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BRIEF ARTICLE



Willingness to express emotion depends upon perceiving partner care

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ABSTRACT

Two studies document that people are more willing to express emotions that reveal vulnerabilities to partners when they perceive those partners to be more communally responsive to them. In Study 1, participants rated the communal strength they thought various partners felt toward them and their own willingness to express happiness, sadness and anxiety to each partner. Individuals who generally perceive high communal strength from their partners were also generally most willing to express emotion to partners. Independently, participants were more willing to express emotion to *particular* partners whom they perceived felt more communal strength toward them. In Study 2, members of romantic couples independently reported their own felt communal strength toward one another, perceptions of their partners' felt communal strength toward them, and willingness to express emotions (happiness, sadness, anxiety, disgust, anger, hurt and guilt) to each other. The communal strength partners reported feeling toward the participants predicted the participants' willingness to express emotion to those partners. This link was mediated by participants' perceptions of the partner's communal strength toward them which, itself, was a joint function of accurate perceptions of the communal strength partners had reported feeling toward them and projections of their own felt communal strength for their partners onto those partners.

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People sometimes express their emotions; sometimes they do not. Yet, why? We make a theoretical and empirical case that willingness to express emotions that convey vulnerabilities is positively linked with the degree to which individuals perceive that partners care for their welfare. We aim to show this link holds when perceptions of partner care are tapped as varying: (a) on average, between individuals, (b) within individuals, between those individuals' various relationship partners and (c) between romantic couples. The emotions for which we propose this link exists are those which convey information about the expresser's current well-being and which, therefore, invite support from those to whom the emotions are expressed (but which also might be ignored or invite exploitation of the revealed vulnerabilities). This set includes both negative emotions (e.g. sadness and anxiety) which call for support in the form of reassurance or help in alleviating the causes

of the emotion (Graham, Huang, Clark, & Helgeson, 2008) and happiness which calls for capitalising on the happiness in the form of partner congratulation, celebration and/or repetition of acts which caused the happiness (Gable & Reis, 2010).

Our theoretical position is straightforward. Choosing to express emotions conveying information about one's current welfare, needs and desires involves balancing potential interpersonal gains against the risks involved in so doing (cf. Murray, Holmes, & Collins, 2006). Expressing emotion can capture attention and convey information about one's welfare (cf. Clark & Monin, 2014; Hareli & Hess, 2012; Keltner & Haidt, 1999; Levenson, 1994), elicit support (Graham et al., 2008), convey that the expresser trusts the partner and, as a result, help grow the relationship (Graham et al., 2008). On the other hand, a person's expressed emotion could be ignored or result in the target of the expression

distancing from the expresser (Howes & Hokanson, 1979; Joiner, Alfano, & Metalsky, 1992; Simpson, Rholes, & Nelligan, 1992, for avoidant people) which may elicit painful feelings of rejection (cf. Eisenberger & Lieberman, 2005). Even worse, targets may use the information conveyed to exploit the expresser (Barasch, Levine, & Schweitzer, 2016; Markovsky, Willer, & Patton, 1988). The bottom line is, it is wise to express emotions to those who care and will be responsive to one but unwise to do so to those who will not.

Hypotheses

Our hypotheses were that, H1: People who *generally* believe their various relational partners care for them also *generally* will report higher willingness to express emotions revealing vulnerabilities: H2: Over and above this, individuals will vary their willingness to express emotion to people *within* their own social networks, being willing to express more emotion to those individuals whom they perceive to care more about them. H3: Individuals who have romantic partners who feel considerable communal strength toward them (as *independently* reported by those partners) will report being willing to express both more emotion to those partners than will individuals who have romantic partners who feel less communal strength toward them. This link will be mediated by participants perceiving the communal strength partners feel toward them. H4: Perceptions of the communal strength which partners feel toward participants will be a joint function of accurate perceptions of the partner's felt communal strength toward a participant and participants' projection of their own felt communal strength onto partners (cf. Lemay, Clark, & Feeney, 2007; Lemay & Clark, 2008).

