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Motivated by the Attachment Security Enhancement Model (Arriaga et al., 2018), the present research investigated the associations between positive relationship experiences and romantic attachment avoidance in three dyadic studies that combined multiple methods, including daily diaries, laboratory observations, and longitudinal follow-ups. Frequency of daily positive relationship events (but not external positive events) during a 21-day diary period predicted declines in romantic attachment avoidance (but not anxiety) from pre- to post-diary in fledgling couples (Study 1) and newlyweds (Study 2). Video-recorded discussions of fledgling couples' shared positive experiences revealed that behaviors validating the relationship (but not simply showing conversational interest) predicted lagged declines in romantic attachment avoidance (but not anxiety) over 1 month (Study 3). The associations were mediated by positive affect during the diary period in Studies 1 and 2, and by changes in positive affect from pre- to post-discussion in Study 3. Positive relationship experiences did not significantly interact with time in predicting romantic avoidance over a 1-year follow-up with quarterly assessments of attachment orientations in Study 1, over an 8-month follow-up with monthly assessments in Study 2, or over a 2-month follow-up with monthly assessments in Study 3. Altogether, these studies provide one of the most comprehensive tests of how positive relationship experiences in nondistressing contexts are linked to romantic attachment.

Keywords: attachment avoidance, attachment change, attachment security enhancement model, positive affect, positive relationship events

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An essential ingredient thought to contribute to a happy and long-lasting relationship is experiencing positive relationship events (Hill, 1988; Reis & Gable, 2003; Strong & Aron, 2006). Indeed, sharing novel experiences with romantic partners (e.g., Aron et al., 2000), disclosing intimate details (e.g., Willems et al., 2020) or expressing gratitude to them (e.g., Gordon et al., 2011), and seeing them respond enthusiastically to sharing of good news (e.g., Gable & Reis, 2010), have all been linked with greater relational well-being—namely greater relationship quality, satisfaction, intimacy, and commitment. One of the primary aims of the present article is to extend this literature by examining how positive relationship experiences and the accompanying positive affect might contribute to adult romantic attachment—the extent to which individuals feel secure or insecure in their romantic relationships.

The predictive role of attachment orientations in personal and relational well-being is perhaps one of the most well-established findings in personality and social psychology (see Gillath et al., 2016; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016, for reviews). However, relatively less is known about what predicts adult attachment orientations in daily life and what may contribute to change in these orientations (Arriaga et al., 2018; Fraley, 2019). Perhaps due to attachment theory's original emphasis on the role of stressful and threatening

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experiences in the attachment behavioral system dynamics (Bowlby, 1973, 1982), much of the research in this domain traditionally focused on understanding how stressful life events and the meaning ascribed to or social support received during these events predicted attachment orientations (Davila & Sargent, 2003; Green et al., 2011; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2020a; Rholes et al., 2021; Sbarra & Hazan, 2008; Simpson et al., 2003). Far less attention has been devoted to how positive relationship events might predict attachment orientations (but see Stanton et al., 2017, for an exception). The recently proposed Attachment Security Enhancement Model (ASEM; Arriaga et al., 2018) articulated the processes by which positive relationship events in nondistressing contexts can play a key role in facilitating attachment security—especially in reducing attachment avoidance that reflects discomfort with being close to and depending on relationship partners.

Inspired by the ASEM propositions, we examined the links between positive relationship events and romantic attachment avoidance in three dyadic studies. Combining multiple methods, including daily diaries, laboratory discussions, and longitudinal follow-ups, we investigated (a) whether the frequency of daily positive relationship events and the quality of individuals' behaviors when discussing these events predicted lagged changes in romantic avoidance and (b) whether these associations were mediated by positive affect. Taken together, our studies constitute one of the most comprehensive tests of how positive relationship events in nondistressing contexts are linked to attachment orientations.

Attachment Working Models

Attachment orientations are thought to be a function of working models—that is, mental representations that concern one's self-worth and others' availability and responsiveness in relationships (Pietromonaco & Barrett, 2000). The organization of these models is dynamic and continuously affected by relational contexts people encounter. Contextual input might be especially powerful during important turning points such as starting a new relationship, getting married, or becoming parents (Arriaga et al., 2018; Fraley, 2019; Fraley et al., 2021; Rholes et al., 2021), making such transitions particularly well-suited to examine predictors of attachment orientations. The influence of relational experiences on working models is not limited to maintaining or updating a single, overarching working model but also involves creating new models for different relationships (Fraley, 2019). These models are hierarchically organized, with relationship-specific ones (e.g., romantic, parental) nested within a global model (Overall et al., 2003). Thus, relationship-specific models are influenced top-down by global working models and bottom-up by daily life events—including positive relationship experiences.

Change in Working Models

The ASEM was proposed to explain how attachment working models can be revised in romantic relationships as a function of typical, daily life situations couples experience. The model makes a distinction between situations that trigger anxious versus avoidant responses. Situations that induce uncertainty about the partner's availability, responsiveness, or commitment trigger anxious responses. In contrast, situations that cause feeling burdened by the partner or the relationship, or that are appraised as limiting one's autonomy trigger avoidant responses. The model recognizes that

although individuals can engage in certain buffering strategies to momentarily mitigate these responses (e.g., reassuring the partner about the strength of the relationship to mitigate anxiety or acknowledging the partner's autonomy to mitigate avoidance), these strategies may fall short over the long term in alleviating attachment insecurities. Thus, one of the most valuable contributions of the ASEM is articulating the features of attachment-security promoting situations and interactions whose effects may go beyond moment-to-moment management of insecure tendencies.

The model suggests that distinct situations would predict declines in attachment anxiety versus avoidance. Situations that foster positive views of the self and comfort with autonomy alleviate attachment anxiety. Of special relevance to the present article, the model argues that situations that foster positive views of relationship partners and positive associations with interdependence alleviate attachment avoidance. The ASEM describes two types of such situations. One is characterized by partner support during stressful experiences. Effective social support from a partner in times of difficulty challenges avoidant individuals' beliefs about relationship partners' unavailability in times of difficulty. Repeated experiences of benefiting from partner support eventually alleviate avoidant feelings, thoughts, and behaviors. Supporting these propositions, perceived support seeking or support receipt from partners were found to predict lagged declines in attachment avoidance among couples experiencing the stress of transitioning to parenthood (Rholes et al., 2021; Simpson et al., 2003).

