

## Reactions to and Willingness to Express Emotion in Communal and Exchange Relationships

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Based on the idea that emotion conveys information about the expressor's needs and on Clark and Mills' (1979) distinction between communal relationships and exchange relationships, it was hypothesized that: (a) expression of emotion (when not directed at the other) would be reacted to more favorably when communal than when exchange relationships were desired, and that (b) people would be more willing to express emotion in communal than in exchange relationships. In Study 1 subjects were led to desire a communal or an exchange relationship with another who expressed either happiness, sadness, irritability, or no emotion. Then liking for the other was assessed. When no emotion was expressed, there was no difference in liking for the other between the Communal and Exchange conditions. However, as predicted, when happiness, sadness, or irritability was expressed, liking was significantly greater when a communal rather than an exchange relationship was desired. In Study 2, subjects were paired with an existing friend (Communal conditions) or with a stranger (Exchange conditions) with whom they expected to have a conversation. They were given a list of possible topics some of which involved talking about emotional experiences and some of which did not. As predicted, subjects in the Communal condition indicated a greater preference for talking about emotional topics than did those in the Exchange condition.

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Much of the emotion people experience and express arises in the context of their social relationships (Averill, 1983; Bowlby, 1969; Csikszentmihalyi & Larson, 1984; DeRivera, 1984; Scherer, Summerfield, & Wallbott, 1983; Schwartz & Shaver, 1987; Shaver, Schwartz, Kirson, & O'Conner, 1987; Trevarthen, 1984). It is also widely believed that display rules exist regarding under what social circumstances emotion should or should not be displayed (e.g., Ekman, 1971; Hochschild, 1979; Malatesta & Haviland, 1985; Saarni, 1979). Yet, despite these facts, social psychologists know little about how the nature of two peoples' relationship influences: (1) reactions to expressions of emotion, and (2) willingness to express emotion. The present research addresses these issues.

*Two types of relationships.* Clark and Mills (1979; Mills & Clark, 1982) have distinguished *communal* from *exchange* relationships. In communal relationships (often exemplified by friendships and family relationships), members feel a special obligation to be concerned about the other's welfare. Thus, they pay attention to the other's needs (Clark, Mills, & Powell, 1986; Clark, Mills, & Corcoran, 1989), give the other benefits in response to those needs (Clark, Ouellette, Powell, & Milberg, 1987), and feel good when they have helped the other (Williamson & Clark, 1989). In contrast, in exchange relationships (often exemplified by relationships between acquaintances or people who do business with one another), members do not feel a special obligation to be concerned about the other's welfare. They keep track of who does what in their relationship (Clark, 1984; Clark et al., 1989), give benefits with the expectation of receiving comparable benefits in return or in payment for benefits previously received (Clark, 1981; Clark & Mills, 1979, Clark & Waddell, 1985), and are not especially responsive to the other's needs (Clark et al., 1986, 1987, 1989).

The present research was based upon our belief that the communal/exchange distinction has clear implications for people's reactions to others' expression of emotion and for their own willingness to express emotion. Why? First and most straightforwardly, expressing emotion communicates one's needs to others (Bell & Ainsworth, 1972; Fridlund, in press). This is appropriate, functional, and called for in communal, but not in exchange relationships because in communal but not in exchange relationships members are supposed to respond to one another's needs. Second, because expression of emotion does fit the norm for communal relationships, *receipt* of expressions of emotion from someone with whom one wishes to develop or to maintain a communal relationship may be taken as a valued communication from the other that he or she feels the same way while *expressing* emotion may be seen as a way of initiating or maintaining a communal relationship with another. In contrast, when an exchange relationship is desired received expressions of emotion may be reacted to negatively because they suggest the other desires a type of relationship one does *not* want. Also expression of emotion may be care-

fully suppressed when an exchange relationship is desired specifically to *avoid* implying to the other that a communal relationship might be desired. Finally, people who are seen as experiencing emotion may be seen as more human and vulnerable. As such, they may seem more likely to understand and to empathize with one's *own* emotions and needs, which, again, is important in communal but not in exchange relationships.

