

## Electronic Supplementary Materials

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### **Attention Check (used in all studies)**

Participants were shown the following text. Subjects who wrote “I pay attention” in the box, all others were excluded.

Imagine you are playing video games with a friend and at some point your friend says:

“I don’t want to play this game anymore! To make sure that you read the instructions, please write the three following words "I pay attention" in the box below. I really dislike this game, it's the most overrated game ever.”

**Having carefully read the text above, do you agree with your friend?**

Two participants failed the attention check in the pilot study, two in experiment 1, four in experiment 2, and one in experiment 3.

### **Demographic Questions (used in all studies)**

We asked participants about their age and gender as follows:

What is your age? (in years)

What is your gender?

Male

Female

Other / Prefer not to say

## Pilot Study

### Methods

Two hundred participants (recruited via Prolific Academic, mean age = 35.68 years,  $SD = 12.45$ ; 68.7% female, 30.8% male, 5% other / preferred not to say) took part in a pilot study. After passing an attention check (final  $N = 198$ ), participants were randomly assigned to one of four conditions. In each condition, participants were instructed to read a short story about a self-enhancement scenario. Across conditions, the self-enhancing statement was the same, but the context of the self-enhancing statement scenario varied.

For each condition, four vignettes were used, differing with regards to the topic of the brag (tennis, chess), and the gender of the self-enhancer (and the gender of the individual to whom the self-enhancing statement is addressed, which was always the same as that of the self-enhancer). Hence, we used 16 versions of the story in total, four versions per experimental condition.

In the Specific Query condition, participants read a story about a college professor looking for a talented student to join the college tennis (chess) team, and the self-enhancer claims achievement in tennis (writing, chess) as a response to the professor's request. In the Low Status condition, the story was about a professional tennis player (chess player), to whom is addressed a self-enhancing statement by a younger and less experienced tennis player (chess player). In the No Competition condition, participants read a story about a professional chess player to whom is addressed a self-enhancing statement by someone in another field (tennis). In the Superior Status condition, the self-enhancer describes about achievements in tennis (chess) that are higher than the addressee's achievements (unlike in the Low Status condition) and the addressee of the brag cares about the discipline of the brag (unlike in the No Competition condition). Both discipline and gender were evenly varied within each condition. Crucially, the self-enhancing statements were always the same, only the context in which they were offered varied.

After reading the story, participants were asked four questions about the self-enhancer:

- (1) "What is your impression of the young man [woman] Peter [Judith] is talking to?" (1 = Very dislikeable, 7 = Very likeable)
- (2) "To what extent do you think the young man [woman] considers themselves superior to Peter [Judith]?" (1 = Not at all, 7 = Very much)
- (3) "To what extent do you think the young man [woman] is being condescending towards Peter [Judith]?" (1 = Not at all, 7 = Very much)

- (4) “Do you think the young man [woman] was bragging when he [she] said “In high school, I won several local tournaments?” (1 = Not bragging at all, 7 = Completely bragging).

The second and third questions were averaged to create a single index indicating the perceived intent to appear superior.

## Results

A one-way ANOVA indicated a general effect of condition on perceived intent to appear superior ( $F(3, 194) = 5.025, p = .002$ ), on perceived bragging ( $F(3, 194) = 4.09, p = .008$ ), but this effect was not present for dislikeability ( $F(3, 194) = 0.605, p = .612$ ). Closer inspection of the data hinted that the effect did not work for female self-enhancers who made statements about chess achievements.

## Descriptive Statistics for Pilot Experiment

**Table 1.** Means and standard deviations for likeability split by gender and discipline.

Discipline	Gender	Condition	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Chess	Female	Specific Query	12	4.25	.62
		Low Status	13	4.15	.80
		No Competition	12	4.42	.67
		Superior Status	10	5.30	1.41
	Male	Specific Query	13	4.23	1.17
		Low Status	12	4.75	1.05
		No Competition	12	4.92	1.50
		Superior Status	13	3.62	1.04
Tennis	Female	Specific Query	13	4.69	1.11
		Low Status	13	4.31	.94
		No Competition	13	4.62	1.56
		Superior Status	13	4.15	1.14
	Male	Specific Query	11	4.91	1.30
		Low Status	13	4.38	1.26
		No Competition	12	4.25	1.13
		Superior Status	13	4.23	1.01

## Vignettes for Pilot Experiment

### Specific Query Condition

Male / Tennis

Peter looked at his tennis racket. He was sitting at his favourite spot in the college courtyard, waiting. As a lecturer at a local college, Peter had volunteered to build up the college's tennis team for the next big tournaments. How would he make sure that his college would get a good result or maybe even win? Right before he went to the courtyard, Peter had made an announcement to the entire school, asking for any student tennis players to come forward and find him in the courtyard. He had even brought his own tennis racket so that new students could easily recognize him. In case someone wanted to join the college tennis team, Peter announced, they could just come to the courtyard, where Peter would be sitting for the next hour. Hopefully there would even be a strong player among the college students willing to join.

Lost in thought, Peter heard footsteps. When he looked up, he saw a young man approaching him. This man was a tennis player, who was new to the university. He had heard the announcement, and was interested in playing for the university team. Peter noticed how the man glanced over the tennis racket. "Do you know how to play tennis?" Peter asked, hoping he might be able to recruit good players. The young man simply said: "In high school, I won several local tournaments."

Male / Chess

Peter looked at the chessboard on the table in front of him, absorbed in thought, playing against himself. He was sitting at his favourite spot in the college courtyard, pondering his next move. As a lecturer at a local college, Peter had volunteered to build up the college's chess team for the next big tournaments. How would he make sure that his college would get a good result or maybe even win? Right before he went to the courtyard, Peter had made an announcement to the entire school, asking for any student chess players to come forward. In case someone wanted to join the college chess team, Peter announced, they could just come to the courtyard, where Peter would be sitting for the next hour. Hopefully there would even be a strong player among the college students willing to join.

Lost in thought, Peter heard footsteps. When he looked up, he saw a young man approaching him. This man was a chess player, who was new to the university. He had heard the announcement, and was interested in playing in the team. Peter noticed how the man glanced over the chessboard. "Do you know how to play chess?" Peter asked, hoping he

might be able to recruit good players. The young man simply said: “In high school, I won several local tournaments.”

#### Female / Tennis

Judith looked at her tennis racket. She was sitting at her favourite spot in the college courtyard, waiting. As a lecturer at a local college, Judith had volunteered to build up the college’s tennis team for the next big tournaments. How would she make sure that her college would get a good result or maybe even win? Right before she went to the courtyard, Judith had made an announcement to the entire school, asking for any student tennis players to come forward and find her in the courtyard. She had even brought her own tennis racket so that new students could easily recognize her. In case someone wanted to join the college tennis team, Judith announced, they could just come to the courtyard, where Judith would be sitting for the next hour. Hopefully there would even be a strong player among the college students willing to join.

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#### Female / Chess

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woman glanced over the chessboard. “Do you know how to play chess?” Judith asked, hoping she might be able to recruit good players. The young woman simply said: “In high school, I won several local tournaments.”

### **Low Status Condition**

#### Male / Tennis

Peter looked at his tennis racket. He was sitting at his favourite spot in a park next to the tennis court. Tennis was his career, his life. After years of training, Peter had managed to become one of the top tennis players in the world, reaching the finals of several grand slam tournaments. Right before he went to the park Peter just finished an intense match against another top tennis player. Now, spending time in the park was a good way of recovering from the stress of the match.

Lost in thought, Peter heard footsteps. When he looked up, he saw a young man approaching him. This man was also a tennis player, who was new in town. Although few people knew him yet, he had looked up the various players in the area, and knew who Peter was, and what his tennis level was. Peter noticed how the man glanced over the tennis racket. “Do you know how to play tennis?” Peter asked. The young man simply said: “In high school, I won several local tournaments.”