The second type of situation, which, according to the ASEM should predict declines in avoidance, involves positive relationship experiences outside of stressful contexts. The feelings of reward elicited by these events are associated with the partner and the relationship, eventually mitigating avoidance. Indeed, recent work speaks to benefits of positive relationship exchanges for avoidantly attached individuals. Specifically, pleasant relationship exchanges buffered the negative association of attachment avoidance with positive affect and relational outcomes such as satisfaction and commitment (Park et al., 2019; Schrage et al., 2020). However, this work did not focus on attachment change. Only one study to date provided initial support for the role of positive relational experiences in predicting lower avoidance. In the study (Stanton et al., 2017), couples were randomly assigned to complete a discussion task that involved either intimate disclosures followed by gentle joint stretching exercises or neutral activities followed by solitary stretching exercises. Although the experimental manipulation predicted declines in romantic avoidance from pre- to 1-month-post-manipulation, this effect was observed only for participants who reported high romantic avoidance before the manipulation.

Based on the ASEM, positive relationship experiences should reduce an individual's attachment avoidance regardless of their initial levels of avoidance (of course, highly avoidant individuals might have more room to show attachment change). The model recognizes that single, isolated experiences may be assimilated into existing working models and thus, remain insufficient in creating lasting change in attachment avoidance. Rather, change in attachment avoidance is likely to occur in the context of frequent positive relationship events, which consistently challenge avoidant expectations and ultimately result in their dissipation. This proposition leads to the previously untested prediction that frequency of daily life events that are appraised as pleasant and satisfying would predict declines in romantic attachment avoidance, particularly when these

events involve the partner. The role of daily positive events—also referred to as uplifts (Charles et al., 2010)—in individual health and well-being has received increasing research attention in recent years (e.g., Charles et al., 2010, 2016; Seltzer et al., 2009; Sin et al., 2015, 2017). However, their role in relationship well-being has been very rarely investigated (see Totenhagen et al., 2012, 2013, for noteworthy exceptions) and there have been no studies to date examining whether they predict attachment orientations.

Although daily life situations provide opportunities for revising avoidant models, the ASEM argues that such revisions depend on the extent to which individuals redefine expectations about interpersonal situations in a way toward placing greater value on interdependence (also see Arriaga et al., 2014). This redefinition occurs through not only a pathway where the individual is the recipient of information conflicting with the existing attachment working models but also an active, "self-generated" pathway where the individual *engages* in behaviors that run counter to the existing working models. Such self-generated changes were nicely demonstrated in studies with couples transitioning to parenthood (Rholes et al., 2021; Simpson et al., 2003), where lagged changes in attachment avoidance occurred as a function of not only perceived support receipt *from* the partner but also perceived and observed support provision *to* the partner. A similar self-generated process might surface when partners jointly reminisce about positive relationship events, which would give them an opportunity to actively engage in positive behaviors while interacting with one another. The ASEM suggests that to the extent that these behaviors validate positive feelings about the relationship, individuals might exhibit greater declines in romantic avoidance.

What might explain the associations of positive relationship events and behaviors with lower romantic avoidance? According to the ASEM, individuals associate feelings of reward emanating from positive events with the relationship, which eventually alleviates attachment avoidance. This perspective is in line with recent work arguing that positive affective experiences are central to relational well-being (Algoe, 2019) as well as classical work showing that novel relational experiences facilitate inclusion of the partner in the self, which in turn generates positive affect and ultimately promotes relationship closeness (Aron & Aron, 1986; Aron et al., 2000; Strong & Aron, 2006). It is also in line with the broaden-and-build cycle of attachment security perspective (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2020b), which suggests that experiences with responsive attachment figures foster greater positive affect, which in turn promotes attachment security. Taken together, these frameworks suggest that positive affect might mediate the association between positive relationship experiences and romantic avoidance.

The Present Studies

The theoretical analysis above led us to develop the following three hypotheses: (1) the frequency of daily positive relationship events would predict lower romantic avoidance, (2) positive behaviors that transpire when discussing these events with the partner would predict lower romantic avoidance, and (3) the associations described in (1) and (2) would be mediated by positive affect. We tested these hypotheses in three existing dyadic longitudinal data sets from Turkey, a non-Western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic (WEIRD) country underrepresented in social psychology (Thalmayer et al., 2021). Romantic couples in our samples

experienced a key turning point—that is, transitioning either to a new dating relationship (Studies 1 and 3) or marriage (Study 2)—during when interdependence processes within the relationship are thought to be formed or redefined (Arriaga et al., 2018; Zayas et al., 2015). As such, positive relationship events during these periods might offer diagnostic information relevant to attachment working models (e.g., beliefs about how much partners value the relationship, how much they can be trusted).

In Studies 1 and 2, we investigated the links between frequency of daily positive relationship events and attachment avoidance. In both studies, couples completed a prediary assessment, a 21-day diary phase, and a postdiary assessment. Attachment orientations were measured at the pre- and post-diary assessments. In line with prior work (Stanton et al., 2017), we used romantic attachment avoidance (participants' attachment avoidance toward their current romantic partner) as the outcome but also controlled for baseline (prediary) levels of global attachment orientations. Positive events were measured during the diary phase. Couples reported whether they experienced a positive event on each day, and if yes, whether these events involved their partners. This allowed us to distinguish between positive relationship events versus external positive events (i.e., events not involving the partner). Past work showed that experiencing daily uplifts in nonrelationship domains (e.g., job, exercise) was associated with greater same-day feelings of love, satisfaction, closeness, and commitment to one's romantic partner (Totenhagen et al., 2012). Thus, we controlled for external positive events in all our analyses to isolate the unique association of positive relationship events with romantic avoidance. We also investigated whether this association was mediated by daily positive affect. To strengthen confidence in the directionality of associations, in all analyses, we modeled *changes* in romantic avoidance from pre- to immediately post-diary.

Finally, couples in both studies completed follow-up assessments of attachment orientations. Study 1 participants were invited to four quarterly follow-ups, with the first one taking place 3 months after the immediate postdiary assessment, whereas Study 2 participants were invited to 8 monthly follow-ups, with the first one taking place a month after the immediate postdiary assessment. Although we did not have any hypotheses about the follow-up assessments (especially given that only attachment orientations but not positive events were measured during the follow-ups), we utilized these data to explore whether the association between positive relationship events and declines in romantic avoidance from pre- to immediately post-diary would change over time. In other words, we explored whether the interaction between frequency of positive relationship events and time predicted romantic avoidance, after controlling for prediary levels of romantic avoidance.

