

Breaching Experiment

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For this breaching experiment I decided to change up my shoes for a day. My goal was to switch my left and right shoes so that they would be worn on the wrong foot and see how people would react. I wasn't exactly sure what to expect so I tried not to have any expectations and just see how it went.

Since I didn't really know what would count as a reaction I thought it best to have a control group first. I went through a day wearing shoes normally and focused on how people might be reacting to my shoes or feet. This was a Monday and my schedule is the same on Wednesdays. For continuity and to avoid external factors future experiments were only conducted on a Monday or Wednesday. I know that other people, the ones involved in my experiment, may not have the same schedules on these days but it was the closest I could get to having identical testing conditions.

Plain brown loafers were my chosen control shoes because they're common enough and don't really stand out on their own. While wearing these it was rather difficult to tell if people were reacting to my shoes or not because nobody said anything directly to me about them, and the reactions were nothing of note. I did get a few looks that some might consider intrigue, but I don't know if it was even directed at me let alone my shoes. They could've been looking at my pants, the ground, somebody else entirely, or not even thinking about what they were looking at and were simply lost in thought. This much was mostly what I expected. Nothing of note happened that day other than finding myself analyzing other peoples' footwear which I don't normally do.

To help avoid a misunderstanding of correlation I decided to add another pair of shoes to the experiment. It seems reasonable to me that people would be more likely to notice shoes that stand out, whether they're being worn backwards or not. For this purpose I wore a pair of shoes that not only stand out in color but design too. These shoes are primarily bright white with blue accents and have a large visible spring coil on the heel. I also wore a rather contrasting outfit to make sure the shoes stood

out. To say they'd be hard to miss would be an understatement. With these shoes I received quite a few looks. It varied from surprise to confusion but for the most part they were all sudden changes in expression. I did have a few people comment on the shoes but it was usually in passing, a simple "nice shoes". I only got one question about the shoes and it was from a friend who had seen the shoes before. These reactions I have seen every time I've worn these shoes in the past but it seemed more frequent, I'm guessing only because I was looking for it.

Now that a relative standard had been set I pulled out my running shoes and put them on backwards. They're a notable brand and the colour scheme stands out, though not as much as the second pair of shoes, so I expected people to see them. I also expected some but not most people to comment on their reversal after seeing them. To my surprise nobody said a thing. I got plenty of looks, many of which started as intrigue and slowly morphed to confusion. One guy almost said something about it but he thought better of it and walked past without comment. Nobody commented on my shoes, even the simple "nice shoes" I had gotten before. It seemed as though people were too afraid to speak up at all. I wasn't yet convinced though.

Just to verify what had happened I thought it best to retry the experiment using the same shoes from my two previous "control" groups. I went one day with the loafers switched and another day with the spring shoes switched. As expected the spring shoes got the most expressionful reactions but twice again, nobody said anything in regards to the reversal. One person did inform me my shoes were untied at one point through the day, which they were, but they still kept silent about my shoes being flipped.

This experiment sure surprised me. Usually people like to speak up when something is off, even if in quite confidence. I'm used to getting my fair share of odd looks but nothing compared to what my shoes got. Looks of confusion were met with a smile and nobody had the guts to challenge what I had on my feet. I don't know if they were too afraid to ask or didn't care enough to or maybe didn't even notice and the looks weren't actually at what it seemed they were. Whatever the reason I'm glad I

chose to use multiple shoes and multiple attempts. It shows that the orthodoxy of the shoe design had little to nothing to do with peoples' reactions. Maybe I'll keep trying until somebody finally speaks up.