

Conversational Skills Training
Delivered via Manuals versus Computers

by

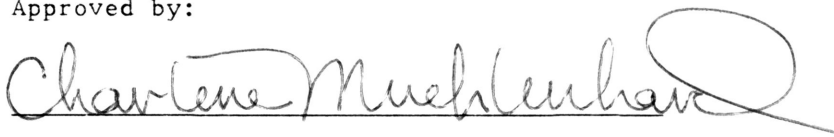
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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the
University Undergraduate Fellows Program

1985-86

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A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Charlene Muehlenhard". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Charlene L. Muehlenhard

May 1986

Several epidemiological studies have found that social isolation is predictive of subsequent physical and mental health problems. Many persons have difficulty initiating interactions with other people. The purpose of this study was to develop a program to teach conversational skills useful for initiating relationships, such as how to start a conversation, ask appropriate questions about the other person, and use appropriate nonverbal behaviors (e.g., smiling and eye contact). This study assessed two techniques for presenting such a program to large numbers of people economically: a manual and a program for microcomputers.

Approximately 700 female introductory psychology students completed a scale measuring their ability to interact with men in social situations. Women in the lower 17% of the distribution were asked to participate in a program to help them talk with men more comfortably. The 45 women who agreed to participate were randomly divided into three groups: a group receiving the training via a manual, a group viewing a computerized program, and a no-treatment control group. In addition, a fourth group of 15 women scoring at the median of the distribution was included for comparison purposes. The program consisted of descriptions of conversational skills, modeling illustrating correct use of these skills, scenarios in which the subject was asked how she would respond, and response-contingent feedback.

Results from analysis of SHI-F scores from pre- to posttreatment assessment showed that the two treatment groups improved

significantly more than the no-treatment control group, but not to the level of the median group. A follow-up questionnaire completed four months after treatment revealed that in comparison with the no-treatment control group, the two treatment groups still had significantly higher SHI-F scores. In addition, the treatment group scores had improved up to the level of the median group.

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Relationships with other people are important for positive mental and physical health. From the very beginning, people need social contact. Babies raised in near isolation conditions of the institutions of the 1930's and 1940's showed major disturbances in interpersonal relationships, becoming either socially indifferent or socially insatiable (e.g., displaying a constant desire for attention) (Hetherington & Parke, 1979). Along the same lines, Resick and Sweet (1979) concluded that parents abusive to their children generally have fewer social contacts than nonabusive parents. Several epidemiological studies have found that isolation, or lack of relationships with other people, is predictive of both physical and mental health problems (Berkman & Syme, 1979; House, Robbins, & Metzner, 1982; Murrell, Himmelfarb, & Wright, 1983; Verbrugge, 1979).

Dating is a way people satisfy their need for social contact. Initiating dates is one of the most difficult aspects of dating, and women, in general, have more difficulty initiating dates than men (Klaus, Hersen, & Bellack, 1977). Research has shown that if a woman just waits to be asked out, she is unlikely to be successful. Asking the man out or hinting that she is interested in dating him are much more likely to result in her getting a date (Muehlenhard & McFall, 1981; Muehlenhard & Miller, 1985). Many women, however, feel uncomfortable about approaching a man; they do not know how to start a conversation with a man, express their interest in him, or ask him out.

There are many conversational skills that women can learn to help them initiate a dating relationship. Learning how to start a conversation, ask appropriate questions about the other person, give more than the shortest possible answer, pay compliments, and use appropriate nonverbal behaviors (e.g., smiling and eye contact) will help women initiate social contact. Conveying interest to a man may spark a reciprocal interest from him that he had not considered before, thus increasing how much he likes the woman. This is important because the most significant predictor of a man's response to a woman's hinting or asking is how much he likes her (Muehlenhard & McFall, 1981; Muehlenhard & Miller, 1985); therefore, showing interest will probably increase the chances of a positive outcome for her efforts. In addition, sending out such signals of interest allows a woman to receive feedback from a man, which can guide her in some course of action (e.g., should she continue hinting, ask him out, or drop everything?). Taking an active role is definitely preferable to both parties sitting at home on a lonely Friday night, wondering what the person of their interest is doing.