*Predictions.* Based on the above arguments, we made two predictions: (1) Expression of any emotion (not directed at the other) will be reacted to more positively (i.e., with greater liking) when communal rather than exchange relationships are desired. (2) People in communal relationships will be more willing to express emotion (again, not directed at the other) to each other than will people in exchange relationships. The first hypothesis was tested in Study 1, the second in Study 2.

## STUDY 1

### *Method*

*Subjects.* Subjects were 183 undergraduates from Carnegie Mellon University. By participating they either partially fulfilled an introductory psychology course requirement or were paid. Data from seven additional participants were not included in any analyses. Two were older, married women with whom we believed the communal and exchange manipulations, explicitly developed for use with younger, single subjects (see Clark, 1986) would not be effective. Five others (2.6% of the total run) expressed suspicions regarding the procedure. They either did not believe another subject was present or did not believe the form used to manipulate the expected relationship type and expression of emotion was authentic. One was in the Communal/Happy condition, two in the Communal/Irritable condition, and two in the Exchange/Irritable condition.

*Procedure.* Subjects signed up for an experiment involving working with another person on word games. Each subject was randomly assigned to one of eight conditions created by crossing the relationship manipulation (Communal, Exchange) with the emotion manipulation (No Emotion, Happy, Sad, Irritable). When the subject arrived, he or she was greeted by a female experimenter and seated in front of a television monitor. On the monitor the subject could see another student sitting at a similar desk. Supposedly this person was the subject's partner for the experiment. (In fact the monitor showed a previously made videotape of one of four moderately attractive undergraduates, two male and two female.)<sup>1</sup> At this point the experimenter turned off the monitor and told the subject that although the study had been advertised as being about word games, it actually dealt with impression formation. The first person to arrive from each pair of subjects (i.e., the other person) was always designated as the stimulus person. Throughout the study, this person would continue to believe the study was about word games. The second person (i.e., the subject) would be asked to form an impression of the stimulus person. More specifically the experiment would consist of three parts. First, the subject would receive a questionnaire filled out by

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<sup>1</sup> A variety of targets were used to help ensure the external generalizability of our eventual results. An effort was made to have each tape viewed by approximately the same number of male and female subjects. The first male tape was viewed by 27 male and 20 female subjects; the second male tape by 27 male and 17 female subjects; the first female tape by 24 male and 26 female subjects and the second female tape by 25 male and 17 female subjects.

the other and form a "very first impression" of that other. Second, the pair would meet and work on word problems in order to give the subject a chance to form a fuller impression of the other. Finally, the pair would be separated and the subject would fill out a second impression form regarding the other.

Next the subject was given the initial questionnaire, supposedly filled out by the partner. (In fact, all forms had been filled out and put in random order before any subjects were run. The experimenter chose the top form not looking at it as she did. Thus she stayed unaware of the relationship and mood manipulations). The information on the top half of the form served as the manipulation of expected relationship type. There subjects in the Communal conditions saw information indicating the other was single, had just transferred to the university, and had chosen the experiment because it seemed like a good way to meet people. Subjects in the Exchange conditions saw answers indicating the other was married, had been at the university for two years, and had signed up for the experiment because it was at a convenient time for his or her spouse to pick him or her up afterwards. [Past work including explicit manipulation checks has shown that these manipulations are effective in producing expectations of communal and exchange relationships (see Clark, 1986; Clark & Waddell, 1985)]. The manipulation of expressed emotion appeared on the bottom half of the form. There the other had responded to questions asking for ratings of the respondent's current experience of happiness, sadness, and irritability, on bipolar scales from 1 (not at all) to 7 (very much so at this moment). Subjects in the Irritable condition received a version in which the other had circled 1's for "happy" and "sad" and a 7 for "irritable"; subjects in the Sad condition received a version with 1's circled for "happy" and "irritable" and a 7 circled for "sad"; and subjects in the Happy condition received a version with 1's circled for "irritable" and "sad" and a 7 circled for "happy." In the No Emotion (control) condition, 1's had been circled for all three emotions.

