

A COMPARISON AND CONTRAST OF  
FRIENDSHIPS AND WORK-PLACE RELATIONSHIPS

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ELISSA C. BRAICO

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Brent Northrup

Director

Harry A. Smith

Reader

[Signature]

Reader

April 2, 1992

Date

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## **Abstract**

Interpersonal relationships play an important role in both society and the work place.

This paper will examine two specific types of interpersonal relationships: social relationships (friendships) and work-place relationships (between people of equal power).

The thesis will first examine social relationships including their types, phases and stages. This model of relationships will then be applied to friendships both inside and outside the work-place to determine similarities and differences.

Specifically, the thesis will follow this structure:

- I. Introduction
  - A. Clarification
  - B. Overview
- II. Social Relationships
  - A. Types of social relationships
    1. Acquaintance
    2. Casual friendship
    3. Close and intimate friendships
    4. Intimacy
  - B. Phases of social relationships
  - C. Stages of social relationship development (Knapp)
- III. Comparison and Contrast
  - A. Friendship
    1. Definitions and summary of research
    2. Stages of friendship (Knapp)
  - B. Work-place relationships
    1. Definitions and summary of research
    2. Stages of work-place relationship development (Knapp)
    3. Hindrances
      - a. Gossip
      - b. Small talk
  - C. Comparison/contrast
- IV. Summary

## INTRODUCTION

Opinions which we hold of one another, our relations with friends and kinsfolk are in no sense permanent, save in appearance, but as eternally fluid as the sea itself.

Marcel Proust

Remembrance of Things Past: The  
Guermantes Way

## CLARIFICATION

Interpersonal relationships are the backbone of human existence. They help us heal past wounds, replace important people, motivate, affirm and validate our identity (Rubin, 1985). Research has indicated that without the touch of other human beings, people young and old will simply give up living. Without interaction with other human beings, man's needs for inclusion, control and affection would not be fulfilled and man would cease to exist.

The study of relationships is a subset of Interpersonal Communication, defined by DeVito (1986) as "communication between individuals..." (p. 163).

Interpersonal relationships are created to lessen loneliness, obtain mental, physical and emotional stimulation, gain self-knowledge, increase self-esteem, maximize physical, mental and social pleasure, and minimize emotional and physical pain (DeVito, 1990, pp. 246-247).

Interpersonal relationships commence, and may continue

to thrive for an indefinite length of time or may be terminated as quickly as they began. Relationships progress through three distinct phases: initiation, maintenance, and dissolution (Duck, 1988). Each relationship phase possesses unique characteristics and communication styles.

Organizational research indicates employee satisfaction and worker productivity is linked to interpersonal relationships between both co-workers on the job and friendships off the job (Kanter & Stein, 1979 and Strauss & Sayles, 1972).

The importance of interpersonal relationships leads one to question whether there are any similarities between interpersonal relationships formed within the work place and relationships formed in the social realm.

This paper will compare and contrast work-place relationships with an equal power base and social relationships (friendships). The paper's objective is to synthesize research from the realms of Interpersonal and Organizational Communications and to ascertain the importance of interpersonal relationships both in and out of the work place.

### OVERVIEW

The paper will be divided into three subsequent chapters. The first chapter will examine social relationship types, phases and stages of development. It will introduce the model which will be applied to friendships inside and outside of the work place in order to determine similarities and differences.

The second chapter will be a comparison and contrast of friendships and work-place relationships. Both types of relationships will be defined, prior research summarized and each relationship analyzed through an application of the model introduced in the first chapter. The chapter will conclude with a comparison and contrast of friendships and work-place relationships and the results of the model application.

The third chapter will be a summary of findings and materials covered throughout the paper.

## CHAPTER ONE

### SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

An introduction and summary of social relationships is necessary in order to lay the ground work for the comparison and contrast of work-place relationships and friendships which will occur later in the paper.

Social relationships, or any relationship which is not terminated before it is started (due to ignorance of the other person, dislike or lack of acknowledgement) may be broken down into three types. DeVito (1989) categorizes social relationships as acquaintance, casual friendship and close and intimate friendship (pp. 360-361).

