

What You Want In A Mate May Not Actually Be What You Want, Study Suggests

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The Huffington Post:

Think you know what you want in a mate?

That may not matter when it comes to actually choosing one, a new study suggests.

“People have ideas about the abstract qualities they’re looking for in a romantic partner,” study researcher Paul W. Eastwick, an assistant professor of psychology at Texas A&M University, said in a statement. “But once you actually meet somebody face to face, those ideal preferences for traits tend to be quite flexible.”

In the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* study, Eastwick and other Northwestern University researchers found that even though people had ideas of what traits and characteristics they wanted in a mate, they weren’t necessarily attracted to people with those traits and characteristics.

For example, a person may say that they want someone persistent, only to not be attracted to such a person upon meeting them.

“After meeting in person, you might feel that, yeah, that person is persistent, but he can’t compromise on anything. It’s not the determined and diligent kind of persistent that you initially had in mind,” Eastwick said in the statement.

The finding shows that people are not defined by a single trait — rather, it’s how a trait interacts with other traits that really determines how a person is, researchers said.

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