**Supplementary Online Materials**

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# **Normative Accuracy**

As noted in the text, all primary analyses included normative accuracy. Table S1 reports those results**.** As can be seen, viewing others more normatively was significantly associated with greater perceiver liking in all samples; this is expected and almost definitional given that the normative profile is so highly correlated with social desirability. This was the only consistent effect across samples. In contrast, target self-esteem did not consistently moderate the link between normative accuracy and perceiver liking across samples.

## **Table S1.**

Results for the normatively accurate impressions from the same models reported in the main text.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Normative Accuracy** |  |  |  |  |
|  | *b* | *SE* | *z* | *p* |
| ***High-Stakes Context: Romantic Exploratory Sample:*** |  |  |  |  |
|  Mean Level of Normative Accuracy | 0.85 | .027 | 32.08 | < .001 |
|  Normative Accuracy and Perceiver Liking | 0.20 | .010 | 20.14 | < .001 |
|  Normative Accuracy and Target Self-Esteem | 0.01 | .017 | 0.58 | .562 |
|  Target Self-Esteem Moderating Normative  Accuracy & Perceiver Liking | 0.001 | .008 | 0.12 | .902 |
| ***Low-Stakes Context: Platonic Exploratory Sample:*** |  |  |  |  |
|  Mean Level of Normative Accuracy | 0.88 | .017 | 51.51 | < .001 |
|  Normative Accuracy and Perceiver Liking | 0.19 | .007 | 28.16 | < .001 |
|  Normative Accuracy and Target Self-Esteem | -0.02 | .010 | -1.68 | .093 |
|  Target Self-Esteem Moderating Normative  Accuracy & Perceiver Liking | -0.01 | .006 | -2.24 | .025 |
| ***Low-Stakes Context: Platonic Replication Sample:*** |  |  |  |  |
|  Mean Level of Normative Accuracy | 0.97 | .024 | 40.01 | < .001 |
|  Normative Accuracy and Perceiver Liking | 0.18 | .009 | 18.85 | < .001 |
|  Normative Accuracy and Target Self-Esteem | -0.04 | .014 | -2.86 | .005 |
|  Target Self-Esteem Moderating Normative  Accuracy & Perceiver Liking | 0.02 | .008 | 1.85 | .064 |

*Note*. *b* = unstandardized regression coefficient. *SE* = standard error.

# **Distinctive and Normative Accuracy Results Controlling for Social Desirability**

In addition to including normative accuracy in our model, we also ran an extended version of SAM which included a socially desirable profile alongside both of our distinctive and normative accuracy measures (see Biesanz, 2021; Wood & Furr, 2016; Zimmermann et al., 2018). In order to create this socially desirable profile, an independent set of coders (undergraduate research assistants; *n* = 30) provided ratings of social desirability for each of the personality items.

As can be seen in Table S2, including social desirability in the model did reduce the three-way interaction of interest between target self-esteem, distinctive accuracy, and perceiver liking, most notably in the platonic replication sample. The platonic replication sample was also the only sample where the interaction between target self-esteem, social desirability, and perceiver liking was significant and stronger than that with distinctive accuracy. This indicates that social desirability could be playing some role in the interaction between target self-esteem, social desirability, and perceiver liking, such that when taking the “social desirability” out of a high self-esteem target’s distinctive personality profile, they were no longer liked significantly more when seen in line with their distinctive personality profile. This suggests that part of what makes accurate perception of high self-esteem targets more beneficial may indeed be the accurate perception of more (distinctively) desirable characteristics, in line with the beneficial content explanation. However, it is clearly not explaining the whole effect, as the three-way interactions with social desirability were generally weaker than the interactions with distinctive accuracy in the other samples. Moreover, given the high statistical power needed for these models, which include three three-way interactions, and convergence issues, the results must be interpreted with a good deal of caution.

