Do Friends Self-Select on the Basis of Virtue?

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Do Friends Self-Select on the Basis of Virtue?

Candace Solecki

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Psychology

Supervised by Dr. Janet F. Gillespie

Department of Psychology

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Abstract

This study explored the role of signature strengths (e.g., leadership, appreciation of beauty and excellence, social intelligence) in close friendships. Specifically, it was hypothesized that college-aged individuals' signature strengths would be similar to those of their closest friends, and also that the closer and more intimate the friendship, the more similar would be the friends in their signature strengths. It was also hypothesized that the strength of the relationship between best friends' signature strengths would be associated with an individual's level of identity development; with the length of the friendship; and with the gender of the persons reporting. College students were administered the Values In Action Signature Strengths Inventory (VIA-IS), the Berndt Adult Friendship Questionnaire, the Positive and Negative Affectivity Schedule, the Ego Identity Process Questionnaire, and an open-ended measure assessing perceptions of friends' positive qualities. Results indicated several trends for data in predicted directions, although the small sample size precluded any conclusions based on statistical significance.
Do Friends Self Select

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Friendship

Friendships between adults have long been a subject of study by psychologists. The study of this topic by developmentalists and clinicians alike has yielded evidence (Hartup & Stevens, 1999) suggesting that the existence of at least one close friend (Nangle & Erdley, 1999) is a vital necessity for a fulfilling and meaningful life. Webster’s Dictionary defines a friend as “one attached to another by affection or esteem.” This would imply that in the majority of close friendships a special connection is felt by both people involved in the relationship. Women have mentioned feelings such as caring, affection and vital about their friendships, while men have typically described their relationship with friends as open and accepting. For all adults, friendships seem to serve a purpose of support and enjoyment. Hartup and Stevens (1997) suggest that adults shape their lives around both families and friends. In other words, friendships are one key “hub” around which revolves a meaningful life. Hartup and Stevens, in other work (1999) suggest that it is a feeling of reciprocity in particular that maintains a friendship: providing support and intimacy, which in return yields similar support and intimacy for the giver. Verbrugge (1977), additionally, stated that adult friendships are sources of social contact and are considered to be strong ties because of their face-to-face contact.

The existing literature on adult friendships solidly supports the notion that friendship is valued, but what are some of the characteristics of friendship that make it both common to all but also personal to individuals? Each friendship presumably has elements special to that relationship that make it work. Some believe that self-disclosure and emotional intimacy are important components to friendship. Also, as mentioned, reciprocity (mutuality) between friends, or shared exchange, is a frequently noted element of friendship. When individuals were asked about friendships, this quality was noted as the most important in the relationship, more so than shared social activities and also more than positive interactions such as smiling (Hartup & Stevens, 1999).
Another significant characteristic of friendship is the feeling that there is a sense of emotional support felt between friends, i.e. loyalty, trust, intimacy and fun (Hartup & Stevens, 1999).

Furthermore, Fehr (2004) has suggested that self-disclosure, or sharing personal information with another person, is the most important element required to develop genuine intimacy in one’s relationship.

Rubin and Schenker (1978) investigated friendship, physical proximity and self-disclosure among adults and found self-disclosure to be another essential ingredient to a good friendship. Self-disclosure and emotional support, in fact, may be primary components of true intimacy in friendship. These authors looked at college roommates and hallmates and predicted that friendship would be more highly associated with self-disclosure in the context of “non-intimate” topics as opposed to intimate topics of conversation between friends. This study also looked at physical proximity, which was defined as being either roommates or hallmates in college dorms. Rubin and Schenker (1978) also predicted that proximity would be more highly linked with self-disclosure in non-intimate conversations in contrast to discussion of intimate topics. They found, using a self-disclosure questionnaire, that friendship was highly related to self-disclosure of intimate topics, such as sex and religion, whereas sheer proximity related more closely to superficial topics, such as movies and music. In sum, friendship, according to these investigators, means that one person self-discloses intimate information with another person.

Fehr (2004) also believed that the intimacy of sharing one’s emotions and feelings with another defines a deep and close relationship and has come to be expected in the friendship bond. Friendships, according to Fehr (2004) are developed through ‘interpersonal scripts’. This notion is defined as “an expected pattern of interaction derived through generalizations from repeated similar experiences” (p.266). Through repeated experiences people develop a cognitive representation of
interaction patterns. Moreover, if previous significant relationships include emotional intimacy, then individuals will expect it in their future friendships.

**Evidence Supporting Similarity in Friendship**

How are friendships formed? It might be that friendships are based on the similarities that people have, and that being alike is what draws them together in the first place. Plato once said that "friends have all things in common" (Dialogues Phaedrus, *The Soul*). Most friends tend to be similar in age, gender, abilities and behavior. Adolescents are most similar to their friends in school-related behavior, attitudes, achievement and behavior. These similarities are thought to come from three sources: (1) sociodemographic conditions that bring like individuals into contact with each other, (2) social selection in which individuals select ones that are similar to themselves, and (3) mutual socialization in which individuals become similar to their friends by interacting with them. Sociodemographic influences determine the neighborhood people live in and the schools that children attend. This influence generates groups of people who have similar beliefs and attitudes. In sum, in dealing with selection of friends, individuals tend to choose others who resemble themselves (Hartup & Stevens, 1997).

Gavin and Furman (1996) also believe that similarities to each other's characteristics, such as attitudes and interests, are of major importance in how friendships are built and maintained. Attitudes are more alike in adolescent friends, and friends' attitudes become more like each others' over time. Kandel (1978) believed that similarity on a number of attributes is an important factor for interpersonal attraction. This study found that among 13-18 years olds, based on self-administered questionnaires, the most important attributes were sex, race and age.

Adult friendships are formed in much the same way that adolescent friendships are formed, through similar attitudes, interests and personality traits. Strangers with like social roles and beliefs are more likely to be in the same place at the same time than those with different beliefs. The more
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Like two people are in social position or status, the greater their chances of meeting and becoming friends. The less similar two people are in social characteristics, the less likely they will become dear friends (Verbrugge, 1977).

The same rules appear to apply to more maladaptive associations as apply to healthy relationships. For example, children showing antisocial behavior seem more likely to become friends with other antisocial children (Hartup & Stevens, 1997). This may occur because other, better socialized children do not select aggressive children to be their friends. Coie, Dodge, and Copotelli (1982) have shown that rejected children who display social skills deficits are likely to decrease their own chances of acceptance into a peer group. However, in contrast, association with children who exhibit antisocial behavior creates a “common ground”. The result is that antisocial behavior increases over time. Similar unions occur among children for friendliness and cooperation as well as shyness and depressive symptoms (Hartup & Stevens, 1997).

Berndt (1982) compiled existing literature and formulated the conclusion that at all ages, friends are similar. In early adolescence friends are most similar in their attitude towards school and peer culture. He also concluded that similarity in friends is reasonably due to friends choosing friends like themselves.

Friends’ Influence on Each Other

As children enter into adolescence they spend considerably less time under adult supervision and more time with their peers. It is usually assumed that peers exert considerable, if not paramount, influence in adolescent relationships, and research suggests that this is indeed the case. Blanton, Dodge and Jaccard (2005) studied the relationship between peer influence and risk behavior in close friendships. There were 1,692 7th-11th graders in the study. Evidence from their work has come to show that one of the most influential predictors of adolescent risk behavior is whether or not the individual has friends that also engage in that behavior. The authors asked
participants to name five same-sex friends. For each friend chosen, five questions were asked about the closeness of the friendship, such as “Did you go to [name]’s house during the past seven days?” (p. 138). Responses to these five questions were scored 0 for no and 1 for yes, and a child’s closest friend was determined from the highest score from the closeness questions. Responses from the participant and the friend were examined to look at the influence that each had on the other. A correlation was found between friends for tendencies to engage in binge drinking as well as sexual activity. The likelihood that the “target friend” would engage in sexual intercourse was higher when the closest friend had done the same.

Mounts and Steinberg (1995) investigated peer influence, drug use and grade point average in adolescents. There were two samples of 500 9th-11th grade participants. Students were asked to name their closest friend and complete a questionnaire. Their closest friend also had to complete the same questionnaire, and then both adolescents’ GPA and drug use data use were collected. This was a 3-year longitudinal study that found that the teenaged participants became more like their closest friend over time. Adolescents whose close friends used drugs reported an increase in their own drug use. Similarly, adolescents who had close friends that did well in school improved their own academic records over time.

Gender and Friendship

Johnson (2004) found that females, in comparison to their male counterparts, tend to have same-sex friendships that are characterized by a greater degree of emotional intimacy in the form of discussing or expressing feelings. Male friends desire intimacy in their same-sex friendships, but seem to define it differently. First, males, on average, reported knowing their friends longer than did females, but females spent more time with their friends on a regular basis. Second, females appeared also to place more emphasis on the need to maintain important friendships by putting energy and time into them when compared to males.
Oswald, Clark and Kelly (2004) studied important factors for friendship maintenance, or factors that hold friendship relationships together. They found one of the main factors of friendship maintenance was *positivity*, or the presence of positive emotions within the relationship. Positivity was more specifically explained as behaviors that made the friendship rewarding and enjoyable (for example, trying to make each other laugh). These authors demonstrated with a “maintenance behavior survey” that the presence of positive emotions is significantly associated with friendship. Martin Seligman, one of the pioneers of positive psychology, has studied the feeling of positivity extensively. Positive psychology---- the psychological subdiscipline that involves the study of positive emotions such as joy, elation and optimism----strives to guide people toward ways to feel happier, and to find more meaning in, and be more satisfied with, their daily lives.

Another cornerstone of positive psychology inquiry is investigation into positive traits, specifically, research on the concept of “signature strengths”. Seligman’s book *Authentic Happiness*, (2002) details twenty-four possible signature strengths an individual can possess, all of which are said to derive from six core human “virtues” ---- wisdom and knowledge, courage, love and humanity, justice, temperance, and spirituality and transcendence. Signature strengths are traits, characteristics that can be recognized across different venues over time. These strengths could be considered “moral” traits, in the sense that they are most closely related to ideas of the quality and content of virtuous (righteous) behavior, and relate to one’s character, or, more simply, one’s “will”. In comparison, an individual’s “talents” (intellectual ability, musical gifts, or athletic prowess) are considered by Seligman to be “nonmoral” --- innate, and not a matter of will. This classification implies then that strengths are “buildable”; with practice, persistence and dedication, individuals’ “signature strengths” (i.e. one’s specific socioemotional strong points) can become apparent, grow and be improved. Moreover, strengths involve choices about whether or not to use them or
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whether or not to keep building strengths. In theory, any individual can attain these strengths with
enough determination and perseverance (Seligman, 2002). Every individual possesses some of these
signature strengths, the constellations of which are as unique as the person. For some, their
signature strengths may seem very natural and predictable because they can be put to use in everyday
life. An example of this would be alerting a cashier that he or she had undercharged someone fifty
dollars. It makes an individual feel good that they did the right thing and chose the more difficult
path of action (as opposed to just keeping the money).