Each type of social relationship is necessary in one's life. "While intimate relationships are necessary for psychological health, each of us sometimes has the need to be the 'the stranger on the train'-to have situations where commitments are not demanded" (Knapp, 1978, p. 48)

Throughout our lives, then we have friends and "Just" friends, old friends and new friends, good friends, and best friends - each relationship meeting some part of ourselves that cries out for expression (Rubin, 1985, p. 56).

According to DeVito (1990), we initiate relationships to lessen loneliness, obtain mental, physical and emotional stimulation, increase self knowledge, maximize physical,

social and mental pleasures and minimize emotional and physical pain

(p. 246).

In sum, relationships are governed by personal needs, particularly inclusion, affection and control needs. However, in order to fulfill these needs, we are initially attracted to people we perceive as physically or emotionally attractive, have similarities or differences with, who offer support to us or who are in close proximity to us (Devito, 1990 and Trenholm & Jensen, 1988). The level of initial attraction which we have to someone will determine whether or not the relationship will progress from the acquaintance stage to the intimate friendship stage. Obviously, if there is limited attraction, there will be little desire to pursue any relationship.

#### **TYPES OF SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS**

Now that social relationships have been defined and their existence clarified and justified, the types of social relationships as suggested by DeVito may now be examined. DeVito (1989) suggests there are three types of social relationships: acquaintance, casual friendship and close/intimate friendship. Each type of social relationship possesses unique characteristics which can be clarified by definition.

### **Acquaintance**

Acquaintance is the first of three types of social relationships. Acquaintance refers to people we know only by name or by face such as classmates or neighbors. According to Duck (1977), acquaintance "concerns the long-term processes by which affective relationships are constructed rather than with short-term influences on desire to affiliate, first impressions, liking and sexual desire (pp. 15-16). Acquaintance usually occurs when people meet for the first few times. The majority of our relationships are classified as acquaintances. In the acquaintance stages, self-disclosure is very limited. Interaction is rather choppy and simplistic and follows common etiquette rather than rules which are established later on if a relationship develops. Individuals see themselves as unique and separate entities. If any conflict occurs at this level, the relationship will be terminated. DeVito (1989) states, One's prior history of friendships, one's personal needs, and one's readiness or lack of readiness for friendship development are extremely important in determining whether a relationship will develop into a close friendship, will soon end after the first encounter, or will continue for a long period as a mere acquaintance (p. 360).

### **Casual Friendship**

Casual friendships are the second type of social relationship. "A casual friend is one we would call to go to the movies, sit with in the cafeteria or ride home from school with" (DeVito, 1989, p. 361). Casual friendships are developed over time and may be the result of an acquaintance which has grown into more than a mere surface relationship. This type of relationship involves a degree of caring, support and commitment for the other individual and is characterized by the beginning of self disclosure. As disclosure increases, so do emotional ties between individuals. Interaction between individuals is fluid. If a casual relationship is terminated, only moderate short-lived remorse would occur.

### **Close and Intimate Friendships**

Close and intimate friendships are the third type of social relationship. Close and intimate friendships are what people usually refer to as "best friend." They are a result of the progression through the acquaintance and casual friendship stages. Individuals are able to predict one another's behavior based on past experience and knowledge of the other. Individuals make sacrifices for one another and openly self disclose. The result is a supportive and intimate relationship.

### **Intimacy**

A brief explanation of intimacy is necessary in order to clarify which type of the three social relationship has developed. Intimacy is another factor which garners the development of a relationship from the acquaintance to the intimate stages. Intimacy is defined by Perlman and Fehr (1987) as "sharing private thoughts, dreams and beliefs, physical closeness, a stable self identity and lack (absence) of anger, resentment and criticism" (pp. 15-16). Intimacy is also indicated by the breadth and depth of self disclosure. Perlman and Fehr (1987) summarize the changes intimacy instills upon a relationship as it grows from acquaintance to close and intimate friendship.

1. Interaction increases in terms of the frequency, duration, and number of settings in which it occurs.
2. Individuals gain knowledge of the innermost being of their partner, the breadth and depth of knowledge exchanged expands, and partners develop personal communication codes.
3. Individuals become more skilled at mapping and anticipating their partner's views and behaviors.
4. Partners increase their investment in the relationship.