One possible way of presenting such a program to women is via a conversational skills training manual, a form of bibliotherapy. A client could take the manual home with her and read it when she has time, looking back over it as many times as she needs to. The presentation of written material draws on the principle that people learn by observation and imitation (Fischer, 1968). Bibliotherapy is useful in "helping the client gain insight into a problem, providing

techniques for relaxation and diversion, creating a medium for the discussion of problems, and helping focus attention outside the self" (Pardeck & Pardeck, 1984, p. 243). In a literature review of the effectiveness of bibliotherapy, three studies found that bibliotherapy helped increase assertiveness, while no studies found it not to be effective (Pardeck & Pardeck, 1984). Similarly, the same review revealed three studies that found bibliotherapy effective in changing behavior (Pardeck & Pardeck, 1984). The reading of a manual may encourage the client to think about the material between sessions with a therapist, and help to strengthen behavior with the presentation of examples (Lester, 1977).

Another alternative is to present the material using a microcomputer. A client could sit down at the terminal keyboard and work through a conversational skills training program at her own leisure. In addition, the branching capability of a computer program could allow the client to focus on areas in which she needs more instruction and practice. She could also receive response-contingent feedback concerning her performance with the opportunity to try again, if needed. Computer aided instruction has been shown to be equivalent to more traditional ways of teaching (e.g., lectures and laboratory work) in a study dealing with human achievement (Pagliaro, 1983). Deignan and Duncan (1978) found that a computer-assisted instruction program to train medical technology students resulted in significantly higher achievement by students than training by lecture or instructional text. Also, the average time for students to

complete the computer-assisted lessons was 12 to 14 percent less than the other two groups. A computerized assertion training program developed by Muehlenhard and McFall (1983) revealed similar results, with the group receiving computerized training performing significantly higher than a control group which was given only motivational "pep talks."

Either of these methods for presenting a conversational skills training program would be most useful as an adjunct for therapy, not as therapy itself. Since therapy is often time-consuming and expensive for a client, presentation of material using one of these modes of communication would reduce the cost of a therapist's time, and allow the client to proceed at her own pace. The purpose of the present study was two-fold: (a) to develop a conversational skills training program useful for initiating relationships, and (b) to assess two techniques for presenting such a program to large numbers of people economically--a manual and a program for microcomputers.

Method

Overview

Approximately 700 female introductory psychology students completed a scale measuring their ability to interact with men in social situations. Women in the lower 17% of the distribution were phoned and asked to participate in a program to help them talk with men more comfortably. The 45 women who agreed to participate were randomly divided into three groups: two treatment groups and a no-treatment control group. In addition, a fourth group of 15 women

from the median of the distribution was included for purposes of comparison.

The two treatment groups received conversational skills training consisting of (a) descriptions of conversational skills, (b) modeling illustrating correct use of these skills, (c) descriptions of conversations in which these skills could be used, followed by a chance to think about, and then to say aloud how they would use the skills in the conversations, and (d) response-contingent feedback. One group received this treatment via a computer program, and one, via a written manual.

All four groups participated in pre- and posttreatment assessment, which consisted of completing questionnaires and talking with a male confederate in a three minute behavioral role play conversation. The two treatment groups participated in three treatment sessions, during which they either interacted with a computer program or took a manual home to read.

A follow-up questionnaire was mailed to all subjects four months after the posttreatment assessment.

Subjects

The final sample was composed of 60 female introductory psychology students. During screening, approximately 700 female introductory psychology students completed the SHI-F questionnaire. Women in the lower 17% of the distribution were phoned and asked to participate. The 45 women who agreed to participate were placed randomly into one of three groups: the computer, the manual, or no-

treatment group. Fifteen more women whose SHI-F scores were at the median were chosen to be an "average" control group. This median control group provided a standard with which the treatment groups could be compared.

Materials

The Survey of Heterosexual Interactions for Females (SHI-F, Williams & Ciminero, 1978) is a 20-item questionnaire asking women how able they would be to approach men they do not know well in various social situations. Women are presented with descriptions of 20 different situations involving male-female interactions, and they are asked to indicate how able they would be to approach the man ranging from unable in every case (0) to able in every case (4). Scores are summed to yield a total ranging from 20 to 100.

Role Play Interactions

Video equipment was used to film the women's conversations with a male confederate. Both pre- and posttreatment role plays were done. Rating sheets completed after the video asked the woman how comfortable she had felt and how well she thought she had done. The camera operator and the male confederate made similar ratings after the subject had left the room.