Whereas Studies 1 and 2 examined whether the frequency of positive relationship events in daily life was linked to lower romantic avoidance, Study 3 zoomed in on a single positive experience (i.e., discussing a positive relationship memory) to elucidate behaviors that predict lower romantic avoidance. In this study, attachment orientations were measured at three monthly surveys. Between Months 1 and 2 assessments, couples completed a video-recorded discussion task where they talked about a positive shared memory. We examined what type of behaviors (exhibited by individuals or their partners) were associated with changes in romantic avoidance from Month 1 to Month 2. We also tested whether these associations were mediated by positive affect,

operationalized as change from baseline to postdiscussion. Finally, as in Studies 1 and 2, we explored if the association between positive discussion behaviors and romantic avoidance changed over time.

Data, materials, and analysis code for all three studies (Bayraktaroglu et al., 2022) are available at https://osf.io/4dh6x/?view_only=b71ace0049d446fc9937fc6ad9f5063f. The studies were not preregistered.

Studies 1 and 2: Daily Life Assessments of Positive Relationship Events

Method

Participants

Data came from two longitudinal studies on relationship formation that recruited romantic couples from Turkey. Study 1[1] focused on fledgling dating couples who were in a relationship for 1–3 months, whereas Study 2 focused on newlyweds who were married for up to 6 months. Each study started with an initial prediary survey session, followed by a 21-day diary session, and then an immediate postdiary survey session. This was followed by four quarterly follow-ups (at 3, 6, 9, and 12 months after the immediate postdiary session) in Study 1 and 8 monthly follow-ups in Study 2.

Based on the projects' grant proposals, we aimed to recruit 150 couples in each study. One hundred sixty-five heterosexual couples initially enrolled in Study 1. Two couples broke up during the diary phase and dropped out of the study, nine couples were not included in the analyses as at least one partner withdrew during the diary phase, and three couples were not included as at least one partner did not attend the immediate postdiary session, leaving 151 couples (N = 302; *mean relationship length* = 2 months, SD = 0.5 months; *mean age* = 20.629, SD = 2.128) who completed the prediary, diary, and immediate postdiary assessments. Of the final sample of 302 respondents, 83% (n = 251) completed at least one quarterly follow-up. As the focus of the present research is on the association between positive relationship events and romantic avoidance, only the follow-up data of couples who remained together were included in the over-time analyses. For the separated participants, prebreakup romantic attachment scores were still included in the analyses and postbreakup data were considered as missing.

One hundred seventy-seven heterosexual couples initially enrolled in Study 2 but male partners of seven couples, female partner of one couple, and both partners of five couples did not complete at least one of the prediary, diary, or postdiary sessions, reducing the final sample to 336 respondents (*mean relationship length* = 3.753 years, SD = 2.724 years; *mean marriage length* = 3.967 months, SD = 1.747 months; *mean age* = 28.816, SD = 3.6438). Only four respondents did not complete any monthly follow-ups. In the remaining sample, all respondents completed at least two monthly follow-ups, with the majority (95%) completing all eight.

To estimate power, we first calculated the effective sample size for each analysis, which reflects an estimate of independent samples that the data provide. In other words, the effective sample size estimate adjusts the actual number of observations for nonindependence in the data. The adjustment is performed using the intraclass correlation coefficient (see Wiley & Wiley, 2019, for details), which, in the present data, is an estimate of the ratio of variance at the dyad level to the total variance. After calculating the effective

sample size, we performed sensitivity power analyses to estimate the minimum effect size that can be detected with adequate power (at 80%). In Study 1, the minimum standardized association that can be detected with 80% power was .179 in the model testing whether positive relationship events predicted changes in romantic avoidance from pre- to immediately post-diary and .163 in the model testing whether positive relationship events interacted with time in predicting romantic avoidance. In Study 2, the minimum standardized associations in the same two models were .179 and .155, respectively.

Measures

Attachment Orientations. Participants completed the Experiences in Close Relationships—Revised Inventory (ECR-R; Fraley et al., 2000)—the 36-item full version in Study 1 and a 10-item short version in Study 2—measuring their attachment toward their current partner in Study 1 and spouse in Study 2. In both versions of the scale, half of the items measured romantic avoidance (e.g., "I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on my partner") and the other half measured romantic anxiety (e.g., "I'm afraid that I will lose my partner's love.") on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*). Items were reverse scored where appropriate, so that higher scores reflected greater romantic avoidance and anxiety. The average correlation between romantic attachment orientations was .461 (range = .407–.523) across six measurement waves in Study 1 and .460 (range = .401–.490) across 10 measurement waves in Study 2 (see Tables S1–S2 in the Online Supplemental Material [OSM], for descriptives and Cronbach's αs at each measurement wave). Whereas Study 1 only assessed romantic attachment orientations, Study 2 assessed both romantic and global orientations (with items measuring global attachment orientations referring to "close relationship partners"). This allowed us to control for baseline (prediary) levels of global avoidance (M = 2.886, SD = 1.083, Cronbach's α = .71) and anxiety (M = 3.238, SD = 1.142, Cronbach's α = .67) in Study 2.

Daily Positive Events. Each day during the diary session, participants reported whether they experienced any of the following events: a positive interaction with someone, a positive event at work/school, a positive event at home, something good happening to a close other, and any other pleasant events not covered by the previous categories (Ryff & Almeida, 2010). This measure has been used widely in recent work examining the psychological and physical health correlates of daily uplifts (e.g., Charles et al., 2016; Gunaydin et al., 2016; Klaiber et al., 2021; Sin et al., 2015, 2017). To measure positive relationship events, participants also indicated whether each event involved their partner.

An important insight provided by the ASEM is that interpersonal situations with potential to create attachment change need to be persistent or frequent (rather than short-lived or isolated) to be able to challenge insecure working models. Relative to major life transitions (e.g., parenthood, break-up; Fraley et al., 2021; Rholes et al., 2021; Sbarra & Hazan, 2008) that have been the focus of past work on adult attachment change, daily uplifts are typically minor events, in both their scope and duration. If these experiences are to create meaningful change in romantic attachment,

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[1] The data set used in Study 1 was also used in a prior publication that focused on a different research question (Gunaydin et al., 2021).

they should occur relatively frequently in people's daily lives. Thus, to capture the between-person differences in the accumulation of positive relationship events, we averaged the number of daily positive events that involved the partner across the 21-day period ($M = 0.821$, $SD = 0.510$ in Study 1; $M = 0.847$, $SD = 0.559$ in Study 2). Similarly, we computed an index of external positive events by averaging the number of positive events that did not involve the partner ($M = 0.852$, $SD = 0.511$ in Study 1 and $M = 0.664$, $SD = 0.500$ in Study 2).

Positive Affect. Each day during the diary period, participants completed a brief mood measure adapted from previous studies (e.g., Selcuk et al., 2016). Specifically, they reported the frequency with which they felt cheerful, happy, calm and peaceful, satisfied, and full of life ($1 = $ *not at all* to $7 = $ *very much*). Given the person-level outcome (i.e., romantic avoidance), we aggregated average daily positive affect over 21 days ($M = 4.728$, $SD = 0.960$ in Study 1 and $M = 4.878$, $SD = 0.993$ in Study 2).