## **Table S2.**

Results from an extended version of SAM to include a socially desirable profile with the distinctive and normative accuracy measures.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **SAM with the inclusion of Social Desirability** |  |  |  |  |
|  | *b* | *SE* | *z* | *p* |
| ***High-Stakes Context: Romantic Exploratory Sample:*** |  |  |  |  |
|  Mean Level of Distinctive Accuracy | 0.11 | .010 | 11.54 | < .001 |
|  Mean Level of Normative Accuracy | 0.16 | .030 | 6.13 | < .001 |
|  Mean Level of Social Desirability  | 0.53 | .020 | 27.08 | < .001 |
|  Distinctive Accuracy and Perceiver Liking | -0.01 | .005 | -1.93 | .053 |
|  Normative Accuracy and Perceiver Liking | 0.008 | .020 | 0.49 | .621 |
|  Social Desirability and Perceiver Liking | 0.11 | .010 | 10.82 | < .001 |
|  Distinctive Accuracy and Target Self-Esteem | 0.02 | .009 | 1.74 | .083 |
|  Normative Accuracy and Target Self-Esteem | -0.03 | .020 | -1.61 | .108 |
|  Social Desirability and Target Self-Esteem | -0.004 | .013 | -0.28 | .780 |
|  Target Self-Esteem Moderating Distinctive  Accuracy & Perceiver Liking | 0.009 | .005 | 1.77 | .076 |
|  Target Self-Esteem Moderating Normative  Accuracy & Perceiver Liking | 0.03 | .014 | 1.81 | .070 |
|  Target Self-Esteem Moderating Social Desirability & Perceiver Liking  | 0.01 | .009 | 1.46 | .145 |
| ***Low-Stakes Context: Platonic Exploratory Sample:*** |  |  |  |  |
|  Mean Level of Distinctive Accuracy | 0.12 | .009 | 12.90 | < .001 |
|  Mean Level of Normative Accuracy | 0.30 | .019 | 15.57 | < .001 |
|  Mean Level of Social Desirability  | 0.69 | .014 | 48.20 | < .001 |
|  Distinctive Accuracy and Perceiver Liking | -0.002 | .005 | -0.43 | .671 |
|  Normative Accuracy and Perceiver Liking | -0.03 | .011 | -2.42 | .015 |
|  Social Desirability and Perceiver Liking | 0.12 | .007 | 18.11 | < .001 |
|  Distinctive Accuracy and Target Self-Esteem | 0.02 | .009 | 2.00 | .046 |
|  Normative Accuracy and Target Self-Esteem | -0.01 | .015 | -0.95 | .345 |
|  Social Desirability and Target Self-Esteem | -0.008 | .009 | -0.92 | .356 |
|  Target Self-Esteem Moderating Distinctive  Accuracy & Perceiver Liking | 0.009 | .005 | 1.68 | .092 |
|  Target Self-Esteem Moderating Normative  Accuracy & Perceiver Liking | -0.006 | .010 | -0.54 | .589 |
|  Target Self-Esteem Moderating Social Desirability & Perceiver Liking  | -0.009 | .006 | -1.51 | .131 |
| ***Low-Stakes Context: Platonic Replication Sample:*** |  |  |  |  |
|  Mean Level of Distinctive Accuracy | 0.12 | .012 | 9.95 | < .001 |
|  Mean Level of Normative Accuracy | 0.31 | .023 | 13.60 | < .001 |
|  Mean Level of Social Desirability  | 0.76 | .019 | 39.43 | < .001 |
|  Distinctive Accuracy and Perceiver Liking | -0.008 | .005 | -1.57 | .117 |
|  Normative Accuracy and Perceiver Liking | -0.08 | .014 | -5.70 | < .001 |
|  Social Desirability and Perceiver Liking | 0.10 | .009 | 10.68 | < .001 |
|  Distinctive Accuracy and Target Self-Esteem | 0.02 | .011 | 1.61 | .108 |
|  Normative Accuracy and Target Self-Esteem | -0.05 | .019 | -2.78 | .006 |
|  Social Desirability and Target Self-Esteem | -0.03 | .012 | -2.73 | .007 |
|  Target Self-Esteem Moderating Distinctive  Accuracy & Perceiver Liking | -0.003 | .006 | -0.56 | .575 |
|  Target Self-Esteem Moderating Normative  Accuracy & Perceiver Liking | 0.02 | .012 | 2.01 | .044 |
|  Target Self-Esteem Moderating Social Desirability & Perceiver Liking  | 0.02 | .008 | 2.83 | .005 |

*Note*. *b* = unstandardized regression coefficient. *SE* = standard error.

# **Covariate Analyses**

## ***Actual and Assumed Similarity***

The Social Accuracy Model can also be expanded to include perceivers’ self-reports, in order to control for actual similarity between perceivers and targets and to examine the role of assumed similarity. In these analyses, target self-esteem continued to significantly moderate the link between distinctive accuracy and liking controlling for actual similarity in both platonic samples, all ps < .001. In the speed-dating sample, the association between target self-esteem, distinctive accuracy, and liking became non-significant controlling for actual similarity, b = 0.09, z = 1.77, p = .08, though remained similar in magnitude. In no samples did target self-esteem significantly moderate the link between perceiver assumed similarity and liking, ps > .32. Overall, this suggests that target self-esteem has a stronger impact on the links between accuracy and liking than it does on the links between assumed similarity and liking. Actual similarity may play some role in the link between accuracy, liking, and self-esteem in the romantic sample; however, it is unclear whether this reduced effect is a function of controlling for similarity or the lower statistical power in this more complex model.

