Humans and apes create social closeness by co-attending to the same thing in close proximity, but only humans create additional closeness through establishing common ground about this experience being shared.

Unlike other animals, humans have a variety of ways to create social closeness with others that revolve around shared experiences. We feel socially closer to others with whom we make music, dance, play team sports and converse, especially when sharing personal information or attitudes, or by gossiping. The human ubiquity of such behaviors contrasted by the absence of similar behavior in other species raises the

thing). We therefore conducted a study to see what role common ground plays in the creating of social closeness during a shared experience, and if this role is similar for human children and great apes.

an experimenter following an interaction in which both they and the experimenter were watching the same video. However, in one condition, the experimenter attempted to create common ground by means of a communicative look to the child in response to the video starting on the screen, providing the necessary information for the participant to infer that they now both knew that they were both watching the same video. In the control condition, the experimenter did not look back at the participant when the video started, meaning that during the video the participant was merely observing the experimenter watching the video while watching the video themselves as well. Importantly, in the control condition the experimenter looked at the participant when they reconvened for the dependent measure so that there was a look from the experimenter to the participant in both conditions. We found that human children, but not great apes approached faster after the experimenter had attempted to create common ground with them.

Overall, these experiments suggest that sharing attention creates a social connection between individuals, facilitating feelings of social closeness and a willingness to interact. Furthermore, the basic psychological mechanisms of creating a social connection with others through sharing attention can not only be found in human adults, but also in human children as young as 2.5 years old, and, surprisingly, in great apes as well. However, where humans create additional social closeness by establishing common ground between them and their partner about the fact that they are sharing attention to something, attempts to create common ground does not

to spent so much time, energy and resources into creating shared experiences is most likely not merely explained by a drive to engage in similar experiences in close proximity. Instead, an (at least) equally important factor is that such social activities provide opportunities to create common ground about sharing that experience with others.

More generally, this series of studies provides more insight in human and great ape social cognition and its role in social interaction and social relationship formation. The current results imply that apes are, unlike some have argued before,