

THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF CLINICAL SEXOLOGISTS  
AT MAIMONIDES UNIVERSITY

THE USE OF DIFFERENTIAL LANGUAGE BETWEEN HETEROSEXUAL  
MALES AND FEMALES REGARDING LOVE AND SEX

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JILL FOXMAN

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## DISSERTATION APPROVAL

This dissertation submitted by Jill Foxman has been read and approved by three faculty members of the American Academy of Clinical Sexologists at Maimonides University.

The final copies have been examined by the Dissertation Committee and the signatures which appear here verify the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given the final approval with reference to content, form and mechanical accuracy.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Signature

Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Wm. A. Granzig, Ph.D, FAACS  
Advisor and Committee Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
November 30, 2002

\_\_\_\_\_  
W. B. Easterling, Ph.D.  
Committee Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
November 30, 2002

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ruth Hunt, Ph.D.  
Committee Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
November 30, 2002

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## VITA

Jill Foxman is a mental health counselor in private practice in Boca Raton, FL., U.S.A. Her masters degree in professional studies in human relations was awarded in 2000, from New York Institute of Technology, Boca Raton, FL., U.S.A. A bachelors degree in economics was awarded from George Washington University, Washington, D.C., U.S.A., in 1985. Currently she is completing her Doctor of Philosophy degree at Maimonides University in Miami, FL., U.S.A.

Jill Foxman is a Diplomate of the American Board of Sexology, a certified sex therapist, a certified cognitive behavioral therapist and a member of the Mental Health Counselor Association, Florida Counseling Association and the American Counseling Association.

## ABSTRACT

In order to understand the language differences between men and women it is important to understand that linguistics, one of the fastest growing academic disciplines, is the study of the structure, history, development and the use of human languages. It ranges from the sounds languages use, phonology, syntax and semantics. Of particular interest is the study of sociolinguistics, which includes the relationships of language to ethnicity and social class, the special language of institutions, i.e., marriage and courtship and an examination of the nuances of language usage in different conversational situations.

Heterosexual males and females have learned language differences resulting in a lack of linguistic communication. The resultant stress and confusion affect sexual response. Solution focused therapy is discussed as a treatment modality addressing lack of linguistic communication as initiating new behavior patterns without focusing on the details of the presenting challenge in the relationship. Brief therapy involves a joint undertaking in which the couple provides data, feelings and perceptions and jointly constructs a workable solution. The therapist's expertise is not to impose any single correct way for the couples to live, but more as a guide in creating a collaborative solution-oriented dialogue.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION TO LANGUAGE DIFFERENCES

The review of literature examines the distinctive linguistic patterns of males and females sexually or romantically involved with each other and how these differences contribute to miscommunication. The physiological and biological effects of communication play a significant role in regards to the differential language used between men and woman. The use of solution-focused and “I” language couple’s therapy as it may help men and women bridge the language gap is discussed. For the purposes of clarity in this review of literature, only male/female relationships are examined. This study does not exclude the validity of gay male or lesbian relationships or presuppose same-sex relationships are without linguistic differential. Conversely, there are exceptions to linguistic difficulties in heterosexual relationships as not all females and males communicate in the same ways (Tannen 1990). In studying the gender differences a distinction has been made between the synchronic and diachronic structures of language.

Additionally, it is important to mention there are many variables affecting gender difference such as age, race, nationality, or class, which may contribute to miscommunication (Aries1998). The zeitgeist determines the setting of the interaction, the topic of the conversation, and the sex composition of the group which influence human behavior in the interaction and influence the degree to which gender differences are delineated. (Aries 1998).

The intent of this study is to review the selected literature and conclude with how the use of differential language between heterosexual males and females regarding

love and sex affects their relationship. Verbal miscommunication between couples can be one of the main reasons for stress and confusion in a relationship or the dissolution of a relationship. This miscommunication can affect relationships sexually as well as emotionally or socially. Males and females experience and express their sexuality differently and that is a source of tension in many relationships (Townsend 1998). Thus a distinction between langue and parole has been maintained throughout the paper.

The sensation caused by Alfred Kinsey's monumental studies of sexual behavior, seem to have developed an insatiable appetite for sexual and biological information. The greatest gap of all exists between the extensive knowledge about the physiology of sex and the relatively rudimentary awareness of the psychology of arousal. The etiology of the sexual template as to why certain people, images and situations are so much more stimulating with the subsequent development of desire. Why are most of us attached to specific stimuli? The resultant desire reveals much about who we are and for what we're searching. (Morin 1995).

The Hite Report on female sexuality, attempted to answer this question by questionnaires that were distributed to men in various parts of the country. The purpose of this early distribution was to test for errors of fact which might be incorporated into the study of female sexuality and to see if there was a difference between social stereotypes of male sexuality and the way men act upon them. Hite realized that there is much that is not known about men's sexuality, and especially about how men feel about their sexual experiences and personal relationships. Some men viewed the questionnaire as a tool for opening up discussion with their wife, lover, or friend (Hite 1981).

Female sexuality had been seen essentially as a response to male sexuality and rarely acknowledged that female sexuality might have a complex nature of its own which would be more than just the logical counterpart of male sexuality (Hite 1976).

The physiological and biological effects of communication support the most powerful explanations for this difference in language. Therefore, psychological and emotional differences are also examined.

Thus, miscommunications affect relationships sexually, socially, and emotionally. Having an understanding of female and male sexuality has helped several couples see a lot of things in their relationship that had been hidden from preconceptions and lack of understanding of each others' feelings (Hite 1981).

How important are relationships with women to men? How do men see women? How are men's relationships with women different from their relationships with other men? What do men want from a relationship with a woman? Shere Hite discussed that for some men friendships with other men are nowhere near as fulfilling as a sexual relationship with a woman that they loved. Some men felt that friends are nowhere as close and intimate as love relationships. While friends are easy to talk to, confide in, and once in a while tell them some of your fears and fantasies, they still do not compare to the intimacy that a love relationship has (Hite 1981). Other men indicated that they communicate well on levels of relationships with females other than the intimate sharing aspect. Many men report being unable to keep the feelings flowing back and forth. Some men said one reason for this discomfort was that they feared they did not feel what the women thought they should feel (Hite 1981).

Many men thought of having sex as a substitute for talking. A few men had the reverse problem. That women would not communicate freely or openly with them. Only a few men placed a high value on talking. One man pointed out that showing feelings is not an automatic equalizer of men and women. Sometimes men felt pressure to show feelings when they in fact did not have many feelings for the women, or even disliked her. Others said they didn't want to show their feelings for fear the woman would hurt them (Hite1981).

## CHAPTER 2

## PHILOSOPHICAL DETERMINANTS OF THE ORIGINS OF MEN AND WOMEN

In Plato's Symposium Aristophanes professed to open a discourse to praise love or Eros in another way. Humans, he said, judging by their neglect of Eros, have never understood the power of love. For if they understood Eros they would surely have built noble temples and altars, and offered solemn sacrifices in his honor; but this is not done, and most certainly ought to be done. Eros of all the Gods is the best friend of men, the helper and the healer of the ills which are the great impediment to the happiness of all humans. By describing the power of Eros, and teaching the world of this power humans shall begin to understand the importance of love. In the first place, what is the nature of man, and what has happened to it? The original human nature was not like the present but different.

The sexes were not two as they are now, but originally were three: there was man, woman, and the union of the two with a double nature. The word androgyne is the closest that modern English has to describe this state. Originally, the primeval human was round, back and sides forming a circle; and had four hands and four feet, one head with two faces, looking opposite ways set on a round neck and precisely alike; also four ears, two sets of genitalia, and the remainder of anatomy to correspond. This human could walk upright as people now do, backwards or forwards, and could also roll over and over at a great pace, turning on the four hands and four feet, eight in all, like tumblers going over and over with their legs in the air when wanting to run rapidly.

There were three sexes of humans because the sun, moon, and earth are three. The man was originally the child of the sun, the woman of the earth, and the man-woman of the moon, which is made up of sun and earth, and they were all round and moved round and round like their parents. These humans possessed great might and strength, and the thoughts of their hearts were great. Since humans were so strong and vain they made an attack upon the Gods. Two of these humans, Otys and Ephialtes, dared to scale heaven to seize the Gods and conquer them. The Gods were not pleased and debated whether to they should kill them and annihilate the entire human race with thunderbolts, as they had done to the giants. That would also be an end of the sacrifices and worship which humans offered to the Gods; but, on the other hand, the Gods could not suffer their insolence to be unpunished. At last, after a good deal of reflection, Zeus discovered a way to punish the humans. His plan was to humble human pride, improve human manners, and allow humans to continue to exist. Zeus decided to cut them in two so they would be diminished in strength, and increased in numbers. This having the advantage of making them more profitable to the Gods. Henceforth human beings shall walk upright on two legs, however if they continue to be insolent and will not be quiet, they will be split again and shall have to hop about on a single leg. Zeus spoke and cut humans in two. He cut them one after another and bade Apollo to give the face and the half of the neck a turn in order that the man might contemplate the section of himself: he would thus learn a lesson of humility. Apollo was also told to heal their wounds and compose their forms. By giving a turn to the face and pulling the skin from the sides all over the belly, like drawpurses, and he made one mouth at the center, which he fastened in a knot called the navel. Apollo also molded the breast and took out most of the

wrinkles, like a shoemaker might smooth leather; he left a few wrinkles, however, in the region of the belly and navel, as a memorial of the primeval state. After the division the two parts of man, and the two parts of woman, each desiring its other half, came together, and throwing their arms about one another, entwined in mutual embraces, longing to grow into one, they were on the point of dying from hunger and self-neglect, because they did not like to do anything apart; and when one of the halves died and the other survived, the survivor sought another of the same sex as the original unsplit human, being the sections of entire men or women, -- and clung to that. They were being destroyed, when Zeus in pity of them invented a new plan: he turned the parts of generation round to the front, for this had not been always their position, and they sowed the seed no longer as hitherto like grasshoppers in the ground, but in one another; and after the transposition the androgynous male generated in the androgynous female in order that by the mutual embraces of man and woman they might breed, and the race might continue; or if man came to man they might be satisfied, and rest, and go their ways to the business of life: so ancient is the desire of one another which is implanted in us, reuniting our original nature, making one of two, and healing the state of man. Each such man when separated, having one side only, like a flat fish, is but the indenture of a man, and he is always looking for his other male half. Men who are a half of that double nature which was once called androgynous are lovers of women. Adulterers both men and women are generally of this breed. The women who are a half of the two-parted woman do not care for men, but have female attachments and female companions of this sort. But they who are a section of the two-parted male follow the male, and while young, being part of the original man, hang about men and embrace them. They are

themselves the best of boys and youths, because they have the most manly nature. Some indeed assert that they are shameless, but this is not true; for they do not act thus from any want of shame, but because they are valiant and manly, and have a manly countenance, and embrace that which is like them. When they reach manhood they are lovers of men, and are not naturally inclined to marry women or beget children. If at all, they do so only in obedience to the law; but they are satisfied if they may be allowed to live with one another unwedded; for such a nature is prone to love and ready to return love, always embracing that which is his separated half to himself. When one of them meets with his other half, the actual half of himself, the pair are lost in an amazement of love and friendship and intimacy, and will not be out of the other's sight, even for a moment: these are the people who pass their whole lives together; yet they could not explain what they desire of one another.

For the intense yearning which each of them has towards the other does not appear to be the desire of intercourse, but of something else which the soul of either evidently desires and cannot tell.

Suppose Hephaestus, with his instruments, to come to the pair who are lying side by side and to say to them, "What do you people want of one another?" they would be unable to explain. And suppose further, that when he saw their perplexity he said: "Do you desire to be wholly one; always day and night to be in one another's company? for if this is what you desire, I am ready to melt you into one and let you grow together, so that being two you shall become one, and while you live a common life as if you were a single man, and after your death in the world below still be one departed soul instead of two -- I ask whether this is what you lovingly desire, and whether you are satisfied to attain this?" -- there is not a man of them who when he heard the proposal would deny or would not acknowledge that this meeting and melting into one another, this becoming one instead of two, was the very expression of his ancient need.