Study 1

In Study 1, each participant rated the extent to which he or she perceived a variety of relationship partners to be communally responsive to them. Independently, they rated the extent to which they would be willing to express happiness, sadness and anxiety to each partner.

Method

Participants

Participants were 114 adults (46.5% female; mean age 32.66 years; SD = 10.44) recruited through Amazon's

Mechanical Turk (MTurk) system. MTurk workers are more representative of the US population than standard Internet samples and more diverse than typical college student samples (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011). Participants were from the United States, had a task approval rate of at least 90% and were paid \$1.20.¹

Procedure and measures

Participants examined a list of possible current relationships: mother, father, neighbour, close friend, cousin and fellow employee. For each relationship the participant currently had (ones that did not currently exist were skipped), the participant entered the relationship partner's initials and gender, then completed measures of perceived partner care and willingness to express emotions to that partner. These communal strength and emotion expression measures were grouped and participants completed all measures of one type then all measures of the other type (with the order of the two types being counterbalanced) before completing two control items (see below) and a demographics questionnaire.

Perceived communal strength of the current relationships

A 10-item measure adapted from the Communal Strength Scale (Mills, Clark, Ford, & Johnson, 2004) assessed the perceived communal strength of each current relationship partner toward the participant. Items included, "How large a benefit would this person be likely to give you?" and "How easily could this person accept not helping you?" Participants responded to each using an 11-point scale (0 = *not at all*, 10 = *extremely*). Observed internal reliabilities ranged from $\alpha = .87$ to $\alpha = .94$.

Likelihood of emotional expression to current relationship partners

Three items assessed participants' likelihood of expressing happiness, sadness and anxiety to each relationship partner, e.g. "When you feel anxious, how likely is it that you will express it to [your cousin]?" Participants were instructed to "assume that the emotion in question was caused by someone or something *other* than the person to whom it is being expressed". The items were endorsed using a 5-point scale (1 = *definitely suppress*, 5 = *definitely express*).

Control questions

Two items asked about likelihood of doing something we judged, *a priori*, to be unrelated to likelihood of emotion expression: “How likely is it that you would eat spicy food?” and “How likely is it that you would wake up before 7 a.m. on a weekend?” The items were endorsed using a 5-point scale (1 = *definitely not*, 5 = *definitely*). We predicted that rating relationships higher on communal strength would be related positively to greater likelihood of emotion expression but not to rating oneself as more likely to do anything or to agree with any question.

Results and discussion

Preliminary analyses

Participants’ mean ratings of the communal strength of each type of existing relationships were: mothers ($M = 7.53$), fathers ($M = 7.29$), neighbours ($M = 3.05$), close friends ($M = 6.81$), cousins ($M = 4.47$) and fellow employees ($M = 3.95$). SDs ranged from 1.79 to 2.45. Using a composite scale (averaging ratings for expressing happiness, sadness and anxiety) mean ratings of the likelihood of expressing emotion to relationship partners were: mothers ($M = 3.28$), fathers ($M = 3.12$), neighbours ($M = 2.30$), close friends ($M = 3.98$), cousins ($M = 2.76$) and fellow employees ($M = 2.96$). SDs ranged from 0.75 to 1.00.

Bivariate correlations, within each category of relationship, between the perceived communal strength of a specific current relationship partner toward oneself and the likelihood of emotional expression to that partner are shown in Table 1. A Bonferroni correction was used such that only those correlations with p -values less than .0014 were considered significant. All correlations between communal strength and the composite likelihood of emotional expression index and most correlations between communal strength and the likelihood of expressing each emotion measured separately were positive and reached statistical significance. As expected, none of the correlations between communal strength, the likelihood of rising early or eating spicy food reached significance.