Data Analytic Strategy

Main Analyses. In both studies, we analyzed the data using multilevel models that accounted for nonindependence of dyadic data (Kenny & Kashy, 2011). We first tested whether positive relationship events predicted decreases in romantic avoidance during the diary period. The model included immediate postdiary romantic avoidance as the outcome and gender ($-1 = $ male, $1 = $ female), positive relationship events, external positive events, and prediary romantic avoidance as predictors.[2] Controlling for prediary romantic avoidance allowed us to estimate changes from pre- to immediately post-diary, whereas controlling for external positive events allowed us to test the ASEM prediction on the unique role of positive relationship events. Separate residual variances were estimated for each gender.

Next, we examined whether the association between positive relationship events and immediate postdiary romantic avoidance was mediated by positive affect during the diary period. We performed the same model as described above once with positive affect across the diary period as the outcome (to estimate the "*a* path" of the indirect association) and once with romantic avoidance as the outcome and positive affect as an additional predictor (to estimate the "*b* path" of the mediation). The significance of the indirect associations ($a \times b$) was tested by constructing 95% CIs using Monte Carlo simulations (Selig & Preacher, 2008).

By using longitudinal follow-ups, we estimated how long the associations between positive relationship events and romantic avoidance held. Specifically, we performed a two-level model with romantic avoidance (measured at immediate postdiary plus four quarterly follow-ups in Study 1 and at immediate postdiary plus 8 monthly follow-ups in Study 2) as the outcome, and gender ($-1 = $ male, $1 = $ female), prediary romantic avoidance, positive relationship events, external positive events, time, and the two-way interactions of time with prediary romantic avoidance, positive relationship events, and external positive events as predictors. Time was centered around the immediate postdiary measurement. Other continuous variables were centered around their grand mean. Separate intercept, time slope, and residual variances were estimated for each gender (see Kenny & Kashy, 2011).

Supplemental Analyses. We performed two sets of supplemental analyses. First, if any focal direct, indirect, or moderated associations were significant, we repeated the analyses by adding baseline levels of other attachment dimensions (romantic anxiety in Study 1 and romantic anxiety as well as global anxiety and avoidance in Study 2) into the models to check if the findings remained robust. Controlling for romantic anxiety was important because although attachment dimensions are theoretically thought to be orthogonal, they show small-to-moderate correlations (e.g., Fraley et al., 2000; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016; also see Tables S1 and S2 in the OSM), and the ASEM is interested in the unique variance in each dimension—that is, the model proposes unique predictors of change in attachment avoidance versus anxiety. Controlling for global attachment orientations was important because they are thought to affect how partners navigate key turning points in the relationship (Zayas et al., 2015). In the second set of supplemental analyses, we repeated the main model examining the role of daily positive events in predicting changes in romantic attachment from pre- to immediately post-diary with romantic anxiety as the outcome to see if the findings were unique to romantic avoidance as predicted by the ASEM.

Results

Positive Events and Changes in Romantic Attachment Orientations From Pre- to Immediately Post-Diary

Zero-order correlations among the variables are provided in Tables S3 and S4 in the OSM. Multilevel models revealed that positive relationship events predicted decreases in romantic avoidance from pre- to immediately post-diary both in Study 1 ($B = -.272$, 95% CI [$-.417$, $-.127$]; Model 1a of Table 1) and Study 2 ($B = -.208$, 95% CI [$-.354$, $-.063$]; Model 1b of Table 1). External positive events did not predict changes in romantic avoidance in either study ($B = .079$, 95% CI [$-.064$, .223] in Study 1 and $B = .106$, 95% CI [$-.054$, .267] in Study 2). Supplemental analyses revealed that the association between positive relationship events and romantic avoidance was robust to adjusting for prediary romantic anxiety in Study 1 ($B = -.273$, 95% CI [$-.418$, $-.127$]; Model 2a of Table 1) and prediary romantic anxiety as well as global avoidance and anxiety in Study 2, $B = -.189$, 95% CI [$-.335$, $-.044$]; Model 2b of Table 1. Finally, repeating the main analyses with romantic anxiety as the outcome did not reveal significant evidence that positive relationship or external events were associated with changes in romantic anxiety from pre- to immediately post-diary ($ps = .095$ in Study 1 and .618 in Study 2; see Table S5 in the OSM).

Mediation by Positive Affect

Mediation analyses revealed that the association between positive relationship events and decreases in romantic avoidance was explained by positive affect. Specifically, positive relationship events significantly predicted average positive affect during the diary period which, in turn, predicted decreases in romantic avoidance from pre- to immediately post-diary both in Study 1 (indirect association [IA] $= -.053$, 95% CI [-0.107, -0.009]) and in Study 2 (IA $= -.102$, 95% CI [$-.169$, $-.048$]). Positive affect accounted

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[2] We tested whether gender interacted with positive relationship events in Studies 1 and 2 and positive behaviors in Study 3 in predicting changes in romantic avoidance. We did not find any significant interaction effects (all $ps > .123$) and hence did not include the interactions of focal predictors with gender in the analytic models.

Table 1

Multilevel Models Predicting Immediate Postdiary Romantic Attachment Avoidance

Fixed effects	Model 1a			Model 2a		
	B	p	95% CI	B	p	95% CI
Study 1: New couples						
Intercept	.596	<.001	[.301, .891]	.662	<.001	[.311, 1.013]
Gender	−.015	.662	[−.082, .052]	−.016	.649	[−.083, .052]
Prediary romantic avoidance	.824	<.001	[.729, .919]	.838	<.001	[.735, .941]
Prediary romantic anxiety				−.027	.499	[−.106, .052]
Positive relationship events	−.272	<.001	[−.417, −.127]	−.273	<.001	[−.418, −.127]
External positive events	.079	.276	[−.064, .223]	.074	.314	[−.070, .218]

Fixed effects	Model 1b			Model 2b		
	B	p	95% CI	B	p	95% CI
Study 2: Newlyweds						
Intercept	.872	<.001	[.616, 1.128]	.564	.002	[.207, .920]
Gender	−.093	.007	[−.161, −.025]	−.100	.004	[−.168, −.031]
Prediary romantic avoidance	.600	<.001	[.512, .688]	.565	<.001	[.463, .668]
Prediary romantic anxiety				.012	.792	[−.076, .099]
Prediary global avoidance				.041	.282	[−.034, .117]
Prediary global anxiety				.064	.112	[−.015, .142]
Positive relationship events	−.208	.005	[−.354, −.063]	−.189	.011	[−.335, −.044]
External positive events	.106	.193	[−.054, .267]	.109	.187	[−.053, .272]

Note. CI = confidence interval. Gender was coded as −1 (male) versus 1 (female).

for 21% of the association between positive relationship events and romantic avoidance in Study 1 and 50% of the association in Study 2 (see Figure 1, for all path coefficients). Supplemental analyses indicated that the indirect associations held in both studies when we reestimated the paths by adjusting for romantic anxiety in Study 1 (IA = −.053, 95% CI [−.108, −0.009]) and romantic anxiety as

well as global anxiety and avoidance in Study 2 (IA = −.091, 95% CI [−.152, −.037]).