Manual

A list of conversational skills was developed. Each skill was first defined and explained. One or more scenarios were presented to demonstrate the use of each skill. Questions about each skill were asked next, and feedback was provided for each answer. Reinforcing

feedback was provided for a correct response, and corrective feedback and another example were given for an incorrect response. After each skill was demonstrated, there was a chance for the subject to read more scenarios illustrating the same skill, or continue on to the next skill. At the end of each manual, there was a short review of all the concepts and a "homework" assignment. Assignments encouraged subjects to practice the skills outside the treatment session.

Computer

The content of the manual and computer were virtually identical. The only differences are those which are inherent to computer usage, such as instructions to press keys for feedback; branching feedback; and being able to go directly to a new example without seeing the material in between. Also, some sound effects such as short songs and beeps were included in the computer program to increase subjects' interest. Finally, a variable for the subject's name was used to personalize the program. An Apple IIc personal microcomputer and a lesson programming language called SuperPILOT were used. Variables were assigned to all pronouns and proper names to make the program easy to switch from female to male subjects. This interchangeability might be useful for further research. The branching capabilities of the computer allowed the program to present a subject with feedback specifically tailored to her responses. As with the manual, a review and a homework assignment concluded every session.

Procedure

The study was described as one dealing with conversational

skills. All of the subjects were called to set up a convenient time for them to come in to the lab for each session.

Videotaping. Subjects were scheduled four or five at a time. While they filled out questionnaires, one woman at a time participated in a role play conversation with a male confederate. Each woman was told to pretend that she was trying to talk with a man in her introductory psychology class as if she wanted to get to know him better. Each role play lasted three minutes. The person who worked the video equipment and stop watch was as inconspicuous as possible, but the subject knew the person was there. After three minutes, the subject was taken to another room where she rated her performance. The male confederate and camera operator then rated her also.

The videotapes of the role plays were rated by raters, who were blind to the subjects' treatment conditions.

Manual Sessions. Each subject came at her specified time and received a manual. She was told to take it home, read it, and do all the homework. The experimenter's name and phone number were given in case of questions.

Computer Sessions. In these sessions, the subject came at her designated time and went into the lab where the computer was set up. We explained to the subject that she was working on a conversational skills program that gives information and examples on good conversational skills. At the beginning of the first session, we explained how to use the computer. We started the computer and left

the subject in the room, telling her that if she had any questions, we would be in the hall. We unobtrusively recorded the time spent on the computer.

Results

Analysis of the change in SHI-F scores from preassessment to postassessment indicate the two treatment groups improved significantly more than the no treatment control group, $F(3,56) = 8.15$, $p < .0001$; however, posttreatment SHI-F scores for the treatment groups did not reach the level of the median group (see Figure 1). Looking at skill ratings made by the male confederate, there was a trend for the manual training group to improve more than the computer training group, $F(3,56) = 2.24$, $p = .0932$. The posttreatment rating scores of the manual group were even slightly higher than those of the median group (see Figure 2). However, analyses of three males' ratings of the videotaped role plays showed no significant differences between the four groups (see Figure 3). In addition, these analyses revealed that the computer group improved significantly more than the other three groups on a rating of smiling, $F(3,55) = 3.75$, $p = .0160$. There was also trend for the two treatment groups to improve on the rating of animated speech more than the median group, $F(3,55) = 2.20$, $p = .0988$.

When comparing the two treatment groups, the manual group spent more time with the material at each session (mean time = 62.0 min per session for the manual group versus 25.1 min per session for the computer group). Also, when offered optional scenes to read and