Primary analyses

We used two-level hierarchical linear models, with ratings of multiple relationships nested within participant, to examine the links between communal strength and overall likelihood of emotional

expression (a composite of ratings for happiness, sadness and anxiety) as well as the likelihood of expression of happiness, sadness and anxiety specifically. First, we averaged each participant’s ratings of the communal strength of all the relationships on which they reported to create a between-subject predictor variable (Level 2) capturing participants’ individual differences in communal strength ratings (akin to their communal orientation, see Clark, Ouellette, Powell, & Milberg, 1987). We called this group-mean centred variable participant’s Mean Communal Strength. Next, we isolated the effect of perceived communal strength of a relationship from the effect of participants’ individual differences in communal strength by subtracting each participant’s Mean Communal Strength rating from that participant’s rating of the communal strength of each individual relationship the participant had rated, resulting in a within-subjects (Level 1) variable. We call this variable Relative Relationship Communal Strength. Both of these variables were entered simultaneously into a model to test our twin hypotheses that both individual differences in communal ratings (H1) and relationship specific communal strength (H2) would predict greater likelihood of emotional expression. The intercepts and slopes for the Level 1 predictor were modelled as random. This analysis revealed the predicted positive significant links between participant’s Mean Communal Strength and the likelihood of emotional expression, ($b = .22$, $p < .001$) and, independently, between Relative Relationship Communal Strength (within participants) and the likelihood of emotional expression, ($b = .23$, $p < .001$).

We conducted similar analyses predicting likelihood of expression of positive emotion (happiness) and negative emotion (a sadness and anxiety composite) separately. As predicted, there were significant positive links between participant’s Mean Communal Strength and the likelihood of expressing positive emotion ($b = .23$, $p < .001$) and negative emotion ($b = .21$, $p < .001$). Also, as predicted, there were significant and positive links between Relative Relationship Communal Strength and likelihood of expressing positive emotion, ($b = .19$, $p < .001$) and of negative emotion, ($b = .25$, $p < .001$).²

Study 1 reveals perceptions of a partner’s communal responsiveness toward the self-predict greater willingness to express both positive and negative emotions to that partner. This was true when perceptions of partner responsiveness were captured as an individual difference and when they were captured

Table 1. Correlations between likelihood of emotional expression and perceived communal strength of partner toward participant in Study 1 (*N*s in parentheses).

Variable	Perceived communal strength					
	Mother (<i>N</i> = 87)	Father (<i>N</i> = 71)	Neighbour (<i>N</i> = 80)	Close friend (<i>N</i> = 98)	Cousin (<i>N</i> = 83)	Fellow employee (<i>N</i> = 56)
Expression of: overall emotion to partner	.55*	.58*	.47*	.41*	.46*	.53*
Happiness to partner	.68*	.55*	.40*	.43*	.39*	.38 [‡]
Sadness to partner	.34 [‡]	.46*	.33 [‡]	.37*	.43 [‡]	.51*
Anxiety to partner	.44*	.49*	.41*	.30 [‡]	.33 [‡]	.44 [‡]
Willingness to eat spicy food	.01	.15	.05	.20 [†]	.23 [†]	.21
The likelihood of waking before 7 am	-.20	.16	-.02	-.05	.02	.20

Note: Results from Study 1.

[†]*p* < .05 and [‡]*p* < .01 (not considered significant given a Bonferroni correction for the number of correlations calculated).

**p* < .0014.

as varying within participants. Variations in perceived partner communal responsiveness are linked with willingness to express emotion within categories of relationships that, normatively and on average in this study, are stronger communal relationship (e.g. relationships with mothers and close friends) as well as within categories of relationships that, normatively and on average in this study, are weaker communal relationships (e.g. relationships with neighbours and fellow employees). This suggests people calibrate their expressions of emotion in a continuous manner. This is important because expressing emotion within weaker communal relationships may be key to growing those relationships.