5. The interdependence and the sense of "wellness" experienced by partners increases.
6. Partners come to feel that their separate interests are inextricably tied to the well-being and outcome of their relationship.
7. The extent of positive affect (liking or loving) and the sense of caring, commitment, and trust increase.
8. Attachment develops so that partners try to restore proximity if they are separated.
9. Partners see the relationship as irreplaceable, or at least special (Perlman & Fehr, 1987, pp. 31-32).

In sum, the longer a relationship is in existence, the more intimacy can be expected.

#### **PHASES OF SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS**

The three types of social relationships (acquaintance, casual friendship and close and intimate friendship) follow distinguishable relationship phases of initiation, maintenance and dissolution. The phases of social relationships will be defined and briefly discussed in order to better understand the process of relationship development and to continue to lay the ground work for the comparison /contrast.

During the initiation stages, "our expectations are

derived from stereotypes, personal reputations, observation or social interaction" (Graziano & Musser, 1982, p. 81). In other words, our personal constructs or "a belief or attitude that defines or influences the way an individual perceives and gives meaning to the world" (DeVito, 1986, p. 224) may later hinder our relationship development. Society and culture influence the types of relationship we will initiate, as do our individual needs for inclusion, affection and control. It may be asserted that people initiate relationships they believe will maximize their gains and minimize their losses. However, only relationships with commitment, little uncertainty and lots of communication will survive.

Davis (in Graziano & Musser, 1982) suggests there are four factors which affect the maintenance stages of a relationship: attentiveness; correct interpretation of communication messages; knowledge of how to respond appropriately; and the desire to respond responsibly. Relationships in the maintenance stage may be classified as a "specialized kind of mutual addiction" (Graziano and Musser, 1982, p. 94). It may be suggested that since people seek to maximize gains and minimize losses and "since no individual possesses all the resources that he/she needs, individuals must exchange resources" (Graziano and Musser, 1982, P. 98) and relationships will be maintained.

Relationships may move rapidly through the stages of

initiation, maintenance and dissolution, stabilize indefinitely or follow the stages over a lengthy period of time. Wilmot (1981) states "relationships stabilize because the participants reach some minimal agreement on what they want from the relationship" (p. 99).

Graziano and Musser (1982) suggest three reasons why relationships are terminated: lack of need fulfillment, lack of positive self-evaluation and changes in intimacy and self-disclosure (pp. 103-104). Friendships are also terminated due to jealousy, possessiveness, the desire for exclusive rights to an individual and privileged access (Rubin, 1985).

DeVito (1990) simplifies Duck's Five Stages of Dissolution. His stages are: the Breakdown Phase (dissatisfaction), the Intrapysic Phase (private brooding or complaining to stranger and friends), the Dyadic phase (partners try to talk and remedy the problem), the Social Phase (dissatisfaction is shared with others) and the Grave Dressing Phase ("history" is created and preparation begun to leave the relationship). These stages of dissolution are frequently followed by actual verbal disengagement strategies.

Knapp (1978) lists four types of verbal disengagement patterns: Helpful-Critical (save and protect), Active-Passive, Aggressive-Evasive (repartee, cliché, name calling, and provocation), and Dominating-Submissive

Patterns (nullification, isolation, defamation and expulsion).

Relationships, whether they be acquaintance, casual friendship or close and intimate, follow distinguishable relationship stages of initiation, maintenance and dissolution. Ayers (1983) states "relationship development is thought to accelerate when rewards increase and/or when uncertainty decreases. Deteriorating relationships are expected to follow a reverse pattern" (p. 62). La Gaipa (1981) suggests five goals or needs which must be fulfilled throughout the course of a relationship. The five goals or needs are: identity, affective, expressive, sociability and instrumental aid (p.77). Identity is the search for self confirmation, evaluation and definition. Affective is the need for affection, love and inclusion. Expressive is the need for understanding, emotional support and disclosure. Sociability is the need for companionship, conversation and common interests. Instrumental aid is the desire for psychological, economic and material services.

If the needs are fulfilled and continue to be fulfilled over a length of time, a relationship will be created and maintained. If these needs are not fulfilled, a relationship may be terminated.

### STAGES OF SOCIAL RELATIONSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Social relationship definitions, types, and phases have been clarified. It is now necessary to introduce a model to be applied to friendships and work-place relationships so they may be compared and contrasted.