## ***Interaction Order***

Given that each participant had numerous interactions, we also examined if there were order effects on distinctive accuracy, and on its links with perceiver liking and target self-esteem. We found one significant, positive order effect on distinctive accuracy in the platonic exploratory sample, *b* = 0.01, *z* = 2.31, *p* = .01, such that accuracy tended to increase across interaction partners. However, there were no order effects in the other samples, all *ps* > .30. Moreover, in the platonic exploratory sample, interaction order did not moderate the accuracy-liking association nor the accuracy-self-esteem associations, all *p*s > .46.

## ***Target Mood***

We also examined the role of target mood during the interactions, as it may relate to both target self-esteem and how much they were liked. Specifically, participantsrated their agreement with the statement “I was happy” on a 1-7 scale after each interaction in the two platonic samples (this was not included in speed-dating due to time constraints). We included these ratings in additional analyses with the three-way interaction between accuracy, perceiver liking, and target-rated post-interaction happiness alongside the three-way interaction between accuracy, perceiver liking, and target self-esteem. In neither sample did target happiness moderate the relationship between accuracy and liking, all *p*s > .30, whereas target self-esteem continued to significantly moderate the association between accuracy and liking, all *p*s < .001. This suggests that it is a target’s global self-views that play a stronger role in influencing how accuracy is related to liking, rather than their current mood or state happiness.

## ***The Role of Other Target Individual Differences***

*Measures*

In both the romantic and platonic samples, using the 44-item version of the Big Five Inventory (BFI; John & Srivastava, 1999), we computed a mean target score for extraversion, neuroticism, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness (see S1 for all descriptive statistics). We also created a mean target score for social anxiety and satisfaction with life, using items like “I have difficulty talking with other people” and “I am satisfied with my life” from the Social Interaction Anxiety Scale (Mattick & Clarke, 1998) and the 5-item Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985), respectively. Notably, all items were completed with the same 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) scale.

## **Table S3.**

Descriptive statistics for the target control variables.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  Measure |  *M* |  *SD* |
| Romantic Exploratory Sample |  |  |
|  Extraversion | 4.49 | 1.05 |
|  Neuroticism | 3.76 | 1.09 |
|  Agreeableness  | 5.18 | 0.81 |
|  Conscientiousness | 4.62 | 0.87 |
|  Openness | 5.09 | 0.76 |
|  Social Anxiety | 2.92 | 1.15 |
|  Satisfaction with Life | 4.46 | 1.15 |
| Platonic Exploratory Sample |  |  |
|  Extraversion | 4.43 | 1.03 |
|  Neuroticism | 4.22 | 1.08 |
|  Agreeableness | 5.23 | 0.77 |
|  Conscientiousness | 4.86 | 0.83 |
|  Openness | 4.90 | 0.86 |
|  Social Anxiety | 3.11 | 1.17 |
|  Satisfaction with Life | 4.84 | 1.12 |
| Platonic Replication Sample |  |  |
|  Extraversion | 4.38 | 1.06 |
|  Neuroticism | 4.32 | 1.07 |
|  Agreeableness | 5.22 | 0.82 |
|  Conscientiousness | 4.76 | 0.89 |
|  Openness | 4.97 | 0.86 |
|  Social Anxiety | 3.21 | 1.27 |
|  Satisfaction with Life | 4.73 | 1.29 |

*Note*. In all samples, the variables were assessed with a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) scale.

*Results*

To test the robustness of our effect and its specificity to target self-esteem, we conducted a set of exploratory analyses controlling for other target characteristics. Namely, in our three-way interaction analyses between accuracy, perceiver liking, and target self-esteem, we also included the three-way interaction between accuracy, perceiver liking, and each of the following target characteristics: extraversion, neuroticism, agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness, social anxiety, and satisfaction with life.