#### Male / Chess

Peter looked at the chessboard on the table in front of him, absorbed in thought, playing against himself. He was sitting at his favourite spot in the park, pondering his next move. Chess was his career, his life. After years of studying, Peter had managed to become one of the strongest chess players in the world, reaching the grandmaster rank. Right before he went to the park to play a bit of chess against himself, he had participated in an online chess tournament where Peter had even managed to win a game against the world champion. Now, spending time in the park was a good way of recovering from the stress of the tournament.

Lost in thought, Peter heard footsteps. When he looked up, he saw a young man approaching him. This man was also a chess player, who was new in town. Although few people knew him yet, he had looked up the various players in the area, and knew who Peter was, and what his chess level was. Peter noticed how the man glanced over the chessboard. “Do you know how to play chess?” Peter asked. The young man simply said: “In high school, I won several local tournaments.”

### Female / Tennis

Judith looked at her tennis racket. She was sitting at her favourite spot in a park next to the tennis court. Tennis was her career, her life. After years of training, Judith had managed to become one of the top tennis players in the world, reaching the finals of several grand slam tournaments. Right before she went to the park Judith just finished an intense match against another top tennis player. Now, spending time in the park was a good way of recovering from the stress of the match.

Lost in thought, Judith heard footsteps. When she looked up, she saw a young woman approaching her. This woman was also a tennis player, who was new in town. Although few people knew her yet, she had looked up the various players in the area, and knew who Judith was, and what her tennis level was. Judith noticed how the woman glanced over the tennis racket. “Do you know how to play tennis?” Judith asked. The young woman simply said: “In high school, I won several local tournaments.”

### Female / Chess

Judith looked at the chessboard on the table in front of her, absorbed in thought, playing against herself. She was sitting at her favourite spot in the park, pondering her next move. Chess was her career, her life. After years of studying, Judith had managed to become one of the strongest chess players in the world, reaching the grandmaster rank. Right before she went to the park to play a bit of chess against herself, she had participated in an online chess tournament where Judith had even managed to win a game against the world champion. Now, spending time in the park was a good way of recovering from the stress of the tournament.

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## **No Competition Condition**

### Male / Tennis

Peter looked at the tennis racket. He was sitting at his favourite spot in the park, where Peter found a tennis racket that someone had forgotten. Peter didn't really care about tennis: he

barely knew how to play, and fiddled with the tennis racket as a distraction to ponder some problem he was facing in his career as a professional chess player.

Lost in thought, Peter heard footsteps. When he looked up, he saw a young man approaching him. This man was also a chess player, who was new in town. Although few people knew him yet, he had looked up the various chess players in the area, and knew who Peter was, and what his chess level was. Peter noticed how the man glanced over the tennis racket. “Do you know how to play tennis?” Peter asked to strike up a conversation. The young man simply said: “In high school, I won several local tournaments.”

#### Male / Chess

Peter looked at the chessboard on the table in front of him, absorbed in thought. He was sitting at his favourite spot in the park, and some players had left a game unfinished on a board. Peter didn't really care about chess: he barely knew how to play, and was using the chessboard as a distraction to ponder some problem he was facing in his career as a professional tennis player.

Lost in thought, Peter heard footsteps. When he looked up, he saw a young man approaching him. This man was also a tennis player, who was new in town. Although few people knew him yet, he had looked up the various players in the area, and knew who Peter was, and what his tennis level was. Peter noticed how the man glanced over the chessboard. “Do you know how to play chess?” Peter asked to strike up a conversation. The young man simply said: “In high school, I won several local tournaments.”

#### Female / Tennis

Judith looked at the tennis racket. She was sitting at her favourite spot in the park, where Judith found a tennis racket that someone had forgotten. Judith didn't really care about tennis: she barely knew how to play, and fiddled with the tennis racket as a distraction to ponder some problem she was facing in her career as a professional chess player.

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### Female / Chess

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### **Superior Status Condition**

#### Male / Tennis

Peter looked at his tennis racket. He was sitting at his favourite spot in the park, pondering how he could advance his tennis level. Although only moderately talented Peter loved tennis. Every day he practiced in order to get better, but it took a long while until his efforts paid off. But Peter kept his tail up – after all, tennis was an important aspect of his life. His best performance was when he had finished second place in a local high school tournament.

Lost in thought, Peter heard footsteps. When he looked up, he saw a young man approaching him. This man was also a tennis player, who was new in town. Although few people knew him yet, he had looked up the various players in the area, and knew who Peter was, and what his tennis level was. Peter noticed how the man glanced over the tennis racket. "Do you know how to play tennis?" Peter asked. The young man simply said: "In high school, I won several local tournaments."

#### Male / Chess

Peter looked at the chessboard on the table in front of him, absorbed in thought, playing against himself. He was sitting at his favourite spot in the park, pondering his next move. Although only moderately talented Peter loved chess. Every day he practiced in order to get better, but it took a long while until his efforts paid off. But Peter kept his tail up – after all, chess was an important aspect of his life. His best performance was when he had finished second place in a local high school tournament.

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#### Female / Tennis

Judith looked at her tennis racket. She was sitting at her favourite spot in the park, pondering how she could advance her tennis level. Although only moderately talented, Judith loved tennis. Every day she practiced in order to get better, but it took a long while until her efforts paid off. But Judith kept her tail up – after all, tennis was an important aspect of her life. Her best performance was when she had finished second place in a local high school tournament.

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#### Female / Chess

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## Vignettes for Experiment 1

### Specific Query Condition

Male / Tennis

Peter looked at his tennis racket. He was sitting at his favourite spot in the college courtyard, waiting. As a lecturer at a local college, Peter had volunteered to build up the college's tennis team for the next big tournaments. How would he make sure that his college would get a good result or maybe even win? Right before he went to the courtyard, Peter had made an announcement to the entire school, asking for any student tennis players to come forward and find him in the courtyard. He had even brought his own tennis racket so that new students could easily recognize him. In case someone wanted to join the college tennis team, Peter announced, they could just come to the courtyard, where Peter would be sitting for the next hour. Hopefully there would even be a strong player among the college students willing to join.

Lost in thought, Peter heard footsteps. When he looked up, he saw a young man approaching him. This man was a tennis player, who was new to the university. He had heard the announcement and was interested in playing for the university team. Peter noticed how the man glanced over the tennis racket. "Do you know how to play tennis?" Peter asked, hoping he might be able to recruit good players. The young man simply said: "In high school, I won several local tournaments."

Male / Writing

Peter was reading a book, titled "Writing Short Stories: How to Succeed at Writing Competitions". He was sitting at his favourite spot in the college courtyard, thumbing through the pages of the writing guide. As a lecturer at a local college, Peter had volunteered to build up the college's competitive writing team for the next big competitions. How would he make sure that his college would get a good result or maybe even win? Right before he went to the courtyard, Peter had made an announcement to the entire school, asking for any student experienced in competitive writing to come forward. In case someone wanted to join the college competitive writing team, Peter announced, they could just come to the courtyard, where Peter would be sitting for the next hour. Hopefully there would even be a gifted writer among the college students willing to join.

Lost in thought, Peter heard footsteps. When he looked up, he saw a young man approaching him. This man had previously participated in writing competitions and was new to the university. He had heard the announcement and was interested in joining the

competitive writing team. Peter noticed how the man glanced over the title of the book. “Do you know how to write short stories?” Peter asked, hoping he might be able to recruit talented writers. The young man simply said: “In high school, I won several local writing competitions.”

#### Male / Science

Peter was reading a book, titled “How to Succeed at Science Competitions”. He was sitting at his favourite spot in the college courtyard, thumbing through the pages of the guide. As a lecturer at a local college, Peter had volunteered to build up the college’s science competition team for the next big competitions. How would he make sure that his college would get a good result or maybe even win? Right before he went to the courtyard, Peter had made an announcement to the entire school, asking for any student experienced in science competitions to come forward. In case someone wanted to join the college science competition team, Peter announced, they could just come to the courtyard, where Peter would be sitting for the next hour. Hopefully there would even be a talented student scientist among the college students willing to join.