And the reason is that human nature was originally one and humans were a whole, and the desire and pursuit of the whole is called love. If humans are not obedient to the Gods, there is a danger that they shall be split up again and go about like bass-relief, the profile figures having only half a nose which are sculptured on monuments, and that humans shall be like tallies. Wherefore let all humans avoid evil, and obtain the good of finding their other half, of which Eros is the lord and minister; and let no one oppose him. For if humans are friends of the God and at peace with Him we shall find our own true loves, which rarely happens in this world at present. These words of Plato include men and women everywhere; and if human loves were perfectly accomplished, with each one returning to their primeval nature, then humans would be happy. This attainment, best of all, the best in the next degree and under present circumstances must be the nearest approach to such a union; and that will be the attainment of a congenial love. Humans must praise the god Eros, who is the greatest benefactor, both leading us in this life back to our own nature, and giving us high hopes for the future, for he promises that if we are pious, he will restore us to our original state, and heal us and make us happy and blessed.

Thus Plato exhorts all to find their other half, or in modern parlance their soul-mates. However early Christians had a different view of men and women finding their other half.

## CHAPTER 3

### MEDIEVAL THEOLOGY AND SEX ROLES

The Roman Church promoted a form of medieval misogyny which cast women not as equals but rather as inferior to men. Looking at the teachings of Tertullian, Jerome, Chrysostom, Ambrose, Augustine, Gregory of Nyssa, Novatian, Methodius, Clement of Rome, and Clement of Alexandria, as well as their intellectual and literary heirs of the nineteenth century, a certain vision of woman is proposed. This is why it is so important, to distinguish between language and action, words and deeds, in dealing with the question of misogyny. Christine de Pizan's insistence upon the repetitiveness of misogynists acknowledges the important role played by language in coming to grips with antifeminism. Misogyny is the expression of a negative opinion. De Pizan wonders how it happened that so many different men and learned men among them have been and are so inclined to express both in speaking and in their treatises and writings so many wicked things about women. The social status of actual women at any given moment, related to this misogyny is a way of speaking about, as distinct from doing something to, women, though speech can be a form of action and even of social practice, or at least its ideological component. Such a distinction between words and deeds, where relations between the genders are concerned, is the necessary foundation of a dialectical, historically informed, political understanding of the phenomenon, an understanding which otherwise would remain hopelessly enmeshed in the literalism of a false ideology, a literalism that risks taking gender difference rather than the oppressive exercise of power by either sex for the true historic cause of social injustice. According

to the discourse of medieval misogyny only by making such a distinction can one begin to identify not only the obvious forms of misogyny, but the more subtle, invisible manifestations of its grand themes, some of which even look like the opposite of antifeminism. Here lies another important difference between misogyny, which may be unconsciously complicit with the phenomenon described, and the present attempt to undo it. The canonical antifeminists of the Middle Ages, and their spiritual heirs the philosophers, novelists, medical specialists, social scientists, and critics of the nineteenth century, whose own particular brand of Romantic and naturalistic misogyny carries a large charge of unexamined attitudes from the medieval misogyny, like the mace or chastity belt, participates in a vestigial horror practically synonymous with the Middle Ages and because one of the assumptions governing our perception of the early Christian and medieval period is the viral presence of antifeminism. This view does not emanate from the nineteenth-century revival of medievalism, from contemporary feminism, or even from recent interest in the study of women in medieval culture. The denunciation of women, constitutes something of a cultural constant. Reaching back to the Old Testament and to ancient Greece and extending through classical Hellenic, Judaic, and Roman traditions all the way to the fifteenth century, it dominates ecclesiastical writing, letters, sermons, theological tracts, and discussions and compilations of canon law; scientific works, as part of biological, gynecological, and medical knowledge; folklore and philosophy. The discourse of misogyny runs like a vein with certain sections of almost every book on morals throughout medieval literature (Bloch 1991).

The little-known sub genre of debate poems, popular in the thirteenth century and involving the virtues and vices of women participates in the antifeminism of popular forms, not the least of which is the current thought of men when they ask the question “what is it that women want”, is shaped by historical and cultural beliefs so engrained in men that they believe it is a genetic anomaly.

In mythology the speech of women is lying speech, in the figure of Pandora who ruined mankind. Molded from the earth as part of Zeus's vengeance for the theft of fire, the view of woman as the one who through speech sowed discord between man and God lies at the core of the narrative of the Fall, the Old Testament association of the feminine and verbal allurements. Nowhere, however, is the cosmic misogyny of the classical world—a world that includes the terrible figures of the Furies, the Harpies, the Fates, but at least accords woman a powerful place in the order of nature—nowhere is the founding antifeminism of the Genesis story more powerfully domesticated than in the late Latin and Christian world where wives are the equivalent of an annoyance of speech implicit to everyday life. With the first centuries of the Common Era antifeminism becomes synonymous with antimarriage literature. Juvenal, for example, claims that it would be "impossible for a lawyer, a public crier, or even another woman, to speak, so abundant is the sea of a wife's words," which he compares to a "cacophony of cauldrons and bells. "What if a husband is moderate but his wife is wicked, carping, a chatterbox, extravagant (the affliction common to all womankind), filled with many other faults, how will that poor fellow endure this daily unpleasantness, this conceit, this impudence?" asks John Chrysostom. "The man who does not quarrel is a bachelor" It is only necessary to scan the canonical misogynistic texts of subsequent centuries to see that neither the association of woman with verbosity nor the specific terms of the cliché have changed very much. The garrulous female is a persistent feature of the discourse of romance in the West. That guardian of literary probity of the seventeenth century, Boileau, for example, repeats the tiresome traditional view of marriage, which holds the promise of unceasing contradiction, argument, scolding, and harangue. Worse, the

verbal abuse to which the husband submits implies the use of terms not to be found in the dictionary. The talkative female is particularly prevalent in the precise, prejudicial subjectivity of all speech acts where relations between the genders are concerned. No possibility of an objective regard upon the opposite sex and, therefore, no innocent place of speech. The mere fact of speaking to women makes one a pimp; a refusal to speak or even to look is the sign of a eunuch.

Saint Jerome states "Then come complains that one lady goes out better dressed than she: that another is looked up to by all: 'I am a poor despised nobody at the ladies' assemblies.' 'Why did you ogle that creature next door?' 'Why were you talking to the maid?' 'What did you bring from the market?' 'I am not allowed to have a single friend, or companion'." Yet none of the medieval misogynists is innocent where such a view is concerned, least of all Pope Innocent who sought to demonstrate not only that a married woman is the source of anxiety through her jealousy of others, but that no reply to her garrulous gossiping will ever be sufficient:

"This woman. 'she says, 'goes out better dressed, that one is honored by everybody; but poor little me, I'm the only one in the whole group of women that they scorn they all look down their noses at me.' She wants all his attention and all his praise; if he praises another she takes it as humiliation. He must like every thing she likes, hate everything she spurns. She wants to master, and will not be mastered. She will not be a servant, she must be in charge. She must have a finger in everything.'"

(Bloch 1991).

## CHAPTER 4

### BIOLOGICAL DETERMINANTS

Today many scientists think that the sexes are quite different and that these differences begin to be established in the human brain during development in the womb. When ovum meets sperm and conception occurs, the embryo has neither male nor female genitals. But around the sixth week of fetal life a genetic switch flips and chromosomes direct the precursors of the gonads to develop into testes or ovaries. The differentiating gonads, if testes, begin to produce testicle descending hormone. This powerful male hormone surges through embryonic tissues during the third month of life, to create the male genitals. The fetal hormone, Mullerian Inhibiting Hormone, also creates the male brain. If the embryo is to be a girl, it develops without the stimulus of male hormones, and female genitals emerge along with the female brain. Hormones determine sex of the fetal brain. Scientists think that this brain architecture plays a role in creating the gender differences that appear in later life. In tests of verbal abilities among Americans, it is becoming clear that, on average, little girls speak sooner than boys. They speak more fluently, with greater grammatical accuracy, and with more words per utterance. By age ten, girls excel at verbal reasoning, written prose, verbal memory, pronunciation, and spelling. They are better at foreign languages. They stutter less. They exhibit dyslexia four times less often than boys. And far fewer girls are remedial readers. This is not to say that boys are inarticulate or that all boys have weaker verbal skills than all girls. In fact, there is more variation within each sex than there is between the sexes. On average, women exhibit more verbal skills than men.

These gender differences could be purely learned. Some argue, for example, that because infant girls are born more mature than boys, girls enter life with a slight edge in language ability that parents and the school system then cultivate as they age. In fact, a host of arguments have been marshaled for the possibility that verbal skills are instilled more regularly in girls than in boys. But data now suggest that these sex differences have an underlying biological component as well (Money 1997).

Women are more verbally fluent not only in the United States but in places as diverse as England, the Czech Republic, and Nepal. The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement recently reported that in some 43,000 writing samples of students in fourteen countries on five continents, girls expressed their thoughts more clearly on paper. The most compelling argument for women's verbal superiority, however, is the link between estrogen, the female hormone, and female verbal skills (Fisher 1992).

In a recent study of two hundred women of reproductive age, psychologists showed that during the middle of the monthly menstrual cycle, when estrogen levels peaked, women were at their best verbally. When asked, for example, to repeat the tongue twister "A box of mixed biscuits in a biscuit mixer" five times as fast as possible, they performed particularly well at midcycle. Directly after menses, when estrogen levels were much lower, these women's speed declined. Even at their worst, most of these women outstripped men on all verbal tasks (Cassell 1984) (Fisher 1992).

Men excel, on average, at higher mathematical problems (not at arithmetic) they are generally better at reading maps, solving mazes, and completing several other visual-spatial-quantitative tasks. Some of these skills appear in childhood. Little boys

take toys apart and explore more of the space around them. They are better at tracking objects in space, and they see abstract patterns and relationships more accurately (Cassell 1984).

Further research of the biological origins of the sexes indicates that the cortices of epileptics are temporarily knocked out of action, causing the limbic desires to rise to the surface and seek expression. While sexuality and aggression are not inextricably joined, they exist in very close proximity, with sexuality focused in the hypothalamus, and aggression seething away below it in a small area known as the amygdala. In this scheme of things, male sexuality and aggression co-exist in discrete but neighboring positions within the human limbic system. They're fuelled by the same major hormone and capable of confusion, but are kept in check by the much larger frontal cortex. It's the frontal cortex which permits the anti-social aspects of the limbic drives to be realized in fantasies rather than acted out; it's the frontal cortex which channels raw sexual desires into socially acceptable paths of expression; and it's the frontal cortex which calibrates the potential benefit or damage of sexual and/or aggressive behavior before either suppressing it or acting it out (Hamer and Copeland 1994).

But the cortex is not simply the prim schoolmistress, slapping down the boisterous desires of the limbic system. It is every bit as much of a sexual organ itself. For if the limbic system is the seat of the raw and unharnessed sex drive, it is the cortex which is the seat of seduction. All the elaboration – and a large part of the pleasure – of sex originates there. And in a land where murdering one's competitors and raping one's conquests is forbidden, it's the cunning cortex which has developed an awesome array of sexual alternatives. Male erotic fantasies, show a panoply of techniques men use to make desire a reality (Costler 1940) (Money 1997).

## CHAPTER 5

### ONTOGENY AND LANGUAGE

The use of ontogeny of language is described by Helen Fisher of Rutgers University, who has been carrying out pioneering work using brain scans in order to locate the position of love in the brain. While her research is still in the preliminary stages, she has located three types of emotion in the brain: lust, infatuation, and attachment. Each emotion has its own specific brain chemistry, which lights up the brain when its owner is attracted to someone. In biological terms, these three components of love have evolved to serve the vital function of ensuring reproduction. Once conception has occurred, the system deactivates itself and the love process stops. The first stage, lust, is the physical and nonverbal attraction. Fisher goes on to say, the second stage, infatuation is the stage where a person keeps popping into your brain and you can't get them out. The human brain focuses on the positive qualities of the person and ignores their bad habits (Fisher 1992).

Limerence is the brain's attempt to form a bond with a potential partner, and it is an emotion so powerful that it can cause incredible euphoria. If someone is rejected, it can also cause despair and lead to obsession. During this stage, several powerful brain chemicals are released that cause feelings of elation. But limerence is a temporary feeling lasting from three to twenty four months. Sex drive differences reveal themselves only after this stage ends or the attachment stage begins. Limerence is nature's biological trick to guarantee that a man and a woman are thrown together long enough to procreate (Tennov 1997).

The biology of desire is found in hormones, which fall into one of three major

classes: protein, steroid, or peptide. Oxytocin, DHEA, and other factors bring people together, but it is dopamine and endorphin response, which are responsible for romantic attachments (Crenshaw 1996; Tomkiw 1999).