Engaging in a strength usually creates a genuine positive emotion in the doer. Full
execution of one's signature strengths can make a person feel inspired and elated. Strengths are also
valued. They create good consequences. Displays of a strength can move and inspire onlookers.
These strengths are also thought to be seen everywhere and cherished in almost every culture in the
world. These strengths can make one a "better" person, e.g. by "honing" or increasing strengths
such as love of learning, social intelligence, honesty and humanity. Once people develop a signature
strength, they want to find a way to use it, and feel joy while doing so. Having these kinds of
strengths might even inspire those around one to become better people. Finally, these strengths
make people feel good about who they are and what they can do for themselves and others.
Seligman and Peterson (2004) suggest that full use of one's signature strength over a lifetime will
lead to incredible satisfaction and genuine happiness, improving the person's life and the lives of
those around them. Seligman's concept of the "positive life", in fact, is defined as "a life that
successfully pursues the positive emotions about the present, past and future" (Authentic Happiness, p.
262).

Identity Development and Friends

Adolescence is a time for self-reflection and for determining who you are as a person, what
you want to do in life and what you believe in. These are all issues of identity, individuals'
perceptions of who they are and their relationships with others. Four possible statuses (states) or levels of identity development are diffusion, moratorium, foreclosure, and achievement. First, the status of diffusion is when the individual is not seriously attempting to sort through possible choices or make any commitments. Choices made at this time will be temporary. Second, the identity moratorium is a time of trying different possibilities and using trial and error to see what works for them and what does not. Next, the status of identity foreclosure is when individuals have made a commitment to certain choices but have not investigated all of the possibilities. Finally, identity achievement is having explored all the possibilities and then making a decision based on the findings (Arnett, 2001).

The further along individuals are in identity development, the more they will choose friends whom they enjoy, rather than friends who are perceived merely as resembling themselves. Erikson (1968) believed that children identify with those closest to them and as they grow up they discard some of these identifications and take on others. The identifications that remain are incorporated into the adolescent’s own characteristics, showing that adolescents form their own identity via emulating others, such as close friends (Erikson, 1968).

Statement of the Problem

The scientific findings on friendship, taken together, seem to point toward close friendships (exemplified by positivity, intimacy, and reciprocity) as being life-sustaining, satisfying, and enriching. In a similar fashion, positive psychology research places high value on utilizing one’s signature strengths to enrich one’s life and add meaning. If positive emotions—which seem to characterize close friendship ties—can sustain and support one, can positive traits play a role in friendships and friendship formation as well? Furthermore, if friends’ attitudes, behaviors, and some personal characteristics are thought to be similar, could the signature strengths of close friends be similar as well? The current study attempted to explore these questions by comparing the signature strengths of close friends. Specifically, the following hypotheses were tested in this study:
Hypothesis 1.

It was hypothesized that there would be a relationship between friends' “signature strengths,” and that the degree of similarity between friends' signature strengths would be influenced by the level of identity development of the participants. Specifically, it was predicted that individuals lower in their level of “identity achievement” (as assessed by a measure of identity development) would show signature strengths that are more similar to their named “best friend.” In contrast, it was predicted that those individuals who are higher in “identity achievement” would show signature strengths that are less similar to those of their “best friend.”

Hypothesis 2.

The second hypothesis was that signature strength similarity would also be influenced by other characteristics of the friends reporting: the closeness of the relationship, measured by Berndt's Adult Friendship Questionnaire (Berndt, 2005), the gender of the friends, and by the degree of positive emotion, measured by the Positive and Negative Affectivity Schedule (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988).

Hypothesis 3.

The third hypothesis was that best friends would be able to predict each other's “signature strengths,” regardless of whether these strengths were similar or dissimilar. This ability to predict was further hypothesized to vary based on the closeness of the friendship as measured by the Berndt Adult Friendship Questionnaire (2005). For the present study, participants indicated their predictions of their best friend's signature strengths via the “Friends' Virtue and Resource Assessment” (FVRA), an open-ended series of questions about participants' views of the "best" friends developed specifically by the researchers for the investigation.
Method

Participants

This study had 16 participants. The first group of participants consisted of 8 undergraduate students at the State University of New York College at Brockport who were enrolled in psychology courses over the Spring and Summer 2006 terms, and the second group (also 8 individuals) was comprised of the “best” (closest) friends of each of these 8 individuals.

The Brockport student participants were college-aged (their ages ranged from 20.35 to 24.90 years of age), with a mean age of 21.39 years. Participants were also of differing ethnic backgrounds although this information was not requested as part of data collection. All participants who were SUNY Brockport students received extra credit toward their final course grade in return for their participation. A total of one male and seven females made up the final Brockport student participant group.

The eight individuals in the “best friends” comparison group were aged 19.53 to 24.89 years of age (mean of 21.0) and all were female. Seven of these eight were the same gender as the Brockport student (i.e., one participant had an opposite-sex best friend).

Instruments

Demographic Measure. Participants were administered a brief demographic measure that asked for information on their gender and age. Additionally, they were asked to provide an e-mail address; this was so that the investigator would be able to send them one reminder of the initial request (which was made during data collection sessions, after administration of all questionnaires) to contact their “best friend” for participation in the study. Finally, the Demographic questionnaire asked respondents to confirm that they currently had a “best friend.” For the purposes of the study, a “best friend” was defined as a person who was not the students’ romantic partner or spouse; who
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was, among the person’s acquaintances, the one to whom he/she felt the closest; and with whom he or she “spent the most time in ‘friendship activities’” such as talking or recreation. A copy of the demographic measure is in Appendix A.

Signature Strengths. Participants’ signature strengths were measured using the Values in Action Signature Strengths Inventory (Appendix A) created by Peterson and Seligman (2004). The VIA-IS, intended for use with adults, is a self-report questionnaire consisting of 240 items that yield information on the presence of 24 possible signature strengths or virtues for an individual. Scoring for VIA-IS yields information on individuals’ “top five” signature strengths, as well as a rank ordering of all the strengths and the degree of intensity for each that a respondent possesses. Higher scores on each of the items indicate that an individual shows or possesses that strength more intensely. The VIA-IS uses 5-point choice-style items (i.e. 5 = “very much like me”, 4 = “like me”, 3 = “neutral”, 2 = “unlike me”, and 1 = “very much unlike me”) to assess the degree to which respondents endorse items reflecting the multiple strengths of character/virtue that make up the VIA Classification. Some examples of the items are “I am strongly committed to principles of justice and equality” (strength of fairness), “I am a spiritual person” (strength of spirituality), and “I always let bygones be bygones” (strength of forgiveness). The highest possible score a respondent could obtain on VIA-IS is 50 and the lowest score would be zero.

Adult Friendships Questionnaire. Closeness of the participants’ friendship relationships was measured using the Adult Friendship Questionnaire (Appendix A), developed by Thomas Berndt (2005). The AFQ consists of 34 items, is also self-report in style, and was designed for the college population. Choice-style items are provided (i.e., 1 = “less than once a month”; 2 = “once a month”; 3 = “a few times a month”; 4 = “a few times a week”; or 5 = “every day”) to indicate the frequency of specific relationship behaviors. Some examples of items include “How often do you talk to him/her in person or on the phone?”, “If you asked him/her to do a favor for you, how
often would he/she agree to it?”, and “How often do you get into arguments?”. Scoring the AFQ allows computation of seven subscales: interaction frequency, commitment, conflict, prosocial, intimacy, rivalry, loyalty and affection. While specific reliability and validity information for the college age version of AFQ was unavailable, its author has published numerous studies using a similar friendship interview for use with younger respondents. Berndt has discussed the issue of reliability and validity without citing specific statistics for these measures (Berndt, 1982; Diaz & Berndt, 1982).

**Ego Identity Process Questionnaire.** This measure is used to assess level of identity development and was created by Balistreri, Busch-Rossnagel and Geisinger in 1995 (Appendix A). The instrument contains 32 items with 8 items measuring each of the four identity statuses – “diffusion”, “foreclosure”, “moratorium” and “achievement”. Items describe topics pertaining to domains of family, friendship, dating, sex roles, occupation, religion, politics and values. For the purposes of this study, the level of identity achievement was determined using the above statuses and also by measuring whether the individual is in the "commitment" (i.e. closer to "achievement") or "exploration" (not "achieved") stage of development. EIPQ also employs choice-style items (i.e. "strongly agree"; “agree”; “slightly agree”; “slightly disagree”; “disagree”; and “strongly disagree”) to assess level of identity development. Scoring for the EIPQ investigates the two domains of commitment and exploration; reverse-scoring is done for negatively-worded items. Some examples of items used in the questionnaire include “I am very confident about what kind of friends are best for me”, “My values are likely to change in the future”, and “I think what I look for in a friend could change in the future.” Significant agreement has been found across raters for the dimensions measured in the questionnaire; test-retest reliability was also found to be relatively high. Cronbach’s alpha values for the EIPQ scales of exploration and commitment are .76 and .75.
Positive and Negative Affectivity Schedule. This self-report questionnaire is a measure of positive and negative affect and was created by Watson, Clark and Tellegen (1988). Tugade and Frederickson (2004) expanded PANAS to contain 38 items (Appendix A). The questionnaire uses choice-style items (i.e. “very slightly”, “a little”, “moderately”, “quite a bit”, “extremely”) to indicate positive activation (PA) and negative activation (NA) of emotions and feelings. The positive affect subscale contains words such as “inspired”, “proud”, and “happy”, and the negative affect subscale uses words such as “depressed”, “disgusted”, and “irritable.” Research has shown two main factors in PANAS, which together account for 42% of the common variance (Tugade & Frederickson, 2004). The longer version of PANAS thus appears more robust than the original 20-item version (10 items for PA and 10 items for NA), factor analyses for which (using only the original items) revealed two factors accounting for 30% of the common variance. For the current study, PANAS scores were used to determine whether emotions felt by an individual, positive or negative, affected the friendship in any way.

