



Does new romantic love heal the broken heart? : The sex differences on the effect of new relationships to the affection of old flames.

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[Introduction]

Dose NEW romantic love heal the broken heart?



New romantic love heal (vs. finished) tasks (Zeigarnik effect, Zeigarnik, 1938).

[Hypothesis]

Lack of closure leads to intrusive thoughts, longing love, and lingering affection, which in turn hinders new romantic relationships.

[Participants]

140 Japanese undergraduate students
 (92 females and 48 males, $M_{age}=19.76$ ($SD=1.00$))

[Procedure]

Participants were asked to report...

- ① **Feeling of incompleteness toward their ex.**
- ② **Intrusive thoughts, longing love, and lingering affection.**
- ③ **Whether or not they are in a new relationship.**

[Questionnaire]

Following items were custom made for this purpose.

- ① **Intrusive thoughts about ex (Cronbach's $\alpha=.90$)**
- ② **Longing love for ex(Cronbach's $\alpha=.91$)**
- ③ **Lingering affection toward ex(Cronbach's $\alpha=.72$)**

- ① Intrusive thoughts about ex
 - I can't stop thinking about my ex.
 - It is difficult to stop thinking about my ex.
 - All I can think about is my ex.
 - I think about my ex almost all the time.
 - My ex never leave my head.
 - I am over my ex (reverse item).
 (6 items)
- ② Longing love for ex
 - I still love my ex.
 - I am jealous of my ex's new date.
 - I wish to get back together again.
 - I wish to stay close with my ex.
 - I can never find a better date.
 - I just can't forget about my ex.
 - I think about my ex when I talk love.
 - My ex is always on my mind.
 (8 items)
- ③ Lingering affection toward ex
 - I check my ex's SNS.
 - I see my ex from time to time.
 - I often ask people about how my ex is doing.
 - I am or I wish to be in touch with my ex.
 (4 items)

[Result]

Feeling of incompleteness, intrusive thoughts, longing love, and lingering affection were all significantly correlated.

	1	2	3
1 Incompleteness			
2 Intrusive thoughts	.72**		
3 Longing love	.74**	.74**	
4 Lingering affection	.47**	.56**	.64**

** $p < .01$

Importantly, feeling of incompleteness was a significant predictor of current romantic relationship ($\eta=.26$). People who reported feeling incomplete about their old flame were less likely to be in a new relationship.

[Conclusion]

New romantic love heal ONLY WOMEN'S broken heart.



Walking away from a meaningful relationship is always going to be difficult. However, letting go and moving on may help to solve many problems associated with post breakup attentional dysfunctions (ex., online or offline stalking, infidelity, depressive rumination, hyperarousal, chronic loneliness, etc.)