Dopamine is rewarding in that it produces a sense of well being and pleasure and without it sex would be just a bodily function (Tomkiw 1999). Masters, Johnson and Kolodny (1986) mention Dr. Michael Leibowitz' work *The Chemistry of Love*, and his observation of dopamine and serotonin as neurotransmitters responding to visual cues and sexual arousal as an explanation of desire and the autonomic nervous system.

Research today recognizes the important role that dopamine plays in sexual desire. Dopamine, enhanced by testosterone drives, increases desire and seeks sex, urgently For males, dopamine can cause or aggravate premature ejaculation (Crenshaw 1996).

Most female mammals, including humans, are more sexually receptive when estrogen is highest. However, in cases where the ovaries have been surgically removed, which dramatically lower levels of estrogen, human female sexual activity and interest do not diminish significantly. Thus, researchers have concluded that estrogen does not affect sexual behavior directly (Morris 1996). Crenshaw (1996) states while estrogen is not directly related to sexual behavior, when combined with oxytocin, does influence a woman's desire to be vaginally penetrated. Estrogen governs receptive sex with the desire to be penetrated and taken. (Crenshaw 1996).

Estrogen is produced in the ovaries in women and the testes in men. Estrogen is important in maintaining the condition of the vagina and lubrication (Crenshaw 1996; Masters, Johnson, and Kolodny 1986). Estrogen influences or attracts some males by

creating sexual scents, “making a woman more attractive to a man” (Crenshaw 1996).

Oxytocin is a peptide secreted by the posterior lobe of the pituitary gland and plays an important role as a hormone that “encourages cuddling between lovers and increases pleasure during lovemaking”. Oxytocin in males increases penile sensitivity, amount of ejaculate, and sperm count. In males the sight of something he perceives as sexually attractive will generate an immediate rise in his, oxytocin level. Oxytocin has a synergistic relationship with estrogen, potentially producing estrogen, which in turn triggers the vagina to lubricate prior to and during sexual arousal (Crenshaw 1996).

In both males and females, testosterone causes the desire to seek out sexual experiences, and the focus on the genitals. A level of testosterone between 20-50ng/dl is a normal range to support a female’s healthy sexual desire but above average levels of testosterone can cause aggressiveness, irritability, isolation, and a desire for solitary masturbation for males and females (Crenshaw 1996).

Research has shown us that sexual desire is a complex and sophisticated process. Researchers such as Kinsey, and Masters and Johnson have taught society much about the functioning of sexual organs and human sexual response. Current scientific investigation is teaching us more about the numerous chemicals involved in a combination that affect our sexual desire and performance. In consort with the physical and chemical, there is a psychological component to human sexual desire (Hamer 1994).

Not only these possibly genetic and biological differences affect communication, but also psychological and emotional reactions that link love and sex between couples can create miscommunications and conflict. Because male and female

sexual desires and capacities differ in fundamental respects, most men and women find it necessary to modify their sexual behavior to accommodate the opposite sex's basic desires and capacities. Relationships involve a bargaining process (Townsend, 1998, p. 23).

While women make love, men have sex, and for more women than men, love must precede sex. Men's brains compartmentalize the two phrases as distinct and separate acts (Pease, 2001). Verbal miscommunication occurs when a man says sex and a woman is more receptive to the phrase make love. This phrase, *have sex*, can have a negative effect on a woman. For a man, to use the expression *make love* when he just wants sex is deceptive. He's often happy with just a good physical relationship – that's taken all his attention. It is still unclear exactly where love is situated in the brain, but research indicated that a woman's brain has a network of connections between her love center and her sex center (the hypothalamus), and the love center needs to be activated before her sex center can be switched on (Pease, 1998). Men do not appear to have these connections; they can deal with sex or love separately. For a man, sex is sex and love is love, sometimes they happen together. When men and women understand each other's perspective and agree not to judge each other's definition, this obstacle ceases to be a stumbling block in the relationship (Pease, 1998).

The psychological/emotional reason most men gave for liking and wanting sex was the feeling of being loved and accepted. In many of replies, there is less a feeling that men enjoy sex than that they need it, sometimes desperately. Sometimes there is a feeling that the implications of the act, combined with the affection, the laying on of hands, add up to a kind of acceptance, affirmation, and even benediction, which almost

transcends words (Hite, 1981). Mentioned in Hite (1981), one interview suggested that during sex, he could express the feelings that he couldn't express verbally. Other men said the same thing in a less direct, less personal way, simply saying that sex is an expression of love (Hite, 1981). In contrast to *The Hite Report on Female Sexuality* (1976) many women felt that the mechanical approach on the part of most men reflected not only a general lack of feeling for them, but also a lack of development of the man's own sensuality and ability to enjoy his own body. This further demonstrates the lack of communication that men and women have to their sexual response.

With an awareness of how men and women think and feel differently, they are freed from the tendency to change a partner at those times when not getting what is wanted. Understanding historical and evolutionary development, they can take what is useful from the past and update it in ways that do not reject genetic makeup (Gray, 1994).

According to Gray (1994), realizing their partners have different conversational styles, they may gravitate to accept differences without blaming themselves, their partners, or their relationships. There is no one right way to listen, talk, to have a conversation—or a relationship. What is important is when the differences do show up; the couple will have positive and useful relationship skills for coping.

Whether a woman decides to be excited by a selected partner, or decides to excite herself through fantasies or masturbation, she can be aroused as readily as a man, but her cues for arousal are initially internal: she must be put in the mood, or allow herself to be put in the mood. She is not likely to be sexually aroused merely by looking

at parts of a stranger's body, whereas such experiences are commonplace for the average man (Townsend, 1998). Recognizing men's and women's different sexual interests and capacities is the first step in working out a healthy sexual adjustment (Townsend, 1998).

A man's biological job is to find as many healthy females as possible and help them conceive. A woman's biological role is to bear children and find a partner who will stick around long enough to raise them (Pease, 1998). This is why commitment is important for women.

In The Hite Report on Female Sexuality (1976) sex is intimate physical contact for pleasure, to share with another person (or alone). There is never any reason to think the goal must be intercourse, and to try to make what one feels fit into that context. There is no standard of sexual performance, against which one must measure up to. Hormones or biology doesn't rule men and women; they are free to explore and discover their own sexuality, to learn or unlearn anything they want, and to make physical relations with their partner.

Where the brashest, boldest, brawniest, best-looking males had already corralled the largest number of the most fertile females, the rest of mankind had to live by wile. Which they direct in two ways. First, by derogating other men and making them seem less attractive to women and by exaggerating their own appeal. Twenty male students described the most effective ways for promoting sexual encounters for themselves. As the use of derogation of competitors and the promotion of one's own attributes were both high on the list, with derogation tactics including putting down the insensitive

behavior of same-sex rivals' and self-promotion tactics including displaying strength, displaying status cues, and increasing perceived mate value through flirting with others.

Women may well have preferred to find an averagely good resource provider to take care of their offspring, and reap the genetic benefit of sex with more dashing men when they could.

It's all oddly reminiscent of the male mixed strategy: find a partner, settle down to ensure at least some children live, and pursue alternative avenues when the costs aren't too high. Is it possible that there are similar psychological adaptations for weighing up the options in both sexes?

In a study on long- and short-term mating, which brought some of the more unedifying aspects of male choice to light, women also let slip some of their priorities. We've already seen how men divided women into good girls and bad girls, and made their bets for long- or short-term mating accordingly. For purposes of sex, men would drop their standards to levels which women were never willing to plumb. It all seemed to show that men were urgent and women were coy; men were keen and women were choosy. But closer examination shows that women were actually playing a mirror image of the same short-term game. They were dividing men up into 'dads' and 'cads', the male equivalents of 'madonnas' and 'whores' (Fisher 1994).

While men short term mated just for the sexual opportunities (hence their lower standards), the imbalance in parental investment just didn't make it worthwhile for women to pursue short-term mating as an end in itself. Women tended to do it for other reasons: 'Immediate extraction of resources, using short-term mating as an assessment device to evaluate long-term prospects, [and] securing protection from abuse by

non-mated males, That's what women were really after in a short-term partner. So indices of his readiness to spend and invest would be particularly important. Indeed, when asked about the qualities they'd find attractive in a short-term partner, women did respond very positively to lavish spending and very negatively to early stinginess.

Other findings, however, seemed to suggest that different reasons were at work - some of them in exact reverse to the general trend. While women were consistently choosier than men, even about short-term partners, like men they were pickier about long-term partners than occasional ones. This makes sense for both sexes, of course. It's a lot easier to accept someone for a few hours a week than for the rest of your life.

## CHAPTER 6

### COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE SEXES

Communication should build bridges, not walls. Women have a reputation for talking everything to death and cannot seem to rest they have processed every relationship, every situation, through the inadequate vehicle of words.

Very often, things are worse for it. Certainly those closest to women, husbands and children, might agree. They often drive them away or make matters worse. Harriet Lerner has been helping people mostly women -deal with relationship issues for a decade in a series of books that began with *The Dance of Intimacy* in 1990, and continuing to *The Dance of Connection*, where Lerner deals with life's most difficult conversations: "How to talk to someone when you're mad, hurt, scared, frustrated, betrayed or desperate."

Lerner believes that does not mean saying everything you think and feel. Expressing true feelings, while absolutely essential in certain situations, is highly overrated as a principle by which to live. Words often fail to convey what people are really feeling and fail to force an apology, and fail to change the other person's behavior.

This is especially true between couples who, unlike friends, neighbors or co-workers, have an enormous stake in talking things out to the satisfaction of both sides.

It is a sad paradox that the more important the relationship, the more likely people are to be locked in narrow conversations as if being true to ourselves often

means repeating the same words over and over again, never persuading the listener, never moving forward, resulting in creating a state of anomie for themselves (Lerner 1990).

There is another way conversation can not, only release frustration and effect change, but it can also, actually make the speaker a better person as conversations invent us. The challenge in conversation is not only to find one's authentic voice, but also to enlarge it. Not just to be ourselves, but also to choose the self we want to be, it can often mean holding your tongue it can mean not laying out a list of criticism and grievances in the name of honesty.

For women, there are a couple of rules, a need to calm down, a need to get a grip on their own reactivity, realizing that calm is contagious.

Men say it shorter as they need to stop the entrenched distancing and stonewalling. They can say, 'I love you, I want to be able to hear what you are upset about, but I can't hear you when I feel flooded: "He needs to find a way to end the conversation in a loving and helpful way. This is not the same as cold withdrawal." (Renshaw 1995).

Silence isn't useful when it turns into that kind of distance, but it does have its place in conversation. Silence might simply be listening to the other person and asking questions and saving your differences for the next conversation. Or leaving them behind altogether.

Two children are playing in a sandbox when a huge fight breaks out. The kids scream, "I hate you!" and run away. But in no time, they are back in the sandbox, playing happily. Two adults observe this and one how it is possible for these kids to be

so angry one minute and happy the next. . "It is simple,' one of the adults explains.

"They choose happiness over righteousness."

## CHAPTER 7

### HEGEMONY AS COMMUNICATION

What do most men want from a relationship with a woman? Even though most men said they were closer to a woman than to anyone else, men often saw women only in a very limited way. When asked, “Do you have close women friends? Do you have more male or female friends?” Most men said they did not have close women friends with whom they did not have sex, and that a friendship with a woman would inevitable lead to sex” (Hite 1981). When asked what things about women do men admire, most men answered in terms of women’s physical characteristics. When personality traits were mentioned, they most commonly involved women being helpful, loving, sweet, or nurturing. All of these indicate a certain hegemony of men over women.

When asked if men had strong resentments against women. One man answered he had resentments against the women who rejected his love. “To really understand male sexuality, women must be constantly aware of the very destructive effects of personality defects of the woman upon his desire, his enthusiasm, his sensitivity to arousal, his erectile ability, his sexual capacity, and his sexual satisfaction” (Hite 1981). But some men had no resentments at all. What, underneath it all, are men angry about? Most of this anger may have been hidden, even unrecognized, or an expression of the zeitgeist around them. In fact, many men replied, hidden anger, guilt and ambivalence that men seemed to feel about women was blocking relationships, even long-term relationships, allowing resentments to grow and solidify. There are probably many reasons for men’s anger, but two are very basic, and built directly into the culture. The

first involves the way men are brought up to see women, and the distance this creates. Men talk about their need for women, describing women as their only real source of warmth, intimacy and affection. Many men went on to say that they saw women in a very limited way, that is, either as potential sexual partners, or as nurturing, approving, and encouraging mother figures. They did not picture women as brave, courageous, independent or intellectually stimulated. In fact, they learned from their fathers' attitudes toward their mother to see women as weak and overly emotional, dependent and relying on men for economic advantage (Hite 1981). The second reason, woman's economic position in society makes her dependent in the relationship and therefore the weaker part in the relationship (Hite 1981). This attitude contributes to the male hegemony over women.

