

## **The Relationship Closeness Induction Task**

Participants arrive at the laboratory in dyads. The experimenter needs to verify that the dyad members are unacquainted. The experimenter places each dyad in a room and seats the two participants across from each other. The experimenter informs members of each dyad that they will not interact or even see each other at the conclusion of the experiment. Participants are told that they will engage in a communication task, and they receive the following instructions:

“You and the other participant will receive three identical lists of questions. These three lists of questions will be on three separate pages. We would like you to engage in as natural a conversation as possible using these questions. An easy way to do this would be to take turns asking and answering these questions. In other words, one participant should ask the other participant the first question on the list. The other participant should answer and then ask that same question of the first partner. There is a time limit on each of the three lists of questions. You should try to finish all the questions within that time limit. Check off each question you finish on the provided sheet. You may spend 1 minute on the first list of question, 3 minutes on the second list, and 5 minutes on the third list of questions. The experimenter will keep time and tell you when to go on to the next list of questions. When this occurs, finish the question you are on and then go on to the next list.”

The experimenter exits the room and closes the door. Participants engage in the RCIT. The experimenter returns to the room three times: (1) after the expiration of the 1-minute time interval allotted for responding to List I, (2) after the expiration of an additional 3 minutes which is the time interval allotted for responding to List II, and (3) after the expiration of the 5-minute time interval for responding to List III.

The three lists of questions follow.

List I

1. What is your first name?
2. How old are you?
3. Where are you from?
4. What year are you at the University of X?
5. What do you think you might major in? Why?
6. What made you come to the University of X?
7. What is your favourite class at the University of X? Why?

## List II

1. What are your hobbies?
2. What would you like to do after graduating from the University of X?
3. What would be the perfect lifestyle for you?
4. What is something you have always wanted to do but probably never will be able to do?
5. If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would you go and why?
6. What is one strange thing that has happened to you since you've been at the University of X?
7. What is one embarrassing thing that has happened to you since arriving at University of X?
8. What is one thing happening in your life that makes you stressed out?
9. If you could change anything that happened to you in high school, what would that be?
10. If you could change one thing about yourself, what would that be?
11. Do you miss your family?
12. What is one habit you'd like to break?

## List III

1. If you could have one wish granted, what would that be?
2. Is it difficult or easy for you to meet people? Why?
3. Describe the last time you felt lonely.
4. What is one emotional experience you've had with a good friend?
5. What is one of your biggest fears?
6. What is your most frightening early memory?
7. What is your happiest early childhood memory?
8. What is one thing about yourself that most people would consider surprising?
9. What is one recent accomplishment that you are proud of?
10. Tell me one thing about yourself that most people who already know you don't know.

Upon completion of the RCIT, the experimenter instructs participants to engage in three additional tasks. First, participants mark on separate sheets of paper the number of questions they asked each other from each of the three lists. Second, participants respond (with a “yes” or “no”) to the following six questions regarding the RCIT: (1) “Do you think you had adequate privacy in your conversation?” (2) “Did you feel relatively comfortable in this conversational setting?” (3) “Do you consider conversation a good way to get to know somebody?” (4) “Do you often engage in conversation similar to the one you just engaged in?” (5) “Do you think the majority of your friends would ask questions similar to those asked in this conversation?” and (6) “Do you think your friends consider conversation the most important way to get to know somebody?” Finally, participants respond to the closeness induction manipulation check that consists of four single-item 9-point scales. The four scales assess closeness, similarity, degree of liking, and likelihood of future friendship.

The scales are worded as follows: (1) “How close do you feel to the participant with whom you are working on this study?” (1= *not at all close*, 9 = *very close*); (2) “How similar do you feel to the participant with whom you are working on

this study? “(1 = *not at all*, 9= *very similar*); (3) “How much do you like the participant with whom you are working on this study?” (1 = *not at all*, 9= *very much*); and (4) “In the future, to what extent do you feel you could be friends with the participant with whom you are working on this study?” (1= *not at all*, 9= *very much*).

If subsequent experimental task is called for, in which participants need to be assigned randomly into the close and distant dyads and then complete the dependent measures, participants in the close condition remain with the same partner, whereas participants in the distant condition are switched to a new partner, who has just completed the RCIT with still another participant. That is, participants in both the close and distant conditions go through an identical relationship induction procedure. This practice insures that the results of the experiment (i.e., the difference between the close and distant condition) are due to the induction of closeness rather than procedural aspects of the RCIT.