Knapp (1978) outlines "Stages of Relationship Development." When his ten stages are applied to friendships both inside and outside the work place, a model is created which will point out similarities and differences. Knapp's ten relationship stages are: initiating, experimenting, intensifying, integrating, bonding, differentiating, circumscribing, stagnating, avoiding and terminating.

Initiation, experimenting and intensifying may be called the initiation stages. Integrating, bonding, differentiating and circumscribing are the maintenance stages. Stagnating, avoiding and terminating are the dissolution stages.

Initiating involves the assessments which occur when we interact or meet a person for the first time. We judge them on physical attractiveness and frequently look for an opportunity to approach them and choose an appropriate introductory line which seems to fit the other person's mood. Frequently, relationships never proceed beyond this stage due to dislike and lack of response from one of the parties involved.

Experimenting involves two people trying to become acquaintances. Participants partake in small talk while searching for something of common interest and knowledge. The individuals rely heavily on three types of information (cultural, sociological and psychological) to predict behaviors. Interaction is frequently casual and noncommittal. At this stage many relationships are terminated.

Intensifying, also known as casual friendship, indicates growing intimacy and commitment between people. Self disclosure is increased and favors are frequently asked of one another. Formality is disregarded and "we-ness" becomes common in conversation. Both verbal and non-verbal shortcuts are created and utilized.

Integrating can be characterized by a close, intimate relationship in which the two lives appear to become one. Activities, attitudes, intimacy, and other commonalities (dress and daily routines) are characteristic of this stage.

Bonding is a public commitment to the relationship. This stage is the most common in all relationships.

Differentiating is the clarification of differences in character, ideas and concerns. It is the first step in the dissolution process. However, differentiating rarely results in more than a conflict between individuals.

Circumscribing is the constricting or limiting of

communication between relationship partners. The breadth and depth of communication is controlled and the number of "touchy" topics increases as a result.

Stagnating is the lack of communication between individuals. The individuals privately announce how things would be if they talk to the other person. As a result, the relationship is brought to a standstill.

Avoiding is creating a lack of verbal contact between individuals. This lack of contact can be either a physical separation or ignoring the presence of the other party.

Terminating is ending all bonds, intimacy and interaction between individuals. It may occur at any time during the course of a relationship. This final stage is characterized by distance (real or imagined barriers between parties) and disassociation (talk of life without one another) (pp. 17-28).

With introduction of Knapp's "Stages of Relationship" model now complete, the comparison and contrast of friendships and work-place relationships may begin.

## CHAPTER TWO

### COMPARISON AND CONTRAST

Social relationships in general have been defined and the different types and phases discussed. The model of relationship development has been defined and discussed as well. It is now necessary to narrow the analysis to two relationship types: friendships and work-place relationships. Within the following chapter, each type of relationship will be defined, prior research summarized and stages of relationship model, created by Knapp (1978) applied. Following the analysis of each relationship type, the results of the model application will be discussed by comparison and contrast.

### FRIENDSHIP

#### **Definitions**

Further clarification of friendship in general is necessary in order to draw similarities and distinctions between social relationships (friendships) and work-place relationships. What is a friend? The term "friend" means something different to every individual. Rubin (1985) summarizes her friendship research with twelve characteristics interviewees said their friends possessed. The twelve characteristics include trust, honesty, respect, commitment, safety, support, generosity, loyalty,

mutuality, constancy, understanding and acceptance. It is through our friends, that we learn about ourself and seek validation of our ideas, beliefs and opinions. "It has its own subjective rationale, which is to enhance feelings of warmth, trust, love, and affection between two people. They (relationships) grow more out of free choice than necessity" (Parlee, et al., 1979, p. 43).

### **Summary of Research**

Argyle and Henderson (1984) summarized four studies on the rules of friendship. The first and second study examined friendship rules in Great Britain, Italy, Hong Kong and Japan. The third study reported differences in friendship rule-keeping between both high and low quality sustained relationships. Study four examined rule breaking, friendship breakdown and dissolution. Throughout their research, eleven hypotheses were tested. These included rules governing jealousy, confidence and privacy, intimacy, self disclosure, lapsed friendships and termination of friendship.