After reading his or her partners' information, the subject filled out the preliminary first impressions form. It asked for ratings of the other on nine dimensions: agreeable, needy, understanding, pleasant, dependent, sympathetic, friendly, self-reliant, and likeable. These ratings were made on 7-point bipolar scales, from 1 ("not at all") to 7 ("very much so").<sup>2</sup> Afterward the subject was checked for suspicion, debriefed, and thanked.

### *Results and Discussion*

Prior to any other analyses, all subjects' responses to the nine items on the dependent measure were submitted to a factor analysis. Whether one examines the results of the unrotated or of the rotated analysis, six of the items (agreeable, pleasant, understanding, sympathetic, friendly, and likeable) fell together and had their highest loadings on a single factor (with positive loadings ranging from .61 to .87). Ratings on these six items were summed to form an overall measure of perceived likeability. The remaining three items (neediness, dependency, and self-reliance) had their highest loadings on a second factor with loadings ranging from .61 to .80—those for neediness and dependency being positive and that for self-

<sup>2</sup> This study spanned two academic semesters. During the first semester, 104 subjects were run. For these subjects, three additional adjectives, "dangerous," "intimidating," and "frightening" had been included on the dependent measure. A preliminary factor analysis on the data from those subjects revealed that responses to these three adjectives fell on a distinct factor from the likeability and dependency adjectives. These items were not retained on the questionnaire used the following semester for the remaining 79 subjects and this measure will not be discussed further.

TABLE 1  
MEAN LIKEABILITY AND DEPENDENCY RATINGS

Emotion	Likeability relationship type		Dependency relationship type	
	Communal	Exchange	Communal	Exchange
Happy	36.6 <sup>f</sup>	33.7 <sup>e</sup>	8.5 <sup>a,b</sup>	13.0 <sup>e</sup>
Sad	29.7 <sup>c,d</sup>	24.7 <sup>a,g</sup>	12.7 <sup>c,h</sup>	14.2 <sup>f</sup>
Irritable	25.9 <sup>b,g</sup>	22.1 <sup>a</sup>	9.2 <sup>a</sup>	13.0 <sup>d</sup>
No Emotion	28.4 <sup>b,c</sup>	28.5 <sup>b,c</sup>	10.1 <sup>a,g</sup>	11.6 <sup>b,d,e,g,h</sup>

*Note.* Higher scores indicate greater liking or dependency. Within the set of likeability or dependency means, means *not* sharing a superscript differ significantly from one another at at least  $p < .05$ .

reliant being negative. After ratings for self-reliance were reversed, each subject's ratings on these three scales were summed to form a measure of perceived dependency.

*Liking.* The means for the measure of liking in each condition appear on the left side of Table 1. Preliminary analyses revealed no significant (or marginal) main or interaction effects involving sex of the subject or of the other. Therefore, the data were collapsed across these variables and analyzed using a 2 (Relationship Type: Communal or Exchange)  $\times$  4 (Emotion: No Emotion, Happy, Sad, or Irritable) analysis of variance. This analysis revealed a significant main effect of Relationship Type,  $F(1, 175) = 15.40, p < .001$ , a significant main effect of Mood,  $F(3, 175) = 39.63, p < .001$ , and an interaction between Relationship Type and Mood that approached significance  $F(3, 175) = 2.09, p = .10$ .

Following the analysis of variance, the Newman-Keuls procedure was utilized to assess the differences between the individual conditions. The results are depicted by superscripts in Table 1. While there was no significant difference in liking expressed in the Communal as compared with that expressed in the Exchange condition when no emotion was expressed, as predicted when *any* emotion was expressed liking was significantly higher in the relevant Communal than in the relevant Exchange condition (Happiness,  $p < .01$ ; Sadness,  $p < .01$ ; and Irritability,  $p < .05$ ).