Figure 1. SHI-F scores : pre- and post-

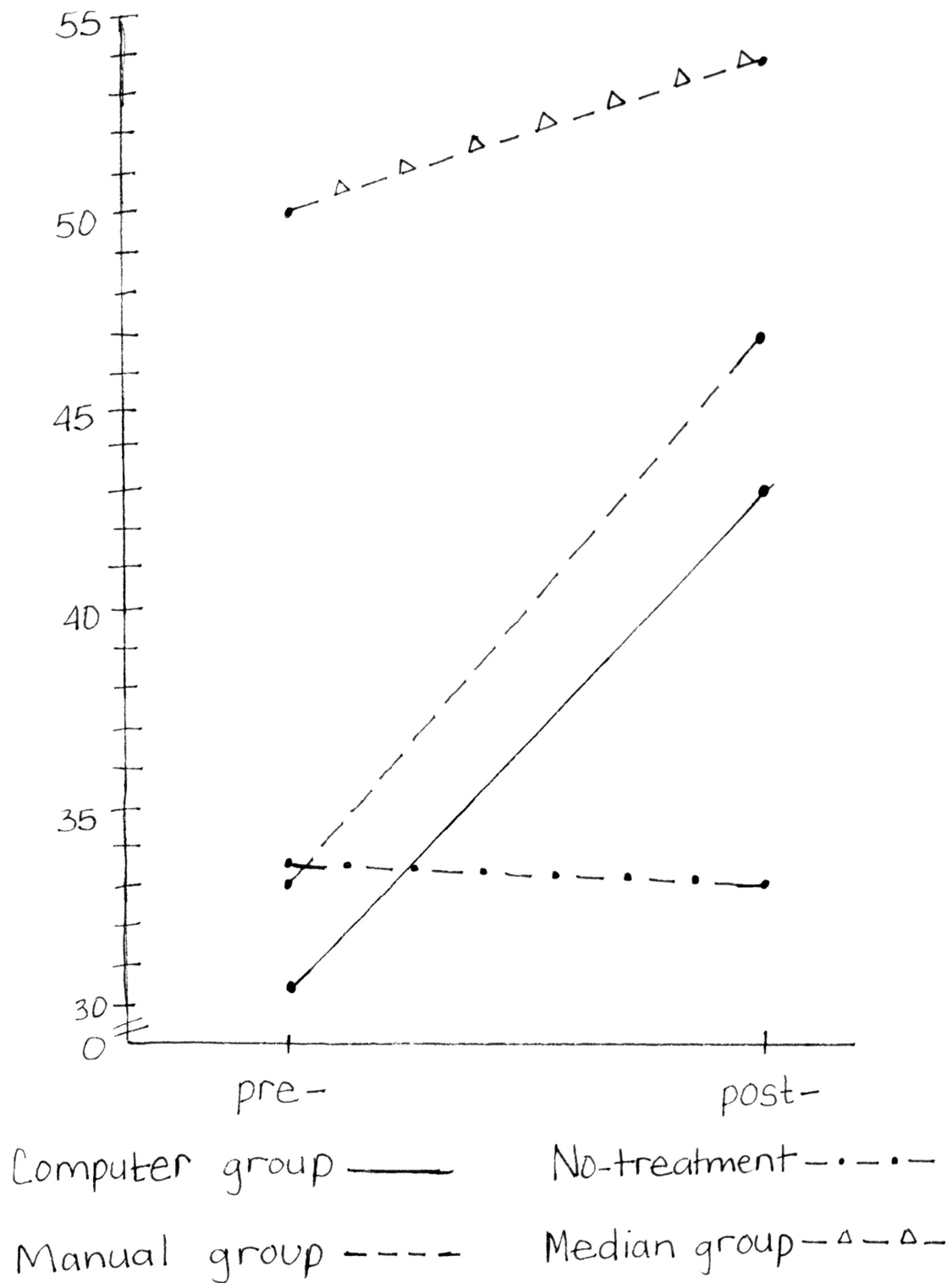