Study 2

We sought additional support for our hypotheses in a second study involving 118 intact romantic couples. We asked both members of couples to report, independently, on their perceptions of their partner's

communal responsiveness toward them, their felt communal responsiveness toward their partner, and their willingness to express a wider variety of emotions to their partner than those examined in Study 1. This study allowed us to test hypotheses we could not examine in a non-dyadic study. We first examined not only whether perceptions of partner communal strength predict willingness to express emotion (Path 1 in Figure 1), but also whether *actual* partner felt communal strength (as independently reported by that partner) would predict participant willingness to express emotion (Path 5 in Figure 1). Our dyadic design also allowed us to test whether this predicted link would be mediated by participant perceptions of partner communal responsiveness (H3) (Path 3 in Figure 1). Finally, our dyadic design allowed us to assess from where perceptions of partner communal strength toward the self arise. We expected these perceptions would be a joint function of actual partner felt communal strength toward the partner (Path 3 in Figure 1) and a function of

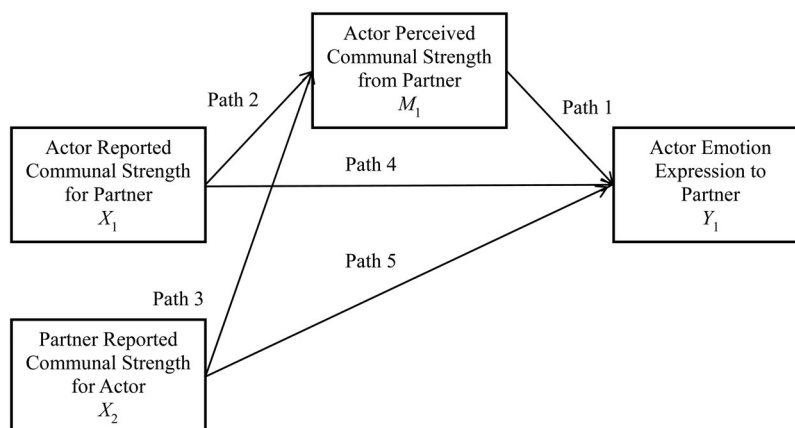


Figure 1. Proposed model.

participants' projecting their own felt communal strength toward their partner (Path 2 in Figure 1) (H4).

Method

Participants

Members of 118 couples (236 people) in long-term exclusive romantic relationships, recruited through flyers posted in the community, participated. They were paid \$5 per individual to separately complete an online survey.³ Our sample included 112 heterosexual couples and six homosexual couples (two gay couples and four lesbian couples). 37.7% of the couples were married, 46.6% were dating, 9.3% were engaged and 5.9% did not report their status. Female participants were, on average, 28 years old; male participants were, on average, 29 years old. Ages ranged from 18 to 76 years. Participants' relationships were, on average, 5 years and 6 months long, with a range from three months to 54 years and two months.

Procedure and measures

As a part of a larger questionnaire both members of each couple independently answered a series of questions about the communal strength they felt toward their partners, the communal strength they perceived their partners to feel toward them and their likelihood of emotion expression.

Participant communal strength felt toward one's partner

A 10-item measure adapted from the Communal Strength Scale (Mills et al., 2004) assessed our participants' perceptions of their own levels of communal strength toward their own partner. Items included "How large a benefit would you be likely to give you partner?" and "How easily could you accept not helping your partner?" Participants responded to using an 11-point scale (0 = *not at all*, 10 = *extremely*). The observed internal reliability was $\alpha = .82$.

Perceived communal strength of partner toward the self (actor). The same communal strength scale was adapted, as it had been in Study 1, for respondents to report on the communal strength they perceived from their partner concerning them (the actor) and their needs. The observed internal reliability was $\alpha = .89$.

Willingness to express emotion to romantic partner. At the start of this session participants were instructed to consider how often per week they experience each

of the following emotions. The emotions included were sadness, happiness, anger/irritability, disgust, guilt, hurt and anxiety.⁴ For each emotion respondents answered the question: When you do experience [name of emotion], how likely are you to express the [emotion] (verbally or by clear facial and vocal tone) to your partner? The items were endorsed using a 7-point scale (1 = *never*, 7 = *always*).