Baxter and Philpott (1982) researched attribution theory and its connection to initiating and terminating friendships. With the use of Kelley's attribution theory, and Jones's ingratiation study, the researchers determined that "distinctiveness information was disproportionately employed in the strategy repertoires to the neglect of

consistency-based and consensus-based information" (Baxter & Philpott, 1982, p. 217). Findings also indicate a greater number of initiation strategies than dissolution strategies and the numbers of both strategies increased with age.

Rusbult (1980) examines satisfaction and commitment in relationships. His findings indicate commitment levels increase with relationship satisfaction and "decrease in alternative value and increases in investment size" (p. 96).

#### **Stages of Friendship (Knapp)**

Knapp's (1978) Stages of Relationship Development, outlined in chapter one, may now be applied to friendships in order to clarify differences between friendship and work-place relationships. Stages one and two (initiating and experimenting) are characteristic of the acquaintanceship common in a highly mobile society like ours. Knapp (1978) states that "the probabilities are high that we will have to contend with more relationships and more short-term relationships" (p.45). Few social relationships proceed beyond this point because of lack of acknowledgement, common interests and general disinterest as a result of experimenting interaction. Most of our relationships are of the acquaintance type.

Stages three and four, intensifying and integrating, are characteristic of casual friendships. However, the

fifth stage, bonding does not exist in friendships per se. A high degree of intimacy does exist between friends who label themselves as close and intimate, however there is no public ceremony which consecrates the friendship. "Friendship is a non-event, a relationship that just becomes, that grows, develops, waxes, wanes, and too often perhaps, ends, all without ceremony or ritual to give evidence of its existence" (Rubin, 1985, p. 5).

The dissolution stages (differentiating, circumscribing, stagnating, avoiding and terminating) however, are frequently found in social relationships ranging from acquaintance to close and intimate friendship. In acquaintance, avoiding and terminating are frequently exercised simply because they are the easiest to partake in when you do not know someone well. Differentiating, circumscribing and stagnating are frequently found in both casual friendships and intimate and close friendships due to the level of intimacy, self-disclosure and commitment involved.

## WORK-PLACE RELATIONSHIPS

### **Definitions**

Further clarification of work-place relationships is necessary in order to draw similarities and distinctions between social relationships (friendships) and work-place relationships. Work-place relationships or relationships

formed in the work place are necessary components of the organizational structure. Work-place relationships can be divided into three types: supervisor-subordinate relationships, co-worker relationships and relationships with customers and clients. The focus of this section shall be on co-worker relationships with an equal power base, frequently found in work groups.

With the birth of the industrial age, men and women were removed from the traditional agrarian society and sent to work in factories. From that time on, specific needs which traditionally were fulfilled by the agrarian life style and the richness of family relationships were fulfilled by the work place. Personal needs satisfied by the work place according to Strauss and Sayles (1972) include physical and security needs (money, job security, achievement and opportunity), social needs (friendship, identification, team work, attention), and egoistic needs (achievement, autonomy and knowledge).

Man is a social animal. He craves friendship, is unhappy when left alone for too long, and often associates with his fellows just because he is hungry for companionship. Particularly for employees who have an unsatisfactory home life, the job provides a large part of their social-need satisfaction (Strauss and Sayles, 1972, p. 10).

As well as fulfilling physical, social and egoistic needs, the work place also provides a way to obtain information about what is happening in the organization. Frequently, this information is passed through what is known as the "grapevine". The grapevine is defined by Goldhaber (1990), as a fast, accurate carrier of information which frequently travels by cluster. "It used to be said by professionals that informal work groups were set up in opposition to the routines and goals of the organization. Then it was said by others that such groups were positive forces that enable workers to produce more and to be more satisfied with their jobs" (Kanter and Stein, 1979, p. 182). In sum, co-worker relationships and work groups provide companionship, identification, understanding, guides to acceptable behavior and help in solving work problems (Strauss, 1972).

Because the focus of the work-place relationship is on the work place and maximized productivity and job satisfaction, work-place relationships frequently do not obtain the levels of intimacy and commitment found in social relationships or friendships. Frequently, work-place relationships last only as long as it takes to accomplish a task, or until an employee is promoted or departs from the organization.