Friend Virtue and Resource Assessment. Best friends’ ability to predict each others’ signature strengths was measured using the Friend Virtue and Resource Assessment (Appendix A), created for the purposes of the current study (Gillespie & Solecki, 2006). This assessment consisted of one checklist and one open-ended question, both of which focused on individuals’ perceptions of qualities in their best friend. The checklist portion of FVRA lists all 24 of the signature strengths (Peterson & Seligman, 2004) below the words, “What do you feel are your best friend’s greatest strengths? Please check five of those listed below”. The open-ended question simply states “The top five ways that my best friend helps me are: (list)”, with blank spaces beneath for the participants’ responses. Lastly, FVRA assesses whether a respondent feels that his or her friend’s greatest strengths played a part in their becoming friends, accomplished via the respondent’s circling any of
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the five “checked” signature strengths in the 24-item checklist. Finally, FVRA asks respondents to indicate their best friend’s date of birth.

Procedure

Recruitment of participants took place by contacting instructors of psychology classes and asking their permission to visit their classes. Participants put their names on sign-up sheets posted, and data were collected in available classrooms. The first phase of data collection began with the distribution of an Informed Consent form and the five self-report questionnaires (see Appendix A; packets consisted of Demographics, VIA-IS, AFQ, EIPQ, PANAS, and FVRA) to participants. Next, students were addressed by the experimenter:

"Hello, my name is Candace Solecki. I’m working with Dr. Gillespie and I thank all of you for your interest in this study. There are four things I need to announce to you all as we pass out these packets of questionnaires. First, you will see 2 copies of an Informed Consent form on top of the packet of surveys. Please read one and check YES as proof that you were given an introduction to this project, and as proof that you wish to participate. There are two copies of it. One copy should be turned in with your completed questionnaires, and one that you should keep for yourself. Second, please go ahead and fill out all of the surveys. Work quickly and don’t worry about any one response as there are no right or wrong answers. Third, last in your packet you will see a handout that says “Thank you”. Keep that, as it explains the last part of the study, which is that we are asking if each of you will also contact a friend about this study as well. Again, please keep that and read it later. You may turn in your questionnaires when you are finished. At that time you will receive a slip of paper that you can turn in to your instructor as proof that you were in the experiment".
Following the above instructions, each participant was distributed a packet containing all measures (Demographic, VIA-IS, AFQ, EIPQ, PANAS, and FVRA). Experimenters answered any additional questions participants had regarding the nature of the study by reiterating that the study explored signature strengths and close friends’ relationships. As mentioned, participants left the data collection sessions with a two-page combined debriefing and sample invitation to (if they wished) recruit their identified “best friend” to complete an Informed Consent, VIA-IS, and FVRA as well.

Each participant completed his or her packet at a different rate, so as each person handed in his or her packet, the experimenter verbally thanked him or her enthusiastically, emphasizing that their participation was appreciated, and noted that it was hoped that their best friend will be interested in participating as well. Finally, the investigator carefully checked each packet for completeness as all were turned in. As a result, only one packet out of a total of 178 collected from Phase 1 contained any missing information. Only one participant refused to participate (handed back the survey untouched), and one participant indicated ineligibility for reasons of having no “best friend”.

Assessment of Best Friends' Signature Strengths

The procedure for the next portion of the study involved making a request to all participants that they contact their best friend to invite him or her to contact the experimenter and complete two of the questionnaires. A written explanation/debriefing, in “bulleted” form, relevant to the remainder of the study (i.e., inclusion of “best friends”), plus a sample invitation and explanation was provided to all participants (a copy is included in Appendix A). The first part read as follows:

“Thank you! Your participation in this study is very much appreciated; you are now done with all questionnaires. Please keep these pages and take them with you. Because we are interested in ways that friends might differ from, or resemble each other, we are asking if you would be willing to contact the “best friend” you referenced in completing the surveys you just finished. Contacting your friend is entirely optional; we invite you to read (and feel free to copy) the following suggested
message, and if you are willing to e-mail your best friend, great! Any “best friend” that contacts us (Ms. Solecki and Dr. Gillespie) in return and completes about 25 minutes worth of questionnaires (similar to the ones you just did, but briefer) will be entered into a raffle for a possible bookstore gift certificate. To ensure that your best friend will get the chance for the raffle gift when you email them, please use the number on your packet of questionnaires (i.e., you must tell them what it is in your e-mail). We thank you again for your help and participation!”

The second part of the form was a sample e-mail invitation that participants could use as a model for their own e-mail messages sent to their “best friend” to invite their participation. That sample read as follows:

“Hi (friend’s name), I’m taking a Psychology class and I just participated in a study about close friendships. I answered some questions about you as a friend of mine, and the investigators are also looking at strengths in friendships and whether they are similar or different. “Signature strengths” are defined as individual, personal socioemotional “strong points” that differ from person to person. If you will e-mail them, they will e-mail you back and give you a web link to a similar questionnaire on personality and friends and you can complete it as part of the study. Every “friend” that a Brockport student invites to participate who fills out these questionnaires online and completes them (it will take about 20-25 minutes) will get a listing of what their top five signature strengths are and will be entered into a raffle for a possible one hundred dollar gift certificate to Borders Books. If you’ll do this, thanks! The researchers’ names and addresses are below, and they will both be checking their e-mails so as to receive your response as soon as possible. To identify yourself, they ask that you give your initials, birth date, and participant number “____”. You do not have to give your name.”
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The names and e-mail addresses of the investigator and the investigator's faculty supervisor were at the end of the sample e-mail invitation.

The third and final phase of data collection involved the participants' best friends contacting the investigator via e-mail to indicate willingness to receive information about the study and complete two questionnaires ("best friends" completed only FVRA [via e-mail] and the VIA-IS [online]). Upon receiving an e-mailed inquiry from a "best friend", the investigator sent him or her (via e-mail) an attachment of the informed consent form and an FVRA. Best friends also received the web link to the Values In Action Institute (www.viastrengths.org) and were instructed to go online to take the VIA-IS. Unfortunately, an initial technical problem for any best friends who logged on to the VIA-IS website created unforeseen difficulties during data collection. The research code provided by the Values in Action Institute, which identified this particular study and matched it to the "best friend" respondents' VIA-IS questionnaire online, was not working when the first several "best friends" attempted to provide their answers. After this obstacle was removed no further problems were encountered. Best friend participants who successfully logged on and completed VIA-IS and FVRA were informed of, and were entered into, a raffle for a chance at a one hundred dollar book store gift certificate. At the end of data collection, one "best friend" was randomly selected and was sent the certificate.

Results

Sample Size. Every effort was made to obtain an adequate number of participants to allow full statistical analyses of the data, but unfortunately, far fewer "best friends" contacted the investigators than had been predicted. During the Spring, 2006 semester, 158 packets for the first phase of data collection were handed out to undergraduate student participants in numerous psychology classes at SUNY Brockport. All received extra credit for their participation; all were given the sample
invitation, and all were e-mailed one reminder about the second phase of the study involving their best friends. While it cannot be ascertained how many participants of these 158 actually extended the invitation to their best friends, only two best friends actually contacted the investigators and successfully followed through with data collection by completing an informed consent, FVRA, and the online VIA-IS. This amounted to an approximate response rate of best friends of one and one quarter per cent, far lower than previous literature on response rates for mailed surveys would suggest (e.g., Larson & Poist, 2004), and paradoxically lower than would be expected given the greater ease of online surveys as compared to those using postal services.

When the apparent lack of “best friend” interest in the project became evident (based on the Spring semester response rate), the investigator continued data collection throughout the Summer semester. Moreover, she additionally contacted only instructors who were willing to offer not just one, but two points of extra credit to the Brockport student. Using this method, the first point of extra credit for participants was received when he or she completed his or her own questionnaires and the second point if and when the individual’s best friend followed through with experimental participation. In those cases, as in the previous semester, the best friend remained entitled to a chance at the aforementioned book store gift certificate raffle. Altering the contingencies for participants and their best friends proved a bit more successful (this effort yielded an additional six “best friends”), but did not significantly alter the size of the data pool. Overall, the average “rate of response” for the best friends was four and one half per cent. Based on these data, a total of 1106 first-phase packets (and invitations) would have been required in order to obtain the planned total of fifty “best friends” complying with the request to participate.

Copies of both versions of the sample invitation for Spring and Summer are contained in Appendix A.
Data Analysis

The experimenter hand-scored all measures completed by participants. For the "best friends", who completed the VIA-IS signature strengths inventory online, the Values in Action Institute scored the measure and sent the data to the investigator. "Best friends" were linked to the participants by matching first names, last initials and birthdates. Due to the lack of respondents, multiple regression analyses proved unfeasible. Instead, data were examined via a t-test and correlational analyses as well as by graphing and tabulating data. Means and standard deviations for all measures can be found in Table 1.

Signature Strengths Scores

The VIA-IS surveys for the Brockport student participants were scored by hand and the top five strengths were then determined based on the highest five scores rated by participants for each of twenty-four strengths. For the best friends, the VIA Institute computed the scores from signature strength surveys taken online and sent a list of their strengths ranking from highest to lowest. Signature strength scores for all participants overall ranged from the highest score of 50 to a lowest of 36.

Commonalities in Signature Strengths

A list of the most frequently indicated signature strengths of both the participants and best friends can be found in Table 2. The most common signature strength among the Brockport student participants was humor, with a total of 5 of 8 (62.5 %) participants possessing this signature strength among their top five strengths. Humor was also the most common signature strength among the best friends, with 4 of 8 (50%) best friends possessing that strength. The top five strengths for the Brockport student participants were: humor, ability to love and be loved,
judgment, curiosity, and appreciation of beauty. The top five signature strengths for the best friends were: humor, integrity, ability to love and be loved, gratitude, and citizenship. The signature strengths zest and love of learning were strengths displayed by the best friends but not the participants. The strength “perspective” was not found among the best friends but rather the participants. Based on their self-ratings, neither the participants nor best friends possessed the signature strengths of ingenuity, self-control or spirituality.

Similarity of Friends’ Signature Strengths

Hypothesis 1, which predicted that friends would share similarities in signature strengths, was examined via computation of “similarity scores” for the eight Brockport student-best friend dyads. Similarity scores were determined by counting the number of “top five” signature strengths that both members of a pair of friends had in common (see Table 3). Similarity scores for participant – best friend dyads ranged from 0 to 2 with a mean of 1.5. In accordance with prediction, seven out of eight student – best friend pairs had at least one strength in common. Two pairs had one strength in common, and five pairs had two signature strengths in common (however, none had more than 2 in common).

Similarity Score between Participants and “Control” Participants

To further test Hypothesis 1, a comparison group of eight participants was randomly selected from the larger group of 150 Phase 1 participants whose best friends were not part of the study and who were not part of the 8 used in the dyad comparisons. These individuals were then randomly paired with one of the eight participants, noting the top five VIA-IS scores for these 16 participants. “Similarity scores” between these 2 groups were then computed and compared (see Table 4) to determine whether the pairs of best friends would be more similar in signature strengths when compared to each other as opposed to a randomly selected “non-friend”. As mentioned, the
The mean similarity score for participants and their best friends was 1.5. The mean similarity score for participants and the control subjects was 0.9. These figures were compared via a t-test (Appendix B). The results were nonsignificant (t = 1.57, p > .05).

