Uncertainty Reduction Theory

The Article, “Rapidly Recognizing Relationships: Observing Speed Dating in the South”, shares observations of men and women who engaged during several speed dating events. Jessica Deyo, Price Walt, and Leah Davis use the “uncertainty reduction theory” to explain a portion of their research. (Griffin, Ledbetter, & Sparks 2015, p. 108). This theory “focuses on how human communication is used to gain knowledge and create understanding”. (Griffin, Ledbetter, & Sparks 2015, p. 108). Upon reading the article, it is clear that the authors agree that the exchange of information helps to reduce uncertainty, even in speed dating. As they used this theory to explain their findings within such an experience, they also show their support for the portion of uncertainty reduction that predicts a better encounter because of having revealed information about each other previously.

Meeting and interacting with people we don’t know can be threatening and cause us to fear doing so. In order to reduce feelings of uncertainty, we all have various behaviors that we may take on to ease the transition of getting to know someone new. Uncertainty reduction is all about “increasing the knowledge of what kind of person another is, which provides and improved forecast of how a future interaction will turn out”. (Griffin, Ledbetter, & Sparks 2015, p. 108). Though speed dating is not the ideal way to become acquainted with someone, this method of interaction pushes people to get straight to the point of interacting and to ask direct questions.

Of course, speed dating heightens feeling of uncertainty within those participating, yet being aware of the small window of time one is allowed to get to know another presses one to override that feeling and focus on the purpose of connecting. This point is well taken by those of us who desire to make our encounters with others count as we live out our Christian lives. Though it can be nerve-wrecking to come in contact with those we are unfamiliar with or those that are unfamiliar with Christendom, keeping in mind the pricelessness of the encounter as potentially being a pivotal one,
motivates us to take advantage of the moment to share the love and Word of God. We read in Ephesians 5:16 that we should “make the most of every opportunity because the days are evil”. (ESV)

Source