Co-worker relationships play a major role in the organization assimilation process. Jablin (1982) states

"organizational assimilation refers to the process by which organizational members become a part of, or are absorbed into the culture of an organization" (p. 256). This process involves both the socialization and individualization of the new employee. Feldman (1981) states, "new recruits turn to other members of the work group to get help in interpreting the events they experience, to learn many nuances of seemingly clear cut rules and to learn informal networks" (p. 314). However, research indicates that co-workers will be reluctant to assist a new employee until the newcomer has established his or her position in the organization and has proven not to be a threat to other workers. Co-workers will also help create and maintain an employee's job satisfaction merely by expressing whether or not they are happy with their job. According to Jablin and Sussman (1983), co-workers serve both formal organizational and psychological individual functions.

Formal organizational group communication generally occurs to generate information process information, share information necessary for the coordination of interdependent organizational tasks disseminate decisions or reinforce a groups perspective-consensus. Psychological, individual oriented organizational group communication functions to provide members with feedback about their self concepts, gratify needs for

affiliation, share and test perspectives about social reality, reduce organization-related uncertainties and concomitted feelings of anxiety, insecurity and powerlessness or accomplish employee-related tasks and resolve individual or group-related problems (Jablin & Sussman, 1983).

It is possible, however, for new employees not to become assimilated into the organizational structure and as a result, these employees eventually leave the organization.

As intricate a part as work-place relationships play in organizations, they frequently do not mature beyond what DeVito (1987) labels "the acquaintance stage" for several reasons. First, work-place relationships are situationally bound which means that if a situation changes through the completion of a task or the promotion of an employee, the relationship will cease to exist on the same initial terms. Second, because organizations consist of interpersonal relationships and organizational hierarchy, personal power becomes a governing force. Power is defined as "a relationship between or among people such that the one with power has the ability or potential to control the behavior of the other" (DeVito, 1986, p. 234). If a partner in a relationship perceives that his or her power has decreased, and both partners no longer share an equal power base, they

will frequently exit the relationship. Third, because of the competitive nature of the organizational structure and the desire by many to climb the organizational ladder and get ahead, competition between workers on an equal power base will frequently destroy the relationship simply because of the competitive nature of individuals.

### **Summary of Research**

Burns (1955) researched cliques and cabals in the occupational milieu. His findings indicate that "in success-oriented milieu, there exist needs for reassurance about possible failure and needs to improve chances of success by illegitimate means" (p.484). Cliques and cabals provide this reassurance. Cliques and cabals are characterized by the use of gossip and are temporary in nature. They frequently function as a counter-system against the dominant norms and values.

Mangam (1981) researched relationships in the work place. Findings indicate that work-place relationships are an entity which exists with tension and tolerance. Different management styles directly affect the amount of tension. Therefore, there is a "need for balance to be established between the sometimes divergent claims of the participating parties" (Mangam, 1981, p.214). In sum, work-place relationships will have times of "war and peace" just like other relationships.

**Stages of Work-Place Relationship Development (Knapp)**

Knapp's Stages of Relationship Development may now be applied to work-place relationships in order to clarify differences between friendship and work-place relationships. Application of Knapp's Relationship Stages reveals some interesting characteristics of work-place relationships. First, work-place relationships rarely progress beyond the first two stages, initiating and experimenting simply because there is no need for an intimate friendship. This is also a result of the power and competition elements frequently found in the work place. Occasionally, relationships may develop to the casual friendship stage, but frequently these are terminated if one of the partners is promoted, moves away or if power and competition gets in the way. Therefore, it may be hypothesized that work-place relationships do not proceed beyond the intensifying stage. The integrating and bonding stages characteristic of intimate and close friendships cease to exist.

Work-place relationships do, however, exhibit the five stages of dissolution: differentiating, circumscribing, stagnating, avoiding and terminating. It appears that regardless of the type of relationship, they always end the same way.

### **Hindrances**

Work-place relationships are frequently victimized by two major hindrances: gossip and small talk. These hindrances frequently stop the work-place relationship from maturing beyond the acquaintance stage.

