

Lightening the Load:

Perceived partner responsiveness fosters more positive appraisals of relational sacrifices

Visserman et al. (2022)

Does perceiving your partner as being responsive (i.e., understanding, caring, and validating your needs) help you see your sacrifices for them in a more positive light?

Methods

1241 participants in committed relationships from North America and Europe were surveyed for this paper. **Participants were involved in several studies**, including ones where they ...



Imagined a hypothetical sacrifice



Completed diaries of daily relationship sacrifices



Were asked by their partner to change a habit or lifestyle



Reported on the time they relocated ≤ 2000 km for their partner



Participants of each study rated their partner's responsiveness and how they felt about the sacrifice (e.g., forfeiting some of their own interests for their partner) at hand.

Results showed that...

Perceiving greater responsiveness was associated with participants feeling closer and less negatively towards their partner, and led to:

- Feeling more positively about sacrifices requested or made.
- Greater dedication toward a sacrifice that the partner desired.

In Summary...

Perceiving a partner to be responsive makes you feel more positively about making sacrifices for them, in part because you may feel more connected to your partner and hold less negative feelings toward them.

That said, everyone has their own needs that must be understood, validated, and cared for, and thus what is perceived as responsive behavior from a partner may look different from person to person.