Comparing each emotion condition with the No Emotion condition *within* each relationship type revealed the following additional effects: (a) Happiness significantly improved liking in both the Communal ( $p < .01$ ) and the Exchange ( $p < .01$ ) conditions, (b) Sadness significantly decreased liking in the Exchange conditions ( $p < .05$ ) but not in the Communal conditions (NS) (with, if anything, there being a slight tendency to increase liking) and, (c) Irritability significantly decreased liking in the Exchange conditions ( $p < .01$ ) while, despite the means falling in the same direction, this effect did not reach significance in the Communal conditions.

The results for liking clearly support our primary hypothesis that expression of emotion will be reacted to more positively when communal than when exchange relationships are desired. We believe these results are due to the distinct norms which apply to communal and exchange relationships. In communal but not in exchange relationships, members feel a special responsibility for the other's welfare. Since expression of emotion conveys information about those needs (or lack thereof in the case of happiness), expressing emotion (as long as it is not negative emotion directed *at* the other) is presumably viewed as appropriate and reacted to positively when communal relationships are desired. This may occur both because: (a) expression of emotion fits the norms for a communal relationship, (b) expression of emotion can be taken as an indication that the other is open to a communal relationship, and/or (c) people who express emotion may seem more human and vulnerable and, as such, more likely to understand and to empathize with one's own emotions and needs.

In addition to supporting our primary hypothesis, the liking results also revealed that expressing happiness increased liking regardless of relationship type and irritability lowered liking in the exchange condition and tended to do the same in the communal condition. These effects may be due to information about the other, in *addition* to willingness to express needs, which expressing happiness or irritability conveys. Happy or joyous people are perceived to be courteous and nice (Shaver et al., 1987). This information, combined with the fact that happiness conveys something about a person's need state may account for happiness increasing attraction in communal relationships. This information by itself may account for happiness increasing liking even in the Exchange conditions. Irritability or anger is associated with cursing, yelling, screaming, complaining, being out of control, and stomping (Shaver et al., 1987)—behaviors that are undoubtedly not relished in *any* relationship. This information together with the inappropriateness of expressing emotion in exchange relationships may be why irritability decreased liking in the exchange condition. This information alone may account for the tendency for irritability to decrease liking in the communal condition despite expression of emotion being quite appropriate in such relationships.

*Dependency.* The mean dependency scores in each condition are shown on the right side of Table 1. Preliminary analyses revealed no significant (nor any marginal) main or interaction effects involving sex of the subject or the other. Therefore, the data were collapsed across these variables and analyzed using a 2 (Relationship Type: Communal or Exchange)  $\times$  4 (Emotion: No Emotion, Happiness, Sadness, or Irritability) analysis of variance. It revealed a significant main effect of Relationship Type,  $F(1, 175) = 32.36, p < .0001$ , a significant main effect of Mood,  $F(3, 175) = 6.94, p < .01$ , and a marginally significant interaction between Relationship Type and Mood,  $F(3, 175) = 2.14, p < .07$ .

The analysis of variance was followed by the Newman-Keuls procedure which revealed that while there was no significant effect of Relationship Type when No Emotion or when Sadness was expressed, if Happiness ( $p < .01$ ) or Irritability ( $p < .01$ ) were expressed, perceived dependency was greater in the Exchange than in the Communal conditions. Looking at the results of these comparisons within each Relationship Type also reveals that: (a) Sadness increased the target's perceived dependency both when Communal and when Exchange relationships were desired ( $p < .01$  in both cases); and (b) within the Communal conditions, but not within the Exchange conditions, expressing sadness resulted in greater perceived dependency than did expressing happiness or irritability ( $p < .01$  in both cases).

