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MOTIVATE

Editorial Note:



Hope this issue finds all of you in great health and happiness! When choosing the theme for this month's issue, I was thinking of how I have always derived great happiness from meeting and learning from people all around the world. This month, we celebrate International Day of Friendship, which the UN commemorates on the 30th of July. As someone who has done research on the subject of Social Identity, this topic strikes very close to heart. Over the past few years, as my professional life has expanded, I have had the opportunity to network and build connections with people all over the world and from all walks of life. I can confidently say that this has been a very enriching experience and has definitely played a role in the kind of action I have taken in various issues.

Through this issue, it is my wish that people understand the need and benefits of having friends all over the world and not limit ourselves with arbitrary boundaries that we are always wont to do. We are and always will be humans first-regardless of the evolution in our cultures. There are certain emotions and behaviors that help us connect to everyone around the world on a universal basis. This issue is an attempt to convince everyone of this as well as the fact that it would definitely be an advantage to know of people and customs around the world and that sharing customs, ideologies, traditions with others and the joy of finding something common with yourself in someone 5000 kms away is definitely worthwhile! As there are no limits to the number of friends one can have, I say, why not be bold and go out and make as many friends as possible!

Thinker's Corner:

It wasn't too long ago that I moved out of my comfort zone which meant leaving my family and friends. Miles away from home, I was in a new city with people from all over the world. On my first day at the university, I scanned the classroom for friendly faces and there I found my first friend. At the end of the first semester, we had a little group of our own where more than half of us were international students. The best part of this mixed group was learning about each other's cultures. We shared our favorite recipes, celebrated festivals and exposed each other to a little bit of what we had carried with us. Even though we live in different cities today, we continue to stay in touch and are thankful to have grown together with the program. Moving away from home opened up this new world of friendship and broadened my perspective of worldly issues.

On the eve of the 2016 elections, my friend and I sat outside our department and wondered the possibilities of the dreaded outcome. I sat there with little knowledge of politics in the United States and comforted my friend. Little did I know, the very next day I was out there participating in a rally along with hundreds of students. In Psychology, this incident is an example of social perspective-taking process. This process explains that we try to make sense of other's situations without having them explicitly stated. Putting ourselves in another person's shoes, without

being jaded by our own thoughts, acts as an excellent tool in problem-solving. Who knew that a simple act of friendship could lead to understanding the situation? Our politicians could probably use some training in social perspective-taking.

Interestingly enough, another such view in psychology aims to explain friendship in terms of social identity – the ways in which a friend would support and understand each other in a group. This was true in my case, especially during group activities, assignments, lab work and even helping out with problem solving in the classroom. Understanding each other at the macro level (in the classroom) meant understanding each other at the micro-level (personally). This was the way I met one of my best friends, in statistics class. I would have never learned the similarities between Mexican and Indian families, if not for her.

Knowingly or unknowingly, having friends from different cultures has created a sense of sensitivity and understanding to their cultures. My queer friends have exposed me to their side of the world and I've learned what their fight is about. This exposure has helped me learn to look at things at an unbiased manner and not to jump into conclusions. As a society, if we begin to look at geographical and cultural boundaries as invisible lines, we can achieve more peace and harmony.

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Identity and I:

One of the most important questions that has existed in the minds of human beings since the beginning of time is one that haunts people even today. It is the question that can make even the bravest soul hesitate to answer and the wisest of people to pause for thought before answering. The question is simple and consists of only 3 words- 'Who am I?'. Though the question by itself is very fundamental, the answer is quite complex in the sense that it has so many endless possibilities. But one thing that is consistent with this is that we become who we are due to the experiences in our lives. It is that which helps shape our opinions and attitudes-which as everyone knows, shapes our perspectives as well. With this in mind, it is therefore important for people to have the right experiences to be able to have a satisfactory sense of identity.

So one may be wondering how, all this preamble to identity is connected to this issue's theme. It has been observed through multiple psychological studies that when one has multiple layers in their identity i.e. associate with multiple groups in society on some basis, they are bound to become more

open-minded and diverse in their thinking. It basically states that the more connected we are to different types of people, the more likely we are to be creative and thorough in our thinking. This set of theories are called Social Identity Complexity.

This month's theme becomes important in two ways. Since we are celebrating friendship- the more friends we have, the more likely we are to look at diverse backgrounds and thinking. the second way

this theme becomes relevant is that people across the world are so diverse from each other in a completely different way. Understanding the nature and purpose of those traditions

expands the way we look at the world around us. We are also less likely in this way to alienate something we do not understand instantaneously and become tolerant by nature. With all of these, it does become important for our identity to be multi-layered and rich with experience-moreover a set of experiences which include being exposed to differences present all around us and this is best possible through international friendships!



