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Reflecting on my Past

My years of high school commenced with unfamiliar beginnings. I’ve spent around five years in California before arriving in Colorado. The change was exiting as I did experience my first blizzard with such forceful snow and winds in the year of 2009. I’ve begun my freshman year of high school in Cherokee Trail High School. At this school, I met my best friend, Hitesh, who I’ve know for the better part of six years now. We’ve come to know each other and share our hobbies through these years. Through these years we’ve developed a bond as we trusted each other increasingly over the years. In these next few paragraphs I will recall some experiences with them that lead me here. Through all these years I’ve learned that my friends define who I am. These years have gone by so quick but left behind so many profound memories.

I first met Hitesh at a social gathering where we exchanged the usual introductions. We got to know each other quite well in a period of two hours. We were **bonding** **(p. 259)** over our similar hobbies and interests. We both liked tennis and share an interest in similar shows. As the night progressed we became exhausted as we’ve been talking and laughing for hours. We then learned there was an air hockey table in the basement. Intrigued, we ventured to the basement and to our amusement there it was. It sitting towards the back corner of the basement. We walked over threw a puck on the tabled and started playing for a few seconds before we were both confused as to why the puck was moving so sluggishly. We started smacking the table confused as to why it wasn’t working. After a few minutes, I hear Hitesh let out a sigh with his finger pointing to an unplugged cord attached to the table. At this point it was probably one in the morning when we began hysterically laughing while searching for an outlet and laughed harder when we couldn’t find one. This fond memory always remains in my mind to this day as I smile at the sheer vagueness of this **interaction (p. 6).** Interaction as defined in the book is “a series of messages exchanged between people, whether face-to-face or online” (p. 6).We became even more familiar with each other as the days passed.

Our **personalities (p. 90)** were unique from each other however. Personality is “an individual’s characteristic way of thinking, feeling, and acting based on the traits they possess” (p. 90). He always appeared as outgoing and extraverted while my **face (p. 52)** expressed more reserved features. This face is “the self we allow others to see and know” (p. 52). Being as outgoing as he was, Hitesh introduced me to his friends with whom we sat with during lunch. We developed a **friendship (p. 355),** which is a close bond two people share, as we ate lunch together and developed some peculiar **personal idioms (p. 179)**. Personal idioms are “words or phrases that have a distinct meaning to a particular relationship” (p. 178). One such personal idiom was when we kept laughing as we saw the hockey table at that house and remembering that incident that occurred a week ago. We later began playing tennis on weekends. Much to my surprise, we both had an interest in tennis, but we both lacked any skill whatsoever to keep a rally going for more than four hits. Of course, we eventually did gain experience as we joined the tennis team at our school. Soon after we made a **commitment (p. 287)** to play tennis at least once every two weeks. Our other shared hobbies included playing video games. These commitments were strong psychological attachment to a partner and the intention to continue this relationship (p. 287). These interactions progressed every day as we became familiar with each other. I felt we had a bond that couldn’t be broken. As days went by I became more familiar with his other friends. One of these people I’ve formed a bond with is Stephen.

Stephen had an immense range of connections across the school. He had a high **personal currency (p. 179)** of charisma. Personal currency refers to characteristics in a person that other people admire (p. 179). Stephen introduced me to a broad presence of **media (p. 7)**, both foreign and domestic. Some of these were shows like Doctor Who, Big Bang Theory, Death Note, and Another. We spent days watching these shows together and I was very intrigued by the humor in some of these shows as well as the plot in the others. This particular day we spent all day marathoning some of our favorite shows. Through the day we developed a **reciprocal liking (p. 291)** as we found these new interests that we began to share. Reciprocal liking refers to the mutual interest. We kept **paraphrasing (p. 154)** some of the quotes from these shows and some comedians as we laughed about them. The more hobbies and interests we shared, the stronger our bond became. Then as we were watching some Doctor Who we **vented (p.125)** to each other our worries about the future. Venting is the process of “letting your emotions dominate your thoughts and explosively expressing them” (p. 125). It was a great chance at **self-disclosure** **(p. 63)** as we discussed our futures. I wasn’t entirely sure what my path was as we were about to graduate. Self-disclosure is the act of revealing personal information to another person you trust (p. 63). Stephen has helped me, just like Hitesh, to open up and express myself more.

Through this boost of self-confidence, my **self-concept (p. 40)** improved as well. Self-concept is how you see yourself through your beliefs, attitudes, and values (p. 40). My personality has definitely changed over the years. I honestly don’t think I’d be able to become who I am right now without their help. We three got along very well as the years progressed. As senior year approached we planned to go camping. The anticipation left me restless for the weekend to begin. We left on a Saturday as the sun was just about to rise. We had an amusing ride as we sang to some music that was playing on the radio with the windows down and the air flowing through the car. As we set up our tents we had a somewhat friendly dispute of **territoriality (p. 226)** even given the size of the tent. It was big enough to fit five people. We did, however, have our own separate tents for when we’d sleep. Territoriality is one’s designation of claim on a personal space they are occupying while restricting access to others (p. 226). As we went on the hike that we anticipated since our departure I let my **selective listening (p. 164)** take advantage of me as I was listening to the birds nested in the trees and I didn’t hear Hitesh and Stephen explaining the distance of the trail we were to hike. Selective listening is the process of acknowledging certain parts of a message while dismissing the rest (p. 163). This unexpectedly long hike wore us all out as we crashed by the pond halfway through the trail as we admired the view. This particular situation peaked my **self-awareness (p. 39)** as I analyzed the life I’ve lived for the past four years in Colorado. Self-awareness refers to “one’s ability to view themselves as a unique person distinct from your environment and reflect on your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors” (p. 39).I started thinking, could I really be who I am right now without these friends I’ve made? It intrigued me that these two people have changed my life as it were. The sound of the wind and the ripples in the pond elicited a soothing sensation as I pondered this thought. It felt as if we were **family (p. 324)**. Family refers to those people you share a bond over a long period of time and those who you’re bound though, in our case, commitment (p. 324).

As these years have passed we have acknowledged each other’s values, traits, and fears. These pieces of information consist of the central layers of the **social penetration theory (p. 59)**. The social penetration theory is when you reveal information about yourself by peeling back or penetrating layers. Through all this time we have become more intimate as we became closer friends. This **intimacy (p. 60)** led me to rely on Hitesh and Stephen whenever I encountered a dilemma in my life. This intimacy is the bond and closeness someone shares with others. Their assistance has led me to make decisions that I might’ve regretted if I’ve decided upon alone. This relationship has led me to change from the reserved self I once was to developing a somewhat more outgoing attitude. This relationship helped my self-esteem as well since I began to imagine others seeing me as more outgoing. This ideology is defined by the **looking-glass self (p. 41)** where we determine our self-concept through thinking of others’ perception of us. This looking glass self can be defined by how we see ourselves by how we think others see us (p. 41). Hitesh, Stephen, and I bonded through the years as we developed similar interests. We shared many of our worries and discussed our ambitions as we became more like family. This bond was precious to us as we’ve gotten to know each other over the years. Through the course of six years, I’ve arrived here to be who I am despite who I was in the past thanks to the friends I’ve spent time with throughout high school.

Works Cited

McCornack, S. (2013) Reflect & Relate: An Introduction to Interpersonal Communication. *Bedford/St. Martin’s*, 3, 1 – 419.