

## Chapter 1C: Box Theory

This theory is so fundamental I will have it tattooed on my arm. It helps explain just about all personal relationships.

We perceive all humans under a surprisingly simple system. This system allows us to form heuristics, which give us the power to filter out people easily. It has many inaccuracies, which, combined with its many accidental uses, creates a flawed system.

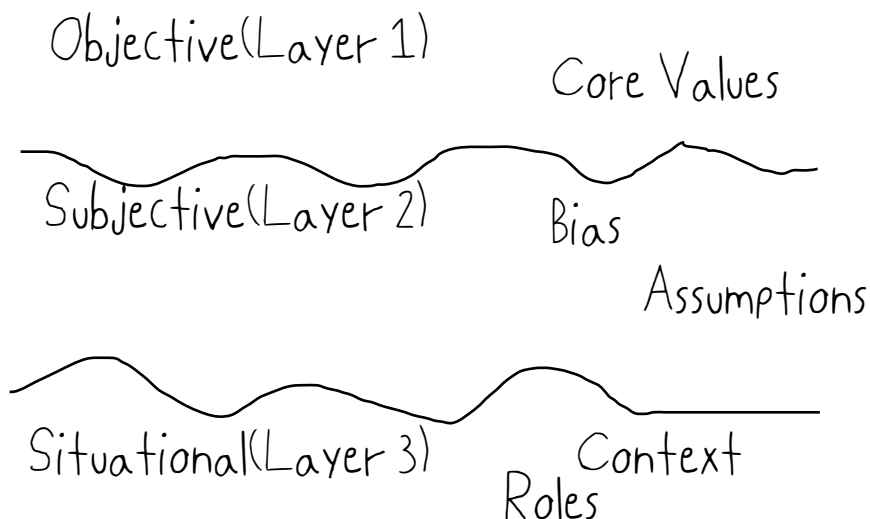
Box theory is the strategy we use to categorize a human into boxes to perceive them similar to the previous people we met. These boxes trap us into false impressions of other people. They also cause us to trap ourselves into the wrong estimates.

The first set of boxes are the most straightforward. Objective Boxes are the characteristics that make up a person. These are often filled with prejudice and will usually be unchangeable like white, male, tall, but also unchangeable like tech worker.

The second set of boxes are riddled with errors. They are the assumptions about the person. They're nice, cool, or smart. This type of box will fade as you know them more.

The next set of boxes is context. They are also in a chemistry class or on the same soccer team. Context boxes shift with time. The college roommate might be absent post-college.

The last set are labels. By far the most important box, it's what role you assign them. Are they someone you are trying to hook up with, or be friends with them.

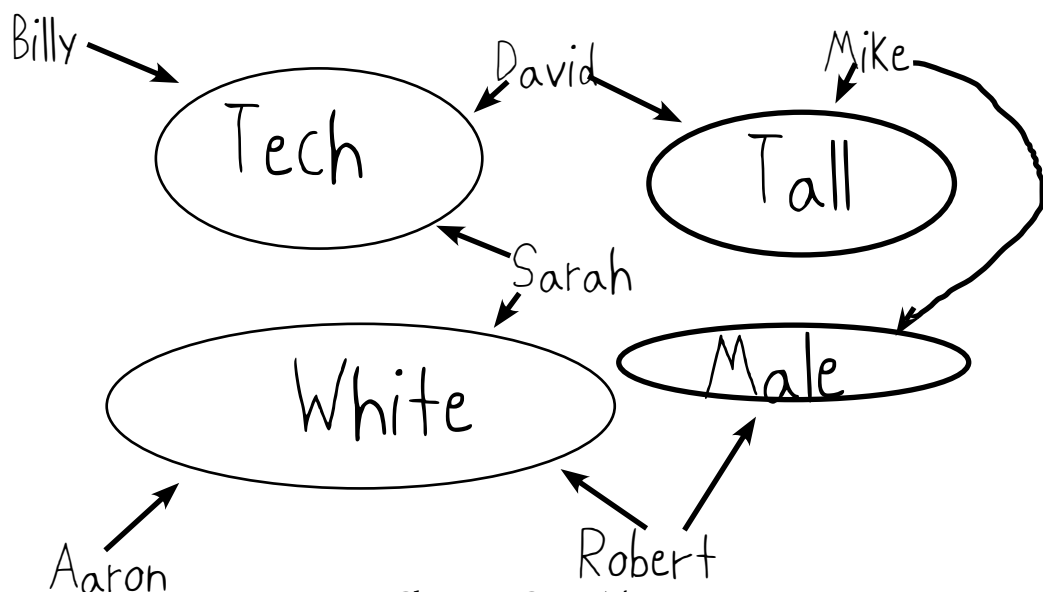


The worst type of box is objective. When you have a box, you must do something with it. There's no point in storing someone is tall or white without an intuition about that.

