

PIECE 2: Dr. Archer, of California University in Davis, videotaped people at library tables. There was a strong pattern in their choice of seats. Corner seats were almost always taken first, followed by the exactly opposite chair because that is farthest away. If somebody broke this rule, and sat closer, students piled up books as if to make a wall, as if their personal space was invaded.

PIECE 1: One sociological study showed that to protect their personal space in crowded trains, commuters tend to hold newspapers in front of them. They read it, of course, but they also shield themselves from strangers this way. When your eyes are set on the stories in the paper, you do not have to worry about the eye contact with strangers around you, a natural reaction for people who want to establish a boundary against others.

PIECE 3: Americans hate to be touched. One Brazilian waiter, when he spoke to the American waiters that he worked with, used to regularly touch them for emphasis and attention. The man's ways of showing friendship toward his co-workers were always rejected and he wanted to know why. So when business was slow he observed how the Americans interacted. And eventually he arrived at this conclusion: Americans see touching as a violation of their personal space.

PIECE 4: John Bringardner, 26, a staff reporter at New York Times, said that when he was studying philosophy at the Sorbonne in Paris, he lived next door to an Algerian man who had a habit of standing mere centimeters from his face. "I could smell his bad breath" said Mr. Bringardner. He felt his personal space was not respected, but he did not step back. He did not want to offend his Algerian friend's feelings.

PIECE 5: Kimmo Hakkanen and his girlfriend, both students at the University of Helsinki, Finland, went together to an international party in a dormitory where a lot of exchange students were announced to come. They decided to bring a bottle of homemade alcohol that Finns typically drink. To their complete surprise, as soon as they put the bottle on the table, a girl from Croatia grabbed it and poured herself a glass, never asking for permission. They felt very uncomfortable, as if somebody attacked their privacy, invaded their personal space.

Are you **tolerant 1)** _____ loud music or intensive scents?

Are you **touch-friendly**? How do you **react 2)** _____ other people touching you in everyday, non-threatening situations?

Would you accept **a kiss-kiss hello 3)** _____ somebody you see for the first time?

Do you tend to **avoid or maintain the eye contact 4)** _____ strangers?

Do you **feel uncomfortable** when somebody is standing very close to you 5) _____ a bus or a tram?

Do you try 6) _____ **establish clear boundaries** with new people that you meet?

7)_____ crowded places, like pubs or shopping malls, do you have a feeling you have **to protect your personal space**?

When you visit doctors, do you ever have a feeling they get **too close 8)** ____ **comfort**? How does it feel?

Have you ever felt that **your personal space 9)** _____ **invaded**?

Do you think people today **need more or less personal space 10)** _____ 50 years ago? Why?

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Why?

What is personal space?

Personal space - how is it related to?

Age

Sex / Relationship

Education

Wealth

Culture / Geography

Climate / Is it all about sun?

City / Village

The Invasion: An acquaintance greets you with an unwelcome bear hug or a kiss on the cheek.

The Invasion: An office mate is constantly in your working area, reading over your shoulder or picking up papers from your desk.

The Invasion: You catch a dinner guest searching through your bedroom or looking into your medicine cabinet.

The Invasion: A neighbor regularly shows up on your doorstep for coffee, unannounced.

The Invasion: The cleaner, the dog walker, or the sitter moves things around in areas of your house he or she has no business to be in.

The Invasion: Your flat-mate regularly opens the door to your room without knocking to ask you questions or to talk.

The Invasion: Your spouse and kids leave their things (toys! socks!) in your spaces.

The Invasion: A dinner companion eats from your plate uninvited.

The Invasion: You are on a group vacation but crave some alone time.

The Invasion: You are pregnant. A perfect stranger pats your pregnant belly in public.

The Invasion: The couple you just met on a vacation cruise wants to hang out with you from breakfast buffet until bedtime.

The Invasion: Your neighbour systematically practices his musical

skills on a trumpet.

The Invasion: You are sitting in the park, reading a gripping book, when you notice a young man taking photos of you from the distance.