

## **Part 1: Coming Together Stages**

I will exemplify my relationship with my roommate Ari Lowel which has taken time to grow. This friendship represents how people gradually progress in their relationship through communication and shared experiences.

### ***1. Initiating***

The initiation takes place when we meet someone for the first time. When I met Ari for the first time in the orientation program, we introduced with our names and majors. We initiated our stories with where we came from and what courses we are taking. At this stage, we had polite, careful yet casual communication. We wanted to initiate a good first impression, and find out where we get along next. Just like, I saw Ari smiled warmly and nodded while I was communicating about my hobbies, which afterwards made me more frank to open up easily. At this stage, people often use small talk, non-verbal cues and some key politeness, that further decides whether a relationship can develop over time (Knapp, 1978).

### ***2. Experimenting***

After the initiation stage, me and Ari entered into the experimenting stage like asking short questions to find something in common. Ari and I revealed that both of us are fond of certain TV shows, and coffee. We started sharing weekend plans, gossiping about other friends and school life, childhood memories. This stage assisted us to realize whether we could have a quality time. Experimenting comprises of analyzing each other's interest more, also the values and personality traits. For instance, Ari opened up with her nearby hiking trail and I immediately approached her to take me too. It was just a mere step to boost up our connection. At this stage, communication grows personal from a mere general one, though people prone to be still

cautious, as people still take time to decide whether their relationship can sustain and get closer (Knapp, 1978).

### ***3. Intensifying***

In the intensifying stage, the friendship gets closer. We started sharing more of our personal stories comprising family, college-related issues and personal goals. We checked in with each other on a daily basis, whenever any of us feel stressed. Emotional connection and trust develop at this stage (Knapp, 1978). Just like, I told Ari about my stressful midterm, and she offered advice and support. Our connection converted into a more intimate and open one. The intensifying stage largely comprises of small gestures of care, sarcasm and using words like “we” to reflect our union. This stage is essential to mark the transition from a casual friendship to truly strong bonding that calls for meaningful connection.

### ***4. Integrating***

Integration takes place when two people’s lives start to overlap (Knapp, 1978). I and Ari started spending more time with each other, attending common classes, studying or going on trips. We tried to coordinate with each other through our daily schedules and friends from the college started recognizing us as a close pair. We also started sharing responsibilities, like we helped each other in household chores and culinaries. Integration basically takes place when two individual works with each other as a unit. At this stage, communication portrays coordination, shared experiences and increased dependence on one another for support. It also reflects a sense of belonging and true connection in both social and personal setting (Knapp, 1978).

### ***5. Bonding***

The final stage of coming together is bonding that portrays a formal or informal commitment. For Ari and me, bonding is about promising to stay close with each other even after we graduate. We celebrated birthdays and milestones together, and planned to keep regular contact. Bonding is a fusion of loyalty, trust and mutual care, referring that the relationship is strong and estimated. Communication at this stage often adds expressions of commitment, future planning and reassurance to be each other's support system. Bonding is the peak of coming together as it reflects both relational and emotional investments in the friendship (Knapp, 1978).

## **Part 2: Coming Apart Stage**

I will use my past friendship with Billy Williams, which bonding has been came to an end after completing my school days. This friendship faded with times, reflecting the stages of coming apart in Knapp's model.

### ***1. Differentiating***

The first stage of coming apart is differentiating. In this stage me and Billy had been noticing some differences in our lifestyles and priorities. My focus has been shifted into the center of academics, while Billy focused with all her time into socializing. We started with phrases like "You always", or "I wish you would...", that ended up in showing frustration or the perception of difference to each other. Communication becomes less harmonious, and we started seeing ourselves as separate entity rather than a best friend's pair. Differentiating frequently starts with subtle disagreements and tensions, indicating that the relationship is shifting (Knapp, 1978).

### ***2. Circumscribing***

At the stage of circumscribing, we started restricting our us-time and communication. Conversation became shorter with days and we only shifted our focus on the safe topics. We

neglected discussing about personal issues and feelings to stop further conflict. For instance, when Billy asked about my college plans, I used to communicate with her with shorter answers or sometimes changed the topic into a safer one that would not raise any more conflict.

Circumscribing gives rise to mental distance and diminishes the depth of connection. People often terminate and communicate less openly at this stage, that with times weakens the relationship (Knapp, 1978).

### ***3. Stagnating***

In the stagnating stage, the friendship seems to be stuck. We stopped sharing meaningful experiences or personal insights. Communication became mechanical and routine, often restricted within greetings and necessary information. For example, we would say “Hi” if we ever meet in any school reunion or we shall not initiate much conversation. Stagnation shows that the relationship is no longer developing, and both the people may feel bored and trapped in their current relationship. The emotional bond starts fading away at this stage (Knapp, 1978).

### ***4. Avoiding***

The avoiding stage starts as people distance themselves from each other intentionally (Knapp, 1978). Billy and I started making excuses to avoid each other. We started avoiding social events together and our interactions started getting rare. Avoiding is both emotional and physical, showcasing that the relationship is going to end soon. Communication may comprise excuses, silence or minimal contact to stop further participation. This stage shows conscious and unconscious efforts to separate from the other person.

### ***5. Terminating***

Finally, at the stage of termination, the friendship ends up. After passing high school, we completely detached our communication. We never tried to maintain contact, and both us moved on to our own world. Terminating marks as an official ending of thy bonding. Communication stops wholly and the emotional bond is broken (Knapp, 1978). It is the final stage of coming apart that shows closure or separation from the other person.

## **References**

Knapp, M. L. (1978). *Social intercourse: From greeting to goodbye*. Allyn & Bacon