**EIPQ Scores**

Hypothesis 1 also predicted that identity development would be related to similarity in signature strengths. The two relevant EIPQ scales, Commitment and Exploration were scored and participants' scores on the Commitment scale ranged from an 81 to a 37 (mean of 64, standard deviation of 14.03), out of a possible total score of 96. Participants' Exploration scores ranged from 83 to 59 (mean of 67, standard deviation of 7.09) out of a possible highest score of 96. Thus, data indicated that participants in this study were relatively at the mid-point of both the Commitment and the Exploration stages. A correlation computed between "similarity scores" and EIPQ Commitment scores was also nonsignificant (r = .112, ns). However, interestingly, the pattern of scores within the eight Brockport participants yielded an intriguing finding. For all 8, EIPQ Commitment scores and Exploration scores were compared. Five participants whose "Exploration" score was higher than their "Commitment" score were labeled the "Explorers" and their signature strength - similarity scores compared with those of the other 3 (i.e., "Commitment" scores higher than "Exploration" scores, or "Committers"). The mean similarity score for "Committers" was 2.0, versus a mean of .8 for "Explorers", which was actually counter to the prediction that those less-achieved in identity status would be more similar in virtue. Thus, overall, Hypothesis 1 was not supported (see Figure 1).

**Friendship Questionnaire Scores**

The two scales of the Berndt Adult Friendship Questionnaire that were examined and scored were the Intimacy and Affection scales as these were thought to most accurately predict
closeness in a friendship. Scores on the Intimacy scale ranged from 20, the highest, to 14, the lowest out of a possible 20. The mean score was 16.6, with a standard deviation of 1.92. Scores on the Affection scale ranged from 10, the highest, to 8, the lowest out of a possible 10. The mean score for the Affection scale was 9.6, with a standard deviation of .74. These scores show that the pairs that participated in the study were indeed generally close in their friendships. To examine Hypothesis 2, which predicted that the closeness of the friendship would be related to the friends’ similarity in signature strengths, a correlation was computed between participants’ “Similarity Score” with their best friend, and their “Intimacy” scores on the Adult Friendship Questionnaire ($r = .302$, ns). The result was nonsignificant (see Figure 2).

**PANAS**

The positive and negative scores for the PANAS were scored by hand but were not factored into the results of the pairs of friends as multiple regression analyses could not be accomplished. PANAS scores for the sample ranged from 90 to 49 (mean of 65, standard deviation of 13.25) out of a possible 95 for the positive emotion scale and 68 to 34 (mean of 51, standard deviation of 10.85) out of 95 on the negative emotion scale. Taken together, these PANAS scores indicate that the group of participants experienced far more positive emotions than negative emotions over the past year.

**Accuracy of Prediction Score**

Hypothesis 3 stated that best friends would be able to predict each others’ signature strengths. A “prediction score” was simply the 5 items checked by any respondent about their friend on the FVRA checklist portion. An “accuracy of prediction” score was determined by comparing the “top five” checked on FVRA to participants’ actual “top five” from VIA-IS. The participants accurately predicted, on average, 1.6 of their best friend’s signature strengths. The eight
Do Friends Self Select 24 best friends accurately predicted, on average, 1.75 of their friend’s (the participant’s) signature strengths. Overall, the best friends were minimally more accurate in predicting their best friends’ (the participants’) signature strengths (see Figure 3).

Commonalities of “Five Ways My Best Friend Helps Me”

At the bottom of the FVRA questionnaire a question asked both the participants and their best friend to list “The top five ways my best friends helps me” (see Table 5). Several answers given by participants and best friends were similar. Six of 8 participant-best friend pairs identified one similar “way” each helped the other, and 2 of 8 identified 2 ways. Several “ways” mentioned by participants were “listens”; “makes me laugh”; “(gives) support when I’m down” and numerous other examples as listed in Table 5. Interestingly, several of the open-ended responses precisely mentioned qualities that are assessed via the VIA-IS signature strengths inventory, e.g. “loves me for me”, “kindness”, and “trusts me”. The possibility that this finding was an order effect can not be dismissed; participants completed the FVRA after completing the 240-item VIA-IS that listed examples of signature strength-associated behaviors.

Discussion

This study began with an intriguing question, one that had never been investigated before. Unfortunately, as is often the case, “unintended consequences” ensued, and a lack of participants precluded all but superficial examination of the three hypotheses. However, some interesting data nonetheless emerged, and several key points can be addressed even if conclusions about the hypotheses are difficult. First, this study provides pilot data that suggest that a larger sample size might yield positive findings. It is clear that participants (at least the best friends) did not view the online survey feedback and raffle chances as sufficient incentive to participate, as their rate of response was extraordinarily low. However, it was also clear from these findings that “best friends”
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are willing and able to view their friends' strengths accurately in some cases. No participant refused the FVRA although it was administered last among questionnaires taking up to 50 minutes to complete, and all 158 Brockport students as well as the 8 “best friends” seemed to take a serious approach to completion of measures. A few of the best friends even e-mailed the investigator to alert her that the research code for the VIA-IS website was not working. Some respondents had to go back to the website twice, once before and once after the problem was fixed. All of the e-mails the investigator received from the best friends were very cordial and showed enthusiasm for participating. For all of these reasons, the validity of this small data set seems clear. In future studies of this type, or attempts at replication of these data, a larger sample size (were grant money available to pay “best friends” for their time) might yield data that do support the hypotheses.

Another data collection method that might yield more data would be to replicate the study in a high school setting, where students might be more likely to be able to recruit best friends by “word-of-mouth” (and where data for both the participant group and the “best friend” group could be collected at the same site).

Another point that must be mentioned deals with the appropriateness of the measures selected for the study. All published measures appeared to be both valid and appropriate to the questions posed, and yielded reliable data. However, VIA-IS remains a relatively new measure, and there are no validity checks incorporated into VIA-IS (such as “lie” scales), which makes it impossible to ascertain if respondents attempted to portray themselves more positively than was the case. Moreover, the FVRA was completely new and experimental, and created for the purposes of this study. In fact, FVRA asked participants what they felt were their best friend’s greatest strengths (i.e., it asked for a subjective judgment). Using the word “feel” in the FVRA may have led to respondents providing opinions rather than predictions. Different results might have been obtained
had participants been asked to predict what their friends actual VIA-IS scores were (e.g. while viewing the items on VIA-IS); or if they had been asked to make their prediction taking the perspective of the best friend him- or herself. In research with 4th and 8th graders, Diaz and Berndt (1982) found that children and adolescents will know and recall varying characteristics about their best friends in different ways. Factual items (such as phone numbers) and personality-related items (such as a friend’s worries) were not known or remembered in the same way or to the same degree.

Another limitation in the present study’s data collection pertains to the involvement of the VIA web site. More data might have been generated if the VIA-IS website had not been having technical difficulties. Twelve best friends completed the Informed Consent and the FVRA, but only eight best friends completed the online questionnaire as well. It is possible that the four best friends were discouraged and did not follow through with participation due to difficulty accessing the web site.

In the final analysis, the hypotheses for this study must be rejected based not on data but on the absence of data. This study’s questions should be asked again, and a replication will hopefully provide clearer answers.
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References


### Table 1

#### Means and Standard Deviations for All Measures

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<th>AFF AFQ</th>
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Table 2

Most Frequently Indicated Signature Strengths

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### Table 3

**Similarity Scores for Participants and Participants' Best Friends**

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Love (49)
Judgment (47)
Valor (44)
Integrity (44)

Do Friends Self Select 33
Citizenship (44)

Fairness (38)
Perseverance (38)
Valor (37)
Citizenship (37)
Curiosity (37)
### Table 4

**Similarity Scores for Participants and Randomly Selected Control Participants**

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<td></td>
<td>Perseverance</td>
<td></td>
<td>Gratitude</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Hope</td>
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<td>Perspective</td>
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<td>23</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Citizenship</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Integrity</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Fairness</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appreciation of Beauty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>Personal Intelligence</td>
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<td>Valor</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Kindness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Judgment</td>
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<td>Originality</td>
<td>113</td>
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<td>Loving</td>
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<td>Forgiveness</td>
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<td>Hope</td>
<td></td>
<td>Perseverance</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Curiosity</td>
<td></td>
<td>Fairness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Social Intelligence</td>
<td></td>
<td>Kindness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>167</td>
<td>Appreciation of Beauty</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>Kindness</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gratitude</td>
<td></td>
<td>Love</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Forgiveness</td>
<td></td>
<td>Self Regulation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Valor</td>
<td></td>
<td>Gratitude</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Humor</td>
<td></td>
<td>Perseverance</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>Curiosity</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>Fairness</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Love</td>
<td></td>
<td>Humor</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Appreciation of Beauty</td>
<td></td>
<td>Citizenship</td>
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<td>Integrity</td>
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<td>Kindness</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gratitude</td>
<td></td>
<td>Curiosity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>
Do Friends Self Select

178  Perspective  
  Love  
  Judgment  
  Valor  
  Integrity  

165  Spirituality  
  Kindness  
  Love  
  Curiosity  
  Citizenship  

1
### Table 5

Commonalities of “Five Ways My Best Friend Helps Me” *(Bold indicates Similarities)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Participant Responses</th>
<th>Participant’s Best Friend’s Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>95</td>
<td>Talking to me</td>
<td>Always listens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Having fun with me</td>
<td>Never judges me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Showing they care</td>
<td>Cheering me up when I need it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Doing things for me</td>
<td>Positive perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paying for me when I’m low on cash</td>
<td>Supportive of my decision in life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96</td>
<td>Life is good when we do activities</td>
<td>Makes me laugh when I am down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Makes me want to go out and do things</td>
<td>Lets me know she is there for me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There for me if I need help</td>
<td>Listens to me vent about stupid things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I learn from her mistakes</td>
<td>Gives me a place to stay if I need it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Someone to hang out with</td>
<td>Tells me it’s alright to be myself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>162</td>
<td>Makes me happy</td>
<td>Listens to my problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gives me something to do</td>
<td>Willing to help me when I need it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Makes me feel worthy</td>
<td>Great sense of music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Helps me with school work</td>
<td>Doesn’t judge me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Makes me laugh</td>
<td>Willing to listen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>163</td>
<td>Has a good time with me</td>
<td>Shows me how to be myself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listens when I need help</td>
<td>Allows me to laugh at myself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Have someone to count on</td>
<td>Teaches me new things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Makes me laugh</td>
<td>Shows me a different point of view</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gives me someone to care about</td>
<td>Shows me how to embrace any situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>166</td>
<td>Loving me</td>
<td>Listens without judging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Helping me</td>
<td>There for me no matter what</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There for me</td>
<td>Loves me for me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Encouraging me</td>
<td>Helps me see the person I really am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Believing in me</td>
<td>Just being herself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>167</td>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>There for me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>Makes me laugh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Making me laugh</td>
<td>Listens to me and gives me advice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Doing things for/with me</td>
<td>Goes out of her way to cheer me up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trusting me/allowing me to trust her</td>
<td>Goes on adventures with me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>168</td>
<td>Finds goodness in people</td>
<td>Brings humor to my life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Doesn’t take life so seriously</td>
<td>Keeps a positive attitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Have fun</td>
<td>Provides a good listening ear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feel companionship</td>
<td>Helps me solve my problems in life</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Support when I'm down
Helping with favors
Work together on school projects
Puts things in perspective
Kindness
Good listener

178

Do Friends Self Select 37
Stays open to new experiences
Gives great advice
Makes me laugh
Does not judge me
Knows everything about anything
There for me when I need her
Appendix A, All Materials Given to Participants
Do Friends Self Select 39

For participant (2nd data collection, Summer 2006)

Statement of Informed Consent

The purpose of this research project is to examine "signature strengths" and close friendship relationships. "Signature strengths" are defined as individual, personal socioemotional "strong points" that differ from person to person. Several areas will be investigated in this study, including signature strengths, friendship and perceptions of friendship. This research project is also being conducted in order for me to complete my master's thesis for the Department of Psychology at the State University of New York College at Brockport.

