



Associate Professor John Drake

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Ebola epidemic in Liberia could be ended by June

There is a chance that the Ebola epidemic in Liberia could be eliminated by June 2015 if the current high rate of hospitalisation and vigilance can be maintained. That's according to a new model developed by ecologists at the University of Georgia and Pennsylvania State University. The model includes such factors as the location of infection and treatment, the development of hospital capacity and the adoption of safe burial practices and is "probably the first to include all those elements," writes John Drake, an associate professor in the UGA Odum School of Ecology who led the project. The study appears in the open access journal *PLOS Biology*.

The more in love, the less focused you are

People who are in love are less able to focus and to perform tasks that require attention. Researcher Henk van Steenbergen concludes this, together with colleagues from Leiden University and the University of Maryland. The article appears in the journal *Motivation and Emotion*. "Forty-three participants who had been in a relationship for less than half a year performed a number of tasks during which they had to discriminate irrelevant from relevant information as soon as possible. It appeared that the more in love they were, the less able they were to ignore the irrelevant information. Love intensity thus was related to how well someone is able to focus. There was no difference between men and women." Van Steenbergen emphasises that the link between romantic love and cognitive control is a new area of research.



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Expecting your romantic partner to mind-read?

When you have a conflict with your spouse or romantic partner maybe you withdraw like a turtle into its shell. Or you expect your partner to be a mind reader about what ticks you off. According to Keith Sanford, PhD of Baylor University's College of Arts & Sciences, those are two of the most common types of disengagement in relationships, and both can be harmful. "Withdrawal is the most problematic for relationships," Sanford writes. "It's a defensive tactic

that people use when they feel they are being attacked, and there's a direct association between withdrawal and lower satisfaction overall with the relationship." Withdrawal does not necessarily influence whether a couple can resolve a conflict, said Sanford, who has done previous studies on couples' conflicts. But expecting or hoping the other person to be a mind reader has a direct influence on the couple's ability to settle the issue. The study by Sanford and other Baylor researchers appears in *Psychological Assessment*.

Feeling cold is contagious!

According to new research at the University of Sussex in the UK, just looking at somebody shivering may make you feel cold. The research by scientists in the Brighton and Sussex Medical School shows that humans are susceptible to 'temperature contagion'. Volunteers who watched videos of people putting their hands in cold water found their own body temperature drop significantly. Neuropsychiatrist Dr Neil Harrison, who led the research, suggests that such unconscious physiological changes may help us empathize with one another and live in communities. The research was published in the journal *PLOS ONE*. Dr Harrison writes: "Mimicking another person is believed to help us create an internal model of their physiological state which we can use to better understand their motivations and how they are feeling."



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