

Examples of Four Relational Spaces with Others:

<i>Insiders who feel like insiders</i>	<i>Insiders who feel like outsiders</i>
<i>Outsiders who feel like insiders</i>	<i>Outsiders who feel like outsiders</i>

from *The Art of Invitation: Building enduring relationships · Connecting community*, p. 9

1. Insider who feels like an insider:

Kamilla takes her boys, a kindergartener and first grader, for their first day of school. While this same experience last year was scary and unfamiliar, this year is different. Kamilla knows her son's teacher, the school receptionist, the hall monitor, and others. This year, she is much more comfortable because she knows others and they know her. She feels welcomed and her boys are accepted.

Chondra began employment at Wright Industries five years ago. She loves her employer and the work environment. She works hard and gives it her best. Chondra's supervisor is flexible with issues that come up around her employment and her children. Others cover her responsibilities at the office if something requires attention with her family during work hours. Chondra feels safe and valued. She, in turn, works hard for the company.

2. Insider who feels like an outsider:

Nate's three children are enrolled in the same school as Kamilla's. Nate's children are, by definition, insiders because of their enrollment. Nate's children are excited about the first day of school and greet their friends walking into the building. Nate, however, feels like an outsider and makes his way quickly in and out of the building. He remembers the multiple phone calls he received last year about his children tardiness at school. He hopes this year will be better, but wonders how much of last year's experience will bleed over to this year.

Chondra attended a seminar to sharpen her skills. She registers for the class and therefore is officially an “insider” to the event. The instructor’s tone and outlook are very different than that of her work environment and personal style. She feels like an outsider in this setting and concludes she wasted her money and energy. She does not get much out of the day.

3. Outsider who feels like an insider:

Pete loves music and has played the guitar for years. He recently decided to form a band, where most of the other band members know one another and have played together in the past. Pete is unsure and anxious; he wonders about his skill level in comparison to the others, and doesn’t want to embarrass himself. As it turns out, the others in the band are very relaxed. Dale instantly feels at home and one of the guys.

Chondra joins an exercise class. She is not very athletic, but the doctor suggests exercising could reduce some current health issues. Those in the class are very accommodating and welcoming. Even though she is new to this experience, she feels comfortable and connected as if she belongs.

4. Outsider who feels like an outsider:

Wilma has applied for acceptance into a treatment program. As she waits for the staff member to call her name, she notices others talking and laughing. They look comfortable and engaged. Wilma desires a better life and hopes she gets accepted, but for today she feels vulnerable and isolated. She must wade through the process to see if she gets qualified or is accepted.

Chondra visits a local care facility to see an ailing relative. This is a new experience for her. Upon entering the building, she looks around but doesn’t see anyone. Finally, a nurse comes out of a room enabling her to ask for assistance. The staff members relays abruptly, “You will have to wait. This isn’t a good time to visit. Your aunt is in the shower room and it will be a while.” Chondra senses that the attendant is overwhelmed. Chondra, as a visitor, and is not a priority. This is Chondra’s first time in a care facility.