In order to participate in this study, your informed consent is required. You are being asked to make a decision whether or not to participate in this project. If you want to participate in this project, and agree to the statements below, please sign your name in the space provided at the end. You may change your mind at any time and leave the study without penalty, even after the study has begun, and still receive extra credit.

I understand that:

1. My participation is voluntary and I have the right to refuse to answer any questions.
2. The confidentiality of my identity is guaranteed; only the principal investigator, faculty supervisor and research assistants will have access to any of the data from my responses.
3. There are no anticipated personal risks because of my participation in this project. A minor benefit will be my receiving 1 or 2 points of extra credit at my instructor's discretion.
4. My participation involves reading five written surveys and answering each of them in writing. It is estimated that it will take 35-40 minutes to complete the surveys.
5. Approximately 150 people will take part in this study. The results will be used for the completion of a master's thesis by the primary researcher.
6. Data will be kept in a locked file cabinet in the faculty advisor's office. Data and consent forms will be destroyed by shredding when the research has been accepted and approved.
7. Your continuation with the following surveys implies consent.

I am 18 years of age or older. I have read and understand the above statements. All my questions about my participation in this study have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in the study realizing I may withdraw without penalty at any time during the survey process. Returning the survey indicates my consent to participate. If you have any questions you may contact:

Primary Researcher
Candace Solecki

Faculty Advisor
Jan Gillespie, Ph.D

"This project has been approved by the SUNY College at Brockport's Institutional Review Board. Approval of this project only signifies that the procedures adequately protect the rights and welfare
Do Friends Self Select 40

of the participants. Please note that absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed due to limited protections of Internet access."  

I understand the explanation of this study and agree to participate: _____YES _____NO

(Note: Your signature is not required; you may merely check above. Keep one copy).

Date_____________________________
Do Friends Self Select 41

For “best friend” (both data collection phase, Spring and Summer 2006)

Statement of Informed Consent

The purpose of this research project is to examine "signature strengths" and close friendship relationships. "Signature strengths" are defined as individual, personal socioemotional "strong points" that differ from person to person. Several areas will be investigated in this study, including signature strengths, friendship, and perceptions of friendship. This research project is being conducted in order for me to complete my master’s thesis for the Department of Psychology at the State University of New York College at Brockport.

In order to participate in this study, your informed consent is required. You are being asked to make a decision whether or not to participate in this project. If you want to participate in this project, and agree to the statements below, please sign your name in the space provided at the end. You may change your mind at any time and choose not to participate.

I understand that:

1. My participation is voluntary and I have the right to refuse to answer any questions. My participation will require my signing on to a web site provided by the investigators to complete a brief online survey.
2. The confidentiality of my identity is guaranteed, only the principal investigator, faculty supervisor and research assistants will have access to any of the data from my responses.
3. There are no anticipated personal risks because of my participation in this project. A minor benefit would be possibly winning a gift certificate to a bookstore from a raffle.
4. My participation involves reading two surveys in total, one of which is online, and the other which will be sent me via e-mail by the investigators. It is estimated that it will take approximately 20-25 minutes to complete both of these surveys.
5. The results will be used for the completion of a master’s thesis by the primary researcher.
6. The results of my surveys will be sent the researchers, printed, and kept on paper in a locked file cabinet in the faculty advisor’s office. Data and consent forms will be destroyed by shredding when the research has been accepted and approved.
7. Your continuation with the following surveys implies consent.

I am 18 years of age or older. I have read and understand the above statements. All my questions about my participation in this study have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in the study realizing I may withdraw without penalty at any time during the survey process. Returning the survey indicates my consent to participate. If you have any questions you may contact:

Primary Researcher

Candace Solecki

Faculty Advisor

Jan Gillespie, Ph.D

585 - 395 - 2433
"This project has been approved by the SUNY College at Brockport's Institutional Review Board. Approval of this project only signifies that the procedures adequately protect the rights and welfare of the participants. Please note that absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed due to limited protections of Internet access."

I understand this explanation of the study and agree to participate: ____YES  ____NO
Date____________________________________

(Note: Your signature is not required; you may merely check above. Keep one copy)
Demographic Data Sheet

Please indicate the following below:

Name: ____________________________

Gender: __________________________

Phone # (optional): __________________________

Your e-mail address: __________________________

The above information will be shredded before questionnaire data are analyzed; there will no way to link your name to your questionnaire responses.

Your date of birth (month, day, year): _____________

Please answer the following as well:

Do you have a "best" friend? By "best" friend we mean:
- A person who is not your spouse/romantic partner and also:
- The person whom you spend the most time with in friendship activities such as talking, recreation, e-mailing, etc.; and:
- The person among your acquaintances to whom you feel the closest

YES I have a best friend currently _____  NO I do not have a current best friend ______

If you answered yes, please add the information about your "best friend" below:

Your best friend's first name and last initial: __________________________

Best friend's birthdate: (month, day, year if you know it): __________________________

NOW PLEASE GO ON TO THE QUESTIONNAIRES IN THIS PACKET
Adult Friendship Questionnaire

To help us understand your relationship better, we'd like to ask you some questions about your friendship with the close friend you named earlier. Please answer each question by circling one of the answers provided.

1. How often do you spend free time with him/her?
   - Less than once a month  
   - Once a month  
   - A few times a month  
   - A few times a week  
   - Every day

2. How sure are you that your friendship will continue in the years to come?
   - Not at all  
   - Not very  
   - A little  
   - Very much  
   - Completely

3. How often do you talk to him/her in person or on the phone?
   - Less than once a month  
   - Once a month  
   - A few times a month  
   - A few times a week  
   - Every day

4. How often does he/she make fun of things that you do?
   - Never  
   - Not often  
   - Sometimes  
   - Often  
   - Always

5. If you asked him/her to do a favor for you, how often would he/she agree to do it?
   - Never  
   - Not often  
   - Sometimes  
   - Often  
   - Always

6. When you feel really good about something, how often do you tell him/her about it?
   - Never  
   - Not often  
   - Sometimes  
   - Often  
   - Always

7. How often does he/she try to prove he/she is better than you at something, like grades or sports?
   - Never  
   - Not often  
   - Sometimes  
   - Often  
   - Always

8. If he/she was choosing someone to go shopping or do something else, how often would he/she pick you?
   - Never  
   - Not often  
   - Sometimes  
   - Often  
   - Always

9. How likely is it that you and he/she will still be friends six months from now?
   - Not at all  
   - Not very  
   - A little  
   - Quite likely  
   - Very likely

10. How often do you and he/she just sit around and talk about things like school, sports, or anything else?
    - Less than once a month  
    - Once a month  
    - A few times a month  
    - A few times a week  
    - Every day

11. How often do you get into arguments with him/her?
12. How often do you and he/she borrow things from each other, like class notes, music, or other things?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Not often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

13. How often do you tell him/her things about yourself that you wouldn't tell most other people?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Not often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

14. How often does he/she try to boss you around?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Not often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

15. If other people were making fun of you, how often would he/she tell them to stop it?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Not often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

16. How likely is it that your friendship will be permanent?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Not very</th>
<th>A little</th>
<th>Quite likely</th>
<th>Very likely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

17. How often do you and he/she do things to have fun together, like play sports or games?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Less than once a month</th>
<th>Once a month</th>
<th>A few times a month</th>
<th>A few times a week</th>
<th>Every day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

18. How often do you feel like it's hard to get along with him/her?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Not often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

19. If you needed help with something, how often would you ask him/her to help you?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Not often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

20. How much does he/she know about what you like and how you feel about things?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Not much</th>
<th>A little bit</th>
<th>A fair amount</th>
<th>A great deal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

21. How often does he/she act like he/she is superior to you?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Not often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

22. How often does he/she ignore you when you're around other people?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Not often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
23. How committed are you to your friendship?
Not at all  Not very  A little  Very much  Completely

24. How often do you and he/she go places together, like a movie, shopping, or out to eat?
Less than once a month  Once a month  A few times a month  A few times a week  Every day

25. How often does he/she annoy or bug you?
Never  Not often  Sometimes  Often  Always

26. How often does he/she do things for you when you don't even ask him/her?
Never  Not often  Sometimes  Often  Always

27. When something is bothering you, how often do you talk to him/her about it?
Never  Not often  Sometimes  Often  Always

28. How often does he/she "show off" or brag about doing something better than you?
Never  Not often  Sometimes  Often  Always

29. How often does he/she decide to do something with another friend instead of you?
Never  Not often  Sometimes  Often  Always

30. How committed do you think he/she is to the friendship?
Not at all  Not very  A little  Very much  Completely

31. How often do the two of you get together on weekdays or weekends?
Less than once a month  Once a month  A few times a month  A few times a week  Every day

32. How sure are you that your friendship will last no matter what?
Not at all  Not very  A little  Very much  Completely

33. How much does he/she care about you?
Not at all  Not much  A little bit  A fair amount  A great deal

34. How much do you care about him/her?
Not at all  Not much  A little bit  A fair amount  A great deal

Participant # __________________ Date __________________

(Berndt, 2005)
EIPQ Questionnaire

In this questionnaire, you will find a number of statements about beliefs, attitudes, and/or values. Please read each statement carefully, and then use it to describe yourself. **Circle** the option indicating the degree to which you think each statement is characteristic or uncharacteristic of yourself. There are no right or wrong answers.