Lost in thought, Peter heard footsteps. When he looked up, he saw a young man approaching him. This man had previously participated in science competitions and was new to the university. He had heard the announcement and was interested in joining the science competition team. Peter noticed how the man glanced over the title of the book. “Do you know a lot about science?” Peter asked, hoping he might be able to recruit talented student scientists. The young man simply said: “In high school, I won several local science competitions.”

#### Male / Gymnastics

Peter looked at the gymnastics mat on the ground. He was sitting at his favourite spot in the college courtyard, waiting. As a lecturer at a local college, Peter had volunteered to build up the college’s gymnastics team for the next big tournaments. How would he make sure that his college would get a good result or maybe even win? Right before he went to the courtyard, Peter had made an announcement to the entire school, asking for any student gymnasts to come forward and find him in the courtyard. He had even brought his own gymnastics mat as a prop, so people would recognize him. In case someone wanted to join the gymnastics team, Peter announced, they could just come to the courtyard, where Peter would be sitting for the

next hour. Hopefully there would even be a skilled gymnast among the college students willing to join.

Lost in thought, Peter heard footsteps. When he looked up, he saw a young man approaching him. This man was a gymnast, who was new to the university. He had heard the announcement and was interested in participating in gymnastics competitions for the university team. Peter noticed how the man glanced over the gymnastics mat on the ground. “Do you practice gymnastics?” Peter asked, hoping he might be able to recruit skilled gymnasts. The young man simply said: “In high school, I won several local tournaments.”

#### Female / Tennis

Judith looked at her tennis racket. She was sitting at her favourite spot in the college courtyard, waiting. As a lecturer at a local college, Judith had volunteered to build up the college’s tennis team for the next big tournaments. How would she make sure that her college would get a good result or maybe even win? Right before she went to the courtyard, Judith had made an announcement to the entire school, asking for any student tennis players to come forward and find her in the courtyard. She had even brought her own tennis racket so that new students could easily recognize her. In case someone wanted to join the college tennis team, Judith announced, they could just come to the courtyard, where Judith would be sitting for the next hour. Hopefully there would even be a strong player among the college students willing to join.

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#### Female / Writing

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### **Low Status Condition**

Male / Tennis

Peter looked at his tennis racket. He was sitting at his favourite spot in a park next to the tennis court. Tennis was his career, his life. After years of training, Peter had managed to become one of the top tennis players in the world, reaching the finals of several grand slam tournaments. Right before he went to the park Peter just finished an intense match against another top tennis player. Now, spending time in the park was a good way of recovering from the stress of the match.

Lost in thought, Peter heard footsteps. When he looked up, he saw a young man approaching him. This man was also a tennis player, who was new in town. Although few people knew him yet, he had looked up the various players in the area, and knew who Peter was, and what his tennis level was. Peter noticed how the man glanced over the tennis racket. "Do you know how to play tennis?" Peter asked. The young man simply said: "In high school, I won several local tournaments."

Male / Writing

Peter was reading a book, titled "Writing Short Stories: How to Succeed at Writing Competitions". He was sitting at his favourite spot in the park, thumbing through the pages of

the writing guide he had authored. Writing was his career, his life. After years of practice, Peter had managed to become an award-winning author, publishing numerous critically acclaimed novels and short stories. Right before he went to the park, Peter had a meeting with his editor, discussing the possibility of Peter writing another book. Now, spending time in the park was a good way of brainstorming ideas for the upcoming project.

Lost in thought, Peter heard footsteps. When he looked up, he saw a young man approaching him. This man had previously participated in writing competitions and was new in town. Although few people knew him yet, he had looked up the various writers in the area, and knew who Peter was, and read several of Peter's award-winning short stories. Peter noticed how the man glanced over the title of the book. "Do you know how to write short stories?" Peter asked. The young man simply said: "In high school, I won several local writing competitions."

#### Male / Science

Peter was reading a book, titled "How to Succeed at Science Competitions". He was sitting at his favourite spot in the park, thumbing through the pages of the guide he had authored. Science was his career, his life. After years of study and research, Peter had managed to become an acclaimed scientist, being appointed to a full professorship at an Ivy League university. Right before he went to the park, Peter had a meeting with his editor, discussing the possibility of Peter authoring another science textbook that ambitious students could use to prepare for the national science competition. Now, spending time in the park was a good way of brainstorming ideas for the upcoming project.

Lost in thought, Peter heard footsteps. When he looked up, he saw a young man approaching him. This man had previously participated in science competitions and was new in town. Although few people knew him yet, he had looked up the various professors in the area, and knew who Peter was, and read several of Peter's critically acclaimed popular science books. Peter noticed how the man glanced over the title of the book. "Do you know a lot about science?" Peter asked. The young man simply said: "In high school, I won several local science competitions."

#### Male / Gymnastics

Peter looked at the gymnastics mat on the ground. He was sitting at his favourite spot in a park next to the gymnastics center. Gymnastics was his career, his life. After years of training, Peter had managed to become one of the top gymnasts in the world, repeatedly

participating in the Summer Olympic Games for gymnastics. Right before he went to the park Peter had just finished an intense training session. Now, spending time in the park was a good way of taking a little break from the training. Afterwards, he would do a few stretches on the gymnastics mat he had brought with him, just to get out and enjoy the sunny weather.

Lost in thought, Peter heard footsteps. When he looked up, he saw a young man approaching him. This man was also a gymnast, who was new in town. Although few people knew him yet, he had looked up the various gymnasts in the area, and knew who Peter was, and what his skill level in gymnastics was. Peter noticed how the man glanced over the gymnastics mat on the ground. “Do you practice gymnastics?” Peter asked. The young man simply said: “In high school, I won several local tournaments.”

#### Female / Tennis

Judith looked at her tennis racket. She was sitting at her favourite spot in a park next to the tennis court. Tennis was her career, her life. After years of training, Judith had managed to become one of the top tennis players in the world, reaching the finals of several grand slam tournaments. Right before she went to the park Judith just finished an intense match against another top tennis player. Now, spending time in the park was a good way of recovering from the stress of the match.

Lost in thought, Judith heard footsteps. When she looked up, she saw a young woman approaching her. This woman was also a tennis player, who was new in town. Although few people knew her yet, she had looked up the various players in the area, and knew who Judith was, and what her tennis level was. Judith noticed how the woman glanced over the tennis racket. “Do you know how to play tennis?” Judith asked. The young woman simply said: “In high school, I won several local tournaments.”

#### Female / Writing

Judith was reading a book, titled “Writing Short Stories: How to Succeed at Writing Competitions”. She was sitting at her favourite spot in the park, thumbing through the pages of the writing guide she had authored. Writing was her career, her life. After years of practice, Judith had managed to become an award-winning author, publishing numerous critically acclaimed novels and short stories. Right before she went to the park, had a meeting with her editor, discussing the possibility of Judith writing another book. Now, spending time in the park was a good way of brainstorming ideas for the upcoming project.

Lost in thought, Judith heard footsteps. When she looked up, she saw a young woman approaching her. This woman had previously participated in writing competitions and was new in town. Although few people knew her yet, she had looked up the various writers in the area, and knew who Judith was, and read several of Judith's award-winning short stories. Judith noticed how the woman glanced over the title of the book. "Do you know how to write short stories?" Judith asked. The young woman simply said: "In high school, I won several local writing competitions."

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#### Female / Gymnastics

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Lost in thought, Judith heard footsteps. When she looked up, she saw a young woman approaching her. This woman was also a gymnast, who was new in town. Although few people knew her yet, she had looked up the various gymnasts in the area, and knew who Judith was, and what her skill level in gymnastics was. Judith noticed how the woman glanced over the gymnastics mat on the ground. “Do you practice gymnastics?” Judith asked. The young woman simply said: “In high school, I won several local tournaments.”

### **No Competition Condition**

Male / Tennis

Peter looked at the tennis racket. He was sitting at his favourite spot in the park, where Peter found a tennis racket that someone had forgotten. Peter didn't really care about tennis: he barely knew how to play, and fiddled with the tennis racket as a distraction to ponder some problem he was facing in his career as a professional chess player.