Moderation by Time

There was no evidence that the strength of the association between positive relationship events and romantic avoidance was moderated by time in either study (B = .049, 95% CI [−.015, .113] in Study 1 and B = −.011, 95% CI [−.030, .008] in Study 2; see Table S6 in the OSM for all model coefficients). Although this may suggest that the associations between frequency of positive relationship events and declines in romantic avoidance remain stable over time, these null findings should be interpreted cautiously. We revisit these findings in the General Discussion section along with findings regarding the time interaction in Study 3.

Study 3: Laboratory Discussion of a Positive Relationship Event

Study 3 aimed to extend Studies 1 and 2's findings by zeroing in on a specific positive relationship event—by asking partners to discuss a positive relationship memory in the laboratory. Examining how this discussion unfolded allowed us to identify the kinds of positive behaviors that predicted declines in romantic avoidance. We assessed couples' attachment orientations at three waves, each separated by a month. Couples visited the laboratory a week after the first assessment wave and completed a videotaped discussion task in which they talked about a recent shared positive experience.[3] Studies 1 and 2 measured the frequency of daily positive events

Figure 1

The Indirect Association Between Daily Positive Relationship Events and Decreases in Romantic Avoidance From Pre- to Immediately Post-Diary Through Positive Affect
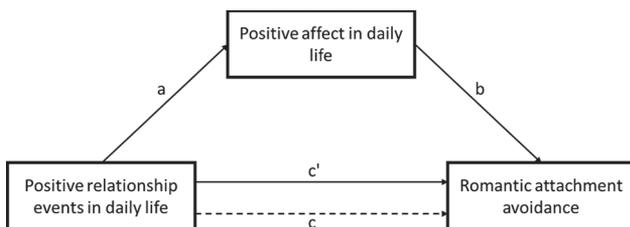
Path	Study 1		Study 2	
	B	95% CI	B	95% CI
a	.496	(.295, .697)	.582	(.401, .763)
b	-.107	(-.190, -.024)	-.176	(-.260, -.091)
c	-.272	(-.417, -.127)	-.208	(-.354, -.063)
c′	-.215	(-.367, -.064)	-.103	(-.254, .047)

Note. CI = confidence interval. c′ stands for the association between positive relationship events and romantic avoidance when positive affect is added into the model. c stands for the same association when positive affect is not added into the model. All path coefficients were estimated by controlling for prediary romantic avoidance and external positive events.

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[3] Participants also completed a conflict discussion between the baseline assessments and the positive event discussion. Given that the conflict discussion is beyond the scope of current research, it will not be discussed further.

that involved the partner, but it was not possible to discern whose behaviors during the event (the respondent's, the partner's, or both) predicted romantic avoidance. In Study 3, we investigated one's own and partner's behaviors simultaneously in the same model to see the unique roles of each in changes in romantic avoidance from Month 1 to Month 2. The mediation analyses also extended our prior findings. Although we were able to model change in the outcome (i.e., romantic avoidance) in Studies 1 and 2, we were not able to do so in the proposed mediator (i.e., positive affect). In Study 3, positive affect was assessed both at the beginning of the laboratory visit (baseline) and after couples completed the positive event discussion. This allowed us to estimate the indirect association between positive behaviors and changes in romantic avoidance from Month 1 to Month 2 via changes in positive affect from baseline to postdiscussion.

Method

Participants

The sample size was determined a priori based on the grant proposal of the project. We aimed to recruit at least 150 dating couples who were in a relationship for 1–6 months. One hundred sixty-seven heterosexual couples ($N = 334$) residing in Turkey enrolled in the study and completed the laboratory session including a positive event discussion. Of these, six couples were excluded from the analyses because they broke up before completing the Month 2 survey, and male partners of four couples, female partner of one couple, and both partners of one couple were excluded because they did not complete at least one of the Month 1 or Month 2 surveys. This resulted in a final analytic sample of 315 participants (*mean relationship length* = 3.342 months, *SD* = 1.619 months; *mean age* = 21.162, *SD* = 2.212). Ninety-six percent ($n = 302$) of these respondents completed the Month 3 follow-up.

Sensitivity power analyses were performed using the same approach as in Studies 1 and 2. The minimum standardized association that can be detected with 80% power was .179 in the model testing whether positive behaviors predicted changes in romantic avoidance from Month 1 to Month 2 and .164 in the model testing whether positive behaviors interacted with time in predicting romantic avoidance.

Measures

Attachment Orientations. Attachment orientations were measured by the same version of the ECR-R used in Study 2. The average correlation between romantic anxiety and avoidance across three measurement waves was .280 (range = .261–.294; see Table S7 in the OSM for descriptives and Cronbach's αs). Means of baseline global avoidance and anxiety were 3.00 (*SD* = 1.143) and 3.951 (*SD* = 1.307), respectively, and Cronbach's αs were .82 and .78, respectively.

Positive Behaviors. Participants were asked to recall and discuss a positive relationship memory during the laboratory session. To help participants recall the memory, several examples were provided for what might be considered as a positive/happy memory (a romantic moment together, a shared novel experience, a happy day spent together, their first date, the moment when they first disclosed they had feelings for each other, etc.). Couples were then given a few minutes to jointly choose a positive relationship event. After making their choice, they discussed this event for 10 min while being videotaped.

To code the videos, we first generated a list of positive behaviors based on a review of previous studies assessing positive relationship behaviors (e.g., Campbell et al., 2010; Finkenauer et al., 2010; Maisel et al., 2008; Reis et al., 2014). Then, the first author watched randomly selected videos of five couples and added to the list behaviors that were not captured by our literature review. The resulting list included 20 behaviors (see Table S8 in the OSM).