Results and discussion

We used the actor-partner interdependence model (APIM) (Kenny, Kashy, & Cook, 2006) as our analytic framework for this study because our data were non-independent. A series of these models were used to examine the links between actor's perceptions of their partner's communal strength and their willingness to express emotion to that partner. We also examined actor's (Path 4 in Figure 1) and partner's (Path 3 in Figure 1) reported communal strength for each other and the actor's overall willingness to express emotion to the partner (a composite of ratings for all seven included emotions) as well as positive emotion (happiness only) and negative emotion (a composite of the negative emotions). Not all partners were distinguishable from each other based on gender (because our sample included five same sex couples) or on any other meaningful variable. Thus, non-distinguishable models were employed. Next, mediation analyses were used to test the degree to which actors' perceptions of partner's communal strength toward the actor mediated the relationship between both actor and partner reported communal strength and actor reported willingness to express emotion to the partner (H3, H4). These mediation analyses were conducted for overall willingness to express emotion, willingness to express happiness (positive emotion) and willingness to express negative emotions.

Actor and partner reported communal strength and actor reported willingness to express emotion

To start we report the Study 2 analyses that closely mirror the analyses conducted and reported for Study 1. These analyses test the hypothesis that actor's perceptions of their partner's communal strength would predict actor's willingness to express emotion to their partner. This hypothesis was supported by an APIM analysis when considering a composite of all of the emotions ($b = .17$, $p = .009$), when

considering positive emotion alone (i.e. happiness) ($b = .16, p = .008$), and when considering a composite of negative emotions alone ($b = .18, p = .015$.) That is, perceived partner communal strength was positively and significantly linked to being willing to express both more positive emotion and more negative emotion to that partner conceptually replicating the results of Study 1 within a sample of romantically involved individuals.

Taking a step back and considering earlier steps in the model, an APIM analysis was used to predict overall willingness to express emotion to the partner not only from participants' perceptions of partner communal strength toward them but, importantly, also from partners' *independently* reported felt communal strength toward them. It revealed the predicted (H3) positive and significant links between the partner's reports of feeling communal strength for the actor and the actor's reported willingness to express emotion, ($b = .15, p = .020$) and also showed, *independently of the first effect*, a link between the actor's own felt communal strength toward the partner and the actor's reported willingness to express emotion, $b = .21, p = .001$. The same pattern resulted for happiness, with positive and significant links between the partner's communal strength for the actor and the actor's, *independently* reported, willingness to express happiness toward that partner, ($b = .13, p = .015$) and, *also and independently of the first link*, between the actor's own felt communal strength toward the partner and the actor's willingness to express happiness, $b = .18, p = .001$. Finally, this pattern also was found for a composite of the negative emotions, with significant positive links between the partner's communal strength for the actor and the actor's willingness to express negative emotion, ($b = .15, p = .032$) and, *independently*, between the actor's communal strength toward the partner and the actor's willingness to express negative emotion, $b = .21, p = .002$. These results support H3: that actors will be willing to express more emotion when their partners feel communally toward them, and also show that actors will be willing to express more emotion to their partners when they themselves feel communally toward their partner.

Mediation analyses

We had two further predictions to test using dyadic mediation analyses. A portion of the third hypothesis (H3) was that the link between the partner's communal strength toward actors and actor's willingness to

express emotion would be mediated by the actor's perception of their partner's communal strength toward them. We further hypothesised that the same perception would mediate the link between an actor's own feeling of communal strength and their willingness to express emotion (H4). That is, their own feelings of communal strength would act on their likelihood of emotion expression via their perception that their partner feels communally toward them. These analyses examined the degree to which actor's perception of their partner's communal strength acts as a mediator.