Lost in thought, Peter heard footsteps. When he looked up, he saw a young man approaching him. This man was also a chess player, who was new in town. Although few people knew him yet, he had looked up the various players in the area, and knew who Peter was, and what his chess level was. Peter noticed how the man glanced over the tennis racket. “Do you know how to play tennis?” Peter asked to strike up a conversation. The young man simply said: “In high school, I won several local tournaments.”

Male / Writing

Peter was reading a book, titled “Writing Short Stories: How to Succeed at Writing Competitions”. He was sitting at his favourite spot in the park, and someone had left the book on the table. Peter didn't really care about writing: he was barely aware that writing competitions existed and was using the book as a distraction from some problem he was facing in his career as a professional tennis player.

Lost in thought, Peter heard footsteps. When he looked up, he saw a young man approaching him. This man was also a tennis player, who was new in town. Although few people knew him yet, he had looked up the various players in the area, and knew who Peter was, and what his tennis level was. Peter noticed how the man glanced over the title of the book. “Do you know how to write short stories?” Peter asked to strike up a conversation. The young man simply said: “In high school, I won several local writing competitions.”

Male / Science

Peter was reading a book, titled “How to Succeed at Science Competitions”. He was sitting at his favourite spot in the park, and someone had left the book on the table. Peter didn’t really care about science: he could barely remember his high school science classes and was using the book as a distraction from some problem he was facing in his career as a professional tennis player.

Lost in thought, Peter heard footsteps. When he looked up, he saw a young man approaching him. This man was also a tennis player, who was new in town. Although few people knew him yet, he had looked up the various players in the area, and knew who Peter was, and what his tennis level was. Peter noticed how the man glanced over the title of the book. “Do you know a lot about science?” Peter asked to strike up a conversation. The young man simply said: “In high school, I won several local science competitions.”

#### Male / Gymnastics

Peter looked at the gymnastics mat on the ground. He was sitting at his favourite spot in the park, where Peter found a gymnastics mat that someone had thrown away. Peter didn’t really care about gymnastics: he barely knew any exercises, and mindlessly stared at the gymnastics mat while pondering some problem he was facing in his career as a professional chess player.

Lost in thought, Peter heard footsteps. When he looked up, he saw a young man approaching him. This man was also a chess player, who was new in town. Although few people knew him yet, he had looked up the various players in the area, and knew who Peter was, and what his chess level was. Peter noticed how the man glanced over the gymnastics mat on the ground. “Do you practice gymnastics?” Peter asked to strike up a conversation. The young man simply said: “In high school, I won several local tournaments.”

#### Female / Tennis

Judith looked at the tennis racket. She was sitting at her favourite spot in the park, where Judith found a tennis racket that someone had forgotten. Judith didn’t really care about tennis: she barely knew how to play, and fiddled with the tennis racket as a distraction to ponder some problem she was facing in her career as a professional chess player.

Lost in thought, Judith heard footsteps. When she looked up, she saw a young woman approaching her. This woman was also a chess player, who was new in town. Although few people knew her yet, she had looked up the various players in the area, and knew who Judith was, and what her chess level was. Judith noticed how the woman glanced over the tennis

racket. “Do you know how to play tennis?” Judith asked to strike up a conversation. The young woman simply said: “In high school, I won several local tournaments.”

#### Female / Writing

Judith was reading a book, titled “Writing Short Stories: How to Succeed at Writing Competitions”. She was sitting at her favourite spot in the park, and someone had left the book on the table. Judith didn’t really care about writing: she was barely aware writing competitions existed and was using the book as a distraction from some problem she was facing in her career as a professional tennis player.

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#### Female / Science

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#### Female / Gymnastics

Judith looked at the gymnastics mat on the ground. She was sitting at her favourite spot in the park, where Judith found a gymnastics mat that someone had thrown away. Judith didn’t really care about gymnastics: she barely knew any exercises, and mindlessly stared at the

gymnastics mat while pondering some problem she was facing in her career as a professional chess player.

Lost in thought, Judith heard footsteps. When she looked up, she saw a young woman approaching her. This woman was also a chess player, who was new in town. Although few people knew her yet, she had looked up the various players in the area, and knew who Judith was, and what her chess level was. Judith noticed how the woman glanced over the gymnastics mat on the ground. “Do you practice gymnastics?” Judith asked to strike up a conversation. The young woman simply said: “In high school, I won several local tournaments.”

### **Superior Status Condition**

#### Male / Tennis

Peter looked at his tennis racket. He was sitting at his favourite spot in the park, pondering how he could advance his tennis level. Although only moderately talented Peter loved tennis. Every day he practiced in order to get better, but it took a long while until his efforts paid off. But Peter kept his tail up – after all, tennis was an important aspect of his life. His best performance was when he had finished second place in a local high school tournament.

Lost in thought, Peter heard footsteps. When he looked up, he saw a young man approaching him. This man was also a tennis player, who was new in town. Although few people knew him yet, he had looked up the various players in the area, and knew who Peter was, and that he had never finished first in a local tournament. Peter noticed how the man glanced over the tennis racket. “Do you know how to play tennis?” Peter asked. The young man simply said: “In high school, I won several local tournaments.”

#### Male / Writing

Peter was reading a book, titled “Writing Short Stories: How to Succeed at Writing Competitions”. He was sitting at his favourite spot in the park, thumbing through the pages of the writing guide. Although only moderately talented, Peter loved writing. Every day he practiced in order to get better, but it took a long while until his efforts paid off. But Peter kept his tail up – after all, writing was an important aspect of his life. His best short story was awarded second place in a local high school writing competition.

Lost in thought, Peter heard footsteps. When he looked up, he saw a young man approaching him. This man had previously participated in writing competitions and was new in town. Although few people knew him yet, he had looked up the various writers in the area,

and knew who Peter was, and that he had never finished first in a local writing competition. Peter noticed how the man glanced over the title of the book. “Do you know how to write short stories?” Peter asked. The young man simply said: “In high school, I won several local writing competitions.”

#### Male / Science

Peter was reading a book, titled “How to Succeed at Science Competitions”. He was sitting at his favourite spot in the park, thumbing through the pages of the guide. Although only moderately talented Peter loved science. Every day he studied in order to get better, but it took a long while until his efforts paid off. But Peter kept his tail up – after all, he was really interested in science, and hence the subject was an important aspect of his life. His best result was when he scored second place in a local high school science competition.

Lost in thought, Peter heard footsteps. When he looked up, he saw a young man approaching him. This man had previously participated in science competitions and was new in town. Although few people knew him yet, he had looked up the various participants for the local science competitions, and knew who Peter was, and that he had never finished first in a local science competition. Peter noticed how the man glanced over the title of the book. “Do you know a lot about science?” Peter asked. The young man simply said: “In high school, I won several local science competitions.”

#### Male / Gymnastics

Peter looked at the gymnastics mat on the ground. He was sitting at his favourite spot in the park, wondering how he could advance his gymnastics skills – he’d even brought the mat to practice some simple exercises. Although only moderately talented Peter loved gymnastics. Every day he practiced in order to get better, but it took a long while until his efforts paid off. But Peter kept his tail up – after all, gymnastics was an important aspect of his life. His best performance was when he had finished second place in a local high school tournament.

Lost in thought, Peter heard footsteps. When he looked up, he saw a young man approaching him. This man was also a gymnast, who was new in town. Although few people knew him yet, he had looked up the various gymnasts in the area, and knew who Peter was, and that he had never finished first in a local tournament. Peter noticed how the man glanced over the gymnastics mat on the ground. “Do you practice gymnastics?” Peter asked. The young man simply said: “In high school, I won several local tournaments.”

### Female / Tennis

Judith looked at her tennis racket. She was sitting at her favourite spot in the park, pondering how she could advance her tennis level. Although only moderately talented, Judith loved tennis. Every day she practiced in order to get better, but it took a long while until her efforts paid off. But Judith kept her tail up – after all, tennis was an important aspect of her life. Her best performance was when she had finished second place in a local high school tournament.