So, you end up taking this information and comparing it to other people or similar data. So, when you are put into the tech box, they compare you to every other person who is also in tech. The same goes for being white or male.

This pretty much means everyone has some sort of implicitly racism, which, when studied, seems to be accurate.

You can also escape these boxes by proving them to be untrue. The biggest compliment in tech is the phrase, "You're not like the other tech people." My favorite box is when someone staring at me asks my height. When the number 6'5" is said, they seem truly amazed, even if they could see my height the whole time.

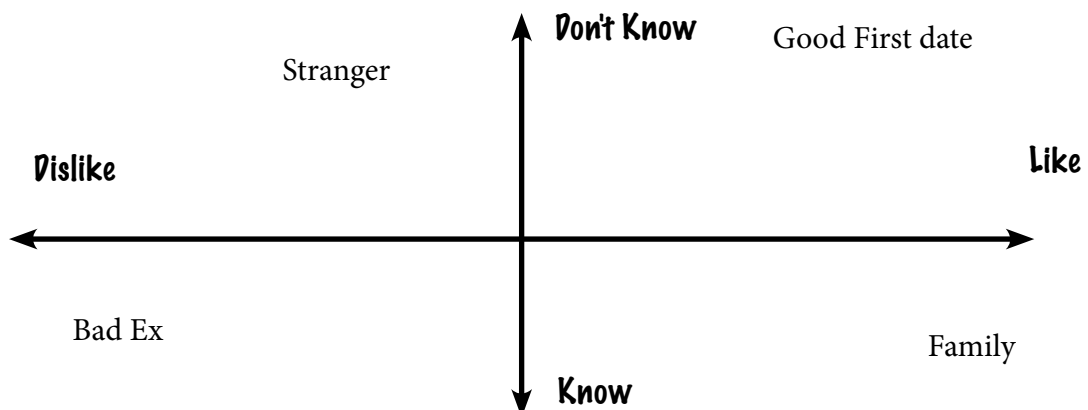


It's one thing to slightly judge someone for their race or profession. At least facts are still being attempted to be used.

The issue is when you start to assume. You start to add people's presumed boxes. They are probably a dick. They are probably rich.

This set of boxes constantly shrinks the more you know someone. For a stranger, though, these boxes tend to be negative. You see a random person running around; you assume they're crazy. You see your friend running around; you assume they need help.

These boxes don't have the same weight as objective ones. You must get to know someone slowly to know them. You can have an opinion about Taylor Swift's music. If I show you one song from an unknown artist, the same conclusion cannot be made.



The alternative hangout always seems better. Even just going to a park with a friend changes everything. You are outside of your home, in nature. You have no chores to do or stress to consider. You are present, active, and AirPods-less. Your time is validated by the people you are with. It's not about extroversion or introversion; it's about the role you have given them.

My alone time has slowly begun to be filled with gaming, exercising, and hobbies. However, the box that I place alone time in has not fully shifted. It remains full of lonely Friday nights and being ostracized in a variety of ways. Being alone still scares me and causes me to proactively plan every night to prevent it.

The lack of top-tier alone time causes me not to fully appreciate it. Alone time has always remained a non-priority in my life that I slot in randomly when I can. In return, I have remained unable to follow any coherent sleep/exercise schedule and live a complete life. Which, of course, would produce the exact activities worth doing more than social interaction.