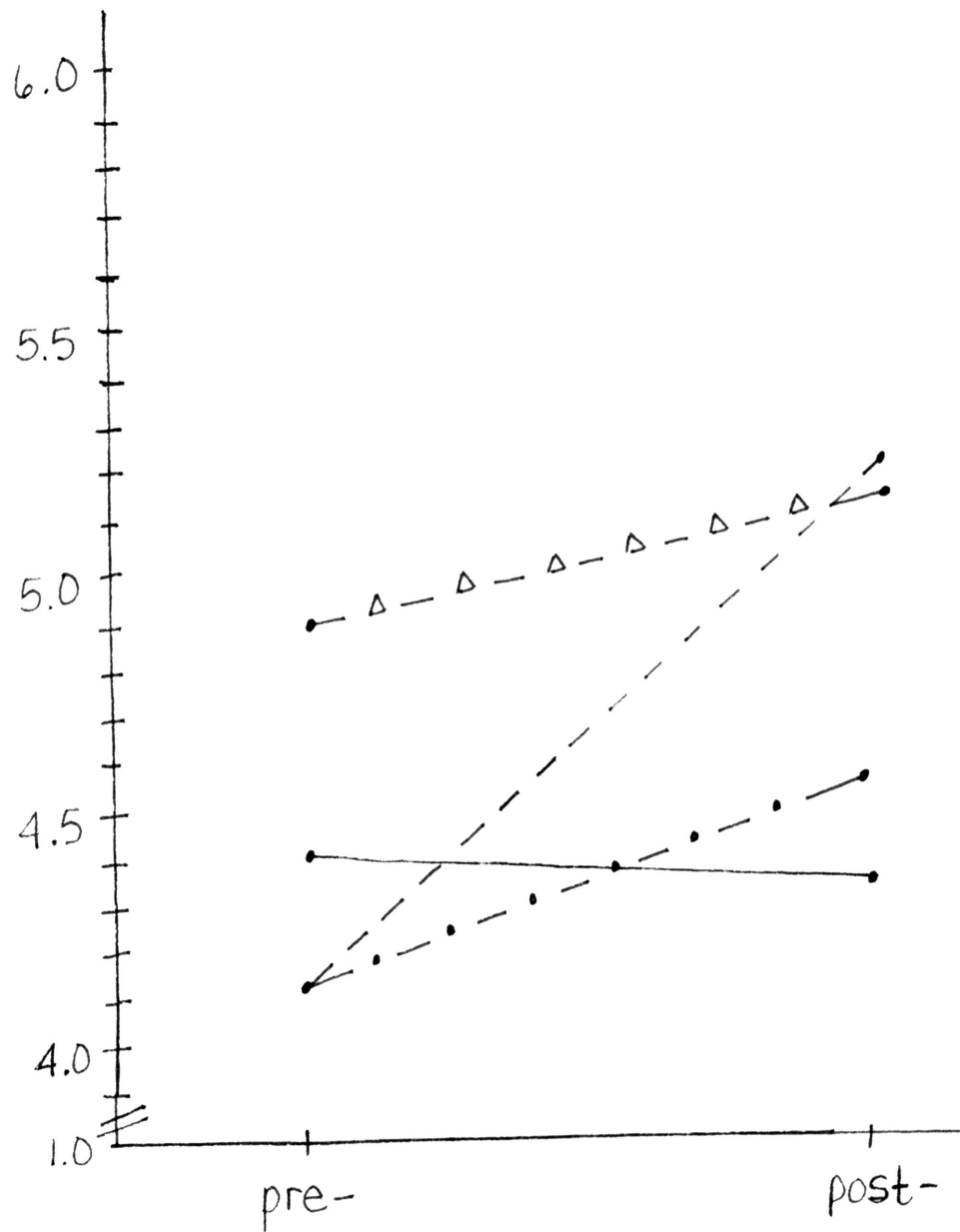