Lost in thought, Judith heard footsteps. When she looked up, she saw a young woman approaching her. This woman was also a tennis player, who was new in town. Although few people knew her yet, she had looked up the various players in the area, and knew who Judith was, and that she had never finished first in a local tournament. Judith noticed how the woman glanced over the tennis racket. “Do you know how to play tennis?” Judith asked. The young woman simply said: “In high school, I won several local tournaments.”

### Female / Writing

Judith was reading a book, titled “Writing Short Stories: How to Succeed at Writing Competitions”. She was sitting at her favourite spot in the park, thumbing through the pages of the writing guide. Although only moderately talented Judith loved writing. Every day she practiced in order to get better, but it took a long while until her efforts paid off. But Judith kept her tail up – after all, writing was an important aspect of her life. Her best short story was awarded second place in a local high school writing competition.

Lost in thought, Judith heard footsteps. When she looked up, she saw a young woman approaching her. This woman had previously participated in writing competitions and was new in town. Although few people knew her yet, she had looked up the various writers in the area, and knew who Judith was, and that she had never finished first in a local writing competition. Judith noticed how the woman glanced over the title of the book. “Do you know how to write short stories?” Judith asked. The young woman simply said: “In high school, I won several local writing competitions.”

### Female / Science

Judith was reading a book, titled “How to Succeed at Science Competitions”. She was sitting at her favourite spot in the park, thumbing through the pages of the guide. Although only moderately talented Judith loved science. Every day she studied in order to get better, but it took a long while until her efforts paid off. But Judith kept her tail up – after all, she was

really interested in science, and hence the subject was an important aspect of her life. Her best result was when she scored second place in a local high school science competition.

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Lost in thought, Judith heard footsteps. When she looked up, she saw a young woman approaching her. This woman was also a gymnast, who was new in town. Although few people knew her yet, she had looked up the various gymnasts in the area, and knew who Judith was, and that she had never finished first in a local tournament. Judith noticed how the woman glanced over the gymnastics mat on the ground. “Do you practice gymnastics?” Judith asked. The young woman simply said: “In high school, I won several local tournaments.”

### **Vignettes for Experiment 2**

The Vignettes for the Specific Query Condition, the No Competition Condition, and the Superior Status Condition were identical to those in Experiment 1

#### **Low Status Condition**

Male / Gymnastics

Peter looked at the gymnastics mat on the ground. He was sitting at his favourite spot in a park next to the gymnastics center. Gymnastics was his career, his life. After years of training, Peter had managed to become one of the top gymnasts in the world, repeatedly participating in the Summer Olympic Games for gymnastics. Right before he went to the park Peter had just finished an intense training session. Now, spending time in the park was a good way of taking a little break from the training. Afterwards, he would do a few stretches on the gymnastics mat he had brought with him, just to get out and enjoy the sunny weather. The tranquillity of the park was also a good way of forgetting about the competitive nature of his profession. Although Peter loved gymnastics, he wanted to live a calm life, out of the spotlight. Ultimately, this led Peter to publicly announce his retirement from gymnastics last week. In a month, after a final competition, he would not be involved in the world of competitive gymnastics in any way whatsoever.

Lost in thought, Peter heard footsteps. When he looked up, he saw a young man approaching him. This man was also a gymnast, who was new in town. Although few people knew him yet, he had looked up the various gymnasts in the area, and knew who Peter was, and what his skill level in gymnastics was. The young man was also well aware of Peter's intention to retire soon, and that Peter would leave the professional gymnastics world for good after his retirement. Peter noticed how the man glanced over the gymnastics mat on the ground. "Do you practice gymnastics?" Peter asked. The young man simply said: "In high school, I won several local tournaments."

#### Male / Tennis

Peter looked at his tennis racket. He was sitting at his favourite spot in a park next to the tennis court. Tennis was his career, his life. After years of training, Peter had managed to become one of the top tennis players in the world, reaching the finals of several grand slam tournaments. Right before he went to the park Peter just finished an intense match against another top tennis player. Now, spending time in the park was a good way of recovering from the stress of the match. The tranquillity of the park was also a good way of forgetting about the competitive nature of his profession. Although Peter loved tennis, he wanted to live a calm life, out of the spotlight. Ultimately, this led Peter to publicly announce his retirement from tennis last week. In a month, after a final competition, he would not be involved in the world of competitive tennis in any way whatsoever.

Lost in thought, Peter heard footsteps. When he looked up, he saw a young man approaching him. This man was also a tennis player, who was new in town. Although few people knew him yet, he had looked up the various players in the area, and knew who Peter was, and what his tennis level was. The young man was also well aware of Peter's intention to retire soon, and that Peter would leave the professional tennis world for good after his retirement. Peter noticed how the man glanced over the tennis racket. "Do you know how to play tennis?" Peter asked. The young man simply said: "In high school, I won several local tournaments."

#### Male / Science

Peter was reading a book, titled "How to Succeed at Science Competitions". He was sitting at his favourite spot in the park, thumbing through the pages of the guide he had authored. Science was his career, his life. After years of study and research, Peter had managed to become an acclaimed scientist, being appointed to a full professorship at an Ivy League university. Right before he went to the park, Peter had a meeting with his editor, discussing the possibility of Peter authoring another science textbook that ambitious students could use to prepare for the national science competition. Now, spending time in the park was a good way of brainstorming ideas for the upcoming project. The tranquillity of the park was also a good way of forgetting about the competitive nature of his profession. Although Peter loved scientific research, he wanted to live a calm life, out of the spotlight. He could not stand the immense pressure to publish new research, while almost a third of his time was spent on writing grant proposals just to get funding. Ultimately, this led Peter to publicly announce his retirement from university last week. In a month, after he had wrapped up his final research projects, he would not be involved in the world of scientific research in any way whatsoever.

Lost in thought, Peter heard footsteps. When he looked up, he saw a young man approaching him. This man had previously participated in science competitions and was new in town. Although few people knew him yet, he had looked up the various professors in the area, and knew who Peter was, and read several of Peter's critically acclaimed popular science books. The young man was also well aware of Peter's intention to retire soon, and that Peter would leave the world of scientific research for good after his retirement. Peter noticed how the man glanced over the title of the book. "Do you know a lot about science?" Peter asked. The young man simply said: "In high school, I won several local science competitions."

### Male / Writing

Peter was reading a book, titled “Writing Short Stories: How to Succeed at Writing Competitions”. He was sitting at his favourite spot in the park, thumbing through the pages of the writing guide he had authored. Writing was his career, his life. After years of practice, Peter had managed to become an award-winning author, publishing numerous critically acclaimed novels and short stories. Right before he went to the park, Peter had a meeting with his editor, discussing the possibility of Peter writing another book. Now, spending time in the park was a good way of brainstorming ideas for the upcoming project. The tranquillity of the park was also a good way of forgetting about the stress of his profession. Although Peter loved writing, he wanted to live a calm life, out of the spotlight. He could not stand the media attention his fame had brought him. Ultimately, this led Peter to publicly announce his retirement from writing last week. In a month, after he had completed his final novel, he would not be involved in the writing community in any way whatsoever.

Lost in thought, Peter heard footsteps. When he looked up, he saw a young man approaching him. This man had previously participated in writing competitions and was new in town. Although few people knew him yet, he had looked up the various writers in the area, and knew who Peter was, and read several of Peter’s award-winning short stories. The young man was also well aware of Peter’s intention to retire soon, and that Peter would leave the world of writing for good after his retirement. Peter noticed how the man glanced over the title of the book. “Do you know how to write short stories?” Peter asked. The young man simply said: “In high school, I won several local writing competitions.”