The finding that expressing sadness is associated with increases in perceived dependency fits well with some findings reported in the literature. For instance it fits well with the finding that people associate their own experiences of sadness with being more helpless, dependent, powerless, and impotent (Izard, 1977; Shaver et al., 1987) and with the finding that, at least when communal relationships are desired, potential recipients of help who are sad receive more help than ones who are not sad (Clark et al., 1987).

Do the dependency findings have any implications for the validity of our primary hypothesis that expressing emotion will be perceived as more appropriate in communal than in exchange relationships? One trend which can be interpreted as consistent with that hypothesis did emerge. Specifically, while there was a tendency for expressions of happiness and irritability to be associated with decreases in perceived dependency in the Communal conditions, they tended to be associated with increases in perceived dependency in the Exchange conditions. Perhaps when a person expresses emotions in an *inappropriate* context (i.e., when he or she does not have or is not seeking to have a communal relationship) that person seems *especially* emotional and needy.

## STUDY 2

Following the first study we conducted a follow-up study for a number of reasons. First, we wanted to demonstrate that the idea that expressing emotion is more appropriate in communal than in exchange relationships would be reflected not only in people reacting more favorably to others' expressions of emotion but also in their being more willing to *express* emotions in communal than in exchange relationships. Second, we wished to extend the test of our general hypothesis regarding the appropriateness of expressing emotion to ongoing, naturally occurring communal relationships as compared with relationships between strangers. Thus, in the second study we examined how willing friends and strangers would be to

discuss emotional topics with one another. We predicted that friends would be more willing to do so.

### *Method*

*Subjects.* Subjects were 31 undergraduates, 20 females and 11 males. Each received partial credit toward an introductory psychology requirement for participating. All subjects signed up with a same sex friend for a study on social interaction and all pairs were scheduled to report to the laboratory at times convenient for them and for one other pair. Once two pairs were scheduled, people in that group were randomly assigned to have the first discussion with their friend or with a stranger (a member of the other pair). The data from five additional participants, all originally assigned to the Friends condition, were not included in the analyses. One group of four males talked to one another continually and compared questionnaire responses during the session despite being asked not to do so. The fifth participant expressed suspicion regarding the purpose of the study.

Excluding the group who did not follow instructions, three male-male pairs of friends, five female-female pairs of friends, two male-male pairs of strangers, four female-female pairs of strangers and 2 mixed-sex pairs of strangers were run. This resulted in there being six male and ten female participants each in the Friends and in the Strangers condition. However, since the one suspicious subject came from one of the male-male friends pairs, our final data pool in the friends condition came from five males and ten females while that in the strangers condition came from six males and ten females. (We do recognize the partial confound between whether pairs were friends or strangers and whether they were composed of the same or mixed sex members. This will be taken into account in the Results section where analyses including and excluding the mixed sex pairs will be reported.)

*Procedure.* When all four subjects signed up for a particular time had arrived, the experimenter led them to believe that each subject would be participating in two private 10-min conversations, one with his or her friend, the other with a member of the other pair. They were told to "just talk freely during that time." The experimenter would be asking questions about the conversations afterwards. Then the experimenter handed each subject an envelope containing the name of his or her first conversation partner. That person was his or her friend or one of the two strangers. The envelopes were prepared by a person other than the experimenter and the experimenter left the room briefly after handing them out in order to remain unaware of the relationship manipulation.

When she returned, the experimenter handed each subject a form saying that when people are told to talk that they sometimes have a problem finding something to talk about. To make things easier, a form suggesting conversation topics was being handed out. Each subject was to rank order the topics in terms of his or her preferences and the experimenter would then pick one both partners seemed to prefer. The form listed fifteen topics. Five were intrinsically emotional in nature (i.e., "times you have felt especially serene," "your fears," "things that make you sad," "things that make you angry," and "what makes you happy"). The remaining ten were not (i.e., "your future plans," "your favorite restaurants," "your opinions of Pittsburgh's weather," "your knowledge of gardening," "your knowledge of Pittsburgh politics," "your opinions of Carnegie Mellon," "your views on wildlife," "your favorite movies," "the best party you've ever been to," and "industry in the U.S."). The topics were randomly ordered on the form.