Figure 2. Skill ratings made by a male confederate: pre- and post-.



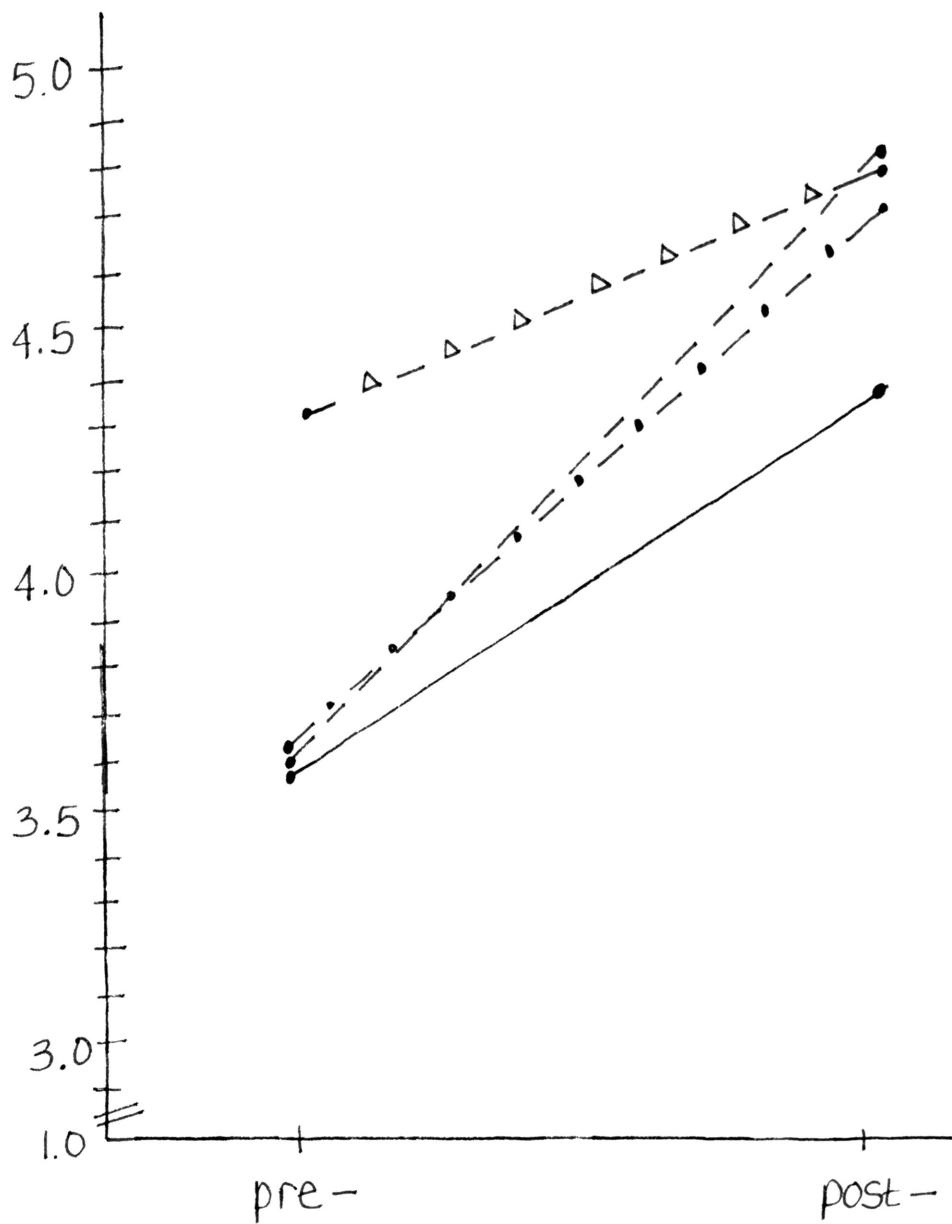
Computer group —

Manual group - - -

No-treatment - . - .

Median group - Δ - Δ

Figure 3. Skill ratings made by three male raters : pre- and post-.



Computer group —

No-treatment —•—•

Manual group - - - -

Median group —△—△

practice with, the manual group chose to do so more often than the computer group.