Twelve independent coders rated participants' behaviors during the positive event discussion. Partners' behaviors were captured by different video cameras so that the coders rated each participant without seeing their partner. The videos were divided into two sets. Each set contained only one randomly selected video from each couple (e.g., If the video of the male partner of couple #95 was assigned to Set 1, then the video of the female partner of couple #95 was assigned to Set 2). The coders first rated all videos in Set 1 and then proceeded to Set 2. Videos were randomly ordered at the couple level, and the same order was used in both sets (e.g., If the male partner of couple #95 was presented the fifth in Set 1, then the female partner was also presented the fifth in Set 2). This ensured that videos of two partners of any given couple were always separated by an equal number of other videos. The coders rated how frequently they observed each behavior on a 3-point scale (1 = *never*, 2 = *sometimes*, 3 = *often*).

An exploratory factor analysis revealed that most behaviors (17 out of 20) loaded onto two factors that explained 56% of the variance in positive behaviors (see the OSM for details of factor analytic procedures). The first factor summarized *validation behaviors* that communicated positive feelings about the event and its interdependent implications (e.g., "disclosed positive thoughts and feelings about the event," "expressed happiness or gratitude about shared positive experiences," "expressed positive future plans and enthusiasm about the future of the relationship") and that affirmed the partner's identity (e.g., "expressed that they valued things that the partner valued," "complimented or affirmed the partner's positive qualities," "expressed happiness or gratitude about something that the partner has said or done"; $M = 2.001$, $SD = .221$, Cronbach's α = .938). The second factor summarized *conversational interest* (e.g., "expressed interest in what the partner was saying," "smiled at the partner or laughed at their jokes," "encouraged the partner to explain further"; $M = 2.384$, $SD = .182$, Cronbach's α = .838). Interrater reliabilities estimated via intraclass correlations using a two-way random effects model were .903 for validation and .872 for conversational interest.

Positive Affect. After arriving at the laboratory, participants rated their baseline positive affect using the same measure as in Studies 1 and 2 ($M = 5.078$, $SD = 1.210$, Cronbach's α = .903). They also completed the same measure after the positive event discussion, this time to report how they felt during the interaction ($M = 6.101$, $SD = 1.067$, Cronbach's α = .926).

Data Analytic Strategy

Main Analyses. As in Studies 1 and 2, we analyzed the data using multilevel modeling. We first examined whether validation and conversational interest observed during the laboratory interaction predicted changes in romantic avoidance. The analysis included Month 2 romantic avoidance as the outcome, and gender (−1 = *male*, 1 = *female*), own validation, own conversational interest,

partner validation, partner conversational interest, and Month 1 romantic avoidance as predictors. Separate residual variances were estimated for each gender.

For behaviors that uniquely predicted lagged changes in romantic avoidance, we examined whether the association was mediated by positive affect during the discussion. The "*a* path" of the indirect association was estimated in a model with postdiscussion positive affect as the outcome, and gender, positive behaviors, Month 1 romantic avoidance, and baseline positive affect as predictors. The "*b* path" was estimated using a similar model except that Month 2 romantic avoidance was the outcome and postdiscussion positive affect was included as an additional predictor. Given we controlled for baseline positive affect, the "*a* path" referred to the association between positive behaviors during the discussion and changes in positive affect from baseline to postdiscussion. Similarly, the "*b* path" referred to the association between changes in positive affect from baseline to postdiscussion and changes in romantic avoidance from Month 1 to Month 2. The significance of the indirect associations ($a \times b$) was tested by constructing 95% CIs using Monte Carlo simulations (Selig & Preacher, 2008).

Finally, for behaviors that uniquely predicted changes in romantic avoidance, we also examined whether the strength of the association changed from Months 2 to 3. In addition to the main effects of gender, positive behaviors, and Month 1 romantic avoidance, this analysis included the main effect of time (0 = Month 2, 1 = Month 3), and its two-way interactions with positive behaviors and Month 1 romantic avoidance as predictors.

Supplemental Analyses. Again, we performed two sets of supplemental analyses. First, if any focal direct, indirect, or moderated associations were significant, we repeated the analyses by adding Month 1 levels of romantic anxiety as well as global anxiety and avoidance into the models. Second, we repeated the main analysis examining the role of positive behaviors in romantic attachment by using romantic anxiety as the outcome to see if the findings were unique to romantic avoidance as predicted by the ASEM.

Results

Behaviors During the Positive Event Discussion and Changes in Romantic Attachment Orientations

Zero-order correlations among the variables are provided in Table S9 in the OSM. Participants' own validation predicted

Month 2 romantic avoidance, after controlling for Month 1 romantic avoidance ($B = -.771$, 95% CI [−1.356, −.186]). Neither participants' own conversational interest nor their partners' validation or conversational interest were significantly linked to romantic avoidance (see Model 1 of Table 2). The association between validation and romantic avoidance was robust to controlling for romantic anxiety and global anxiety and avoidance at Month 1 ($B = -.728$, 95% CI [−1.317, −.140]; Model 2 of Table 2). Supplemental analyses repeating the models with romantic anxiety as the outcome revealed that neither own nor partner positive behaviors significantly predicted romantic anxiety (see Table S10 in the OSM).

The analytic model predicting Month 2 romantic avoidance was rather a conservative one, simultaneously including all observed behaviors from both partners. Although this analysis revealed a unique role of one's own validation behaviors in romantic avoidance, the partner's validation behaviors failed to reach significance. This does not necessarily mean that partner behaviors during positive relationship events are not relevant for romantic avoidance. One possibility is that partners influence one another's romantic avoidance through *eliciting* positive relationship behaviors. That is, the partner's positive relationship behaviors may evoke similar behaviors in the actor, which, in turn, predict declines in the actor's romantic avoidance. Exploratory mediation analyses supported this possibility: Controlling for Month 1 romantic avoidance, the partner's validation positively predicted own validation ($B = .632$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.548, .716]), which in turn predicted declines in own romantic avoidance at Month 2 ($B = -.909$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [−1.389, −.428]; IA = −.574, 95% CI [−.894, −.267]). This indirect association held after controlling for Month 1 romantic anxiety as well as global anxiety and avoidance (IA = −.547, 95% CI [−.875, −.248]).

Mediation by Positive Affect

Mediation analyses revealed that the association between own validation behaviors and romantic avoidance was explained by positive affect. Validation behaviors during the discussion predicted increases in positive affect from baseline to postdiscussion, which, in turn, predicted decreases in romantic avoidance from Month 1 to Month 2 (IA = −.103, 95% CI [−.218, −.011]). Positive affect accounted for 11% of the association between validation and romantic avoidance (see Figure 2, for all path coefficients).

