

The Joy of Familiar Strangers

We have lots of different kinds of relationships in life, from close family to extended family to close friends to acquaintances. But there's another kind of relationship which is underrated: familiar strangers.

Familiar strangers are those familiar faces you tend to see when you're doing the things you love. I see my familiar strangers at swing dances, at jiu jitsu class, or at church. Maybe I've asked their names, but if I have, I've mostly forgotten them. Fortunately, the relationship is one in which knowing and remembering names doesn't matter all that much.

We may not know each others' names, but we share passions and missions. We share experiences with each other - like that Monday night swing dancing adventure with the train tracks or the time we took down that gate at the church. I can nod to those familiar strangers who shared those memories, and they can nod back. When it's time to do the things we love again, we familiar strangers will find each other somehow - no planning needed, no contact information needed. Anonymity and unity come together in this special kind of relationship.