1. I have definitely decided on the occupation I want to pursue.
   - Strongly Agree  Agree  Slightly Agree  Slightly Disagree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

2. I don't expect to change my political principles and ideals
   - Strongly Agree  Agree  Slightly Agree  Slightly Disagree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

3. I have considered adopting different kinds of religious beliefs.
   - Strongly Agree  Agree  Slightly Agree  Slightly Disagree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

4. There has never been a need to question my values.
   - Strongly Agree  Agree  Slightly Agree  Slightly Disagree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

5. I am very confident about what kinds of friends are best for me.
   - Strongly Agree  Agree  Slightly Agree  Slightly Disagree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

6. My ideas about men's and women's roles have never changed as I became older.
   - Strongly Agree  Agree  Slightly Agree  Slightly Disagree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

7. I will always vote for the same political party.
   - Strongly Agree  Agree  Slightly Agree  Slightly Disagree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

8. I have firmly held views concerning my role in my family.
   - Strongly Agree  Agree  Slightly Agree  Slightly Disagree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

9. I have engaged in several discussions concerning behaviors involved in dating relationships.
   - Strongly Agree  Agree  Slightly Agree  Slightly Disagree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

10. I have considered different political views thoughtfully.
    - Strongly Agree  Agree  Slightly Agree  Slightly Disagree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

11. I have never questioned my views concerning what kind of friend is best for me.
    - Strongly Agree  Agree  Slightly Agree  Slightly Disagree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree
12. My values are likely to change in the future.

   Strongly Agree  Agree  Slightly Agree  Slightly Disagree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

13. When I talk to people about religion, I make sure to voice my opinion.

   Strongly Agree  Agree  Slightly Agree  Slightly Disagree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

14. I am not sure about what type of dating relationship is best for me.

   Strongly Agree  Agree  Slightly Agree  Slightly Disagree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

15. I have not felt the need to reflect upon the importance I place on my family.

   Strongly Agree  Agree  Slightly Agree  Slightly Disagree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

16. Regarding religion, my beliefs are likely to change in the future.

   Strongly Agree  Agree  Slightly Agree  Slightly Disagree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

17. I have definite views regarding the ways in which men and women should behave.

   Strongly Agree  Agree  Slightly Agree  Slightly Disagree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

18. I have tried to learn about different occupational fields to find the best one for me.

   Strongly Agree  Agree  Slightly Agree  Slightly Disagree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

19. I have undergone some experiences that made me change my views on men’s and women’s roles.

   Strongly Agree  Agree  Slightly Agree  Slightly Disagree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

20. I have consistently re-examined many different values in order to find the ones which are best for me.

   Strongly Agree  Agree  Slightly Agree  Slightly Disagree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree


   Strongly Agree  Agree  Slightly Agree  Slightly Disagree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

22. I have questioned what kind of date is right for me.

   Strongly Agree  Agree  Slightly Agree  Slightly Disagree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

23. I am unlikely to alter my vocational goals.

   Strongly Agree  Agree  Slightly Agree  Slightly Disagree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

24. I have evaluated many ways in which I fit into my family structure.
Strongly Agree  Agree  Slightly Agree  Slightly Disagree  Disagree  Strongly Disagree

25. My ideas about men's and women's roles will never change.

26. I have never questioned my political beliefs.

27. I have had many experiences that led me to review the qualities that I would like for my friends to have.

28. I have discussed religious matters with a number of people who believe differently than I do.

29. I am not sure that the values I hold are right for me.

30. I have never questioned my occupational aspirations.

31. The extent to which I value my family is likely to change in the future.

32. My beliefs about dating are firmly held.

Balistreri, Busch-Rosnagel, & Geisinger, 1995
Do Friends Self Select 50

Positive and Negative Affectivity Schedule-1 Year

This scale consists of a number of words that describe different feelings and emotions. Read each item and then mark the appropriate answer in the space next to that word. Indicate to what extent you have experienced these emotions and feelings over the last year. Use the following scale to record your answers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very slightly</td>
<td>a little</td>
<td>moderately</td>
<td>quite a bit</td>
<td>extremely</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| __ interested | __ irritable | __ amused | __ relaxed |
| __ distressed | __ alert | __ angry | __ discouraged |
| __ excited | __ ashamed | __ calm | __ relieved |
| __ upset | __ inspired | __ anxious | __ disgusted |
| __ strong | __ nervous | __ content | __ satisfied |
| __ guilty | __ determined | __ blue | __ sad |
| __ scared | __ attentive | __ curious | __ surprised |
| __ hostile | __ jittery | __ depressed | __ tired |
| __ enthusiastic | __ active | __ happy | |
| __ proud | __ afraid | __ | __ disappointed |

Participant # ____________________ Date ____________________

Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988
1. What do you feel are your best friend's greatest strengths? Please check five of those listed below:

- Curiosity
- Love of Learning
- Judgment
- Ingenuity
- Social Intelligence
- Perspective
- Valor
- Perseverance
- Loving
- Citizenship
- Fairness
- Leadership
- Self-Control
- Prudence
- Humility
- Appreciation of Beauty
- Spirituality
- Forgiveness
- Humor
- Zest
- Hope
- Kindness
- Gratitude
- Integrity

Do you feel that any of your friend's greatest strengths (in question 1 above) played a part in your becoming friends? If so, please CIRCLE any of your friend's "five greatest strengths" that you have checked from the list above in question 1.

2. The top five ways my best friend helps me are:

_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

My best friend's first name and last initial are: ________________________

His/her birthday (if you know it) is: ________________________________

Participant # __________________________ Date ______________________
Debriefing and Sample Invitation

THANK YOU! Your participation in this study is very much appreciated, you are now done with all questionnaires.

** PLEASE KEEP THESE PAGES AND TAKE THEM WITH YOU **
These are essential in explaining how you could earn an additional one point Extra Credit (2 points total: 1 for today and 1 more)

HOW?
• Well, because we are interested in ways that friends might differ from, or resemble each other, we are asking if you would be willing to contact the "best friend" you referenced in completing the surveys you just finished.

• Contacting your friend is entirely optional; we invite you to read (and feel free to copy) the following suggested message, and if you are willing to e-mail your best friend, great!

• Any "best friend" that contacts us (Ms. Solecki and Dr. Gillespie) in return and completes about 25 minutes worth of questionnaires (similar to the ones you just did, but briefer) will be entered into a raffle for a possible bookstore gift certificate. And you will earn an additional one point of extra credit. (Your instructor has agreed to this plan).

• To ensure that your best friend will get the chance for the raffle gift when you email them please use the number on your packet of questionnaires (i.e, you must tell them what it is in your email).

We thank you again for your help and participation!
Sample Friend Recruitment E-Mail Invitation

Hi ____________________

I’m taking a Psychology class and I just participated in a study about friendships. I answered some questions about you as a friend of mine, and the investigators are also looking at strengths in friendships and whether they are similar or different. "Signature strengths" are defined as individual, personal socioemotional "strong points" that differ from person to person. If you will e-mail them, they will e-mail you back and give you a web link to a similar questionnaire on personality and friends and you can complete it as part of the study.

Every “friend” that a Brockport student invites to participate who fills out these questionnaires online and completes them (it will take about 20-25 minutes) will get a listing of what their top five signature strengths are and will be entered into a raffle for a possible one hundred dollar gift certificate to Borders Books. Also, this will help me earn extra credit in class that could help my final grade.

If you’ll do this, thanks! The researchers’ names and email addresses/phones are below, and they will both be checking their e-mails so as to receive your response as soon as possible. To identify yourself, they ask that you give your initials, birth date and participant number ______. You do not have to give your name.

Primary Investigator
Candace Solecki

Faculty Advisor
Dr. Jan Gillespie
1: I find the world a very interesting place.

2: I always go out of my way to attend educational events.

3: I always identify the reasons for my actions.

4: Being able to come up with new and different ideas is one of my strong points.

5: I am very aware of my surroundings.

6: I always have a broad outlook on what is going on.

7: I have taken frequent stands in the face of strong opposition.

8: I never quit a task before it is done.
9: I always keep my promises.
   - Very Much Unlike Me
   - Unlike Me
   - Neutral
   - Like Me
   - Very Much Like Me

10: I am never too busy to help a friend.
    - Very Much Unlike Me
    - Unlike Me
    - Neutral
    - Like Me
    - Very Much Like Me

11: I am always willing to take risks to establish a relationship.
    - Very Much Unlike Me
    - Unlike Me
    - Neutral
    - Like Me
    - Very Much Like Me

12: I never miss group meetings or team practices.
    - Very Much Unlike Me
    - Unlike Me
    - Neutral
    - Like Me
    - Very Much Like Me

13: I always admit when I am wrong.
    - Very Much Unlike Me
    - Unlike Me
    - Neutral
    - Like Me
    - Very Much Like Me

14: In a group, I try to make sure everyone feels included.
    - Very Much Unlike Me
    - Unlike Me
    - Neutral
    - Like Me
    - Very Much Like Me

15: I have no trouble eating healthy foods.
    - Very Much Unlike Me
    - Unlike Me
    - Neutral
    - Like Me
    - Very Much Like Me

16: I have never deliberately hurt anyone.
    - Very Much Unlike Me
    - Unlike Me
    - Neutral
    - Like Me
    - Very Much Like Me

17: It is important to me that I live in a world of beauty.
    - Very Much Unlike Me
    - Unlike Me
    - Neutral
    - Like Me
    - Very Much Like Me
18: I always express my thanks to people who care about me.

19: I always look on the bright side.

20: I am a spiritual person.

21: I am always humble about the good things that have happened to me.

22: Whenever my friends are in a gloomy mood, I try to tease them out of it.

23: I want to fully participate in life, not just view it from the sidelines.

24: I always let bygones be bygones.

25: I am never bored.
26: I love to learn new things.

- Very Much Unlike Me - Unlike Me - Neutral - Like Me - Very Much Like Me

27: I always examine both sides of an issue.

- Very Much Unlike Me - Unlike Me - Neutral - Like Me - Very Much Like Me

28: When someone tells me how to do something, I automatically think of alternative ways to get the same thing done.

- Very Much Unlike Me - Unlike Me - Neutral - Like Me - Very Much Like Me

29: I know how to handle myself in different social situations.

- Very Much Unlike Me - Unlike Me - Neutral - Like Me - Very Much Like Me

30: Regardless of what is happening, I keep in mind what is most important.

- Very Much Unlike Me - Unlike Me - Neutral - Like Me - Very Much Like Me

31: I have overcome an emotional problem by facing it head on.