Table 2

Multilevel Models Predicting Month 2 Romantic Attachment Avoidance in Study 3

Fixed effects	Model 1			Model 2		
	B	*p*	95% CI	*B*	*p*	95% CI
Intercept	4.539	<.001	[2.953, 6.126]	4.426	<.001	[2.791, 6.060]
Gender	.060	.147	[−.022, .142]	.051	.231	[−.033, .135]
Month 1 romantic avoidance	.475	<.001	[.384, .567]	.450	<.001	[.341, .559]
Month 1 romantic anxiety				−.044	.368	[−.142, .053]
Month 1 global avoidance				.046	.314	[−.044, .137]
Month 1 global anxiety				.047	.285	[−.039, .134]
Own validation	−.771	.010	[−1.356, −.186]	−.728	.015	[−1.317, −.140]
Own conversational interest	−.331	.348	[−1.026, .363]	−.333	.346	[−1.028, .362]
Partner's validation	−.432	.151	[−1.023, .159]	−.467	.123	[−1.061, .127]
Partner's conversational interest	−.053	.883	[−.756, .651]	−.053	.882	[−.761, .655]

Note. CI = confidence interval. Gender was coded as −1 (male) versus 1 (female).

Figure 2

The Indirect Association Between Own Validation Behaviors During the Positive Event Discussion and Month 2 Romantic Avoidance Through Postdiscussion Positive Affect
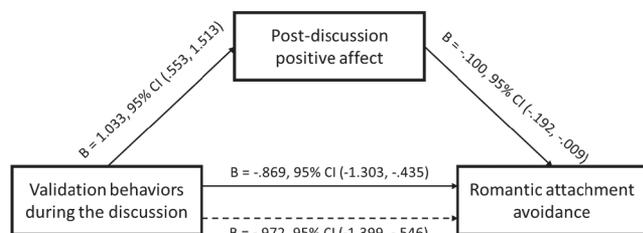
Note. CI = confidence interval. The statistics above the solid line correspond to the association between own validation behaviors and romantic avoidance when postdiscussion positive affect is added to the model. The statistics below the dashed line correspond to the same association when positive affect is not added to the model. All path coefficients were estimated by controlling for Month 1 romantic avoidance and prediscussion positive affect.

Supplemental analyses indicated that the indirect association held when we reestimated the paths by adjusting for romantic anxiety as well as global anxiety and avoidance at Month 1 (IA = −.104, 95% CI [−.223, −.015]).

Moderation by Time

As in Studies 1 and 2, there was no evidence that the association of validation behaviors with declines in romantic avoidance changed over time ($B = .340$, 95% CI [−.119, .798]; see Table S11 in the OSM for model coefficients).

General Discussion

Using diverse methodologies, including daily diaries, laboratory discussions, and longitudinal follow-ups, the current research constitutes one of the most comprehensive tests of the role of positive relationship experiences in attachment orientations. Our findings support the ASEM prediction that positive relationship experiences outside of distressing contexts play a crucial role in revising avoidant working models. Specifically, Studies 1 and 2 showed that the frequency of positive relationship events in fledgling couples' and newlyweds' daily lives over a 3-week diary period predicted decreases in romantic avoidance from pre- to immediately post-diary. Study 3 zoomed in on a single positive event that fledgling couples recently experienced and showed that engaging in behaviors validating the partner and the relationship while discussing this event predicted decreases in romantic avoidance over 1 month. It is important to note that these findings were obtained by controlling for initial levels of not only romantic avoidance but also romantic anxiety as well as global anxiety and avoidance.

An important contribution of the ASEM is that it differentiates between daily life events that contribute to revising avoidant versus anxious working models. The framework identifies positive relationship events in nondistressing contexts as particularly relevant for reducing attachment avoidance. In line with this prediction, we observed that the role of positive relationship experiences was unique to romantic avoidance. Positive relationship events did not significantly predict changes in romantic anxiety in any of the studies. Our studies were well-powered to detect a standardized association of .179, which is slightly lower than the median correlation of .19 in psychology studies (Stanley et al., 2018). If positive relationship events do predict declines in romantic anxiety, the association is likely to be much weaker than the association observed with romantic avoidance.

According to the ASEM, the mechanism by which positive relationship experiences predict declines in attachment avoidance is the feelings of reward produced by these experiences. In line with this prediction, we found that positive affect accounted for the association of positive relationship events and behaviors with romantic avoidance. It should be noted that the evidence for the indirect association was particularly compelling in Study 3, where we were able to control for prediscussion levels of positive affect and, hence, examine the role of changes in positive affect from pre- to post-discussion.

A major strength of the current work is recruiting samples from Turkey, a non-WEIRD country that is underrepresented in social psychology in general and relationship research in particular. Prior studies that informed the ASEM's formulation primarily relied on Western samples. Therefore, the present studies advance the generalizability of the ASEM by testing the model's predictions (on the links between positive relationship events and attachment avoidance) in an underrepresented population. A notable direction for future work is to continue tests of the model premises in diverse samples to further establish the framework as a general model for adult attachment change.

A unique feature of Studies 1 and 2 was the assessment of positive events in a daily diary design. This allowed us to capture the frequency of these events in couples' everyday lives, which is important for attachment theoretical reasons. According to both the classical formulations (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Bowlby, 1982) and recent elaborations (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2020a) of the theory, development of secure attachment results from repeated interactions with a responsive close other in times of hassles or adversities. An important contribution of the ASEM is the recognition of how positive experiences in nondistressing contexts may also contribute to alleviating attachment insecurities. The model argues that for such changes to occur, repeated (rather than single, isolated) positive experiences that involve the partner are necessary. Studies 1 and 2 performed the first direct tests of this argument by investigating the links between frequency of positive relationship experiences in daily life and changes in romantic avoidance. Another unique contribution of these studies was that they allowed us to distinguish positive relationship experiences from external positive experiences (i.e., experiences not involving the partner). The ASEM suggests that pleasant experiences that involve the partner are particularly influential in alleviating attachment avoidance. Indeed, our findings documented the unique predictive role of positive relationship experiences in changes in romantic avoidance, after controlling for external positive experiences.

Whereas Studies 1 and 2 focused on the frequency of positive relationship events in daily life, Study 3 zoomed in on a particular positive relationship event, which partners discussed in a laboratory setting. This allowed us to examine what kind of behaviors exhibited during a positive event discussion predicted romantic avoidance. Individuals who validated their partner and the relationship (but not

those who simply expressed conversational interest) showed lagged declines in romantic avoidance (but not anxiety) over a month.