We calculated the indirect effects present in our APIM models and employed the Monte Carlo method with the use of an online tool, to assess our mediation models (Selig & Preacher, 2008). Support for the expected relationships was found. When considering willingness to express all emotions to the partner as a composite outcome variable, perceptions of the partner's communal strength mediate both the link between partner's reports of communal strength and actor willingness to express (partner-actor indirect effect, $b = .12, se = .05$) and the actor's own feelings of communal strength toward the partner and their willingness to express emotion to him or her (actor-actor indirect effect, $b = .07, se = .03$). Both effects were significant. The same was true for positive emotion (happiness) (partner-actor indirect effect, $b = .10, se = .04$; actor-actor indirect effect, $b = .06, se = .02$) and negative emotions (partner-actor indirect effect, $b = .12, se = .05$; actor-actor indirect effect, $b = .07, se = .03$). Taken together these results support H3 and H4, and suggest that perceptions of communal strength do mediate the links between own and partner's reports of communal strength with willingness to express emotion, both positive and negative. Models depicting the APIM results for emotion, overall and for positive and negative emotions separately, appear in Figures 2–4.

General discussion

The two studies provide evidence, in three forms, that people's perceptions of the communal strength that their partners feel toward them are positively linked with their willingness to express both positive and negative emotions to those partners. *Between participant* differences in perceived partner communal strength, *within person* differences in perceived partner communal strength (between a person's various relationships) and *between (romantic) relationship differences* in

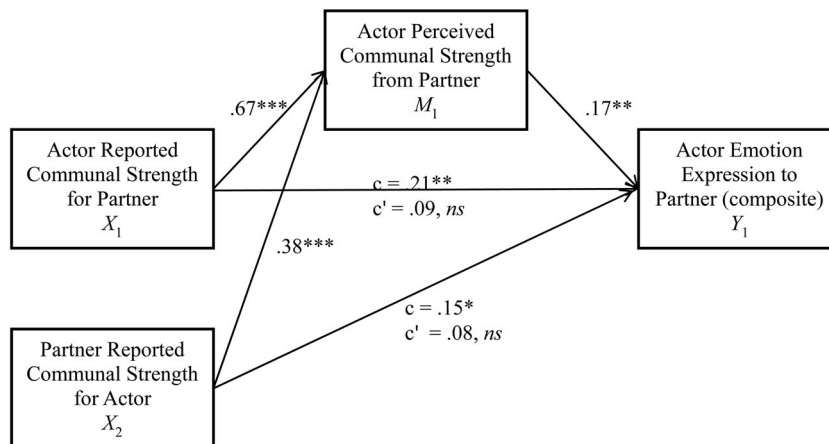


Figure 2. Estimates for a composite of all emotion types, including both positive and negative emotions.

perceived partner communal strength all were positively linked to willingness to express emotion.

These links are likely due, in large part, to (potential) expressers believing that emotion expression is both more likely to elicit support and to grow relationships and less likely to be ignored or to elicit distancing or exploitation when a partner cares (or wishes to care) for them. Then, once emotions are expressed to caring partners those emotions should convey not only information about the expresser's needs but also that the expresser trusts the partner and desires support. In turn partners are likely to respond with understanding, validation and care (see Clark et al., 1987; Graham et al., 2008), thereby initiating, maintaining and strengthening the communal relationships (Graham et al., 2008). This too likely contributes to the positive link. In other words, we suggest a positive cycle exists involving perceiving that a partner cares (or will care) eliciting disclosure of one's vulnerabilities through emotion expression and emotion expression, in turn eliciting responsiveness (Reis, 2012) which, in turn, will further build perceptions of partner care.