### Female / Gymnastics

Judith looked at the gymnastics mat on the ground. She was sitting at her favourite spot in a park next to the gymnastics center. Gymnastics was her career, her life. After years of training, Judith had managed to become one of the top gymnasts in the world, repeatedly participating in the Summer Olympic Games for gymnastics. Right before she went to the park Judith had just finished an intense training session. Now, spending time in the park was a good way of taking a little break from the training. Afterwards, she would do a few stretches on the gymnastics mat she had brought with her, just to get out and enjoy the sunny weather. The tranquillity of the park was also a good way of forgetting about the competitive nature of her profession. Although Judith loved gymnastics, she wanted to live a calm life, out of the spotlight. Ultimately, this led Judith to publicly announce her retirement from

gymnastics last week. In a month, after a final competition, she would not be involved in the world of competitive gymnastics in any way whatsoever.

Lost in thought, Judith heard footsteps. When she looked up, she saw a young woman approaching her. This woman was also a gymnast, who was new in town. Although few people knew her yet, she had looked up the various gymnasts in the area, and knew who Judith was, and what her skill level in gymnastics was. The young woman was also well aware of Judith's intention to retire soon, and that Judith would leave the professional gymnastics world for good after her retirement. Judith noticed how the woman glanced over the gymnastics mat on the ground. "Do you practice gymnastics?" Judith asked. The young woman simply said: "In high school, I won several local tournaments."

#### Female / Tennis

Judith looked at her tennis racket. She was sitting at her favourite spot in a park next to the tennis court. Tennis was her career, her life. After years of training, Judith had managed to become one of the top tennis players in the world, reaching the finals of several grand slam tournaments. Right before she went to the park Judith just finished an intense match against another top tennis player. Now, spending time in the park was a good way of recovering from the stress of the match. The tranquillity of the park was also a good way of forgetting about the competitive nature of her profession. Although Judith loved tennis, she wanted to live a calm life, out of the spotlight. Ultimately, this led Judith to publicly announce her retirement from tennis last week. In a month, after a final competition, she would not be involved in the world of competitive tennis in any way whatsoever.

Lost in thought, Judith heard footsteps. When she looked up, she saw a young woman approaching her. This woman was also a tennis player, who was new in town. Although few people knew her yet, she had looked up the various players in the area, and knew who Judith was, and what her tennis level was. The young woman was also well aware of Judith's intention to retire soon, and that Judith would leave the professional tennis world for good after her retirement. Judith noticed how the woman glanced over the tennis racket. "Do you know how to play tennis?" Judith asked. The young woman simply said: "In high school, I won several local tournaments."

#### Female / Science

Judith was reading a book, titled “How to Succeed at Science Competitions”. She was sitting at her favourite spot in the park, thumbing through the pages of the guide she had authored. Science was her career, her life. After years of study and research, Judith had managed to become an acclaimed scientist, being appointed to a full professorship at an Ivy League university. Right before she went to the park, Judith had a meeting with her editor, discussing the possibility of Judith authoring another science textbook that ambitious students could use to prepare for the national science competition. Now, spending time in the park was a good way of brainstorming ideas for the upcoming project. The tranquillity of the park was also a good way of forgetting about the competitive nature of her profession. Although Judith loved scientific research, she wanted to live a calm life, out of the spotlight. She could not stand the immense pressure to publish new research, while almost a third of her time was spent on writing grant proposals just to get funding. Ultimately, this led Judith to publicly announce her retirement from university last week. In a month, after she had wrapped up her final research projects, she would not be involved in the world of scientific research in any way whatsoever.

Lost in thought, Judith heard footsteps. When she looked up, she saw a young woman approaching her. This woman had previously participated in science competitions and was new in town. Although few people knew her yet, she had looked up the various professors in the area, and knew who Judith was, and read several of Judith’s critically acclaimed popular science books. The young woman was also well aware of Judith’s intention to retire soon, and that Judith would leave the world of scientific research for good after her retirement. Judith noticed how the woman glanced over the title of the book. “Do you know a lot about science?” Judith asked. The young woman simply said: “In high school, I won several local science competitions.”

#### Female / Writing

Judith was reading a book, titled “Writing Short Stories: How to Succeed at Writing Competitions”. She was sitting at her favourite spot in the park, thumbing through the pages of the writing guide she had authored. Writing was her career, her life. After years of practice, Judith had managed to become an award-winning author, publishing numerous critically acclaimed novels and short stories. Right before she went to the park, had a meeting with her editor, discussing the possibility of Judith writing another book. Now, spending time in the park was a good way of brainstorming ideas for the upcoming project. The tranquillity of the park was also a good way of forgetting about the stress of her profession. Although

Judith loved writing, she wanted to live a calm life, out of the spotlight. She could not stand the media attention her fame had brought her. Ultimately, this led Judith to publicly announce her retirement from writing last week. In a month, after she had completed her final novel, she would not be involved in the writing community in any way whatsoever.

Lost in thought, Judith heard footsteps. When she looked up, she saw a young woman approaching her. This woman had previously participated in writing competitions and was new in town. Although few people knew her yet, she had looked up the various writers in the area, and knew who Judith was, and read several of Judith's award-winning short stories. The young woman was also well aware of Judith's intention to retire soon, and that Judith would leave the world of writing for good after her retirement. Judith noticed how the woman glanced over the title of the book. "Do you know how to write short stories?" Judith asked. The young woman simply said: "In high school, I won several local writing competitions."

### **Vignettes for Experiment 3**

#### **Specific Query Condition**

Male / Chess

Peter looked at the chessboard on the table in front of him. He was sitting at his favourite spot in the college courtyard, waiting. As a lecturer at a local college, Peter had volunteered to build up the college's chess team for the next big tournaments. How would he make sure that his college would get a good result or maybe even win? Right before he went to the courtyard, Peter had made an announcement to the entire school, asking for any student chess players to come forward and find him in the courtyard. He had even brought his own chessboard, so people would recognize him. In case someone wanted to join the chess team, Peter announced, they could just come to the courtyard, where Peter would be sitting for the next hour. Hopefully there would even be a strong chess player among the college students willing to join.

Lost in thought, Peter heard footsteps. When he looked up, he saw a young man approaching him. This man was a chess player, who was new to the university. He had heard the announcement and was interested in participating in chess tournaments for the university team. Peter noticed how the man glanced over the chessboard on the table. "Do you know how to play chess?" Peter asked, hoping he might be able to recruit good chess players. The young man simply said: "In high school, I won several local tournaments."

Male / Computer Science

Peter was reading a book, titled “Advanced Programming for Hackathons”. He was sitting at his favourite spot in the college courtyard, thumbing through the pages of the guide. As a lecturer at a local college, Peter had volunteered to build up the college’s programming team for the next big hackathons. How would he make sure that his college would get a good result or maybe even win? Right before he went to the courtyard, Peter had made an announcement to the entire school, asking for any student programmers to come forward and find him in the courtyard. In case someone wanted to join the college hackathon team, Peter announced, they could just come to the courtyard, where Peter would be sitting for the next hour. Hopefully there would even be a talented student programmer among the college students willing to join.

Lost in thought, Peter heard footsteps. When he looked up, he saw a young man approaching him. This man had previously participated in hackathons and was new to the university. He had heard the announcement and was interested in joining the college hackathon team. Peter noticed how the man glanced over the title of the book. “Do you know programming?” Peter asked, hoping he might be able to recruit talented student programmers. The young man simply said: “In high school, I won several local hackathons.”

#### Male / Poker

Peter looked at the poker set on the table in front of him. He was sitting at his favourite spot in the college courtyard, waiting. As a lecturer at a local college, Peter had decided to build up a poker team for the next big tournaments. How would he make sure that his team would get a good result or maybe even win? Right before he went to the courtyard, Peter had made an announcement to the entire school, asking for any student poker players to come forward and find him in the courtyard. He had even brought his own poker set, so people would recognize him. In case someone wanted to join the poker team, Peter announced, they could just come to the courtyard, where Peter would be sitting for the next hour. Hopefully there would even be a skilled poker player among the college students willing to join.

Lost in thought, Peter heard footsteps. When he looked up, he saw a young man approaching him. This man was a poker player, who was new to the university. He had heard the announcement and was interested in participating in poker tournaments for the team. Peter noticed how the man glanced over the poker set on the table. “Do you know how to play poker?” Peter asked, hoping he might be able to recruit good poker players. The young man simply said: “In high school, I won several local tournaments.”