Why did validation not predict declines in romantic anxiety as well? The answer might lie in the general versus specific nature of behaviors observed during the positive event interaction. Validation behaviors observed in Study 3 communicated positive feelings about the event and its interdependent implications and affirmed the partner's identity in general rather than validating the partner's specific achievements or goal progress. According to the ASEM, the latter might play a more crucial role in boosting the partner's self-confidence and, in turn, mitigating anxious working models. Future studies might manipulate the content of positive event interactions (e.g., discussing a happy memory together vs. discussing personal achievements) to allow different forms of validation behaviors to unfold. Such studies would be ideally suited to examine the relative effectiveness of different forms of validation behaviors in mitigating avoidant versus anxious working models.

Another reason why behaviors observed during the dyadic interaction failed to significantly predict romantic anxiety might be the predominantly positive nature of the discussion task. Past work showed that anxious individuals react strongly to both positive and negative relationship events (Campbell et al., 2005). Combining this work with recent evidence documenting the relevance of unpredictable fluctuations in perceived partner responsiveness for romantic anxiety (Gunaydin et al., 2021), one might expect that an unpredictable mix of positive and negative behaviors might predict attachment anxiety. Therefore, observational paradigms that allow both positive and negative behaviors to transpire might be needed to capture how self or partner behaviors predict change in attachment anxiety.

Prior theorizing and empirical work on attachment change largely focused on how others' (perceived) behaviors were linked to one's own attachment orientations (e.g., Green et al., 2011; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2020a). The present study showed that one's own behaviors predicted their own attachment orientation, after controlling for the partner's behaviors. To our knowledge, the prior literature includes only a single piece of similar evidence where individuals who acted more responsively toward their partner during a video-recorded support discussion showed lagged declines in attachment avoidance over a 6-month period (Rholes et al., 2021). Taken together with the present study, these findings point to what Rholes et al. referred to as a "self-generated" pathway by which attachment security can be enhanced via the person's own behaviors.

Although self-generated change in attachment orientations has not traditionally been a major focus of adult attachment research, it does echo a well-defined process of revising "working hypotheses" in the behavior change literature. A common goal of many behavior change interventions is to encourage individuals to form intentions for engaging in goal-directed behaviors when targeted social situations are encountered (Gollwitzer, 1999). Goal-directed behaviors improve social situations, which affirm the newly formed intentions, which, in turn, further reinforce adaptive behaviors. This self-fulfilling cycle eventually helps achieve long-lasting changes in "working hypotheses" that define how people make sense of themselves, others, and social situations (Walton & Wilson, 2018). The process of revising "working hypotheses" is similar to the process of revising "working models" of attachment, except that in the former, the self is seen as the main agent generating change. Our findings (along with the seminal finding

by Rholes et al., 2021) suggest that such self-generated change is a viable pathway for enhancing attachment security.

It is important to note that the possibility of self-generated change may vary across situations, relationships, and individuals. Situations that encourage individuals to act in ways that contradict their existing schemas may be especially well-suited for initiating self-generated change. For avoidantly attached individuals, these situations may involve providing support to a distressed partner (Rholes et al., 2021), making a sacrifice for the partner or the relationship (Farrell et al., 2016), or validating the relationship when reflecting on a shared happy memory (Study 3 of the current research). The nature of the dyadic interaction may also bolster self-generated change, as our exploratory mediation analyses showed. Specifically, we found that when partners engaged in validation behaviors, actors were likely to reciprocate in kind, which ultimately predicted lagged declines in actors' romantic avoidance. Finally, dispositional factors may facilitate the effect of situations or dyadic interactions on self-generated change. For instance, individuals who perceive their partners as responsive (Reis & Gable, 2015) might be more willing to reciprocate the partner's validation behaviors because they will likely perceive these behaviors as genuine indications of care and interest. Similarly, individuals who approach their relationships with compassionate goals (Canevello & Crocker, 2010) or who believe that successful relationships can be cultivated (Knee et al., 2003) might be more likely to benefit from situational or relationship cues that trigger self-generated change. This analysis suggests that understanding when, how, and for whom self-generated change occurs is an important direction for future research.

The availability of follow-up measures of attachment orientations allowed us to investigate whether the associations between positive relationship events and changes in romantic avoidance persisted over time. In none of the studies, we were able to detect a significant interaction between positive relationship events and time. Although this may suggest that the association between positive relationship events and changes in romantic avoidance remained stable over time, these null findings should be interpreted with caution, keeping the achieved statistical power in mind. The studies employed relatively large samples for dyadic designs and were well-powered to detect standardized associations of .163 in Study 1, .155 in Study 2, and .164 in Study 3 in the models testing the positive relationship events by time interaction. Although these associations are conventionally thought to be halfway through small to moderate (Cohen, 1988), interaction effects can be even smaller. A smaller interaction effect, which the current samples were not sufficiently powered to detect, may suggest that the associations may hold only for a certain period of the study window and then decline to insignificance. Thus, although our analyses suggest that the associations between positive relationship events and declines in romantic avoidance may persist over time, further research is needed to more precisely estimate for how long.

The above point also highlights a limitation of the current work. The longitudinal follow-ups in Studies 1 and 2 assessed attachment orientations but not daily positive events. This precluded examining whether *changes* in the frequency of positive relationship events would predict changes in romantic avoidance. Although collecting these data using a measurement-burst design (in which daily diaries are repeated longitudinally) would be challenging, such a data structure would enable even stronger tests of the role of positive relationship events in attachment change.

A second limitation of our studies was that all couples in our sample experienced a relationship transition as they were in the initial months of either a new dating relationship (Studies 1 and 3) or a marriage (Study 2). Starting a new relationship, getting married, becoming parent, or breaking up are often seen as key events that offer greater possibilities for revising attachment working models (Arriaga et al., 2018; Fraley et al., 2021; Rholes et al., 2021; Sbarra & Hazan, 2008; Zayas et al., 2015). Thus, the study samples provided a particularly good opportunity to test the ASEM predictions on the links between positive relationship events and romantic avoidance. At the same time, the same sample characteristics limit the generalizability of our findings. Further research is needed to see to what extent our findings would hold for couples in more stable periods of their relationship.

Notwithstanding these limitations, the present studies provide novel evidence on relationship events that predict changes in romantic attachment avoidance. Despite the truly remarkable achievements in our understanding of attachment orientations as a "predictor," the study of attachment orientations as an "outcome" continues to occupy the agenda of relationship researchers (Fraley, 2019). Recent theoretical models such as the ASEM provide promising frameworks to advance this important agenda. Across three studies using multiple methods (daily diaries, laboratory observations, and longitudinal follow-ups) and recruiting samples in diverse relationship stages (fledgling couples and newlyweds), the present research provided evidence for the ASEM prediction that positive relationship events are linked to decreases in romantic avoidance and hence contributed to advancing our understanding of what predicts attachment orientations.

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