Gossip plays a key role in the organization and work-place relationships particularly during the maintenance and termination stages. La Gaipa (1982) lists five functions of gossip: impression management, evaluation, social boundaries, information/cognitive supplement and assumptions underlying gossip. Gossip is selective about who it gossips about, how much information is presented and who is blamed for gossiping. Gossip becomes a common yet not often accurate method of sharing information within the work place.

Small talk plays a crucial role in the organization and the initiation and maintenance of work-place relationships. Knapp (1978) suggests that small talk fulfills several unique functions. It is "a way of maintaining a sense of community or fellowship with other human beings, an audition for friendship, it is a procedure for indicating who we are, an interpersonal pacifier and a means for uncovering integrating topics" (Knapp, 1978, pp. 112-113). Small talk provides the basis for the acquaintance relationships which frequently are the norm in the work place. It is unfortunate that the relationships do

not develop beyond the acquaintance level.

#### COMPARISON/CONTRAST

After a definitional clarification, summary of prior research and the application of Knapp's (1978) Stages of Relationship Development, a comparison and contrast of friendships and work place relationships may now be completed. The breadth, or number of topics available to be discussed during conversation increases as intimacy and self-disclosure increases. Obviously, the breadth will be deeper in an intimate and close relationship simply because both parties have shared more time and personal information. Work-place relationships, which frequently do not proceed beyond the acquaintance level will not have much breadth due to limited knowledge and interaction.

The depth of a relationship, or the knowledge of the inner personality is also frequently deeper in an intimate relationship for obvious reasons, such as large quantities of self-disclosure, intimacy, affection and trust. Once again, because work-place relationship frequently do not proceed into the deeper levels of relationships, the depth of the relationship remains rather casual and surface.

Because close and intimate friendships have progressed beyond the preliminary stages of physical attraction, attraction is not as important as the commitment to the relationship and the individuals involved.

In work-place relationships, the opposite is true. Relationships remain on the basic levels of attraction and are easy to terminate if either or both of the parties wish to do so.

Social relationships (friendships) are developed to fulfill identity, affection, expressive, sociability and aid needs (La Gaipa, 1981). Work-place relationships, on the other hand, are created to fulfill physical and security needs, social and egoistic needs (Strauss and Sayles, 1972). There is notable overlap between the needs pursued within these two types of relationships, particularly between the social and economic needs.

The application of Knapp's Stages of Relationship Development indicate that social relationships (friendships) are capable of obtaining the most intimate and committed stages of relationships, what Knapp calls the integrating and bonding stages. Work relationships, as indicated before, seldom mature beyond the initiating and experimenting stages due to the situational basis of the co-worker relationship. However, both social relationships and work-place relationships do follow the same stages of dissolution (differentiating, circumscribing, stagnating, avoiding and terminating) as well as verbal dissolution strategies.

## CHAPTER THREE

SUMMARY

After clarifying the definitions, types and phases of social relationships (friendships), and work-place relationship, applying Knapp's Stages of Relationship Development and comparing and contrasting the findings of these two analyses, conclusions may now be drawn.

Through the analysis of both social relationships (friendships) and work-place relationships, it is obvious that there are both similarities and differences.

It may be concluded that though the social and work place relationships may appear similar in some aspects (especially with the application of Knapp's Stages of Relationship Development), these two types of relationships are very different. Work place relationships are created primarily to accomplish a task, increase productivity and increase job satisfaction. They are usually not intimate and are classified as acquaintance relationships and frequently end as a result of situational changes, promotions, power and the competitive nature of the organization.

Social relationships, on the other hand are created to fulfill man's needs for inclusion, control and affection. There are three types of social relationships, acquaintance, casual friendship and close and intimate

friendships, all of which play a necessary role in man's life. Social relationships are capable of becoming intimate and long lasting, unlike most work place relationships. Social relationships frequently end because personal needs are not being fulfilled, changes in intimacy, self-disclosure and lack of positive reinforcement of the self.

Because of the changes the Industrial Revolution brought about to society, the work place has been and continues to be the place where many needs are fulfilled. In the future, the organizational focus would profit from focusing upon interpersonal relationships and their role in the organization.

As our society changes, relationships may continue to grow less intimate and more and more surface and impersonal. If so, it is necessary that we be aware of these relational changes and attempt to reverse them before one of the most important aspects of life, interpersonal relationships, grows even more neglected.

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