

communication is just a shitty way of formalizing feelings

So, we've always tiered our friends, right? That's always been a thing? That thing where you say: "hey first tier of friends come hang out!" "Hey, second tier of friends, stay behind and wait until I'm ready for you."

I think that electronic communication has formalized something that has already existed, but to say that formalization is inconsequential is to miss the entire point of formalization. Formalization is about creating the context under which mistakes must be pointed out.

The first day of my job the CEO of the educational institution that I work for approached me.

(I want to point out two things:

(a) I don't like that institution and CEO were in the same sentence as educational

(b) I was very excited that the CEO was coming to talk to me!!!)

He whispered in my ear: "Try ironing your shirt next time."

I've had conversations like this for the entirety of my existence because my parents got most of their/my clothes by asking food distributors who sold to our store to give us t-shirts of their products so that we could do a formalized sample-session of their small portions of their product. My point is that you don't need to iron Celestial Seasoning's or Kettle Chips T-Shirts, so I never learned how to iron or how to dress. Probably more importantly, but vaguely unrelated, I never learned how to follow rules.

I'm bringing this up because I recently sent a mass email that a lot of you were a part of. Some of you were not. I did not bcc people on that email. It was a transparent-carbon-copy email. That was my first tier and you (if you were not on that email) are my second tier. That's rude! Do you feel insulted? Probably. I would.

What I did in that first email was I invited people to a show that I am doing in my home's basement. It's going to be on Sunday, May 18th @ 8pm and while it is free, you have to RSVP (limited seating). It's going to be 60-70 minutes of me telling stories to the people that are there. The real reason that those other people were in the first tier is because I thought they were more likely to want to formalize an experience where they were listening to me than you second tier people who: I feel might possibly want to have a formalized experience of listening to me, but, for the most part, have not shown that much dedication to the craft of paying attention to me - and while I don't want to exclude them from the opportunity to listening to me I also don't want to be so vulnerable as to ask them to listen to me only to be ignored - which is my least favorite style of rejecting me. Also, I want you second-tier people to, even if you don't pay attention that much, pay attention a little bit and know that I'm doing something interesting and artistic so that when other people are like: "do you know that Nisse Greenberg guy?" you can respond with "yeah, he does interesting and artistic stuff that I wish I attended with a better regularity."

SO: You feel hurt. You want to be included on the first tier. Well, the only surefire way to do that is to come to my other show: Bad Feelings. If I see that you are dedicated to the craft of listening to me, I will formally move you from the second tier list to the first tier list. It's a process. And beware, those of you in the first tier - it's a slippery slope up there and you can fall quite easily - you better be coming to one of these shows if you want to stay on that list.

God, I'm ugly.

I think my problem with our newfound allegiance to communication electronically is that it's formal. It's got rules and because you can look at the communication over and over and analyze over and over, you get to analyze if anyone has broken any of the rules that we've formalized over and over in a way that conversation doesn't allow you to do because memories are about reminding you that your version of the truth is subjective and personal and not open to analysis by the wider world. I want social mistakes where the wrong person shows up to the wrong place. My favorite stories are when the group included the wrong people, and if you come to either of my shows, you will realize that my real favorites are when I am the wrong people.

My biggest change is here. This is how I'd like you to communicate with me. Maybe? I'm trying it out.

Nisse Greenberg

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PS: There's an even more primary first tier that I don't even plead to formally listen to me - that group is a group that I plead to formally make plans to informally listen to each other. Weird, huh?