Salute San Raffaele

University in Italy set out to answer in an article published in Springer's journal *Motivation and Emotion*. Their research complements what is already known about how obstacles to a romantic relationship affect attraction and commitment towards a partner.

Study participants provided basic information about themselves and the state and dynamics of their relationship. The researchers then manipulated the participants' perception that their relationship could end. Manipulation techniques included providing statistics about the failure of relationships to one group, and giving false feedback to some participants about the chances of their romantic affiliations ending. Participants were then asked how committed they were to their relationship, and how they felt towards their partner.

Sciara and Pantaleo found that participants' romantic feelings and levels of commitment towards their partners were more intense when no mention was made about the possibility that their relationships could end. Romance and commitment diminished when they heard that there could be either a high or low risk of a break-up. When participants were told that there was only a moderate chance the relationship would end, commitment was stronger. The researchers also established that the influence of such manipulated risk on romantic commitment was fully mediated by feelings of romantic affect.

"This shows that, when faced with a 'too high' risk of ending the relationship, [participants](#) clearly reduced the intensity of their [positive feelings](#) towards the [romantic partner](#)," explains Sciara.

Pantaleo believes it is important for psychologists, clinicians and counsellors to understand the causal role that perceived risk plays in the outcomes of their clients' [romantic relationships](#).

"Reduced relationship commitment, for instance, leads to dissolution

considerations and, thereby, to actual relationship breakup. Relationship breakup, in turn, plays a critical role in the onset of depression, psychological distress, and reduced life satisfaction," he adds.

More information: Simona Sciara et al, Relationships at risk: How the perceived risk of ending a romantic relationship influences the intensity of romantic affect and relationship commitment, *Motivation and Emotion* (2017). [DOI: 10.1007/s11031-017-9650-6](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11031-017-9650-6)

Provided by Springer

Citation: A fear of getting dumped kills romance and commitment (2017, November 28) retrieved 6 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2017-11-dumped-romance-commitment.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.