These style differences continue throughout adulthood, and just learning about style differences will not make them go away (Tannen1990). Above all, we all want to be heard and understood. The dichotomy, according to Tannen, is in learning to hear and understand the other sex is the key to being understood.

Communication is a continual balancing act, juggling the conflicting needs for intimacy and independence. While women tend to focus on intimacy as the key in the world of connection, for men independence is key. These differences give men and women differing views in the same situation (Tannen1990).

Basically, the linguistic difference begins with biology and continues through verbal communication with men and women needing to understand there will be differences in communication.

The differences between men and women's brains explains the way they use

them. In general, women tend to use both sides of their brains simultaneously, while men use one side or the other. This means that a man tends to use either his left-brain language skills or his right-brain spatial problem-solving skills. A woman uses both at the same time. Studies have revealed that some women have much more corpus callosum, or connective tissue, between the two hemispheres of the brain, which would account for a woman's tendency to use both sides of the brain simultaneously. While some men may have more corpus callosum than some women, these men still use only one side of the brain at a time, while the women use both. The impact of their difference is staggering.

A man's brain first develops billions of neuroconnectors between his emotions and his action center. When he is emotionally charged or upset, he generally wants to do something about it. Finding a solution is his priority. Certainly, a woman will also act to solve problems, but because of the way her brain develops, her initial tendency is first talk about it (Gray 1994).

When a man is distressed, women think they are being very loving by trying to get him to talk. They do not instinctively realize that the best thing they can do is lovingly accept him by giving him lots of space and then, when he is directly supportive to respond warmly in a way that says they are glad to have him in their life. Women do not instinctively understand that men receive love differently (Gray 1994).

Gray uses the metaphor of primitive man and his cave. For modern man the key to better communication is when he can learn to convey to a woman that he is now "out of his cave" and receptive to communication. Going into his cave is an innate tendency and it is important for the couple's communication that a woman be willing to postpone

her immediate needs to share feeling until her partner is out of the cave. For a man, to enhance communication, it is equally important for a man to give clear signals when he is out of his cave.

Men and women are essentially different in how they think, feel, and act and is dependent upon biology, communication, and interpretation. Language is the form of timing and interpreting the rules of when to communicate. Knowing when a man is out of his cave and accepting him by giving him lots of space are certain rules that women can follow when wanting to communicate. Other rules for men and women to follow would be, if you don't know what to say, say nothing. If she won't talk, ask more questions until she does. Whatever a couple does, don't correct or judge each other's feelings and remain calm (Gray 1994).

There is a substratum of biological difference between men and women and their expression of sexuality. These underlying biological differences are recognized in cognitive development, brain differences, and hormones.

Sexual strategies as they relate to emotion and desire are different between men and women. For women, their strategy for looking for an available man is based on investment, in other words, the stability and commitment that a man offers. Women's sexual desire and their desire to continue sexual relationships are closely tied to signs of sufficient investment. If a woman tries to continue a sexual relationship that involves inadequate investment from her partner, she experiences negative emotions that alert her to strategic interference, dampen her sexual desire, and urge her to stop having sex until adequate signs of investment are forthcoming (Fisher 1994).

Compared to women, men are more frequently aroused sexually, and they are aroused by a greater variety of stimuli. The mere sight of a potential sexual partner arouses men, by the anticipation of a new type of experience. Women are far less likely to form such associations and to be aroused by the sight of a stimulus object. Men's strategies are different. Men can fall deeply in love and press for commitment, but they can also maintain relationships merely because they offer sexual relations with fun, attractive partners.

Sexual strategies are not necessarily conscious. Instead they operate as desire, attractions, and emotions (Townsend 1998). By their very nature, male and female strategies often conflict and interfere with each other. Men and women evolved emotional mechanisms that alert them to strategic interference and allow them to alter their own behavior and influence the behavior of the opposite sex to eliminate or reduce the interference (Townsend 1998).

Townsend (1998) discussed the process of mate selection, and how men and women differ. Men look for physical attractiveness and women socioeconomic status. This information when looking at twenty years of research has remained relatively constant.

Men and women, fall in love for different reasons. Men fall out of love for different reasons as well. A man falls out of love because he is dissatisfied sexually, or has met another attractive and available woman. A woman falls out of love because she lost respect or there is no verbal communication. For a marriage to succeed, communication must include a willingness to restrict desires rather than vent them (Townsend 1998).

The biological differences between men and women primarily focus on needs and wants. Perceptual differences, or motivational differences, and emotional alarms as link between sex and love help explain the biology of desire.

Peak erotic experiences or turn-ons are a way to unlock the mysteries of eros, which is the source of attraction and the craving for sexual love. Psychology of language and desire are important but eroticism is the process through which sex becomes meaningful. Eroticism can best be understood as the multifaceted process through which our innate capacity for arousal is shaped, focused, suppressed, and expressed. Humans are born sensuous and sexual, but become erotic as both overt and subtle messages about themselves from our primary caretakers are given. Gradually integrating these messages with experiences of touch, as well as the highly personal mental images and emotions that go with them, the demands and ideals of the culture, along with the interpersonal dynamics of our families and communities, influence sexual responses profoundly (Morin 1995).

Men dichotomize love and sex. While women can multitrack having a greater flow of information between the left and right hemisphere of the brain. Most women can talk about several subjects simultaneously and sometimes in a single sentence (Pease 1998).

Thus history shows how men and women have sought partners who are attractive, financially and emotionally stable, capable of having children, and who was willing to commit to the responsibilities of family life.

These are universal values and survival skills, guaranteed to keep men and women alive in the best way possible, ensuring an adequate mate and providing the couple with the security to carry out their commitment. But Americans have radically expanded upon these basic needs. Americans seek not just sexual union but sexual satisfaction in many ways: love, romance, passion, ecstasy, or a gentle embrace. In such a state of love, we run the risk of seeking wholeness exclusively in the other, struggling between the extremes of over dependence and isolation (Waldman 1998). Today, couples have to consciously build a life together, reconstructing meaning at every moment (Waldman 1998).

Both Tannen and Waldman further suggested that conflict is itself a form of connection. Anger, envy, and contempt color all relationships. People live with both their fantasies of love and their experiences of love. Inner representations of loving relationships may have little to do with the other person in the relationship. There is in human nature a compulsion to repeat. It compels us to do again and again what we have done before, to attempt to restore an earlier state of being. To transfer the past, the ancient longing, the defenses against those longings onto the present people often repeat the past while consciously trying not to. The repetition compulsion, writes Freud, explains why this one feels betrayed by his friends and why one feels abandoned by his colleagues and why each of a lover's love affairs may pass through similar stages and ends the same way (Waldman 1998).

If a relationship has a hidden purpose, the healing of childhood wounds, instead of focusing entirely on surface needs and desires, one can learn to recognize the unresolved childhood issues that underlie them. Take responsibility for communicating

their and desires to their partner In a relationship, one can cling to the childhood belief that their partner automatically intuits their needs. The couple must accept the fact that in order to understand each other, they must develop clear channels of communication (Waldman 1998).

Masters, Johnson, and Kolodny discuss intimacy as a process of caring and which differs from love in several ways. Since it is an ongoing process, intimacy fluctuates in intensity at different times in the relationship. Sometimes, the level of intimacy increases while love decreases.

Many men derive a sense of emotional closeness from shared activities with another person. Men watch and evaluate how adept their companions are at problem solving, strategic analysis, dealing with stress, handling teamwork and deflecting insults. A woman might be puzzled that her boyfriend views a two-hour session of mixed doubles on the tennis court as intimate time together. For women, sharing at the emotional level is one of the hallmarks of intimacy. Unless two people are willing to reveal a good deal of information about themselves as to what is felt, what is feared, what is worrisome, and what hopes or dreams they have, it is unlikely that any meaningful intimacy can exist. It is actually in this process of communication that the essence of intimacy is expressed.

Intimacy is further defined as a process in which a couple attempts to move towards complete communication on all levels (Masters, Johnson, and Kolodny 1994). While this certainly includes nonverbal dimensions of communication including sex, this implies the verbal expression of feelings within a relationship is the actual bedrock of intimacy.

In *Sex and Human Loving* (Masters, Johnson, and Kolodny 1988) discussed communication and how understanding *how to communicate* effectively is a cornerstone of interpersonal and sexual relations, yet few of us are taught the skills of intimate communication. In many cases, the sender doesn't succeed in saying what he or she really means. Sometimes people can't find the right words to convey what they're feeling, or what they need, so messages they send are inaccurate. Nonverbal communication is often at least as important as the words that are spoken, as we can see from the following example: "After a lovemaking session one night, Cathy withdrew into a stubborn silence. When George asked her what was wrong, she said "Nothing at all," but the firm set of her lips and the way she rolled away to avoid his touch told George how to interpret these words –something was bothering her. With some patience and encouragement, George was able to find out what had upset Cathy. She hadn't had an orgasm".

Of the total feeling expressed by a spoken message, only 7 percent is verbal feeling, 38 percent is vocal feeling, and 55 percent is conveyed by facial expression. Communicating about sex doesn't always involve words, letting a partner know what is important or pleasing to us sexually often requires touch. Some couples find that a visit to a sex therapist or counselor is helpful if talking about sex together is difficult; the therapist may pinpoint the source of reluctance (Masters, Johnson, and Kolodny 1988).

It's important to recognize that inconsistencies between nonverbal cues and verbal content are usually resolved in favor of the former. Nonverbal messages are more powerful than spoken words alone. For this reason it's useful to communicate in ways that maintain consistency between the verbal and nonverbal messages you send to your

partner.

One way to improve the chances of communicating effectively is to be aware of nonverbal language – an aspect of communicating to which many people never pay attention. Nonverbal messages apply in a special way to sexual interactions. Touch can be used as an effective means of nonverbal communication in a variety of ways, intimate partners often seem to talk too much and touch too little, missing many opportunities to convey feelings of affection to each other. In many situations, a long, tight hug says more about the way people feel about each other than a ten-minute dialogue. On the other hand, if people confine their touching to sexual situations, they compartmentalize the physical side of their interactions, sometimes making sex a tool to be used to attain closeness (Masters, Johnson, and Kolodny 1988).

## CHAPTER 8

### MARRIAGE AND LANGUAGE DIFFERENTIALS

Structuralism is one of the keys to unlocking the marriage relationship. In every marriage, there are two realities, his and hers, and that these perspectives are often divergent.

Jesse Bernard's insights on gender were based on a critical analysis of the cultural forces and socialization practices that led to these different perceptions. Societal messages about sex roles rigidly prescribed certain traits, functions, and behaviors as being appropriate for either men or women, and did not allow for deviations from those expectations. The structural analysis focused on the negative impact that these rigid prescriptions had on women and on their experiences in the marital relationship. An examination of the implications that differences in power had for both genders and advocated social changes that would improve not only women's lives, but men's as well. There are "two marriages" in every marriage, "his" and "hers". This had a significant impact on the ways that social scientists began to look at men's and women's experiences within marriage (Bernard, J. 1972).

#### Social Roles of Husbands and Wives

The changes that have taken place in the American culture since the 1950's have resulted in confusion about masculinity and femininity and about the appropriate roles for men and women in their most intimate relationship, marriage. This uncertainty is tied to the ubiquitous image of the 1950's traditional family, with a breadwinner father and a stay-at-home mother. Family historians note that this family type, which is still regarded as ideal by many, is actually an aberration that emerged due to social and

economic forces (Coontz 1992). Even though this traditional family form was normative for only a brief period of our history, and mainly for the more privileged members of our society, the gender-related images associated with this family type have become icons. Culturally, the roles of the provider husband/father and the housewife mother, and have assumed that we should aspire to the gender-stereotyped patterns of behavior and interaction that characterize these roles.

To what extent do these ideals reflect reality? Over the last several decades, men's and women's roles have been in transition. During the 1970's, the women's movement heightened awareness of sexism and gender differences in all areas of life, including marriage.

Marriage remains a gendered institution, however, and even though there is evidence of changes in expectations about marital roles, gender socialization is typically bifurcated, and pervasive messages about masculinity and femininity are internalized. Men and women typically believe that they should act in certain ways, and even though they may intellectually disagree with these stereotypes, it can be very difficult to overcome the power of these messages. Men and women may then hold conflicting expectations themselves, wanting more traditional roles and patterns of behavior in some aspects of marriage, but more egalitarian patterns in other dimensions (Cassell 1984).

