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Creativity and romantic passion.

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Carswell, Kathleen L., Finkel, Eli J., Kumashiro, Madoka

Citation

Carswell, K. L., Finkel, E. J., & Kumashiro, M. (2019). Creativity and romantic passion. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 116(6), 919-941. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pspi000162>

Abstract

Romantic passion typically declines over time, but a downward trajectory is not inevitable. Across 3 studies (1 of which encompassed 2 substudies), we investigated whether creativity helps bolster romantic passion in established relationships. Studies 1A and 1B revealed that people with highly creative personalities report not only greater overall passion but also an attenuation in the tendency for passion to decline as relationship duration increases. Studies 2 and 3 explored positive illusions about the partner's physical attractiveness as a possible mediator of the effect of creativity on passion. Cross-lagged panel analyses in Study 2 indicated that being creative is linked to a tendency to view the partner as especially attractive, even relative to the partner's own self-assessment. Path analyses in Study 3 provided longitudinal evidence consistent with the hypothesis that positive illusions about the partner's attractiveness (participant's assessments, controlling for objective coding of the partner's attractiveness) mediate the link between creativity and changes in passion over time. Study 3 also provided longitudinal evidence of the buffering effect of creativity on passion trajectories over time, an effect that emerged not only for self-reported passion but also for objectively coded passion during a laboratory-based physical intimacy task 9 months later. A meta-analytic summary across studies revealed a significant overall main effect of creativity on passion, as well as a significant moderation effect of creativity on risks of passion decline (e.g., relationship length). (PsycInfo Database Record (c) 2025 APA, all rights reserved)

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