

ACQUAINTANCES



When You Are More Than A Stranger,
But Less Than A Friend

Definitions

- Individuals with limited familiarity and contact
- Individuals may know each other through casual encounters; however, a strong bond, past history, and depth of mutual knowledge between the parties is lacking
- Interactions between individuals is not necessarily voluntary or positive

How do you influence an
acquaintance?

Does politeness matter?

Depends on how you think of them

Lydon, Holmes & Jamieson. (1997). *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 73(3), 536-548.

Communal Relationship

- Relationships in which members respond to each other's needs
- Social interactions may become a platform for diagnosing and advancing the state of the relationship

Exchange Relationship

- Relationships imbued with tit-for-tat and/or concrete reciprocity expectations
- Careful accounting of giving and taking

Depends on how you think of them

Prefriends (preunits)

- These are acquaintances that see potential to move towards friendship
- Closeness is not established but can be imagined
- You want to act as friends but you do not feel as comfortable about gestures between you two
- There is a need for constant reassurance about the state of the relationship

Nonfriends (nonunits)

- You share things in common, but you are different people—you don't feel the need to change
- You define the relationship as casual
- There is not as much at stake in the relationship
- Typically defined as “just someone I know”
- There is a lack of closeness in the relationship

Scenarios

- In the first scenario, participants were asked how they would feel if the other person paid for both dinners while they were away from the table.
- The second scenario involved the participant in her or his room studying one evening for a midterm the next day. The selected person drops by, concerned about a personal matter and looking for someone to talk with.
- The fifth scenario involved phoning the selected person on a Friday evening just before going to meet some people and discovering that the person is sick and is unable to get to the drugstore to pick up a prescription. You are given \$2.50 extra for your trouble after being reimbursed for the prescription.

Do Acquaintances Differ?

Intention to repay favor or comfort receiving the favor

other...

Table 1
Means for Study 1 Dependent Measures

Measure	Condition		
	Unit	Preunit	Nonunit
Intentions ^a	38.2	38.0	30.7
Affect ^b	32.8	26.7	24.0

^a Reliable planned contrast of units and preunits versus nonunits. ^b Reliable planned contrast of units versus preunits and nonunits.

Means for Study 1 Dependent Measures

Do Acquaintances Differ?

Expectations and feelings toward receiving favor, time to repaying favor, or importance of favor to the relationship

Table 2
Means for Study 2 Dependent Measures

Measure	Condition		
	Unit	Preunit	Nonunit
Behavioral Expectation/Intention ^a	31.4	28.1	24.2
Affect ^b	36.7	30.5	26.9
Reciprocation importance ^c	13.8	20.9	17.3
Time until reciprocation ^d	35.3	30.0	31.0
<i>n</i>	20	18	22

^a Reliable planned contrast of units and preunits versus nonunits. ^b Reliable planned contrast of units versus preunits and nonunits. ^c Reliable planned contrast of preunits versus units and nonunits. ^d Reliable post hoc difference between units and preunits.

Means for Study 2 Dependent Measures

Do Acquaintances Differ?

Explanatory attributions about favor or significance of favor to relationship

Table 3
A Priori Comparisons of the Percentage Making Attributions for the Dinner and Seeing Implications of the Dinner for the Relationship in Study 3

Code	Relationship		
	Unit	Preunit	Nonunit
Attributions			
Relationship development ^a	6	41	21
Interpersonal dispositions ^b	37	13	15
Implications			
Relationship development ^a	9	21	9
Explicitly stated "None" ^a	54	28	47

^a Reliable planned comparison of preunits versus units and nonunits.

^b Reliable planned comparison of units versus preunits and nonunits.

Nonfriend Acquaintances are ...

- Least likely to repay a favor even though experience most discomfort receiving favor.
- Least likely to expect the favor or feel comfortable receiving the favor.
- Perceive the favor as less important to the relationship and take longer to repay favor than prefriends.
- Even though slightly more likely to attribute favor to “because he likes me” and “to share with me” than prefriends; nonfriends are decidedly more likely to say the favor has NO relationship significance.

Conclusions

If your acquaintance is unlikely to expect or repay a favor (i.e., no exchange orientation) AND if he/she does not value favors from you (i.e., no communal orientation), how do you motivate him/her to act?

COMPLIANCE GAINING STRATEGIES