There are more obvious changes in women's than in men's roles. Most women have moved into the world of work, while maintaining most of the responsibility of nurturing all family members. Currently, almost 70% of married couples who have children under the age of eighteen are dual-earner families. Women may experience role

strain and overload, but they also enjoy the increased rewards that can result from multiple roles.

Men's roles have not changed as noticeably as women's, which is one of the reasons for women's greater dissatisfaction with marriage. Since most families are dual-earners, men no longer have major responsibility for the provider role. However, men typically have not correspondingly increased their involvement in household work and child care, leading to the gender messages so prevalent in our culture is that the behavioral repertoires of both men and women are restricted. Even though recent research indicates that men and women actually want very similar things from their relationships (Vangelisty and Daly 1997), and that they both value emotional closeness, openness, and affection, they often experience dissatisfaction and feel that their partner is not meeting their needs. Women, in particular, are more likely to feel that their expressive needs are not being met.

In addition to changes in work roles, and household and childcare roles, expectations about the emotional realm of marriage-as reflected in expressive behaviors-have also changed. The emotional side of the relationship has become more important for marital wellbeing, and emphasis is shifting to the importance of men sharing in the "emotion work" that is necessary to nurture marriages and other relationships in the family. More men and women want relationships that are interdependent and equal, with each partner providing support and understanding to the other, and with both partners sharing in the decision-making. Peer marriages are based on a deep friendship between husband and wives and are characterized by sharing between husbands and wives in all aspects of their lives. Comprehensive research

program on dynamics in marriage indicates that sharing power in the relationship is essential for marital happiness (Cottman 1999). Marriages where husbands and wives had equal power in the relationship were also marriages that had higher levels of emotional nurturance, affirmation, positive interactions, and empathy (Steil 1977).

The impact of men's socialization experiences on their intimate relationships. Socialization experiences that emphasize the importance of separateness rather than connection, and that teach men to avoid showing weakness or expressing intimate feelings, contribute to men's difficulty in meeting their wives' expectations about communication and closeness. An emerging literature on masculinity and male gender role socialization has brought attention to the dilemmas men experience as they face conflicting expectations about their work and family roles and about emotional expressiveness with their partners (O'Neil1990). Male gender role conflict has been associated with such individual outcomes as depression, anxiety, lower self-esteem, and a low capacity for intimacy.

Male gender-role conflict is of particular interest and relevance to understanding patterns of intimate interaction in marriage. The negative impacts of men's gender role socialization experiences, not only for the men themselves, but also for their intimate relationships must be understood as a form of alienation. A common result of these life-long messages is that men often experience difficulty in communicating their intimate feelings and in experiencing emotional closeness with their partner. Popular culture depicts men as avoiding intimacy at all costs, and retreating from women's desires for emotional connection and closeness. Wives desire more direct communication about the relationship, including conversations about feelings and daily events. Whereas

husbands are more likely to view talk as serving functions such as problem-solving. Of course, not all women nor all men fit these descriptions. However, we generally socialize women to be relationship experts and we expect them to monitor relationships and attend to relationship problems and we expect men to be less involved and less invested in their relationships.

Men and women come to marriage, then, with a diversity of beliefs about gender, and variations in the extent to which they exhibit gender-stereotyped traits and behaviors. In order to more fully understand the influence of gender on marriage, we must take into account these individual variations and look more closely at the beliefs and expectations that individuals have, and how these are played out in patterns of marital interaction. These daily interactions included such language behaviors as self-disclosure, assurances, emotional support, and dealing with conflict in an understanding and cooperative manner. The findings indicate that people have complex and sometimes seemingly contradictory views about gender and gender roles. Beliefs about family and work roles didn't have much impact on daily interactions between spouses or on marital satisfaction for either husbands or wives. However, those husbands who experienced greater gender-role conflict and held more stereotyped gendered beliefs were less expressive with their wives, and had lower marital satisfaction. For men, being conflicted about what it means to be a man, and taking an essentialist perspective on gender, had a pervasive dampening influence on their openness and affectionate behaviors with their spouses, as well as on their wives' marital happiness.

Interestingly, women's higher levels of stereotyped beliefs were associated with wives' conflict management behaviors and with greater marital satisfaction for both

husbands and wives. Wives with more stereotyped beliefs were more likely to cooperate during the handling of marital disagreements, apologize when they are wrong, listen attentively to their husbands, and try to avoid judgmental statements.

These findings for gender attitudes and beliefs clarify the ways that gender difficulty in recognizing other ways that related perceptions impact relationships. their husbands express their feelings and beliefs clarify the ways that gender related perceptions impact relationships.

Husbands' acceptance of their wives' influence and wives' use of soothing behaviors and a "softened start-up" when bringing up marital problems predict more positive marital outcomes. Buying into stereotyped beliefs about men and women very likely blocks men from being open to their wives' ideas and suggestions, particularly concerning their marriage. For women, holding stereotyped beliefs may result in a greater tendency to engage in soothing behaviors, particularly in trying to manage conflict, which can have a positive impact on their marriage. However, the fact that women's stereotyped beliefs are related to their conflict management behaviors, but not to their expressive behaviors, suggests that these beliefs may actually inhibit women's expressions of intimacy within their relationship while increasing their sense of responsibility for coping with marital conflict.

As society tries to untangle the myriad ways that gender influences intimate relationships, it is beginning to understand that whether people have traditional or more egalitarian beliefs about men's and women's societal roles may not be as relevant for expressive behaviors as other gender-related perceptions. Rather, feeling conflicted about what it means to be a man, and relying on the stereotyped beliefs that permeate

popular culture, are significantly influencing men's marital styles. It is these conflicting expectations and stereotyped beliefs that lead men to be more restricted in their emotional behaviors, and therefore dampens not only their wife's satisfaction, but their own as well. This last point is an important one- men who are more emotionally skilled and expressive are happier, and so are their wives. Women with more stereotyped beliefs may take more responsibility for the emotion work in their marriages, and may experience difficulty in recognizing other ways that their husbands express their feelings.

Women don't always recognize that men's more instrumental behaviors. Have we moved beyond a dichotomous view of men and women, of "his" and "her" marriage? There have been positive changes, but we still must battle pernicious popular culture portrayals of male-female relationships and convert as a battle of opposites.

Therapists must help couples move away from stereotyped views, presented in essentialist depictions of men and women as opposites. Such views actually the emotional climate of marriages by contributing to resentment and distancing behaviors, and a lack of true understanding of the uniqueness of each partner. Promotion of equal sharing of power and influence in the marital relationship and recognition of the importance of nourishing emotional expressiveness in both partners, and we must value the diverse ways that men and women communicate love for each other (Renshaw 1995).

## CHAPTER 9

### CLINICAL MANAGEMENT OF COMMUNICATION PROBLEMS

To learn more effective ways of sexual interaction, sensate focus exercises was introduced (Masters, Johnson, and Kolodny1998). Initially, this method was intended for couples with sexual dysfunction. This does not mean that the partner always causes the problem, but points out that he or she is affected by it, as the relationship is affected. This strategy shifts the therapeutic focus to the relationship instead of the individual. This strategy provides an opportunity to gain the cooperation and understanding of both partners in overcoming the distress. Interestingly, a majority of time in the therapy sessions is usually spent on nonsexual issues (such as dealing with anger, self-esteem, or power struggles), although there is a direct attempt to provide information about sexual anatomy and physiology while attending to the couples other needs (Masters, Johnson, and Kolodny 1998). Couples who have negative sexual attitudes are encouraged to adopt new viewpoints.

The purpose of touching is not to be sexual but to establish an awareness of touch sensations. The person doing the touching is told to do so on the basis of what interests them, not on any guesses about what their partner likes or doesn't like. The trick is to integrate these nonverbal messages in such a way the person being touched adds some additional input to the touching, which is still primarily done based on what interests the person touching (Masters, Johnson, and Kolodny1988).

Tennov (1979) defined limerence as an incomplete, or unrequited, form of desire and an involuntary state of being whose end is difficult to achieve. Often the understanding of desire is derived from sex and love. Tennov's concept of limerence is

used to describe the state of falling in love or being romantically in love. There are several components to this theory. The initial stage is intrusive thinking about the limerent object. Next is an acute longing for reciprocation from the limerent object followed by a feeling of walking on air when reciprocation seems evident. Then, a general feeling of intensity occurs that leaves other life issues in the background. Finally, one emphasized the other's positive attributes and minimizes the negative. Tennov (1979) includes sexual attraction as an important component on limerence.

Tomkiw used John Gray's definition of desire as more "wanting what we don't have and love is wanting what we have" (Tomkiw 1999), and as far back as sixty-five years ago, Cosstler and Willy (1937) wrote: "There can be no sexual love without desire; but on the other hand, until the flux of desire has radiated through the organisms into psychical components or at least into social and effective elements, there is not any sexual love. Desire, that is specific sexual impulse, is undoubtedly the essential and primary element of this synthesis".

Expanding on Kinsey's earlier writings, Teinisch & Beasley (1991) in the *Kinsey Institute New Report on Sex* reported on desire as more than physiological, and as: "A type of sexual appetite (similar to being hungry for food) must exist or be created for arousal to take place. This arousal includes thinking about sex, encountering the smells, sights or touches that a person interprets as sexual; or receiving or giving a signal that sex is desired" (Teinisch & Beasley 1991).

Freud's sexual theories and his concept of transference was another significant factor in studying desire. Therapeutically transference is the patient directing feelings of love or hostility towards the analyst (Berry 2000). Transference, such as adults

projecting their childhood emotional reactions to a distant or ambiguous parent onto an adult love interest can interfere with effective linguistic and emotional communication. For sexual desire to be functional there needs to be effective linguistic and emotional communication as when desire is present, and the beginning of a relationship occurs; communication and language play a significant role.

The goal of sex therapy is to improve sexual functioning (Kaplan 1974). Solution focus therapy concentrates on communication and language. It is important for the sex therapist to have a deep comprehension of pathological marital transactions because they frequently contribute to sexual dysfunctions and also may present serious obstacles to therapy. Problems in the marital system may be aggravated and perpetuated by various communication difficulties (Kaplan 1974).

## CHAPTER 10

### COUNSELING THE COUPLE

Differential linguistics contributes to counseling complexities for a heterosexual couple. Regardless of the form of therapy it is necessary to show how men and women do not understand each other's sexual needs, and is a reflection of the mind set of men and women. Female erotic interests that need to be explored: 1. romance 2. commitment 3. communication 4. intimacy 5. nonsexual touching. Males: 1. pornography 2. female nudity 3. sexual variety 4. lingerie 5. her availability. Men are visual and want sex. Women are auditory and feeling and want touch and romance. For a woman to criticize a man's need for visual stimulation is like a man criticizing a woman for wanting to talk or go out to dinner. The answer is to have both. The same holds true for language (Pease 1998).

The clinical sexologist is responsible for developing a treatment that addresses these issues by encouraging clients who are grappling with sexual problems to explore their peak turn-ons, hoping the potential benefits of doing so will be obvious to the couple. Unfortunately this is difficult as most people had trouble grasping the value of discussing their peak experience; they just wanted to fix their problems (Morin 1995). The clinical sexologist needs to gently challenge clients to set aside their preoccupation with problems for a while so they will learn more about their eroticism.

Sexual communication has a dual function. Besides passing along crucial facts about what you like, don't like, or might like to try, it's important to bolster or at least not undermine your partner's sexual self-esteem. There's no question that couples are at their best when their partners make them feel as if they have a special knack for turning

them on. Conversely, we're our least sexy when others convince us that we can't do anything right. While most couples know when communication is necessary but aren't sure how to proceed. A therapist, in counseling the couple must encourage them to inquire specifically about what their partners needs are. The goal of these delicate questions is to give your partner permission to express himself or herself, with out sounding demanding (Morin1995).

In counseling, a therapist may be effective when keeping in mind that men's talk is more structured than a woman's. Men usually have a simple opening, a clear point, and a conclusion. It's easy to follow what he means or wants. Women, on the other hand—with a greater flow of information between left and right hemispheres and specific brain locations for speech, can talk about several subjects simultaneously—sometimes in a single sentence (Pease 1998).