#### Female / Chess

Judith looked at the chessboard on the table in front of her. She was sitting at her favourite spot in the college courtyard, waiting. As a lecturer at a local college, Judith had volunteered to build up the college's chess team for the next big tournaments. How would she make sure that her college would get a good result or maybe even win? Right before she went to the courtyard, Judith had made an announcement to the entire school, asking for any student chess players to come forward and find her in the courtyard. She had even brought her own chessboard, so people would recognize her. In case someone wanted to join the chess team, Judith announced, they could just come to the courtyard, where Judith would be sitting for the next hour. Hopefully there would even be a strong chess player among the college students willing to join.

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#### Female / Computer Science

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### **Low Status Condition**

Male / Chess

Peter looked at the chessboard on the table in front of him. He was sitting at his favourite spot in a park next to the chess club. Chess was his career, his life. After years of training, Peter had managed to become one of the top chess players in the world, winning the national chess championship multiple times. Right before he went to the park Peter had just finished an intense chess match against the world champion. Now, spending time in the park was a good way of taking a little break from the match. The tranquillity of the park was also a good way of forgetting about the competitive nature of his profession. Although Peter loved chess, he wanted to live a calm life, out of the spotlight. Ultimately, this led Peter to publicly announce his retirement from chess last week. In a month, after a final competition, he would not be involved in the world of competitive chess in any way whatsoever.

Lost in thought, Peter heard footsteps. When he looked up, he saw a young man approaching him. This man was also a chess player, who was new in town. Although few people knew him yet, he had looked up the various chess players in the area, and knew who Peter was, and what his chess level was. The young man was also well aware of Peter’s intention to retire soon, and that Peter would leave the professional chess world for good after his retirement. Peter noticed how the man glanced over the chessboard on the table. “Do you

know how to play chess?” Peter asked. The young man simply said: “In high school, I won several local tournaments.”

#### Male / Computer Science

Peter was reading a book, titled “Advanced Programming for Hackathons”. He was sitting at his favourite spot in the park, thumbing through the pages of the guide he had authored. Programming and computer science was his career, his life. After years of study and research, Peter had managed to become an acclaimed computer scientist, being appointed to a full professorship at an Ivy League university and serving as a senior technology advisor to the government. Right before he went to the park, Peter had a meeting with his editor, discussing the possibility of Peter authoring another computer science textbook that ambitious students could use to prepare for the most competitive hackathons in the country. Now, spending time in the park was a good way of brainstorming ideas for the upcoming project. The tranquillity of the park was also a good way of forgetting about the competitive nature of his profession. Although Peter loved computer science, he wanted to live a calm life, out of the spotlight. He could not stand the media attention that his status as one of the foremost technology experts in the country had brought him. Ultimately, this led Peter to publicly announce his retirement from all positions last week. In a month, after he had wrapped up his final projects, he would not be involved in the world of programming and computer science in any way whatsoever.

Lost in thought, Peter heard footsteps. When he looked up, he saw a young man approaching him. This man had previously participated in hackathons and was new in town. Although few people knew him yet, he had looked up the various computer science professors in the area, and knew who Peter was, and read several of Peter’s advanced programming books. The young man was also well aware of Peter’s intention to retire soon, and that Peter would leave the world of computer science for good after his retirement. Peter noticed how the man glanced over the title of the book. “Do you know programming?” Peter asked. The young man simply said: “In high school, I won several local hackathons.”

#### Male / Poker

Peter looked at the poker set on the table in front of him. He was sitting at his favourite spot in a park next to the poker club. Poker was his career, his life. After years of training, Peter had managed to become one of the top poker players in the world, regularly winning the top poker tournaments in the country. Right before he went to the park Peter had just finished an intense poker game against other world-class poker players. Now, spending time in the park was a

good way of taking a little break from the game. The tranquillity of the park was also a good way of forgetting about the competitive nature of his profession. Although Peter loved poker, he wanted to live a calm life, out of the spotlight. Ultimately, this led Peter to publicly announce his retirement from poker last week. In a month, after a final tournament, he would not be involved in the world of professional poker in any way whatsoever.

Lost in thought, Peter heard footsteps. When he looked up, he saw a young man approaching him. This man was also a poker player, who was new in town. Although few people knew him yet, he had looked up the various poker players in the area, and knew who Peter was, and what his skill level in poker was. The young man was also well aware of Peter's intention to retire soon, and that Peter would leave the professional poker world for good after his retirement. Peter noticed how the man glanced over the poker set on the table. "Do you know how to play poker?" Peter asked. The young man simply said: "In high school, I won several local tournaments."

#### Female / Chess

Judith looked at the chessboard on the table in front of her. She was sitting at her favourite spot in a park next to the chess club. Chess was her career, her life. After years of training, Judith had managed to become one of the top chess players in the world, winning the national chess championship multiple times. Right before she went to the park Judith had just finished an intense chess match against the world champion. Now, spending time in the park was a good way of taking a little break from the match. The tranquillity of the park was also a good way of forgetting about the competitive nature of her profession. Although Judith loved chess, she wanted to live a calm life, out of the spotlight. Ultimately, this led Judith to publicly announce her retirement from chess last week. In a month, after a final competition, she would not be involved in the world of competitive chess in any way whatsoever.

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good way of forgetting about the competitive nature of her profession. Although Judith loved poker, she wanted to live a calm life, out of the spotlight. Ultimately, this led Judith to publicly announce her retirement from poker last week. In a month, after a final tournament, she would not be involved in the world of professional poker in any way whatsoever.

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### **No Competition Condition**

Male / Chess

Peter looked at the chessboard on the table in front of him. He was sitting at his favourite spot in the park, where Peter found a chessboard that someone had forgotten. Peter didn't really care about chess: he barely knew how to play, and mindlessly stared at the chess board while pondering some problem he was facing in his career as a professional tennis player.

Lost in thought, Peter heard footsteps. When he looked up, he saw a young man approaching him. This man was also a tennis player, who was new in town. Although few people knew him yet, he had looked up the various players in the area, and knew who Peter was, that he loved tennis, but that he had no reason to be particularly interested in chess. Peter noticed how the man glanced over the chessboard on the table. "Do you know how to play chess?" Peter asked to strike up a conversation. The young man simply said: "In high school, I won several local tournaments."

Male / Computer Science

Peter was reading a book, titled "Advanced Programming for Hackathons". He was sitting at his favourite spot in the park, and someone had left the book on the table. Peter didn't really care about programming: he could barely remember his high school programming classes and was using the book as a distraction from some problem he was facing in his career as a professional tennis player.

Lost in thought, Peter heard footsteps. When he looked up, he saw a young man approaching him. This man was also a tennis player, who was new in town. Although few people knew him yet, he had looked up the various players in the area, and knew who Peter was, that he loved tennis, but that he had no reason to be particularly interested in programming. Peter noticed how the man glanced over the title of the book. “Do you know programming?” Peter asked to strike up a conversation. The young man simply said: “In high school, I won several local hackathons.”

#### Male / Poker

Peter looked at the poker set on the table in front of him. He was sitting at his favourite spot in the park, where Peter found a poker set that someone had forgotten. Peter didn't really care about poker: he barely knew how to play, and mindlessly stared at the poker set while pondering some problem he was facing in his career as a professional tennis player.

Lost in thought, Peter heard footsteps. When he looked up, he saw a young man approaching him. This man was also a tennis player, who was new in town. Although few people knew him yet, he had looked up the various players in the area, and knew who Peter was, that he loved tennis, but that he had no reason to be particularly interested in poker. Peter noticed how the man glanced over the poker set on the table. “Do you know how to play poker?” Peter asked to strike up a conversation. The young man simply said: “In high school, I won several local tournaments.”

#### Female / Chess

Judith looked at the chessboard on the table in front of her. She was sitting at her favourite spot in the park, where Judith found a chessboard that someone had forgotten. Judith didn't really care about chess: she barely knew how to play, and mindlessly stared at the chess board while pondering some problem she was facing in her career as a professional tennis player.