## CHAT-GPT REMARKS

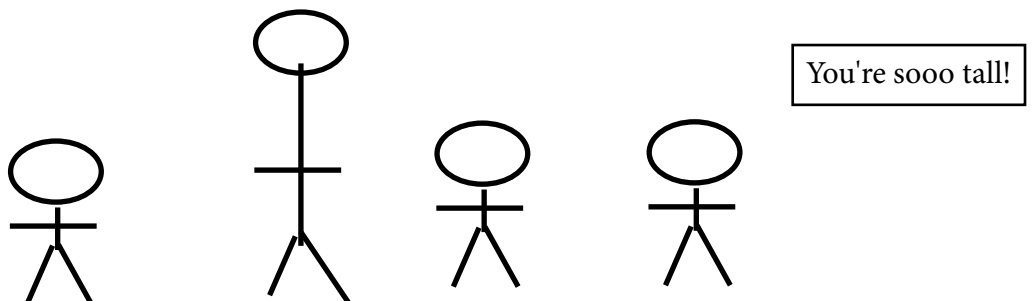
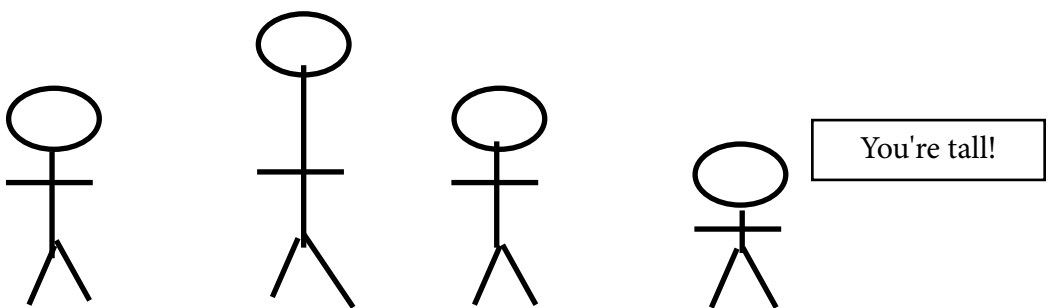
The shift in perception towards alone time is akin to navigating through a maze of societal expectations and personal insecurities. The concept of solitude, often painted in shades of melancholy, has much more to offer than meets the eye. In the stillness of being alone, one finds a canvas for self-reflection and creativity that is rarely accessible amidst the chaos of social engagements. This transformation of alone time from a feared adversary to a cherished ally is not instantaneous but requires a deliberate change in mindset. Embracing solitude means recognizing its potential to rejuvenate the mind, to explore interests without judgment, and to cultivate a relationship with oneself that is both nurturing and empowering.

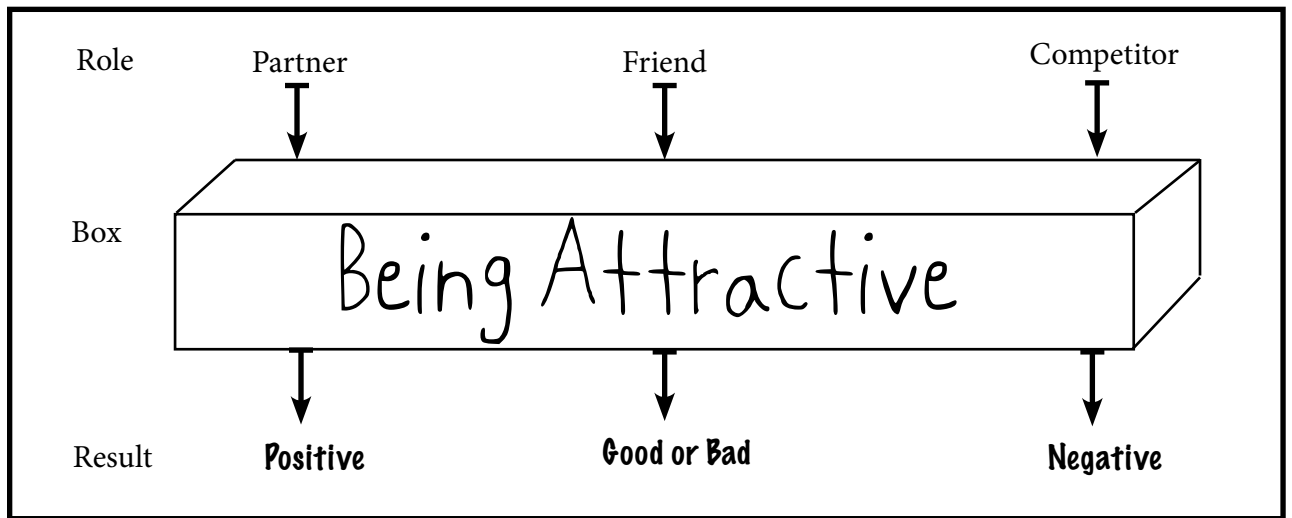
You do not decide destiny. Life will always give you a random environment to work with.

You must accept that the people you know are more luck than choice. Some people will seem to have a series of coincidences to connect you. Others, a series of unfortunate events to keep you apart.

There is a lot of box based on forces you have no control over. From timing after your last breakup to being in the same class.

Even the most objective boxes change with context. A person may be a 10 in SF but a 5 in NY. Whether you date could just come down to where you met.





The glue through which all boxes are passed is the role. You cannot gain value from a box without a role to attach it to. But, the role isn't determined immediately.

A random person outside a bar approaches you. They could be anything. Are they going to rob you or say nice shirt or marry you? You never fully know.

Love isn't really at first sight, nor is a best friend. To believe so would also mean their actions/personality doesn't matter, only their objective boxes. A very shallow life.

