

I-Sharing and Face-to-Face Encounters with Objectively Dissimilar Others

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Research shows that when people believe they have experienced a moment identically, that is, when people “I-share,” they like each other that much more (Pinel, Long, Landau, & Pyszczynski, 2004). I-sharing not only fosters liking, but can also help alleviate feelings of existential isolation (feeling alone in one’s experience). The effects of I-sharing maintain even when participants have a choice between interacting with an outgroup member that I-shares with them and an ingroup member who does not. However, this research has always been conducted over a computer and never in a “real”, face-to-face interaction. The present study thus aims to take this work one step further by investigating whether the past preferences for an I-sharer – regardless of group membership --hold true even in a face-to-face interaction. This study will expose participants to an ingroup member or an outgroup member with whom they do or do not I-share. Moreover, participants will meet their partner either before or after the I-sharing manipulation. This study will allow us to determine whether, even in a face-to-face interaction, I-sharing is more important than shared social group membership in determining liking. This study will also allow us to determine whether it matters at what point in time people learn of their I-sharer’s group identity. These results will have implications for future research on I-sharing and its possible real world applications.