Ramblings:

As human beings, we are all used to weighing the pros and cons of things before making a decision. Following that same rationale, here are some of the reasons as to why having friends across the world are beneficial to us in multiple ways-

1. We will have the opportunity to learn about new cultures. Since we are hard-wired to learn new information, this can be a great chance to learn about new cultures.
2. You will get unique and authentic international food, not to mention superb chocolates and other kinds of gifts when we visit each other.
3. It provides with great networking opportunities. For those who are serious about their professional lives, it gives one a chance to interact with and collaborate with people around the world.
4. Weighing in the cost-benefits, it helps one save on accommodations when traveling around the world if you can bunk over in your friends' places.



5. Learning new languages become so very easy when interacting with them on a daily basis. Also there will be someone always available around the clock when you want someone to speak to in our lives.

6. You will gain a better appreciation for things you have taken for granted in your lives when you see others without the same benefits. You also develop the

ability to empathize with people and their issues. This makes us more sensitive.

As can be seen, there are several advantages to having a friend in different places around the world. It makes one understand the uniqueness of humans and appreciate the better things in life.

(Sourced from <https://www.theinterngroup.com/our-blog/7-benefits-making-friends-from-around-the-world/> AND <https://www.lifehack.org/articles/communication/10-amazing-things-about-having-overseas-friends.html>)

Brief Report:

1. Dr. Deepti Swamy conducted a workshop on Military Psychology at St. Josephs College (Autonomous) on the 7th of July, 2018.
2. As part of the orientation programme for the freshers at Acharya Bangalore Business School, Dr. Deepti conducted sessions on 'What is Happiness?' on the 13th of July, 2018

Mind Workout:

There are several small ways to begin building contacts overseas. Remember- ‘Rome was not built in a day!’ It can be especially challenging if you are not naturally a people’s person who thrives in social situations. But not to despair because there are several techniques that can be utilized in these situations. Here are some small ways by which international friends can be made-

1. Travelling is one of the first and foremost ways by which one can become acquainted with people from abroad. When you travel internationally, talk to the cab drivers and shopkeepers, take the public transport and simply try blending into the local social scenes as much as possible.
2. Ask around your friends if they know of and can introduce you to people from other countries. This means you can begin with the advantage of already knowing something about the individual before you interact with them.

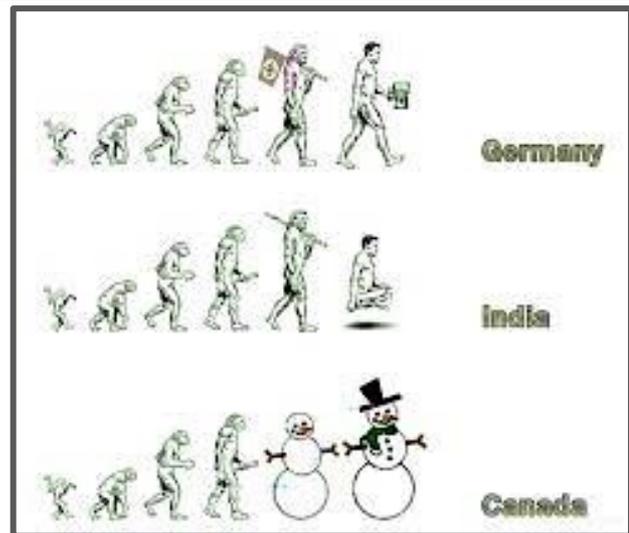


3. Go the conventional and old-fashioned way and become pen-pals. Find ways by which you can become pen friends with people abroad and maintain an active correspondence with them. Make use of technology to help you along the way. Only thing is beware of which websites are safe for using this in the most effective manner.
4. Use common interests and hobbies to initiate contact with others. Using platforms like Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest, one can help identify those who have similar interests like ours and build up an acquaintance.
5. Attend international events like professional conferences and workshops or even sporting events. This provides a way for people to break ice with each other effectively with the context in hand.

With some of these in mind, one can make a beginning with having friends abroad. Through these friends, more of them can be contacted and thus the network can keep going here.

Fun and Funny:

Identify these six Flags of the World-



ANSWERS FOR THE FLAGS IDENTIFICATION (In clockwise Order starting from top left)-
 Mexico, Australia, Zimbabwe, The United States of America, United Kingdom and Jamaica.

We would love to hear your opinion about this issue and theme. Do write to us at deepti@i-dentitee.com or log on to our Facebook page at fb.me/identiteellp

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