After all four subjects completed the topic choice forms, the experimenter took each subject, individually, into an adjoining room and checked for suspicion. At the same time, each subject was also asked to verbally rate the closeness of his or her relationship with each of the three other members of the group. Ratings were made on a scale from 1 (not at all close) to 7 (very close). Finally, subjects were debriefed and thanked for their participation.



### *Results and Discussion*

*Relationship manipulation checks.* As anticipated, friends rated themselves as being significantly closer ( $m = 5.48$ ) than did strangers ( $m = 1.06$ )  $t(29) = -19.76, p < .0001$ , and eliminating the four subjects in the mixed-sex group did not alter this result. In addition, to check on our assumption that communal norms are seen as applying to friendships more than to relationships with strangers while exchange norms are seen as applying to relationships with strangers more than to friendships, a survey of a separate group of subjects from a similar population was conducted. It asked them such things as how responsive to a friend's and a stranger's needs they would be, how responsive to their needs they would want a friend and stranger to be, whether they would expect repayment for benefits given to a friend and a stranger, and whether they would repay a friend and a stranger for benefits received. The results clearly indicated that friendships *are* considered to be significantly more communal and significantly less exchange in orientation than are relationships with strangers, thereby supporting the underlying assumptions of this study. Details of this separate study are available from the authors.

*Measure of willingness to discuss emotion.* The dependent measure of willingness to discuss emotional topics consisted of the sum of each subject's rankings of the five emotional topics. The lower this sum the more willing the subject was to discuss emotional topics. The mean sum was 31.57 in the Friends condition and 41.00 in the Non-friends condition. Preliminary analysis revealed no significant (or marginal) main effects or interactions involving sex of the subject or of the partner. Therefore the data were collapsed across these variables and a  $t$ -test was conducted. It revealed that friends were significantly more willing than strangers to discuss emotional topics  $t(29) = -3.10, p < .004$ . Since mixed sex pairs were only represented in the Strangers condition, we repeated our analyses excluding the four subjects in the two mixed sex pairs. The mean in the Friends condition remained 31.57 while the mean in the Strangers condition became 40.42. Again a preliminary analysis revealed no significant effect of the sex of the pair, the data were collapsed across this variable, and a  $t$ -test was conducted. The difference between the Friends and the Strangers condition remained significant  $t(25) = -2.60, p < .02$ .

It might be asked whether *each* of the five emotional topics received higher rankings in communal than in exchange relationships. In fact, all five emotional topics were ranked as more preferable in the Friends than in the Strangers condition (8.5 vs 10.7 for serenity; 7.1 vs 9.4 for fear; 7.6 vs 9.2 for sadness; 4.7 vs 6.9 for anger; and 3.8 vs 4.1 for happiness). Individual two-tailed tests comparing ranking by friends relative to strangers for each emotion separately (and using an  $\alpha$  of .01 given the multiple tests), however, revealed that the predicted difference reached

significance only for anger  $t(30) = 2.96, p < .01$ . Nonetheless two other differences, that for fear  $t(30) = 2.06, p < .05$  and that for serenity  $t(30) = 1.84, p < .08$ , approached significance. Moreover, according to a sign test (Siegel & Castellan, 1988), the probability of all five differences falling in the predicted direction was low ( $p = < .03$ , one-tailed). (Again, excluding the four subjects in the mixed sex stranger pairs does not alter this overall pattern of results nor the significance of this sign test.)

