

When another driver cuts in front of him, even if no danger is involved, the driver may go through a physiological change, becoming angry and even attacking the other driver. Compare this to the situation that occurs when the same man is stepping into an elevator and another person steps in front of him, invading his personal territory. His reaction in those circumstances is normally apologetic and he allows the other man to go first; remarkably different from what happens when another driver cuts in front of him on the open road.

For some people, the car becomes a protective cocoon in which they can hide from the outside world. As they drive slowly beside the curb, almost in the gutter, they can be as big a hazard on the road as the driver with the expanded personal space.

In summary, others will invite or reject you, depending on the respect that you have for their personal space. This is why the happy-go-lucky person who slaps everyone he meets on the back or continually touches people during a conversation is secretly disliked by everyone. As a number of factors can affect the spatial distance a person takes in relation to others, it is wise to consider every criterion before making a judgment about why a person is keeping a certain distance.

From Figure 14, it is now possible to make any one of the following assumptions:

1. Both the man and woman are city dwellers and the man is making an intimate approach to the woman.
2. The man has a narrower intimate zone than the woman and is innocently invading hers.
3. The man is from a culture with a narrow intimate zone and the woman was brought up in a rural area.

A few simple questions and further observation of the couple can reveal the correct answer and help you avoid an embarrassing situation resulting from an incorrect assumption.



Figure 14 *Who is who and from where!*