The effects we reported here were predicated upon, and our theoretical rationale specifically applies to, emotions that convey both expresser vulnerability and information about the expresser's welfare to partners. We believe this to be true for all seven emotions examined: sadness, happiness, anger/irritability, disgust, guilt, hurt and anxiety. Specifically, the six negative emotions included in this list all convey that the expresser is feeling distressed and could use comfort and support in facing and remediating a

loss, facing and addressing an injustice or removing or reducing the source of the emotion. For instance, a sad person has generally experienced a loss and may be in need of supporting words of sympathy, comfort and reassurance or help with (if possible) replacing what has been lost. An angry or hurt person generally feels unjustly treated and may be supported with words of comfort, suggestions regarding how to address the injustice, or, if the partner him or herself caused the anger or hurt (as was possible in Study 2) by the partner addressing and correcting the injustice the partner him or herself caused. Perceiving a partner as caring for one's welfare should increase the perceived likelihood of eliciting constructive responses to one's expressed emotion *even if* the emotions themselves do not convey warmth toward the target. In this regard, Yoo, Clark, Lemay, Salovey and Monin (2011) have shown that expressed anger does not necessarily elicit an angry, retaliatory response *if* a communal relationship is sufficiently strong. The positive emotion examined, happiness, also calls for support in the form of empathy and capitalisation (Conoley, Vasquez, Del Carmen Bello, Oromendia, & Jeske, 2015; Gable & Reis, 2010).

Potential expressers of all seven emotions investigated in this research likely hope that their partners will be positively responsive to them but also may worry about partners ignoring them, distancing from them, retaliating (in the case of anger) or even exploiting their vulnerabilities. This is why we expected the results we obtained.

Our a priori plan was to test our hypotheses using a composite measure of emotion and then to examine

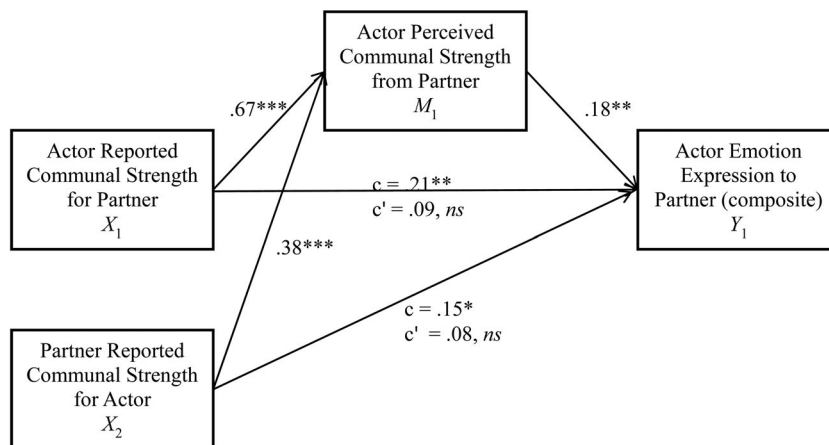


Figure 3. Estimates for a composite of negative emotion types only.

happiness alone. Our analyses were conducted and are reported according to that plan. Readers may wonder whether the results hold true for each emotion examined individually. In both studies, for all seven of the emotions tested, the link between perceived partner care and willingness to express each emotion was positive. For Study 1, as shown in Table 1, with Bonferroni corrections made for multiple tests, 7 of the 24 correlations between willingness to express one particular emotion within a relationship type approached but did not reach the standard set for significance. In Study 2, when results for the each of seven emotions are modelled separately, the path between perceived communal strength felt by the target toward the participant and the participant's willingness to express each emotion was positive for all seven emotions, reached significance for six of

those seven and approached significance for the remaining emotion, sadness ($p = .09$).⁵ Still, we emphasise the complete consistency in the direction of links observed between perceived partner communal strength and willingness to express across all emotions examined.