As can be seen in Table S4, the interaction between self-esteem, distinctive accuracy, and perceiver liking was quite robust controlling for these other individual differences. The only two traits that consistently (in two of the three samples) reduced the target self-esteem effect to non-significance, while maintaining their own significance, were extraversion and social anxiety. Conceptually, this makes sense, given these two traits also tap into social confidence and (in)security. However, given the complexity of these models and high statistical power needed to adequately test not one but two three-way interactions (with two other three-way interactions with normative accuracy also in the models), these results must be interpreted with caution. Indeed, in the platonic exploratory sample, the largest sample of the three, the three-way interactions for both self-esteem and each covariate remained significant when modelled together. Overall, it seems safe to conclude that indicators of social confidence, or lack thereof, whether assessed with self-esteem, social anxiety, or extraversion, similarly play a role in the links between accuracy and perceiver liking. In other words, the beneficial target seems likely to be one who is socially confident and secure, however one wishes to operationalize that. Moreover, these results suggest some specificity of this effect for traits relevant to social confidence, rather than socially desirable traits more generally (e.g., neuroticism, agreeableness, and satisfaction with life), as these latter traits did not as consistently moderate accuracy and liking, nor attenuate the self-esteem associations.

## **Table S4.**

Main moderation analyses with target self-esteem, distinctive accuracy, and perceiver liking, while including three-way interactions with target control variables.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Control Variables** | Three-way interaction between distinctive accuracy, perceiver liking, and self-esteem  | Three-way interaction between distinctive accuracy, perceiver liking, and control variable |
|  | *b* | *SE* | *z* | *p* | *b* | *SE* | *z* | *p* |
| ***High-Stakes Context: Romantic Exploratory Sample:*** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  Extraversion | 0.007 | .006 | 1.21 | .227 | 0.01 | .006 | 2.41 | .016 |
|  Neuroticism | 0.009 | .006 | 1.47 | .142 | -0.007 | .006 | -1.16 | .246 |
|  Agreeableness | 0.01 | .005 | 2.65 | .008 | -0.0004 | .005 | -0.07 | .942 |
|  Conscientiousness | 0.02 | .005 | 3.10 | .002 | -0.004 | .005 | -0.67 | .501 |
|  Openness | 0.02 | .005 | 2.90 | .004 | -0.003 | .005 | -0.50 | .619 |
|  Social Anxiety | 0.008 | .006 | 1.34 | .179 | -0.01 | .006 | -2.20 | .028 |
|  Satisfaction with Life | 0.009 | .006 | 1.48 | .138 | 0.009 | .006 | 1.48 | .138[[1]](#footnote-1) |
| ***Low-Stakes Context: Platonic Exploratory Sample:*** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  Extraversion | 0.02 | .006 | 3.12 | .002 | 0.03 | .006 | 6.02 | <.001 |
|  Neuroticism | 0.02 | .006 | 2.61 | .009 | -0.03 | .006 | -5.20 | < .001 |
|  Agreeableness | 0.03 | .005 | 5.73 | < .001 | 0.01 | .005 | 2.09 | .036 |
|  Conscientiousness | 0.03 | .006 | 5.31 | < .001 | 0.008 | .005 | 1.51 | .130 |
|  Openness | 0.03 | .005 | 5.97 | < .001 | 0.01 | .005 | 2.32 | .021 |
|  Social Anxiety | 0.02 | .006 | 3.77 | < .001 | -0.02 | .006 | -4.10 | < .001 |
|  Satisfaction with Life | 0.02 | .006 | 3.55 | < .001 | 0.02 | .007 | 2.47 | .014 |
| ***Low-Stakes Context: Platonic Replication Sample:*** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  Extraversion | 0.008 | .007 | 1.15 | .253 | 0.03 | .007 | 4.71 | < .001 |
|  Neuroticism | 0.02 | .007 | 2.43 | .015 | -0.01 | .008 | -1.60 | .111 |
|  Agreeableness | 0.02 | .007 | 2.51 | .012 | 0.01 | .008 | 1.89 | .058 |
|  Conscientiousness | 0.02 | .007 | 3.29 | .001 | 0.003 | .007 | 0.47 | .641 |
|  Openness | 0.02 | .006 | 3.60 | < .001 | 0.004 | .007 | 0.50 | .616 |
|  Social Anxiety | 0.009 | .008 | 1.13 | .257 | -0.03 | .009 | -3.14 | .002 |
|  Satisfaction with Life | 0.03 | .009 | 3.18 | .002 | -0.006 | .009 | -0.60 | .548 |

*Note*. *b* = unstandardized regression coefficient. *SE* = standard error.

1. While these associations appear identical, they are different when including more decimal places. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)