- Very Much Unlike Me - Unlike Me - Neutral - Like Me - Very Much Like Me

32: I always finish what I start.

- Very Much Unlike Me - Unlike Me - Neutral - Like Me - Very Much Like Me
33: My friends tell me that I know how to keep things real.

- Very Much Unlike Me  
- Unlike Me  
- Neutral  
- Like Me  
- Very Much Like Me

34: I really enjoy doing small favors for friends.

- Very Much Unlike Me  
- Unlike Me  
- Neutral  
- Like Me  
- Very Much Like Me

35: There are people in my life who care as much about my feelings and well-being as they do about their own.

- Very Much Unlike Me  
- Unlike Me  
- Neutral  
- Like Me  
- Very Much Like Me

36: I really enjoy being a part of a group.

- Very Much Unlike Me  
- Unlike Me  
- Neutral  
- Like Me  
- Very Much Like Me

37: Being able to compromise is an important part of who I am.

- Very Much Unlike Me  
- Unlike Me  
- Neutral  
- Like Me  
- Very Much Like Me

38: As a leader, I treat everyone equally well regardless of his or her experience.

- Very Much Unlike Me  
- Unlike Me  
- Neutral  
- Like Me  
- Very Much Like Me

39: Even when candy or cookies are under my nose, I never overeat.

- Very Much Unlike Me  
- Unlike Me  
- Neutral  
- Like Me  
- Very Much Like Me
40: "Better safe than sorry" is one of my favorite mottoes.

41: The goodness of other people almost brings tears to my eyes.

42: I get chills when I hear about acts of great generosity.

43: I can always find the positive in what seems negative to others.

44: I practice my religion.

45: I do not like to stand out in a crowd.

46: Most people would say I am fun to be with.
47: I never dread getting up in the morning.
  
  \[ \text{Very Much Unlike Me} \quad \text{Unlike Me} \quad \text{Neutral} \quad \text{Like Me} \quad \text{Very Much Like Me} \]

48: I rarely hold a grudge.
  
  \[ \text{Very Much Unlike Me} \quad \text{Unlike Me} \quad \text{Neutral} \quad \text{Like Me} \quad \text{Very Much Like Me} \]

49: I am always busy with something interesting.
  
  \[ \text{Very Much Unlike Me} \quad \text{Unlike Me} \quad \text{Neutral} \quad \text{Like Me} \quad \text{Very Much Like Me} \]

50: I am thrilled when I learn something new.
  
  \[ \text{Very Much Unlike Me} \quad \text{Unlike Me} \quad \text{Neutral} \quad \text{Like Me} \quad \text{Very Much Like Me} \]

51: I make decisions only when I have all of the facts.
  
  \[ \text{Very Much Unlike Me} \quad \text{Unlike Me} \quad \text{Neutral} \quad \text{Like Me} \quad \text{Very Much Like Me} \]

52: I like to think of new ways to do things.
  
  \[ \text{Very Much Unlike Me} \quad \text{Unlike Me} \quad \text{Neutral} \quad \text{Like Me} \quad \text{Very Much Like Me} \]

53: No matter what the situation, I am able to fit in.
  
  \[ \text{Very Much Unlike Me} \quad \text{Unlike Me} \quad \text{Neutral} \quad \text{Like Me} \quad \text{Very Much Like Me} \]

54: My view of the world is an excellent one.
Do Friends Self Select 61

55: I never hesitate to publicly express an unpopular opinion.

56: I am a goal-oriented person.

57: I believe honesty is the basis for trust.

58: I go out of my way to cheer up people who appear down.

59: There are people who accept my shortcomings.

60: I am an extremely loyal person.

61: I treat all people equally regardless of who they might be.
62: One of my strengths is helping a group of people work well together even when they have their differences.

- Very Much Unlike Me  
- Unlike Me  
- Neutral  
- Like Me  
- Very Much Like Me

63: I am a highly disciplined person.

- Very Much Unlike Me  
- Unlike Me  
- Neutral  
- Like Me  
- Very Much Like Me

64: I always think before I speak.

- Very Much Unlike Me  
- Unlike Me  
- Neutral  
- Like Me  
- Very Much Like Me

65: I experience deep emotions when I see beautiful things.

- Very Much Unlike Me  
- Unlike Me  
- Neutral  
- Like Me  
- Very Much Like Me

66: At least once a day, I stop and count my blessings.

- Very Much Unlike Me  
- Unlike Me  
- Neutral  
- Like Me  
- Very Much Like Me

67: Despite challenges, I always remain hopeful about the future.

- Very Much Unlike Me  
- Unlike Me  
- Neutral  
- Like Me  
- Very Much Like Me

68: My faith never deserts me during hard times.

- Very Much Unlike Me  
- Unlike Me  
- Neutral  
- Like Me  
- Very Much Like Me
59: I do not act as if I am a special person.

- Very Much Unlike Me  
- Unlike Me  
- Neutral  
- Like Me  
- Very Much Like Me

70: I welcome the opportunity to brighten someone else’s day with laughter.

- Very Much Unlike Me  
- Unlike Me  
- Neutral  
- Like Me  
- Very Much Like Me

71: I never approach things halfheartedly.

- Very Much Unlike Me  
- Unlike Me  
- Neutral  
- Like Me  
- Very Much Like Me

72: I never seek vengeance.

- Very Much Unlike Me  
- Unlike Me  
- Neutral  
- Like Me  
- Very Much Like Me

73: I am always curious about the world.

- Very Much Unlike Me  
- Unlike Me  
- Neutral  
- Like Me  
- Very Much Like Me

74: Every day, I look forward to the opportunity to learn and grow.

- Very Much Unlike Me  
- Unlike Me  
- Neutral  
- Like Me  
- Very Much Like Me

75: I value my ability to think critically.

- Very Much Unlike Me  
- Unlike Me  
- Neutral  
- Like Me  
- Very Much Like Me
76: I pride myself on being original.

- Very Much Unlike Me  - Unlike Me  - Neutral  - Like Me  - Very Much Like Me

77: I have the ability to make other people feel interesting.

- Very Much Unlike Me  - Unlike Me  - Neutral  - Like Me  - Very Much Like Me

78: I have never steered a friend wrong by giving bad advice.

- Very Much Unlike Me  - Unlike Me  - Neutral  - Like Me  - Very Much Like Me

79: I must stand up for what I believe even if there are negative results.

- Very Much Unlike Me  - Unlike Me  - Neutral  - Like Me  - Very Much Like Me

80: I finish things despite obstacles in the way.

- Very Much Unlike Me  - Unlike Me  - Neutral  - Like Me  - Very Much Like Me

81: I tell the truth even if it hurts.

- Very Much Unlike Me  - Unlike Me  - Neutral  - Like Me  - Very Much Like Me

82: I love to make other people happy.

- Very Much Unlike Me  - Unlike Me  - Neutral  - Like Me  - Very Much Like Me

83: I am the most important person in someone else's life.
Do Friends Self Select 65

34: I work at my very best when I am a group member.

35: Everyone's rights are equally important to me.

86: I am very good at planning group activities.

87: I control my emotions.

88: My friends believe that I make smart choices about what I say and do.

89: I see beauty that other people pass by without noticing.

90: If I receive a gift, I always let the person who gave it know I appreciated it.

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91: I have a clear picture in my mind about what I want to happen in the future.

Very Much Unlike Me  Unlike Me  Neutral  Like Me  Very Much Like Me

92: My life has a strong purpose.

Very Much Unlike Me  Unlike Me  Neutral  Like Me  Very Much Like Me

93: I never brag about my accomplishments.

Very Much Unlike Me  Unlike Me  Neutral  Like Me  Very Much Like Me

94: I try to have fun in all kinds of situations.

Very Much Unlike Me  Unlike Me  Neutral  Like Me  Very Much Like Me

95: I love what I do.

Very Much Unlike Me  Unlike Me  Neutral  Like Me  Very Much Like Me

96: I always allow others to leave their mistakes in the past and make a fresh start.

Very Much Unlike Me  Unlike Me  Neutral  Like Me  Very Much Like Me

97: I am excited by many different activities.

Very Much Unlike Me  Unlike Me  Neutral  Like Me  Very Much Like Me
98: I am a true life-long learner.

Very Much Unlike Me  Unlike Me  Neutral  Like Me  Very Much Like Me

99: My friends value my objectivity.

Very Much Unlike Me  Unlike Me  Neutral  Like Me  Very Much Like Me

100: I am always coming up with new ways to do things.

Very Much Unlike Me  Unlike Me  Neutral  Like Me  Very Much Like Me

101: I always know what makes someone tick.

Very Much Unlike Me  Unlike Me  Neutral  Like Me  Very Much Like Me

102: People describe me as "wise beyond my years."

Very Much Unlike Me  Unlike Me  Neutral  Like Me  Very Much Like Me

103: I call for action while others talk.

Very Much Unlike Me  Unlike Me  Neutral  Like Me  Very Much Like Me

104: I am a hard worker.

Very Much Unlike Me  Unlike Me  Neutral  Like Me  Very Much Like Me

105: My promises can be trusted.
Very Much Unlike Me  Unlike Me  Neutral  Like Me  Very Much Like Me

106: I have voluntarily helped a neighbor in the last month.

Very Much Unlike Me  Unlike Me  Neutral  Like Me  Very Much Like Me

107: My family and close friends cannot do anything that would make me stop loving them.

Very Much Unlike Me  Unlike Me  Neutral  Like Me  Very Much Like Me

108: I never bad-mouth my group to outsiders.

Very Much Unlike Me  Unlike Me  Neutral  Like Me  Very Much Like Me

109: I give everyone a chance.

Very Much Unlike Me  Unlike Me  Neutral  Like Me  Very Much Like Me

110: To be an effective leader, I treat everyone the same.

Very Much Unlike Me  Unlike Me  Neutral  Like Me  Very Much Like Me

111: I never want things that are bad for me in the long run, even if they make me feel good in the short run.

Very Much Unlike Me  Unlike Me  Neutral  Like Me  Very Much Like Me

112: I always avoid activities that are physically dangerous.
113: I have often been left speechless by the beauty depicted in a movie.

114: I am an extremely grateful person.

115: If I get a bad grade or evaluation, I focus on the next opportunity, and plan to do better.

116: In the last ~24 hours, I have spent 30 minutes in prayer, meditation or contemplation.

117: I am proud that I am an ordinary person.

118: I try to add some humor to whatever I do.

119: I look forward to each new day.
120: I believe it is best to forgive and forget.

121: I have many interests.

122: I always go out of my way to visit museums.

123: When the topic calls for it, I can be a highly rational thinker.

124: My friends say that I have lots of new and different ideas.

125: I always get along well with people I have just met.