It is important to note that the theoretical reasoning set forth here does not lead to the prediction that people will be more willing to express *all* emotions more when perceptions of partners' communal responsiveness are greater. Whereas many emotions convey important information about partner welfare, some may not. Awe, for instance, suggests that the expresser is observing something amazing and expressing it may be unrelated to partners' communal responsiveness. Empathic happiness, empathic sadness and emotions such as compassion

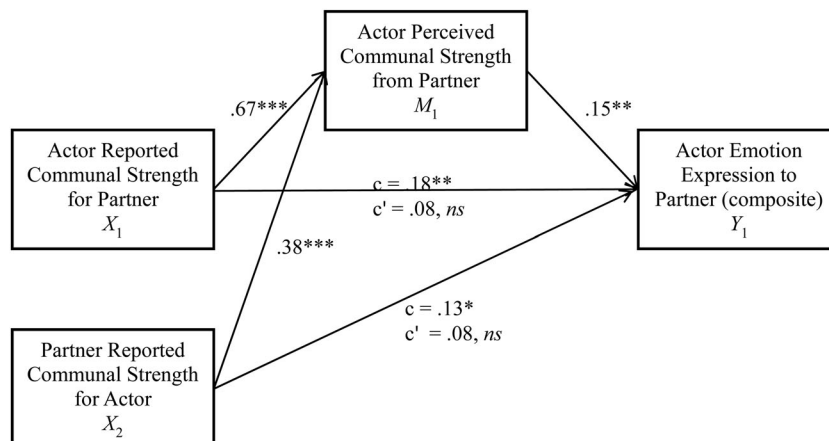


Figure 4. Estimates happiness only.

and gratitude suggest the expresser cares for the person on whose behalf these emotions are being felt (empathic happiness, empathic sadness, compassion and gratitude). Willingness to express these emotions should be better predicted by the expresser's felt communal strength toward the target rather than the expresser's perception of a partner's felt communal strength toward them (although these two perceptions will be positively correlated in most cases.)

Furthermore, it is important to note that future research may well reveal some boundary conditions for links between perceived communal responsiveness to the self and willingness to express some of the emotions examined here. In particular, it is possible that people will sometimes withhold expressions of their own anger or disgust when caused by the partner and, possibly, their own happiness when it may elicit envy in that partner despite perceiving that their partner cares for them. This is because perceiving partner care will typically be positively correlated with caring for one's partner and expressions of anger or disgust caused by partners and happiness that elicits painful envy in partners can interfere with one's partner's welfare. Because we did not investigate likelihood of expressions of emotion caused by partners in Study 1 (indeed we specifically ruled reporting on expressions of those emotions out in Study 1) and because we did not differentiate between emotions caused by partners versus something else in Study 2, these issues await further research.⁶

Despite cautions regarding the reach of the link between willingness to express emotions and perceived partner care, we believe the present findings are important. Individual differences in people's tendencies to perceive that partners care may well drive the individual differences in emotional expressiveness tapped by many extant measures (Friedman, Prince, Riggio & DiMatteo, 1980; Gross & John, 1995; Kring, Smith & Neale, 1994). Measures of selective expression of emotions conveying needs to partners may well emerge as one of the best indicators of how secure and of how communally based relationships are.

Notes

1. Data from three participants who had completed a related study were excluded from the sample.
2. Two correlations between communal strength and trying spicy foods trend in a positive direction. This may be due to chance and/or to people with higher levels of courage or curiosity being both more willing than others to risk

deepening communal relationships and tasting spicy foods.

3. Some participating couples also completed a session in the laboratory and were paid an additional \$30 (data from this second session were not used in the current investigation).
4. Measures of compassion felt for and gratitude felt toward the partner were collected in the same study but are not relevant to the present paper because these emotions convey concern for partner needs rather than serving primarily as cues regarding the expresser's own needs and desires.
5. We are happy to share the full models with interested readers.
6. In this regard we refer interested readers to research reported by Lemay, Overall and Clark, (2012) and Overall, Girme, Lemay and Hammond (2014) which suggests that when a person suffers an injustice at the hands of his or her communal partner, expressing hurt rather than anger will be a more constructive and more compatible with maintaining communal relationships.

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Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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