Women's ability to multitask is scientifically supported by brain scans. When a woman is speaking, female brain scans show that her left and right brain centers controlling speech are both operating, and hearing functions also operate at the same time allowing her to speak and listen at the same time. Men's conversation, being solution oriented, creates his need to complete a sentence. Women, in an attempt to make a man feel important multitask, a man sees this as impolite or scatterbrained. A couple in counseling may come to understand too that a woman's apparent indirect way of speaking can contradict a man's need for direct speech and literal meaning of words. The clinical sexologist should be able to develop a treatment plan that with patience and practice they can come to understand each other.

A lesson for a couple to learn in counseling is that conflict is inevitable. Men and women have different sexual strategies and psychologies. When they recognize that their sexual interests and capacities are different, they can begin on working out a healthy sexual adjustment (Townsend 1998).

## CHAPTER 11

### THE CLINICAL ARMAMENTARIUM

As all therapists eventually develop their own paradigm of clinical practice, it is impossible to delineate an ideal treatment that would be applicable for all clinical sexologists in all situations for all clients.

Because of this difficulty two separate models for addressing communications problems are presented as illustrative of the variety of clinical skills that should be in every clinician's armamentarium.

#### Solution Focused Therapy

The goal of therapy is not to eliminate the symptom(s), but to help the client set up some conditions allowing for spontaneous achievement of the stated (or inferred) goal. In solution-focused therapy there is an emphasis on the language that determines meaning, not on either/or frames in which the client keeps doing more of the same attempting to solve a problem. Solution-focused therapy eschews the imposition of concepts of deficit or pathology and may even say that there may not be any relationship between the problem and solutions (Hoyt and Berg 1998).

When changing a couple's language using solution-focused therapy, deShazer suggests a process of having the couple focus first on what works and to initiate new behavior patterns, not focus on details of a presenting problem. As discussed earlier, the style differences in communication for males and females can be seen as cross-cultural differences (Tannen 1990). These differences could replicate a perceived problem for a couple arguing from a reference point of right/wrong.

Solution-focused therapy works to deconstruct the problem by finding exceptions. A couple willing to construct a better relationship may be more willing to learn each other's language. The couple involved in solution-focused therapy can learn to use their own existing strengths and competencies. The therapeutic relationship is a negotiated, consensual, and cooperative endeavor in which the solution-focused therapist and client jointly produce various language games focused on (a) exceptions, (b) goals, and (c) solutions (Hoyt and Berg 1998).

An important component of solution-focused therapy is the therapists *not knowing*, which allows clients to be their own experts rather than the therapist telling them what is wrong. The solution-based therapist's emphasis is on language determining meaning, on therapist-clients conversations rather than outside analysis and search for *truth* from an expert (Goldenberg and Goldenberg 2000).

Concerned with change and with little interest in assessing just why the couple has developed problems, solution-focused therapists insist that couples join them in therapeutic conversation as they attempt to describe their troublesome situation. John Gray defines it in terms of breaking the language barrier. Solution-focused therapists listen to the language used as couples describe their situations and the conflict resolution they hope to achieve. Berg and deShazer (1993) felt that as the client and therapist talk extensively about the solution to be constructed together, a belief in the truth or reality of what they are talking about emerged. This is the way language works, naturally (Berg and deShazer 1993).

Instead of problem talk, searching for explanations of client problems by piling facts upon facts about their troubled lives, these therapists urge solution talk wherein the

therapist and clients discussing solutions to be constructed together (Goldenberg and Goldenberg 2000). For example, instead of saying to a couple in the initial session, “Tell me what problems brought you to see me,” the solution-focused therapist might ask, “How can we work together to help you change your situation?”

“The solution-based therapist helps couples, by means of solution-talk, to come to believe in the truth or reality of what they are talking about together with the therapist, and to construct solutions consistent with those consensually validated perceptions”, and workable solutions result from redescriptions of themselves. The couple creates new, empowering stories about themselves. When successful, clients achieve a cognitive change, reconstructing their sense of their own ability to resolve, control, or contain the presenting problem (Shoham, Rohrbaugh, and Patterson 1995).

As discussed earlier, when a woman needs support, she requires a man to listen in a new way, using new relationship skills. To do this successfully, he does not have to make major changes. By putting a new spin on old skills, men can easily learn to listen or reconstruct the situation without getting upset with her. By learning to duck and dodge what he hears as blame, mistrust, and criticism, a man can gradually learn to listen patiently. After focusing on skills that men can use, the therapist focuses on new skills that women can use to communicate so that men will listen and truly understand. With this cognitive change, the solution-focused therapist’s attempt to aid the couple in not focusing on the particular presenting problem, but in discovering their own creative solutions for becoming unstuck (Goldenberg and Goldenberg 2000). The assumption here is that clients already know what they need to solve their complaints; the therapist’s task is to help them construct a new use for knowledge they already have

(Goldenberg and Goldenberg 2000). The over-all aim of this approach is to help clients start the solution process.

Solution-focused therapists have a number of therapeutic questions to disrupt problem-maintaining behavioral patterns, change beliefs, and amplify exceptions to behavior previously thought of by clients as unchangeable. Three kinds of questions, often asked during the initial session, are increasingly central to the solution-focused approach: (1) miracle questions; (2) exception-finding questions; and (3) scaling questions (Berg and Miller 1992).

What therapists talk about and how it is talked about it makes a difference to the client. Thus reframing a marital problem into an individual problem or an individual problem into a marital problem makes a difference both in how we talk about things and where we look for solutions. Men and women are essentially different in how they think, feel, and act. This is dependent upon biology, communication, and interpretation. Language is a form of timing and interpreting the rules of when to communicate. Masters, Johnson, and Kolodny discuss communication and understanding how to communicate effectively as a cornerstone of interpersonal and sexual relations, yet few people are taught the skills of intimate communication. This is why solution-focus therapy can work. It is about languaging and interpretation.

Solution-focused therapists offer suggestions for initiating small changes, which once achieved, lead to further changes in the system (Goldenberg and Goldenberg 2000). Couple therapists often see clients each of whom takes an either/or position. The solution-focused therapist is likely to offer a both/and substitute in which both have valid positions and inflexibility in listening to the other leads to a standoff that is wrong

in order to reexamine their viewpoints (Goldenberg and Goldenberg 2000).

The first technique, the miracle question deShazer (1991) states: Suppose that one night there is a miracle and while you were sleeping the problem that brought you to therapy is solved: How would you know? What would be different? What would you notice the next morning that will tell you that there has been a miracle? What will your spouse notice? (deShazer 1991). The second technique, the exception-finding question is used early in therapy (Shoham, Rohrbaygh, and Patterson 1995). This deconstructs a problem by focusing on exceptions to the rules – times when the couple is communicating and listening to each other’s needs. Here the solution-focused therapist encourages the couple to build on times they were able to control the problem. The third technique, scaling questions ask clients to quantify their own perception of a situation and is intended to build a positive outlook (Goldenberg and Goldenberg 2000).

The solution-focused therapist may ask in a first session, “How confident are you that you can stick with this? Let’s say ten means you’re confident that you’re going to carry this out, that a year from now you’ll be back and say, “I did what I set out to do”. Okay? And one means you’re going to back down from this. How confident are you, between ten and one?” (Berg and deShazer 1993). Here the therapist is getting the client to commit to a change. Used at various times during therapy, scaling questions may help couples gauge each other’s perceptions of an event. As in most solution-focused techniques, the therapist does not teach the client what to do differently or teach her or him new tactics for accomplishing change (Goldenberg and Goldenberg 2000). The therapist’s interventions tend to be simple and minimal, and in most cases are effective in opening doors (Goldenberg and Goldenberg 2000). An example of a scaling

question would be: she to therapist: “I thought the way we dealt with the money issue last night was a seven”. He: “Well, at least we didn’t end up fighting, but I think we have a long way to go and I would rate it a four”. The therapist then uses these numbers to motivate or encourage: “What might the two of you do to make a small change, say move it up one point?” Or perhaps the therapist points out that previously they rated themselves at two or a three, so what exception occurred to bring about the improvement? In this way, change is conveyed as continuous and expected” (Goldenberg and Goldenberg 2000).

When is it not a legitimate question to ask clients whether coming to therapy contributes to clients’ lives?” “Does it work?” This justification and test are especially relevant to solution-focused therapy, which is organized to create positive change as quickly as possible. All questions asked by solution-focused therapists, ranging from scaling to coping to miracle questions, may be evaluated by the pragmatic question. “Do they work?” (Miller and deShazer 1998).

These solution-focused questions assume that clients’ lives are changing, and that clients’ problems are discontinuous and contingent realities. Problems are discontinuous realities because they are not always present in clients’ lives. They are contingent because problems and solutions are directly related to clients’ practical activities, including their uses of language to interpret reality. The solution-focused language game is designed to persuade clients that change is not only possible, but that it is already happening” (Miller and deShazer 1998).

The importance of language in people’s lives is often overlooked because, as Wittgenstein (1958) states it is organized as diverse language games that are so familiar

to us that we take them for granted. Language games consist of the typical ways in which language is used to construct meanings and build social relationships (Wittgenstein 1958). Language games are, at least to some extent, culturally standardized patterns of language used that are recognized and responded to, in everyday lives. Men can mentally index their problems and put them on hold; women churn. Tannen (1990) refers to this by calling male-female conversation, cross-cultural communication. If adults learn their ways of speaking as children growing up in separate social worlds of peers, then conversation between women and men is cross cultural (Tannen 1990).

In the Wittgensteinian language game, the idea that people talk themselves into problems and solutions are obvious, and even a matter of common sense. People construct problems by interpreting and describing aspects of their lives as desired conditions that they wish to change. People sustain their problems by continuing to talk in this way. People talk themselves into solutions by changing how they interpret and describe their lives. Solution-focused therapists do not insist that clients develop new stories that integrate their entire lives. It is enough for clients to be able to describe better future lives, and identify how aspects of clients' future lives are evident in their present lives. A major way in which solution-focused therapists assist their clients is by suggesting new questions for assessing clients' lives. The questions ask clients to conceptualize and describe their lives in new ways (Miller and deShazer 1998).

The solution-focused development model of brief therapy stresses the clinical situation, which includes both therapist and client. DeShazer and his colleagues developed a concept called cooperation. Each couple shows a unique way attempting to

cooperate. The therapist's job becomes, first, to describe the particular matter to himself and, then, to cooperate with the couple's way, thus, to promote change. How the clients depict their situation or construct reality and what actually happens in the session are accepted by the therapist at face value and adapted to and utilized by the therapist as the foundation of therapy. This model of solution-determined brief therapy focuses right from the start of the session on what the client is already doing that works. The therapeutic task, when constructed in this way, allows the therapist to readily develop an intervention that fits since the intervention just asks the client to continue to do something. This process of solution development can be summed up as helping an unrecognized difference become a difference that makes a difference (deShazer 1988).

Townsend spoke with several couples that had been married more than twenty-five years. They all thought one of the most difficult things about living with someone was accepting the fact that the other person has his or her own perspective, opinion, and peculiar habits, and that many of these traits are not going to change. They said that too often people marry with the idea that their partner is more or less okay but needs a little working on; that their partner will eventually see the light and give up those annoying habits (Townsend 1998). Very often those pet peeves that were there in the beginning of the relationship are still there twenty years later, only they are even more annoying because the romantic passion and novelty of young relationships are not there to mask them. Most successful couples met invariably had things in common they really enjoyed doing together, i.e., sports, camping, reading, traveling and they took time to do them. As deShazer put it . focus on what the client is doing that works.

Recognizing that these male-female differences are persistent and tenacious, and that a certain amount of conflict is inevitable, is the first step toward negotiating a compromise (Townsend 1998). In keeping with deShazer's (1991) problem/nonproblem concept, solution-focused therapy is languaging about problems and languaging about nonproblems. The notion of a problem necessarily implies the existence of nonproblem, that is, areas of our life in which the problem/nonproblem is not an issue and is of no concern to the client (deShazer 1991).

In the problem-defining/exception constructing language game: "A women and her husband came to see Insoo Kim Berg at the Brief Family Therapy Center because, suddenly, six weeks earlier she had developed an insatiable desire for sex, in her words, she had become a nymphomaniac. During this six-week period, she had felt that she had to have sexual intercourse at least once per day without which she would remain awake, crying until 3:00AM. Prior to this session she had been able to restrain herself from sexual activity for two nights in a row by sleeping fully clothed on top of the blankets. As the session developed, the client's description of her complaint went from bad to worse. She wanted normophilic sex about three times per week that was uncontaminated by compulsion. She wanted just to go to sleep without having to have sexual intercourse first. Without her daily fix of sex, she was unable to get to sleep. As she saw it, now she was having sex for all the wrong reasons. Her compulsion to have sex was the problem. None of the exceptions, that is, times when she overcame the compulsion to have sex, were indicators of a nonproblem because they all involved the woman deliberately restraining herself. For an exception to be meaningful and useful to

her, to indicate a nonproblem, it would have to involve her spontaneously not feeling the compulsion to have sex (Berg and deShazer 1992).