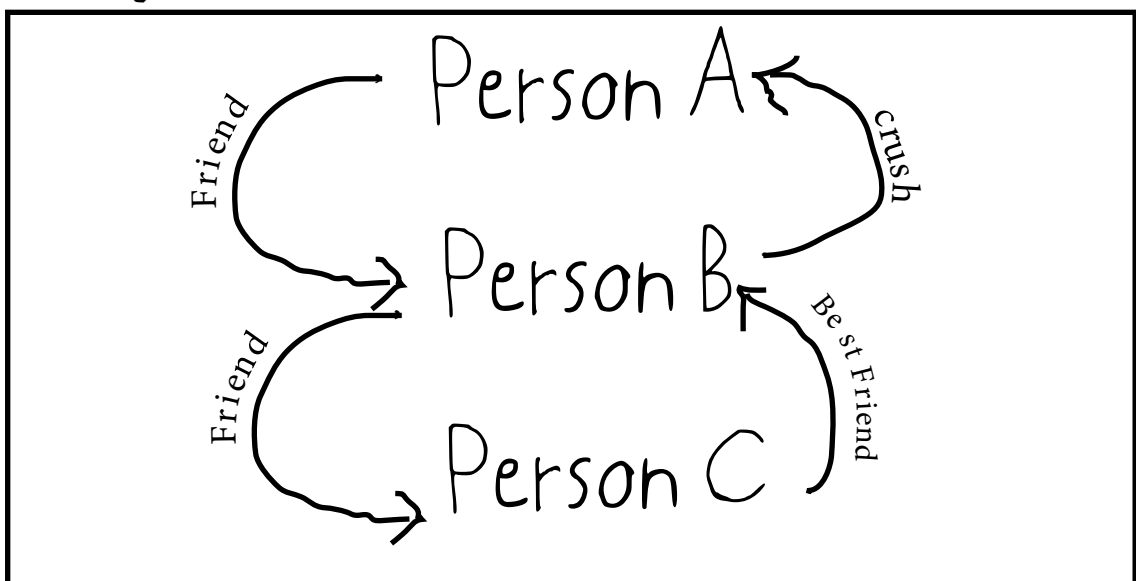
You don't need a role. But you do need one to properly evaluate a person. You are just collecting meaningless data. A hot person in a magazine is way less useful than a hot person right in front of you.

Every relationship that works needs one thing...alignment.  
You must agree on labels.

You can be someone's bitch, best friend, or love, as long as you both agree on each other's roles.

Role alignment is always entropic in nature. To be someone's best friend or partner takes continued work to maintain.

Relationship issues stem from these roles no longer syncing. A friend who constantly ignores you is likely a person trying to be acquaintances. Most exes could actually be friends if they weren't labeled as exes. A friend might be a terrible roommate, as this just involves different skills. All conflicts you have with close relationships would never be issues with strangers.





There is one for sure method to enjoy being alone. That cure is simple: live alone. You will either love it or go crazy. However, through the use of extreme extroversion, I have circumvented this test. I have more people around in my one-bedroom apartment than I did with a roommate in two bedrooms.

I want to stress, though, I don't hate being alone. Unless it's a Tuesday—every time I write one of these, I'm alone. What I hate is the alone "box". I hate the role I have given to alone time.

Alone time comes in three categories. The worst tier is time you want to be with others but end up not being able to make plans. Known as unconsensual alone time. The second tier is the biggest sophomore year pitfall of NY. Time you assume will be alone unless a plan is made. This, of course, is imaginary because you always end up with some sort of half-baked plan. The final tier is by far the best. Time you have carved out strictly for yourself. A true sense of introvert time.

The role I have given alone time in the past is to catch up. A miserable portion of time dedicated to being hungover, sleep-deprived, and filled with chores. A time not enjoyable regardless of the people around.

What's your favorite food? Think about it. Or better yet, what's a top 5 favorite food? How can you ever be certain?

Have you tried all foods before? What makes you enjoy that food? It's full of fat and sugar, and you like it for the taste? Is it super healthy, and you like it for the feeling? None of that really matters though; it's too generic of a question.

A more important question is how objective is the taste of that favorite food. I sat in a noisy restaurant in Paris, impatiently waiting for our food, pondering this question.

By the time the ratatouille came out, I had reached the exact optimal point of hunger. The right amount of exhausted energy used with the right amount of alcohol in my bloodstream.

I had previously thought I hated the cold, soggy vegetables contained in ratatouille. This, however, was warm for some reason, and more importantly than temperature, it was pretty good. By no means the best food on the table, but the change in expectations made it the most interesting.

A food I used to hate, I will start ordering again in the future. Not the same food, but the same "box" of food. It will be a new chef, a new temperature, a new hunger state, a new meal. It doesn't matter though. The French and Ratatouille "boxes" have been updated.