

Yoobin Park
Postdoctoral Researcher, University of California, San Francisco

1. What first drew you to relationship science?

I actually started out really interested in studying eating behaviors, especially how shared meals might shape bonding processes. Then I met a professor (who later became my MA supervisor) who suggested I pursue graduate training focused on the "bonding" part rather than the eating part. I took that advice, which naturally led me into relationship science.

2. What's a project you're especially proud of right now, and why?

We just published a paper on how transcutaneous vagus nerve stimulation shapes couples' interactions. I'm especially proud of this one because a) it's exactly the kind of interdisciplinary work I hoped to do when I started my postdoc, and b) I got to do it with a dream team!

3. What do you find most exciting or rewarding about studying relationships?

Relationship research is incredibly relevant to everyday life. I've never met anyone who doesn't have a bunch of follow-up questions when I say I study relationships. People are genuinely curious about it and often surprised by how useful it can be. Plus, you never run out of research ideas.

4. What advice would you give to students or early-career scholars interested in relationship science?

One broad piece of advice is not to be shy about reaching out - whether for collaboration or simply to connect. I used to dread cold-emailing people (my PhD mentors can confirm this), but getting over that fear really expanded my world. Some of my favorite projects started with a simple email or chat.