***Mate Selection Theories***

**Evolutionary Psychology/Natural Selection**
- Began with our prehistoric ancestors
- Women were attracted to men who would provide for the family and teach the son skills that would ensure he survive in prehistoric society
- Men attracted to women who could bear healthy children and feed them

**Social Homogamy**
- Individuals are attracted to those who come from a similar social and cultural background
  - i.e. race, age, ethical background, religion, socio-economic background, political views, physical characteristics – length of fingers and space between eyes

**Ideal Mate Theory**
- Attraction is based on the individual’s unconscious image of the ideal mate
- Supports the concept of ‘love at first sight’ because everyone has an unconscious ideal and makes the immediate judgment of the person as lovable

**Social Exchange Theory**
- Attraction is based more on what people are really like than what is ideal
- Almost everyone, regardless of attractiveness, finds a mate in their society because individuals are attracted to different people, so they aren’t all searching for the same ideal mate. (“What do they see in each other?”)
- Individuals are attracted to and fall in love with those who are equally but not identically appealing (less physically attractive but assertive may attract a physically attractive shy mate)

**Developmental Theory**
- Development of ‘courtship’. No way to predict who will marry who, except by analyzing the couple’s advances and retreats, changing definitions of the situation, and resolution of tensions

**Conflict/Feminist Theory**
- Suggest that a match between an older man and a younger woman ensures that the man has greater resources, and that the younger woman will need his resources to acquire an improved lifestyle
- Age difference allows for men to maintain a dominant status in a patriarchal marriage – important for those who hold traditional patriarchal values
- Since women now have increased financial potential and extended fertility, they might prefer to marry younger partners, although there is little evidence of this happening

**Market Experience Theory**
- suggests that dating is effective because it enabled individuals to learn to relate to another person and to judge characters so that they would be able to determine personal qualities they desired in a marriage partner

**Complementary Theory**
- People marry those whom they think will complement their psychological needs (i.e. abused as a child expect to be abused by mate)

**Ideal Mate Theory**
- Based on past parental role models and dating experiences, people form impressions of an ideal marital partner and search for someone who approximates this ideal

**Free-Choice Mate Selection**
- Individuals are attracted to each other, fall in love, and decide to marry

**Like-Attracts-Like Selection**
- People from similar SES and cultural background have more opportunity to meet and tend to enjoy each other’s company and eventually meet