126: I am always able to look at things and see the big picture.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>127: I always stand up for my beliefs.</td>
<td><img src="https://www.valuesinaction.org/images/scales.png" alt="Scale" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>128: I do not give up.</td>
<td><img src="https://www.valuesinaction.org/images/scales.png" alt="Scale" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>129: I am true to my own values.</td>
<td><img src="https://www.valuesinaction.org/images/scales.png" alt="Scale" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>130: I always call my friends when they are sick.</td>
<td><img src="https://www.valuesinaction.org/images/scales.png" alt="Scale" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>131: I always feel the presence of love in my life.</td>
<td><img src="https://www.valuesinaction.org/images/scales.png" alt="Scale" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>132: It is important for me to maintain harmony within my group.</td>
<td><img src="https://www.valuesinaction.org/images/scales.png" alt="Scale" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>133: I am strongly committed to principles of justice and equality</td>
<td><img src="https://www.valuesinaction.org/images/scales.png" alt="Scale" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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134: I believe that our human nature brings us together to work for common goals.

135: I can always stay on a diet.

136: I think through the consequences every time before I act.

137: I am always aware of the natural beauty in the environment.

138: I go to extremes to acknowledge people who are good to me.

139: I have a plan for what I want to be doing five years from now.

140: My faith makes me who I am.
140: I prefer to let other people talk about themselves.
141: I never allow a gloomy situation to take away my sense of humor.
142: I have lots of energy.
143: I am always willing to give someone a chance to make amends.
144: I can find something of interest in any situation.
145: I read all of the time.
146: Thinking things through is part of who I am.
147: I am an original thinker.

148: I am good at sensing what other people are feeling.

149: I have a mature view on life.

150: I always face my fears.

151: I never get sidetracked when I work.

152: I take pride in not exaggerating who or what I am.

153: I am as excited about the good fortune of others as I am about my own.
155: I can express love to someone else.

156: Without exception, I support my teammates or fellow group members.

157: I refuse to take credit for work I have not done.

158: My friends always tell me I am a strong but fair leader.

159: I can always say "enough is enough."

160: I always keep straight right from wrong.

161: I greatly appreciate all forms of art.
161: I feel thankful for what I have received in life.

162: I know that I will succeed with the goals I set for myself.

163: I believe that each person has a purpose in life.

164: I rarely call attention to myself.

165: I have a great sense of humor.

166: I cannot wait to get started on a project.

167: I rarely try to get even.
Do Friends Self Select

77

Very Much Unlike Me  Unlike Me  Neutral  Like Me  Very Much Like Me

168

It is very easy for me to entertain myself.

Very Much Unlike Me  Unlike Me  Neutral  Like Me  Very Much Like Me

169

If I want to know something, I immediately go to the library or the Internet and look it up.

Very Much Unlike Me  Unlike Me  Neutral  Like Me  Very Much Like Me

169

I always weigh the pro's and con's.

Very Much Unlike Me  Unlike Me  Neutral  Like Me  Very Much Like Me

170

My imagination stretches beyond that of my friends.

Very Much Unlike Me  Unlike Me  Neutral  Like Me  Very Much Like Me

170

I am aware of my own feelings and motives.

Very Much Unlike Me  Unlike Me  Neutral  Like Me  Very Much Like Me

171

Others come to me for advice.

Very Much Unlike Me  Unlike Me  Neutral  Like Me  Very Much Like Me

171

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175: I have overcome pain and disappointment.

176: I stick with whatever I decide to do.

177: I would rather die than be phony.

178: I enjoy being kind to others.

179: I can accept love from others.

180: Even if I disagree with them, I always respect the leaders of my group.

181: Even if I do not like someone, I treat him or her fairly.
82: As a leader, I try to make all group members happy.

Very Much Unlike Me  □  Unlike Me  □  Neutral  □  Like Me  □  Very Much Like Me

83: Without exception, I do my tasks at work or school or home by the time they are due.

Very Much Unlike Me  □  Unlike Me  □  Neutral  □  Like Me  □  Very Much Like Me

84: I am a very careful person.

Very Much Unlike Me  □  Unlike Me  □  Neutral  □  Like Me  □  Very Much Like Me

85: I am in awe of simple things in life that others might take for granted.

Very Much Unlike Me  □  Unlike Me  □  Neutral  □  Like Me  □  Very Much Like Me

86: When I look at my life, I find many things to be grateful for.

Very Much Unlike Me  □  Unlike Me  □  Neutral  □  Like Me  □  Very Much Like Me

87: I am confident that my way of doing things will work out for the best.

Very Much Unlike Me  □  Unlike Me  □  Neutral  □  Like Me  □  Very Much Like Me

88: I believe in a universal power, a god.

Very Much Unlike Me  □  Unlike Me  □  Neutral  □  Like Me  □  Very Much Like Me
189: I have been told that modesty is one of my most notable characteristics.

190: I find satisfaction in making others smile or laugh.

191: I can hardly wait to see what life has in store for me in the weeks and years ahead.

192: I am usually willing to give someone another chance.

193: I think my life is extremely interesting.

194: I read a huge variety of books.

195: I try to have good reasons for my important decisions.
96: In the last month I have found an original solution to a problem in my life.

97: I always know what to say to make people feel good.

98: I may not say it to others, but I consider myself to be a wise person.

99: I always speak up in protest when I hear someone say mean things.

200: When I make plans, I am certain to make them work.

201: My friends always tell me I am down to earth.

202: I am thrilled when I can let others share the spotlight.
203: I have a neighbor or someone at work or school that I really care about as a person.

- Very Much Unlike Me  - Unlike Me  - Neutral  - Like Me  - Very Much Like Me

204: It is important to me to respect decisions made by my group:

- Very Much Unlike Me  - Unlike Me  - Neutral  - Like Me  - Very Much Like Me

205: I believe that everyone should have a say.

- Very Much Unlike Me  - Unlike Me  - Neutral  - Like Me  - Very Much Like Me

206: As a leader, I believe that everyone in the group should have a say in what the group does.

- Very Much Unlike Me  - Unlike Me  - Neutral  - Like Me  - Very Much Like Me

207: For me, practice is as important as performance.

- Very Much Unlike Me  - Unlike Me  - Neutral  - Like Me  - Very Much Like Me

208: I always make careful choices.

- Very Much Unlike Me  - Unlike Me  - Neutral  - Like Me  - Very Much Like Me

209: I often have a craving to experience great art, such as music, drama, or paintings.

- Very Much Unlike Me  - Unlike Me  - Neutral  - Like Me  - Very Much Like Me

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210: I feel a profound sense of appreciation every day.

Very Much Unlike Me  Unlike Me  Neutral  Like Me  Very Much Like Me

211: If I feel down, I always think about what is good in my life.

Very Much Unlike Me  Unlike Me  Neutral  Like Me  Very Much Like Me

212: My beliefs make my life important.

Very Much Unlike Me  Unlike Me  Neutral  Like Me  Very Much Like Me

213: No one would ever describe me as arrogant.

Very Much Unlike Me  Unlike Me  Neutral  Like Me  Very Much Like Me

214: I believe life is more of a playground than a battlefield.

Very Much Unlike Me  Unlike Me  Neutral  Like Me  Very Much Like Me

215: I awaken with a sense of excitement about the day's possibilities.

Very Much Unlike Me  Unlike Me  Neutral  Like Me  Very Much Like Me

216: I do not want to see anyone suffer, even my worst enemy.

Very Much Unlike Me  Unlike Me  Neutral  Like Me  Very Much Like Me
217: I really enjoy hearing about other countries and cultures.

- Very Much Unlike Me  - Unlike Me  - Neutral  - Like Me  - Very Much Like Me

218: I love to read nonfiction books for fun.

- Very Much Unlike Me  - Unlike Me  - Neutral  - Like Me  - Very Much Like Me

219: My friends value my good judgment.

- Very Much Unlike Me  - Unlike Me  - Neutral  - Like Me  - Very Much Like Me

220: I have a powerful urge to do something original during this next year.

- Very Much Unlike Me  - Unlike Me  - Neutral  - Like Me  - Very Much Like Me

221: It is rare that someone can take advantage of me.

- Very Much Unlike Me  - Unlike Me  - Neutral  - Like Me  - Very Much Like Me

222: Others consider me to be a wise person.

- Very Much Unlike Me  - Unlike Me  - Neutral  - Like Me  - Very Much Like Me

223: I am a brave person.

- Very Much Unlike Me  - Unlike Me  - Neutral  - Like Me  - Very Much Like Me
224: When I get what I want, it is because I worked hard for it.

225: Others trust me to keep their secrets.

226: I always listen to people talk about their problems.

227: I easily share feelings with others.

228: I gladly sacrifice my self-interest for the benefit of the group I am in.

229: I believe that it is worth listening to everyone's opinions.

230: When I am in a position of authority, I never blame others for problems.
231: I exercise on a regular basis.

Very Much Unlike Me  Unlike Me  Neutral  Like Me  Very Much Like Me

232: I cannot imagine lying or cheating.

Very Much Unlike Me  Unlike Me  Neutral  Like Me  Very Much Like Me

233: I have created something of beauty in the last year.

Very Much Unlike Me  Unlike Me  Neutral  Like Me  Very Much Like Me

234: I have been richly blessed in my life.

Very Much Unlike Me  Unlike Me  Neutral  Like Me  Very Much Like Me

235: I expect the best.

Very Much Unlike Me  Unlike Me  Neutral  Like Me  Very Much Like Me

236: I have a calling in my life.

Very Much Unlike Me  Unlike Me  Neutral  Like Me  Very Much Like Me

237: People are drawn to me because I am humble.

Very Much Unlike Me  Unlike Me  Neutral  Like Me  Very Much Like Me
238: I am known for my good sense of humor.

- Very Much Unlike Me □ Unlike Me □ Neutral □ Like Me □ Very Much Like Me

239: People describe me as full of zest.

- Very Much Unlike Me □ Unlike Me □ Neutral □ Like Me □ Very Much Like Me

240: I try to respond with understanding when someone treats me badly.

- Very Much Unlike Me □ Unlike Me □ Neutral □ Like Me □ Very Much Like Me
Appendix B

Source Table for t-test for Comparison of Participants-Best Friends and Participants-Controls Similarity Scores

Independent Samples Test, t-test for Equality of Means (SPSS)

<table>
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<th>Source</th>
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Figure 1. Identity Statuses and Signature Strengths for Eight Participants

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Figure 1. Identity Statuses and Signature Strengths for Eight Participants

- Commitment
- Exploration
- Total Signature Strengths
- Predicted
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Figure 2. Friendship Closeness and Signature Strengths Similarity Scores for Eight Participants
Figure 3. Friendship Closeness and Signature Strengths Predictions for Eight Participants