

The Range of Relationships

by Sophia Tutorial



WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, we'll discuss the various types of relationships we form in our lives. The specific areas of focus include:

1. Elements and Value of Relationships
2. Familial Relationships
3. Social Relationships

1. Elements and Value of Relationships

As you learned in a previous lesson, a **relationship** is a group of two or more that share a sense of interdependence formed around:

- Common goals
- Values
- Shared experiences

Out of these relationships comes **interdependence**, or a state in which each member of a relationship is mutually dependent on the others.

This dependence can be:

- Emotional
- Economical
- Ecological
- Moral

Any or all of these are ways that members of a relationship are reliant on and responsible to each other. When you consider the relationships you have in your life, they probably include:

- Friends
- Family members
- Neighbors
- Coworkers
- Social group/club members

You form relationships in all of these contexts, but the way you view these relationships and the value you attribute to them might be a little bit different than the way other people you know value their relationships. However, relationships can be considered in terms of four elements:

- Intensity
- Obligation
- Privilege
- Emotion



TERMS TO KNOW

Relationship

Groups of two or more that share a sense of interdependence formed around common goals, values, and shared experiences.

Interdependence

A state in which each member of a relationship is mutually dependent on the others (e.g. emotionally, economically, ecologically, and/or morally reliant on and responsible to each other).

2. Familial Relationships

We all have families, but the way we view familial relationships can differ depending on our specific circumstances.

↪ **EXAMPLE** A lot of people think of their families—particularly their immediate families—as a relationship where there's a lot of strong emotion or intensity; there can also be a sense of obligation.

These people may even feel privilege in the sense that they always have the option to go home. These elements can extend outward to a particular relative, such as a favorite uncle, grandparent, or cousin.

↪ **EXAMPLE** There are also people who do not have those feelings about their families. There may be some estrangement or conflict, so there isn't a sense of strong emotion or privilege in those particular family dynamics.

These people may find that they have a stronger sense of intensity and emotion with friends. Friends might become substitute families, depending on the length of the friendships. Acquaintances are more on the outer circle, but friends that people have known all their lives have the ability to replace family.

3. In Social Relationships

These differences also occur in the way we value our relationships socially.

↪ **EXAMPLE** For some people, the relationships that originate from places of worship can be filled with a large sense of obligation. These relationships might be very important to these people, carrying strong emotion and intensity. For other people, this may not be the case.

↪ **EXAMPLE** Think about coworkers. If you've worked really hard on a big project with your team members, chances are you've deepened the intensity and emotion in these relationships. You probably also feel a strong sense of obligation; you don't want to let them down. The value placed on relationships with coworkers might not be as high for somebody else in a different work situation.



BIG IDEA

We all have a wide range of relationships that come from many different experiences and contexts. While relationships are important to all of us, we value them in different ways, depending on our experiences with the individuals in our lives.



SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned about the **elements and value of relationships**, particularly in regards to **familial relationships** and **social relationships**. You now understand that while all relationships are considered in terms of intensity, obligation, privilege, and emotion, the value placed on these relationships can differ from person to person, depending on their experiences with others. Good luck!

Source: Adapted from Sophia tutorial by Marlene Johnson.



TERMS TO KNOW

Interdependence

A state in which each member of a relationship is mutually dependent on the others (e.g. emotionally, economically, ecologically and/or morally reliant on and responsible to each other).

Relationship

Groups of two or more that share a sense of interdependence formed around common goals, values, and shared experiences.