

COMMUNICATIONS THAT SHOULD LEAD TO PERCEIVED EXPLOITATION IN COMMUNAL AND EXCHANGE RELATIONSHIPS

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This paper discusses implications of the distinction between communal and exchange relationships (Clark & Mills, 1979; Mills & Clark, 1982) for communications likely to be perceived as exploitative. In exchange relationships, in which people benefit each other in response to benefits received or with the expectation of receiving a comparable benefit, exaggerating the debt the person owes the other or minimizing the debt the other owes or is capable of paying the person should be perceived as exploitative. In communal relationships, in which people benefit each other in response to needs, exaggerating the person's obligation to respond to the other's needs or minimizing the other's obligation to respond to the person's needs should be perceived as exploitative. Misrepresenting the type of relationship or exaggerating the strength of a communal relationship may also be perceived as exploitative. Different types of communications that should be perceived as exploitative in exchange and communal relationships are discussed. Similarities and differences between communications that ought to be perceived as exploitative in each type of relationship are examined.

In this paper, we discuss implications of a distinction between exchange and communal relationships (Clark & Mills, 1979; Mills & Clark, 1982) for understanding the kinds of communications that should lead to perceived exploitation—that is, communications that should be perceived as taking unfair advantage of the recipient. We begin with an overview

This article is based in part on a paper presented at the Second International Conference on Personal Relationships, July 1984, Madison, Wisconsin. Requests for reprints should be sent to Judson Mills, Department of Psychology, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742.