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### **The difference in the perception of friends and familiar faces for Russians and Americans**

It is better to have one hundred friends than one hundred rubles. The meaning of the proverb is obvious: the value of the ruble varies but not the value of friends. This well-known Russian proverb shows the highest degree of importance of amicable and family relationships for a Russian person perfectly. Russians have always relied on a close network of family, friends, and coworkers as protection against the risks and unpredictability of daily life. In the village commune, Russians felt safe and secure in the company of family and neighbors. Today, in the city, they continue to value familiar faces and mistrust those they do not know. Despite its great size, Russia is run on the basis of personal connections. In the workplace and private life, Russians depend on friends who owe them favors, former classmates and others whom they trust. Because of the mistrust of their government, the bureaucracy is not expected to respond equitably to a citizen's request. Instead, Russians will call friends and ask for their help. In their turn, friends will say a good word for the official and all problems will be solved. Americans who want something from the government will approach the official directly and tell about their problems, they hope law and logic will prevail. [1]

In spite of the apparent unlikeness, there are still points of contact. Let's reason the matter out. Like most European languages, Russian has two forms of "you". The more formal "vy" is used between strangers or in addressing people of higher position. The informal "ty" is reserved for friends, family members and children. Americans tend to be informal in their speech—candid, direct, and without any rituals or polite forms. Russians welcome and appreciate such informal talk but usually only after a certain stage in the relationship has been reached. [1] Due to lack of ease in communication Americans often think Russian people are too gloomy and close-lipped. The choice of which of these forms should be used by foreigners in addressing Russians depends on the degree of their relationship. Who can be considered a friend? The word "friend" must be used carefully in Russia. For most Americans, anyone who is not an enemy seems to be a friend. An American can become acquainted with a complete stranger and at once describe that person as a friend. American friendships, however, are compartmentalized, often centering around colleagues in an office, neighbors in a residential community, or participation in leisure activity. This reflects the American unwillingness to get too deeply involved with personal problems of others. A friend in need may be a friend indeed, but an American is more likely to refer a needy friend to a professional for help rather than become involved in the friend's personal troubles. [1] Nevertheless, it does not mean complete indifference. In the USA people will not listen to a lengthy tirade about that the life is unhappy because it is not accepted to complain there. However, people will not refuse to sympathize and say encouraging words. It will not be dry, just brief. Everyone has always got their own problems, someone has more, someone has less, but, in the Americans' opinion, it is not a good idea to tell about their worries to others. Americans are very warm-hearted. If you are lost or look upset, an occasional passer-by will come to you and ask whether you need any help. Communication with Americans is really lightweight. Topics of conversation are usually different, but at the same time completely impersonal. A person learns about the news, but he is unlikely to wait the soulfulness that is inherent in the Russian. In American friendship, there is a concept of personal life, which Russians do not always understand. The American will not try to know about your earnings, will not interfere in your life, will not give unnecessary advice. The boundary between "we have fun together" and "this is not my/your business" is clearly observed. You can spend a whole evening together and discuss a lot of things, but you do not learn anything innermost about each other if your relationship does not reach the right condition. The

situation is no different in Russia. Therefore, the opportunity to find an American friend, who can be trusted, despite some detachment, is possible. [2]

However, the difference still can be traced. In the Russian language, the concepts of "friend" and "acquaintance" are not synonymous. A friend for Russians is an equal member of the family. Such friendships are not made easily or quickly. This friendship is all-embracing and implies a special relationship between people. For the reason that the society has been closed, Russians share their points of view on life\society\politics and so on inside with their friends whom they trust. It is a connecting link between Russian friends. Talking with friends becomes their second nature, even a need. So, in Russia, at four o'clock in the morning, without a phone call, your friend can come to your house, and you're up and putting the teapot on will not be something out of the ordinary. Russians say that "between friends, what's theirs is yours and what's yours is theirs, especially if it's in the refrigerator". Because of the desire to separate, many Americans would regard this as impositions. [1]

So, both Americans and Russian appreciate their friends and they are always ready to come to help. There is essential difference in only two things: how exactly is the trust relationship established between friends and whether the boundaries of privacy are respected. These borders are very often erased for Russian people.

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