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Intro to RHET

06 December 2017

Exit Essay

In Carl Engelking's essay *You'd Be Happier If You Talked to Strangers More Often*, he states how humans are the most social creature on this planet, yet in certain situations we remain in silence. These situations are the awkward silence that appears whenever you step into an elevator, or a form of public transportation. Rather than talking to another commuter and potentially creating a new friend, humans naturally stare at the wall, and ignore the other peoples around them. We don't do this because we like to be alone, we do this because he has this misconception that others don't want to be talked to, so it's an easier route to remain silent.

Behavioral scientists, Nicholas Epley and Juliana Schroeder, conducted an experiment with 100 normal commuters at a train station in Homewood, Illinois. During this experiment, the scientists split 100 into three separate groups, each with a task to perform. One of the groups was assigned to start a conversation with a random stranger, another was told to stay silent, and the third group was told to go about their commute as they usually would. In this social experiment, the group assigned to start a conversation with a stranger, claimed to actually have a more pleasurable trip, and felt more productive.

Another experimental group simply had to fill out a survey about their predictions if they were to talk to a stranger. This group all stated how they imagined talking to a stranger would

make their trip less pleasurable, and actually be deficient. This experiment was repeated in a waiting room as well as a bus; and the outcomes were all the same as the first experiment.

People's assumptions didn't match their reality. Scientists have proclaimed that humans actually want to talk and interact with others, yet they remain in this state of pluralistic ignorance. Mr. Engelking concludes his essay by remarking instead of remaining in pluralistic ignorance during these situations, make your as well as their day more pleasurable by starting a conversation.

After reading this essay, I agree with Carl Engelking as well as the two scientists about their research. I always want to talk and interact with people, yet I get this feeling that others would rather be left alone instead of conversing. There's nothing worse than an awkward ride in a elevator, uber, or even a plane. You always have this sensation that the person near you doesn't want to talk. When in fact all humans feel the same way about this subject. Simply talking with someone for two minutes could change their whole persona and create a better atmosphere in those situations.

The data given for these social experiments go hand in hand with how I feel about this topic, as well as how others feel.