The results of the second study provided clear support for the prediction that subjects would be more willing to discuss emotional topics with a friend (Communal conditions) than with a stranger (Exchange condition). In turn, that finding is consistent with our assumption that expressing emotion is more appropriate in communal than in exchange relationships. Of course, because this study was correlational in nature and because friends and strangers differ in many ways, we readily acknowledge that there are many alternative explanations for the results. For example, friends know one another better than do strangers. Perhaps friends feel the other will be better able to understand their emotion; perhaps they know they can trust their friend not to disclose any emotional information they convey; perhaps they know that expressing emotion to a friend may pay off in getting increased support whereas all these things may seem less likely with a stranger. We actually believe all these likely differences between friends and strangers stem from the same communal norm to be responsive to each others' needs from which we also believe the differences in willingness to express emotion stems and that each attribute may contribute to the others in a cyclical fashion. For example, expressing emotion may elicit support, the support may increase feelings of trust, and the trust may contribute to even greater willingness to express emotion. Still, there is nothing in the present data that can prove the communal norm itself rather than, say, friends having greater knowledge of each other simply as a function of time spent together, is what leads, directly or indirectly, to greater willingness to express emotion.

In addition to testing our primary hypothesis regarding how relationship type influences willingness to express emotion, we were able to examine preferences for expressing particular emotions. In general among the five emotional topics, those involving happiness or anger tended to be preferred over the remaining topics. (Once again, excluding the four subjects in the mixed sex stranger pairs does not alter the overall pattern of results.) However, because the ranks for the five emotions within each relationship type were not independent, we did not compare the mean ranking for each emotion with each other emotion within relationship type as was done in Study 1. Instead sign tests were used within each relationship type condition to compare subjects' preferences for talking about each specific emotion relative to average preferences for the ten nonemotional topics. These tests revealed that within the Friends condition, happiness

and anger were preferred over the nonemotional topics ( $p < .002$ , two-tailed, in both cases) and that subjects' ratings for fear, serenity, and sadness did not differ significantly from the average ratings for the nonemotional topics. Within the Strangers condition, happiness was preferred over nonemotional topics ( $p < .004$ , two-tailed) and serenity was avoided ( $p < .008$ , two-tailed) relative to the nonemotional topics. Preferences for the fear, sadness, and anger topics did not differ significantly from preferences for the nonemotional topics.

Clearly both friends and strangers preferred discussing happiness to the nonemotional topics. Perhaps people implicitly know what we found evidence for in Study 1. That is, in both Communal and Exchange conditions expressing happiness is associated with increased liking. Why might discussing anger have been preferred to the nonemotional topics in the Friends but not in the Strangers condition? Friends may wish to talk about past anger experiences in part because they know the other will be responsive to them—expressing sympathy or suggesting potential ways to resolve the anger. Strangers may not exhibit the same preferences specifically because they know the other is not obligated to provide sympathy and support and might even resent being expected to do so. Finally, we simply do not have a good explanation for why serenity was avoided in the Strangers condition but not in the Friends condition. Serenity is, perhaps, an uncommon, and difficult, emotion to discuss and perhaps people are especially reluctant to attempt to discuss it in exchange relationships.

### GENERAL DISCUSSION

Returning to our overall and primary hypothesis, both studies support the idea that expression of emotion is more appropriate in communal than in exchange relationships. Subjects both: (a) reacted to expressions of emotion more positively when communal than when exchange relationships were desired (Study 1) and (b) were more willing to discuss their emotional experiences in existing friendships (assumed to most often be communal relationships) than in relationships with strangers (assumed to be exchange relationships). Although alternative explanations exist for the results of the second study we would note that only our more general explanation, that is that expression of emotion is more appropriate in communal than in exchange relationships, can account for the results of both studies. Of course, we must be careful not to generalize our conclusions too far. In the first study we dealt with expressing emotion to another who was not the target of the emotion. The results from that study may not generalize to situations in which subjects are themselves the target of the emotion. Also, in Study 2, if subjects did choose to talk about serenity, fear, sadness, anger, or happiness, the other need not have been the target. Given this the results may not generalize to ex-

pressing emotion *about* the other person in relationships. Drawing conclusions about reactions to expressions of emotion directed at oneself or about willingness to express emotion directed at the other must await further research.

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