Lost in thought, Judith heard footsteps. When she looked up, she saw a young woman approaching her. This woman was also a tennis player, who was new in town. Although few people knew her yet, she had looked up the various players in the area, and knew who Judith was, that she loved tennis, but that she had no reason to be particularly interested in chess. Judith noticed how the woman glanced over the chessboard on the table. “Do you know how to play chess?” Judith asked to strike up a conversation. The young woman simply said: “In high school, I won several local tournaments.”

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Judith was reading a book, titled “Advanced Programming for Hackathons”. She was sitting at her favourite spot in the park, and someone had left the book on the table. Judith didn’t really care about programming: she could barely remember her high school programming classes and was using the book as a distraction from some problem she was facing in her career as a professional tennis player.

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### Female / Poker

Judith looked at the poker set on the table in front of her. She was sitting at her favourite spot in the park, where Judith found a poker set that someone had forgotten. Judith didn’t really care about poker: she barely knew how to play, and mindlessly stared at the poker set while pondering some problem she was facing in her career as a professional tennis player.

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## **Superior Status Condition**

### Male / Chess

Peter looked at the chessboard on the table in front of him. He was sitting at his favourite spot in the park, wondering how he could advance his chess level – he’d brought the chessboard to do some chess exercises. Although only moderately talented Peter loved chess. Every day he practiced in order to get better, but it took a long while until his efforts paid off. But Peter kept

his tail up – after all, chess was an important aspect of his life. His best performance was when he had finished second place in a local high school tournament.

Lost in thought, Peter heard footsteps. When he looked up, he saw a young man approaching him. This man was also a chess player, who was new in town. Although few people knew him yet, he had looked up the various chess players in the area, and knew who Peter was, and that he had never finished first in a local tournament. Peter noticed how the man glanced over the chessboard on the table. “Do you know how to play chess?” Peter asked. The young man simply said: “In high school, I won several local tournaments.”

#### Male / Computer Science

Peter was reading a book, titled “Advanced Programming for Hackathons”. He was sitting at his favourite spot in the park, thumbing through the pages of the guide. Although only moderately talented Peter loved programming. Every day he practised in order to get better, but it took a long while until his efforts paid off. But Peter kept his tail up – after all, he was really interested in programming. His best result was when he scored second place in a local high school hackathon.

Lost in thought, Peter heard footsteps. When he looked up, he saw a young man approaching him. This man had previously participated in hackathons and was new in town. Although few people knew him yet, he had looked up the various participants for the local hackathons, and knew who Peter was, and that he had never finished first in a local hackathon. Peter noticed how the man glanced over the title of the book. “Do you know programming?” Peter asked. The young man simply said: “In high school, I won several local hackathons.”

#### Male / Poker

Peter looked at the poker set on the table in front of him. He was sitting at his favourite spot in the park, wondering how he could advance his skill level in poker – he’d brought the poker set to go through some poker strategies. Although only moderately talented Peter loved poker. Every day he practiced in order to get better, but it took a long while until his efforts paid off. But Peter kept his tail up – after all, poker was an important aspect of his life. His best performance was when he had finished second place in a local tournament.

Lost in thought, Peter heard footsteps. When he looked up, he saw a young man approaching him. This man was also a poker player, who was new in town. Although few people knew him yet, he had looked up the various poker players in the area, and knew who Peter was, and that he had never finished first in a local tournament. Peter noticed how the man

glanced over the poker set on the table. “Do you know how to play poker?” Peter asked. The young man simply said: “In high school, I won several local tournaments.”

#### Female / Chess

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Lost in thought, Judith heard footsteps. When she looked up, she saw a young woman approaching her. This woman was also a chess player, who was new in town. Although few people knew her yet, she had looked up the various chess players in the area, and knew who Judith was, and that she had never finished first in a local tournament. Judith noticed how the woman glanced over the chessboard on the table. “Do you know how to play chess?” Judith asked. The young woman simply said: “In high school, I won several local tournaments.”

#### Female / Computer Science

Judith was reading a book, titled “Advanced Programming for Hackathons”. She was sitting at her favourite spot in the park, thumbing through the pages of the guide. Although only moderately talented Judith loved programming. Every day she practised in order to get better, but it took a long while until her efforts paid off. But Judith kept her tail up – after all, she was really interested in programming. Her best result was when she scored second place in a local high school hackathon.

Lost in thought, Judith heard footsteps. When she looked up, she saw a young woman approaching her. This woman had previously participated in hackathons and was new in town. Although few people knew her yet, she had looked up the various participants for the local hackathons, and knew who Judith was, and that she had never finished first in a local hackathon. Judith noticed how the woman glanced over the title of the book. “Do you know programming?” Judith asked. The young woman simply said: “In high school, I won several local hackathons.”

#### Female / Poker

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Lost in thought, Judith heard footsteps. When she looked up, she saw a young woman approaching her. This woman was also a poker player, who was new in town. Although few people knew her yet, she had looked up the various poker players in the area, and knew who Judith was, and that she had never finished first in a local tournament. Judith noticed how the woman glanced over the poker set on the table. “Do you know how to play poker?” Judith asked. The young woman simply said: “In high school, I won several local tournaments.”

### Descriptive Statistics for Experiments 1-3

#### Descriptive Statistics for Experiment 1

**Table 2.** Experiment 1. Means and standard deviations for perceived intent to appear superior (average of superiority and condescension questions), dislikeability, and perceived bragging.

	Condition	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Perceived intent to appear superior	Specific Query	49	3.43	1.26
	Low Status	52	3.20	1.44
	No Competition	48	3.55	1.62
	Superior Status	49	4.62	1.37
Dislikeability	Specific Query	49	3.16	1.09
	Low Status	52	3.69	1.11
	No Competition	48	3.17	1.03
	Superior Status	49	4.16	1.10
Perceived Bragging	Specific Query	49	3.51	1.54
	Low Status	52	3.69	1.83
	No Competition	48	3.79	1.88
	Superior Status	49	4.78	1.56

### Descriptive Statistics for Experiment 2

**Table 3.** Experiment 2. Means and standard deviations for perceived intent to appear superior (average of superiority and condescension questions), dislikeability, and perceived bragging.

	<b>Condition</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
Perceived intent to appear superior	Specific Query	50	3.31	1.57
	Low Status	50	3.19	1.47
	No Competition	50	3.50	1.63
	Superior Status	49	4.67	1.39
Dislikeability	Specific Query	50	3.08	1.08
	Low Status	50	3.52	1.05
	No Competition	50	3.14	1.23
	Superior Status	49	3.84	1.23
Perceived Bragging	Specific Query	50	3.24	1.89
	Low Status	50	3.38	1.47
	No Competition	50	3.70	1.74
	Superior Status	49	4.57	1.66

### Descriptive Statistics for Experiment 3

**Table 4.** Experiment 3. Means and standard deviations for perceived intent to appear superior (average of superiority and condescension questions), dislikeability, and perceived bragging.

	<b>Condition</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
Perceived intent to appear superior	Specific Query	50	3.45	1.46
	Low Status	50	2.94	1.52
	No Competition	52	3.18	1.28
	Superior Status	48	4.43	1.33
Dislikeability	Specific Query	50	3.18	1.20
	Low Status	50	3.40	1.09
	No Competition	52	3.38	1.01
	Superior Status	48	3.94	1.16
Perceived Bragging	Specific Query	50	3.62	1.80
	Low Status	50	2.74	1.51
	No Competition	52	3.62	1.72
	Superior Status	48	4.52	1.66

### **Mediation Analyses**

Since Experiments 1 and 2 are nearly identical, we conducted a joint mediation analysis (combined  $N = 397$ ). For these experiments the mediation analysis showed a significant indirect effect of condition (superior status vs other conditions) on dislikeability through perceived intent to appear superior;  $b = 0.4809$ , 95% BCa CI [0.3278, 0.6474]. This effect was replicated in Experiment 3 ( $N = 200$ ),  $b = 0.4818$ , 95% BCa CI [0.2850, 0.6999].