Throughout the conversation, the therapist focused on questions like: “What will be happening when you have sex for the right reasons?” “What will be happening when sex is entirely voluntary?” However, the responses to these questions just confirmed the “solidity” of the woman’s idea of herself as a nymphomaniac, leading her to the conclusion that this complaint was anchored in the traumas of her past. The conversation about what is going on here switched to her husband who described her agony about the nymphomania and his tiredness. As he saw it, he was being robbed of the opportunity to be romantic toward her; rather than her lover; he had become just a stud, a sex machine. Husband: “But for me, it’s more of a sleep problem for both of us”. Therapist: “I wonder about that. Maybe we’ve been looking at this the wrong way”. Wife: “Do you have any cures for insomnia?” Therapist: “I don’t know. We’ve been looking at this as a sex disturbance, but it’s beginning to look more like a sleep disturbance” (Berg and deShazer 1992).

What was going on here is that the husband offered a different view, a different work/concept that was immediately accepted by his wife and the therapist. We thought we were on safe grounds; language seemed to be behaving itself quite well, but now the woman is saying that she is willing to consider calling her complaint by a different name (Berg and deShazer 1992). This can support Townsend (1998) in that men and women have different sexual strategies and psychologies; conflicts like this are virtually inevitable (Townsend 1998). With rare exceptions, even couples who think their sex lives are a complete mess can point at least some pleasurable moments (Morin 1995).

CHAPTER 12  
 EXPRESSING EXACT FEELINGS - THE KEY TO AN INTIMATE  
 RELATIONSHIP

Intelligence and common sense desert couples when it comes to sex. First of all, couples don't know how to talk about sex, have no vocabulary for sex except tongue twisters like fellatio oral sex, and profanity. There is, in fact a nonvocabulary for sex, and are taught that sex is something not to talk about. Maturation does little to dispel this notion.

While a great deal more discussion about sex, especially in the media, lead to advanced and sophisticated knowledge it is an illusion that sexual problems are non-existent. Sexual attitudes in general, in the movies, in the streets, and the sexual affairs and exploits of neighbors and friends are gleefully discussed. However, talk specifically about ourselves is very often, if at all ever articulated. Trying to solve a sexual problem by talking about other's problems except our own is about as reasonable as going to a mechanic to get help for an inoperative automobile, and discussing the neighbor's SUV.

A more efficacious method for dealing with is the use of "I" language. Whether following the Masters and Johnson model or Jack Anon's P-LI-SS-IT model. Regardless of the therapeutic model it is apparent that communication with sexual partners is left unsaid.

Theresa Crenshaw explores this in depth in *Bedside Manners*. (Crenshaw 1983).

Since tomorrow often changes and he is more likely to do the right thing at the wrong time, these morning-after discussions don't communicate very useful information. To be effective, communication must occur at the time, so that if her needs change, which

they usually will, he is informed immediately. She must develop the ability to tell him what she wants when she wants it, not two days later. One of the most effective ways to communicate is to provide instant feedback that clearly states what is wanted. “I” language is simply using the first person singular when expressing sexual needs rather than blaming the other partner. This is a simple common sense, rational, obvious information on how to solve a communication difficulty.

It is possible to be direct without being harsh. But couples usually settle for being very unclear with one another. They fear that information and discussion will make sex clinical and take fun out of it.

The vagueness with which people interact gives rise to a great deal of attempted mind reading. By trying to read between the lines in order to figure out what the other person really wants, even if he or she tells you, you won't listen because you think you already know. The major form of miscommunication regarding sex is not saying exactly what is needed or wanted. People don't vary from this theme. In the meantime, the other person is being blamed because of the lack of “I” usage.

For a man and a woman to share their sometimes different feelings requires clear communication and patience. Understanding and cooperation develop from a willingness to learn about and from each other, and a recognition of the differences by taking responsibility for what they want.

Having differences is inevitable and, indeed, desirable. Without them you would not be challenged or stimulated. How you cope with these differences determines whether you have serious problems or not.

No one knows how you feel unless you tell them. Mind reading is at best unreliable. They may guess, and may even be right most of the time, but they will never know when they are wrong unless you tell them, and they listen. "I" language is a way of talking to one another that leaves very little room for misunderstanding.

Two-year-olds use "I" language very well. "I'm hungry," "I want a cookie," "I love you," "I hate you." You never have to say to yourself, "I wonder what he meant by that?" But when he goes to school, one of the first things he learns is, "Don't say 'U' Don't start your sentences with 'U'" (Crenshaw 1983).

Learning to become tactful (untruthful) and civilized (manipulative). Instead of saying, "I want to go to a movie," he says, "Wouldn't you like to go to a movie, Dad?" or "There's a good movie playing at the Guild Theater." Now he fits in. He is communicating just as vaguely as everybody else. You can't figure out what he really wants from what he is saying, so you read between the lines. Second-guessing and interpretation become second nature after a while. "You" language is well established. Instead of believing what you hear, you believe your own analysis of what is being said. Using "I" language allows you to be selfish in a good way as it allows a person to express words, and feelings work for you must express them to someone else. Feelings can be expressed in many different ways, some useful, others invariably confusing (Renshaw 1995).

HE: "Where would you like to go for dinner tonight, dear?"

SHE: "I don't know. Where would you like to go?"

HE: "Whatever you want to do is fine with me."

SHE: "I'd like to please you."

Even if you didn't have much depth of feeling on the matter, you would make a choice. So express a preference even if that preference is not particularly strong. Do not use "ought," "should," "must," "have to" and similar synonyms. Instead: "I might" "I could" "I would like to" "I want to" "I'd love to" (Crenshaw 1983).

If you can't change a "should" into a "want," reconsider if it is really in your best interest to do it. Other words need to be eliminated. "Why" often comes across as an accusation and puts the other person on the defensive- "Why on earth did you do that?" -especially if they don't really know the answer. Rather than asking someone, "Why are you feeling that way," or "Why are you upset," try, "What is bothering you, in what way, and what might be done to change it." This is especially necessary for sexual activity.

"Always" and "never." are not very accurate predictors of the future. "Always" and "never" encompass the past, present, and future, often resulting in self-fulfilling prophecies. Couples need to acknowledge the possibility of change.

Learning to use "I" language is hard, but not impossible. But only a conscious effort of both partners will cause it to become second nature. While it looks deceptively easy, it is as challenging and awkward as any foreign language could be in the beginning.

The therapist has the responsibility of providing the context for this change. Couples will sometimes try to use "I" language as a weapon against each other. These pitfalls to "I" language must be avoided. Determined opponents will argue over it. "You're not using 'I' language!" she accuses. (At that moment, by the way, neither is she.) The therapist has the task of setting the usage rules which include not correcting each other,

pointing out that it is easier to see when someone else is not using "I" language than when you yourself are not. Encourage the couple to concentrate on developing these skills, when tempted to correct someone else, and instead take a closer look at verbal behavior.

"I" language is a therapeutic tool intended to improve communications. Like most tools, it can also be used as a weapon. "I hate you." "I don't like anything about you." "I am tired of you" is technically "I" language. If you add the phrase "right now," those statements are sometimes true just for the moment.

"I" language is an attitude, not just words. It is not an order or a command, but a vehicle for sharing information about yourself, with the understanding that you are interested in hearing the other person's feelings too (Crenshaw 1983).

The therapist must further entrust clients not to let "I" language become yet another belief system. While it works most of the time, it won't work, however, if not used correctly. Determine where the problem lies with the couple and work with them to express it accurately.

The personal growth movement and other extreme I-me philosophies have taken the position that everything should be communicated. If it itches, scratch it. If you have a thought, let it all hang out. These schools of thought encourage people to communicate all the time-with everyone. To express every feeling, no matter how trivial, to anyone who happens to be nearby.

If the thought is there, it deserves to be expressed! Not necessarily so.

This method of honesty can cause serious problems, including unnecessary relationship crises, and even divorce, when used without judgment and discrimination.

Many therapists find themselves trying to patch together a wounded relationship because someone encouraged "Express your anger. Get it all out," or "Be honest about your affair, you'll feel better."

There are times and circumstances when it is better not to communicate. If you are tired, premenstrual, irritable, or tense, it is not an ideal time for a serious discussion especially since you are probably taking yourself far too seriously as it is. Realize that there are some times when you are more vulnerable to an argument than others. Respect those times as much as you can, and don't undertake an important discussion then (Crenshaw 1983).

Selective communication presumes that you have a choice, that you can participate in a sensible conversation if you wish, and that you can discipline your impulses and defer the issue when appropriate.

Often, the use of "I" language makes "right" choices obvious to both. However, after two people have accurately and carefully expressed their respective needs and/or desires to one another there may still be a conflict. This does not necessarily lead to a problem if phase two is instituted: the negotiation of available options.

Most disagreements are kept unrealistically simple: black or white-your way or mine. The argument is limited to two solutions and therefore often goes unresolved, or leaves one person unhappy.

There are usually many options possible, but lack of awareness, inertia, and stubbornness prevent us from exploring them.

When there is an apparent conflict, make a list of all the possible alternatives. She makes a list of alternatives that are desirable to her. He makes a list of his desirable

alternatives. Do not think of ways to dilute your preferences to accommodate what you think will be acceptable to the other person. Then compare your lists and begin considering the alternatives that could suit you both. Problems crop up and continue because people don't stop to solve them.

Remember that the first benefit of "I" language is better communication with yourself. In order to tell someone else how you feel, you must first know your own feelings. For men, the lag time between their feelings and their knowledge of them is greatest in the emotional zones.

For women, the lag time is most prominent in the sexual sphere. As you practice using the "I" language, the lag time between having a feeling and registering it will decrease, enabling you to express your emotions earlier. Communication will be clearer and more enjoyable. Arguments will disappear from your repertoire, and you will find new solutions to old problems.

Crenshaw further counsels couples at the use of "I" language rather than mind reading by this scenario:

(HE thinks: "I know she likes spaghetti") and says, "How about Italian food?"

(SHE thinks: "Chinese food is his favorite") and says, "How about Chinese food?"

(HE thinks: "I had Chinese food for lunch, but if she really wants to go there, I'll take her") and says, "Wonderful, let's go."

(SHE thinks: "I'm not too fond of Chinese food, but since it makes him happy, I'll go")

(Exit, stage right.)

They end up going out to eat where neither one of them wants to go, each thinking he or she is pleasing the other one.

Lights up in a somewhat garish chrome-and-vinyl restaurant dining room:

HE: "The service is slow."

SHE: "I only came here because you wanted to. You know I don't like Chinese food."

HE: "What do you mean? It was your idea in the first place."

The argument flourishes. They are both wounded by their own good deeds, energetically accusing the other. Methods that rely on second-guessing what your partner really wants usually backfire. This frustrates all communication. Why talk if, no matter what you say, your words are not believed.

Effective communication contains five simple, but necessary ground rules:

1. Say what you mean.
2. Be clear.
3. Believe what you hear.
4. Trust that you're both on the same side.
5. Listen carefully (Crenshaw 1983).

Simplify your life and be honest in your communication. Say what you mean and mean what you say. Be clear you know what you want, but won't tell, hoping he or she will figure it out from vague hints. Even when this method fails time and again, you don't give up. You get angry instead. If you don't generally get what you want, chances are that you aren't being clear about your needs. Believe what you hear, don't hear what you want to believe. He doesn't talk to her because she doesn't believe anything he says. She has her own interpretation of every thought he has. She is immune to his words. His reasons and his feelings are irrelevant. Refusing to believe what you are being told creates problems that didn't exist, except in your mind, and makes them real. You must

trust that the other person is on your side, and would not hurt you on purpose, just as you would not set out to hurt them. When problems occur, you must be secure that they were accidents or unavoidable. Deal with the consequences instead of attacking each other. Otherwise, you will be the victim of perpetual suspicions and insecurities.

There was no one there to help you remember what was said. You did not tape the discussion. No one can prove whose memory is more accurate.

If you wish to conserve energy and stop fighting, there is a way to bypass this detour and stick with the issue. Avoid saying, "I said," or "You said." Eliminate those terms from your vocabulary and substitute, "I meant." You cannot remember precisely what you said. Even if you can remember, you cannot prove it. You can usually remember what you meant-and no one can argue with that.

The problem is discussed and they are en route to a solution. There is no intervening argument. Listen to what he or she is telling you now. Don't insist on holding onto your past or present impressions. Stop interpreting and pay attention to the literal meaning of what is being said.

How people talk to one another can be negatively charged and uncomfortable, or warm and expressive. What is said can be badly distorted by how it is being expressed. "I" language enables individuals to express their perceptions without antagonizing each other. Learning to use the "I" language depends on one key principle: Start your sentences with "I": "I would like . . ." "I feel - . ." "I need . . ." End them with, "And I'd like to know how you feel, what you would like, what you need." Simple, clear, efficient, considerate. Four transactions and the issue is resolved. No conflict. If you speak from your own point of view instead of in absolutes,

communication is much easier. An advantage of "I" language is that, when used correctly, it is very hard to argue.

Another advantage of "I" language is that you must talk about yourself. In order to do that, you must know how you feel. "I" language forces you to examine your feelings. It also helps you take responsibility for doing something about those feelings by choosing some course of action.

"I" language can help you to become more vulnerable, but is that desirable? We build up defenses to avoid getting hurt. (Those defenses rarely work, by the way, and often cause even greater hurt.)

It is not necessary or wise to be vulnerable all the time, even with someone you trust. However, in an intimate relationship, vulnerability is essential sometimes. You need to be able to be yourself, relaxed and at home with someone else in this world. Can you survive without becoming vulnerable? Yes. Are there risks in becoming vulnerable? Of course. If you become vulnerable, you may be in jeopardy (the risk). However, if you are not willing to share your vulnerabilities with someone you are close to, the relationship is in jeopardy. The choice is yours to make.

Successful communication requires a sender and a receiver. The message must be clear, must be listened to, and there must be no static.

What is static? If you are absorbed in a television program, you may not hear when someone talks to you. It won't register, because of the "static." Depending on your point of view, the static can be either the TV program or the conversation.

If you are upset, preoccupied, tired, anxious, worried, angry, or in pain, these conditions and many others will affect your ability to send and receive messages, just as

static on the radio obscures music. Recognize and respect the static in your environment. Try to reduce it, or postpone a discussion until the static is gone. Otherwise, you won't accomplish much, and unnecessary arguments often develop.

The following provides a practical guide to help you put these concepts into practice.

Guidelines for Intimate Conversation: How to express your feelings in words:

1. Start every sentence you speak with the pronoun "I".

EXAMPLES: "I'm hungry." "I'm happy." "I'd like to go to a movie."

It may sound selfish, but it is not. It is clear and honest.

It is more selfish to make someone guess what you are really thinking. Tell them yourself. "I" language gives someone else information about you.

2. Avoid starting sentences with any of the following:

"You . . . "Let's . "We . . . "I think you .

"Let's" and "we" incorporate the other person without consulting them.

3. Do not make absolute statements. EXAMPLES: "That is the prettiest girl in the school."

"That is an ugly dog."

"That is a stupid game."

Eliminate "that is" statements and substitute "I prefer, I like, I dislike," etc.

People respond to one another and to their environment through their individual perceptions. It is risky to impose your perception on someone else through casual absolute statements.

4. Avoid asking questions without making your concern clear in advance. "Are you getting hungry yet?" usually means "I'm hungry and want to eat soon."

"What's the matter?" usually means "I'm worried that something is bothering you and need to know if anything is wrong." Don't hide your concerns behind a question. Express the concern and then ask the question.

5. "I don't know" or "I don't care" are rarely acceptable. "I don't know, but let me think about it" and "I'll tell you as soon as I figure it out" are sometimes necessary. You may not have strong feelings, but you do have some feelings. With a little effort you can find them. To leave a response at "I don't know" is not to have looked far enough for the answer, especially if it has to do with yourself, how you are feeling, what you would like to do, etc. "I don't care" is inappropriate. When asked "What would you like to do tonight, dear?", the response "I don't care" does not actually fit. If the response is "How about a snake walk at midnight?", you'd suddenly care quite a lot. If you were home alone, you wouldn't go to the cupboard blindfolded or select a can of food at random for dinner. Even if you didn't have much depth of feeling on the matter, you would make a choice. So express a preference even if that preference is not particularly strong.

6. Do not use "ought," "should," "must," "have to" and similar synonyms.

SUBSTITUTE INSTEAD: "I might" "I could" "I would like to" "I want to"

"I'd love to"

If you say to yourself "I should get up this morning," and change it to "I would love to keep sleeping but I want to get up because I hate being late, and I like my job and want to keep it," it is much easier to get out of bed. But if you can't change it into a "want" because you dislike your work and your standard of living isn't worth the pain, it

may be time to give notice. If you can't change a "should" into a "want, reconsider if it is really in your best interest to do it.

7. Eliminate the word "why" and replace it with "what." "Why" often comes across as an accusation and puts the other person on the defensive.

8. Eliminate the words "always" and "never." Substitute "up to now" or "in the past."

Human beings are not very accurate predictors of the future. "Always" and "never" encompass the past, present, and future, often resulting in self-fulfilling prophecies. "Up to now" leaves the future uncommitted and acknowledges the possibility of change.

Learning to use "I" language is hard, but not impossible. After a year of conscious effort, it will begin to become second nature. It looks deceptively easy, but it is as challenging and awkward as any foreign language could be in the beginning.

## CHAPTER 13

### REPRISE

For the purposes of this research, popular literature was used to examine language differences in male/female relationships. There are exceptions to this as not all females and males react the same. Reviewing the history of relationships and their challenges, it is found that if communication were not an obstacle, men and women would be more alike than different. Since that is not the case, miscommunication between couples is one of the main reasons for causing stress and confusion. This can ultimately lead to an end of the relationship.

In creating this work, it is recognized that men and women struggle with communication in their relationships. Biology, desire, and cultural differences all play a significant role. This work has stimulated as many questions as it has answers for the mystery of the communication gap between men and women. It is a miracle that men and women have successful relationships at all, given these findings.

The differential use of language between men and women has been a question that needs to be answered. The research has explained how and why these differences occur but what about the interpretations of what is actually said. When a man says, I love you, he may have several meanings of the word love. The woman may hear something entirely different.

How do men define love and sex? Is it devotion or commitment, passionate infatuation or lust? Most men said it could start as a strong feeling, but to last and develop into real love, it had to be worked on and allowed to mature over a period of

time (Hite 1981). Some men, when they fall deeply in love, felt it was not good, that it was something to control or flee from. As for women, they equate love with emotions and security. For women love and sex are intertwined.

What about words? People interpret words differently everyday. An example of how transference plays a role in relationships is portrayed in the following scenario. A couple comes into therapy for communication issues. The woman complains that he calls her names and uses vulgar language. The man agrees and proceeds to say that's the way he learned to express love and get attention. The therapist asks him to explain his upbringing and past relationships. He says this is how his parents communicated with each other and how he was abused verbally in past relationships. The therapist suggests to the woman to try to understand the origin and help him point that out when it's occurring. The therapist also suggests to the man to become more aware of his language and express his feelings in a more loving way. The therapist suggests acknowledging each other's strengths and minimizing the weaknesses.

Another example of miscommunication between couples is examined in the following statements: If she says: "This is the best sex I've ever had." She really means: "I'm lying and you can never call my bluff, nor would you want to. I need something: money, clothes, and a father to my child. It's our old standby." If she says: "Sex will be much better after we move in together." She really means: "I mean 'much better' in the sense that we really won't be having any, except when I'm really in the mood." If he says: "I really like you but don't want a relationship." He really means: "If I do get laid, at least I was honest with her." If he says: "I love you" in the first week of dating. He really means: "I want to get laid."

These examples might be extreme but they demonstrate the potential communication gap that exists between men and women. Why is it that people can't say what they actually mean? It would cause a lot less confusion and miscommunication.

Men and women both have different language. According to the research, lack of communication, trust, hostility, transferences, and sexual sabotage are some of the main reasons for marital discord (Kaplan 1974). These issues may or may not result in sexual difficulties. Some persons' and couples' sexual responses are amazingly impervious to negative aspects of their relationship. They are able to enjoy an admirable sexual relationship in the midst of power struggles, transferences and contractual disappointments. Their sexuality is relatively unaffected by the negative interactions with their partners because they have excellent defenses. Also, some couples that destroy each other in other ways do not act out their problems in bed. In many other relationships, however, marital disharmony takes its toll of the couple's sexuality and so must be dealt with in treatment.

In *The Hite Report on Female Sexuality* (1976) sex is intimate physical contact for pleasure, to share with another person (or alone). There is never any reason to think the goal must be intercourse, and to try to make what you feel fit into that context. There is no standard of sexual performance out there, against which one must measure up to. Hormones or biology doesn't rule people. People are free to explore and discover their own sexuality, to learn or unlearn anything they want, and to make physical relations with their partner anything they like.

Treatment requires patience and practice on the part of the couple. Honesty, knowing each other's game plan, experimenting, and understanding differences in

language, are prerequisite for treatment. Trying to ignore differences only creates more confusion and frustration between the sexes. Where women speak and hear language of connection and intimacy, men speak and hear a language of status and independence; in this way communication between men and women can be similar to cross-cultural communication.

Many experts tell us we are doing things wrong and should change our behavior— which sounds easy. In sensitivity training men are judged by women's standards, attempting to get them to talk more like women. Assertiveness training judges' women by men's standards and tries to get them to talk more like men. No doubt, learning can help many people to be more sensitive or more assertive. But being told they are doing everything all wrong helps few people. And there may be little wrong with what people are doing, even if they are winding up in arguments.

Can people change their conversational styles, and to what extent? Those who ask this question rarely want to change their own styles. Changing one's own style is far less appealing, because it is not just how one behaves, but whom they feel themselves to be. Therefore a more realistic approach is to learn how to interpret each other's messages and explain their own in a way your partner can understand and accept. But even if no one changes, understanding differences improves relationships. Once people realize that their partners have different conversational styles, they are inclined to accept differences without blaming themselves, their partners, or their relationships. What is important is when the differences do show up, they will have positive and useful relationship skills for coping with them (Gray 1994).

Solution-focused therapy is about languaging. "More than the mere outward

expression of inner thoughts and feelings, language shapes and is shaped by human relationships” (Goldenberg and Goldenberg 2000). The basis of solution-focus therapy is that there is no right or wrong answer, only a different way of looking at the challenge. The goal is to capitalize on the couples’ strengths and minimize their weaknesses. Instead of problem talk these therapist urges solution talk.

Solution-focus brief therapy may provide a remedy in the couple’s learning to communicate and interpret each other’s language in the presence of a therapist or interpreter. The therapist intervenes, listening to each interpretation of the challenge, which brought them to therapy. As deShazer noted, more often than not the issue that brings the client into therapy is not the main reason they are there (Goldenberg and Goldenberg 2000).

The overall aim of this approach is to help clients start the solution process. In turn, this will help to bridge the communication gap between men and women and can reduce the difference in language that may cause stress and confusion in the couples’ sexual and emotional response to each other. When successful, clients achieve a cognitive change, reconstructing their sense of their own ability to resolve, control, or contain the presenting challenge (Shoham, Rohrbaugh, and Patterson 1995).

The title and question of how differential language between heterosexual males and females regarding love and sex affects relationships has been learned during this research. It takes effort and discipline to learn the skills of constructive dialogue, which lie at the heart of any successful relationship. The two key skills of constructive dialogue are deep listening and straight talking.

## GLOSSARY

Armamentarium – The equipment of a clinician including books, instruments medicines and therapeutic techniques.

Androgyne – (177) Having the physical and psychological characteristics of both males and females.

Diachronic – (84) To study something over time.

Hegemony – (163) Dominance of one group over another.

Langue – (195) The whole system within which particular usages have meaning and utterances that are made.

Medieval – (13) Period between the end of the classical period of Greek and Roman culture and the beginning of the Italian Renaissance, beginning in the seventh century and ending in the fifteenth century.

Ontogeny – (145) Study of the life cycle from birth through maturity to death.

Parole – (145) Particular usage and utterances that in fact are made.

Structuralism – (142) The explicit study of the underlying structures and patterns of organization of languages, society, culture, literature and other systems.

Synchronic – (84) To study something in the current state of its being.

Sociolinguistics – (139) The structure, history, development and use of human language and its relationship to society.

Zeitgeist – (161) Each historical period has its own historical time period and spirit.

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