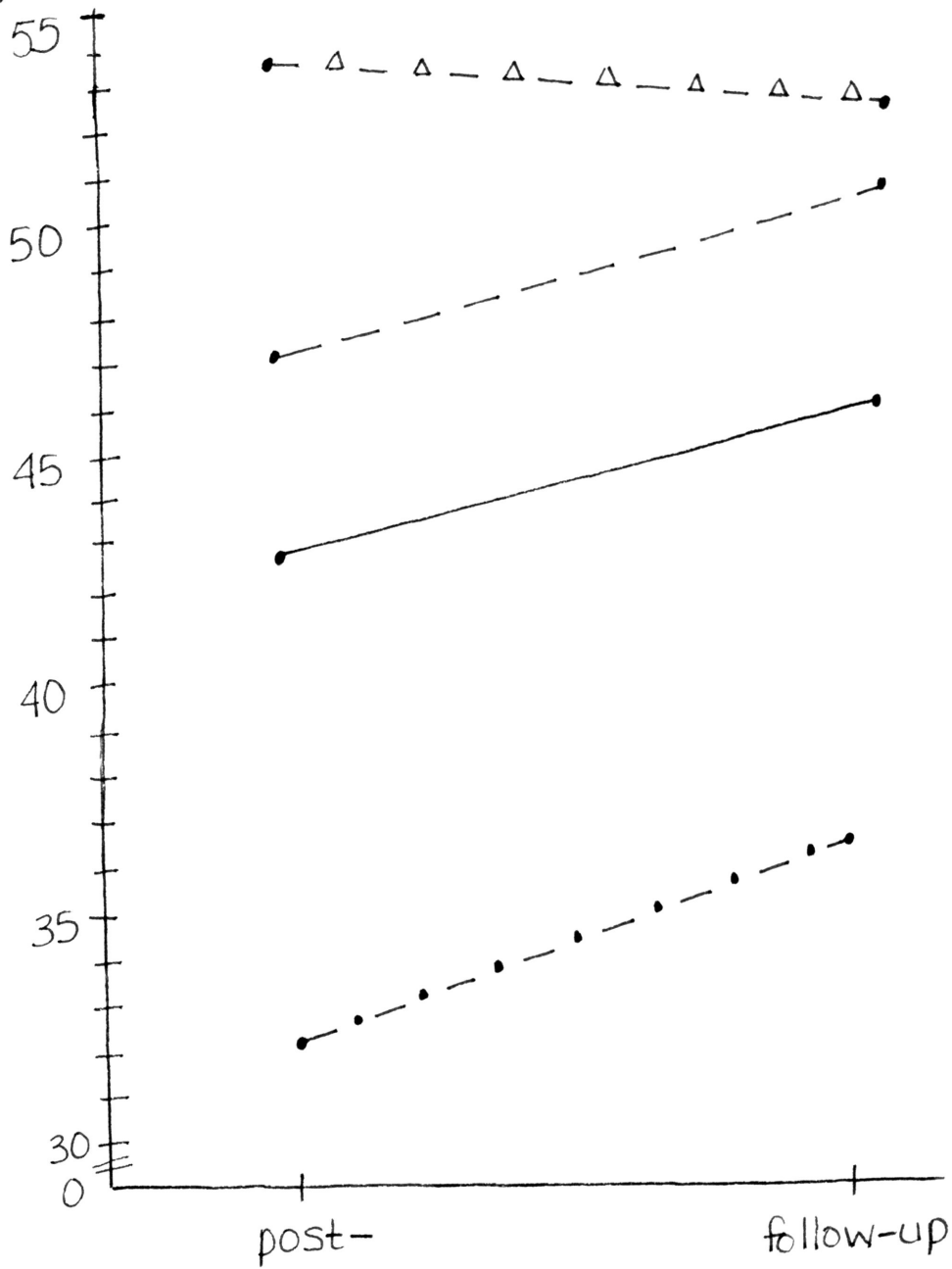
Analysis of a follow-up questionnaire sent to subjects four months after the study showed that the two treatment groups scored significantly higher on the SHI-F than the no-treatment control group. In addition, the SHI-F scores of the two treatment groups were not significantly different from those of the median group (see Figure 4).

Discussion

In the initial analysis of SHI-F scores, the two treatment groups improved significantly more than the no-treatment control group, but not to the level of the median group. The analysis of the follow-up SHI-F scores showed that the two treatment groups scored significantly higher than the no-treatment control group, and as high as the median group. These results indicate that the treatment groups continued to improve as a result of the training program. Therefore, the training program seemed to be effective, at least for this time period.

The SHI-F has been found to correlate with social skill and self-confidence in several studies (Imhof, Bourg, & Muehlenhard, 1985; Twentyman & McFall, 1975; Williams & Ciminero, 1978). It may be in the present study, the SHI-F picked up more lack of self-confidence than social skills deficits. After subjects went through the training program, it may have taken some time to implement the skills learned and increase self-confidence through interacting and

Figure 4. SHI-F scores: post- and follow-up.



Computer group ———

No-treatment · - ·

Manual group - - -

Median group -Δ-Δ

being rewarded, thus explaining no significant improvements found by the three male raters in the videotaped behavioral role plays conducted immediately after treatment. The male confederate's ratings of the manual group improved most; however, the other male raters scores revealed no significant differences between their ratings of the two treatment groups. It may be that the demand characteristics and familiarity with the setting accounted for all the groups improving slightly in postassessment, so that no significant differences were found among groups.

Further research could be aimed at developing a longer computer program with more complex branching capabilities that would allow subjects to concentrate on areas corresponding to their specific deficits. After the effectiveness of computerized skills training is documented using nonclinical subjects, this type of research should next use subjects who are in true need of such a program and are thus highly motivated to learn and practice. Also, pre- and postassessment role plays could be executed in a more natural manner, such as putting a subject in a "waiting room" with a male confederate, all the while videotaping without her knowledge, to see if she starts a conversation with him.

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Appendix A

Consent Form for Program Participants

1. Purpose The purpose of this study is to evaluate different ways of helping women feel more comfortable starting conversations with guys.

2. Procedure Everyone participating in this study must agree to come in for five half-hour sessions, for which you will receive 3 credits. The first and fifth sessions will be assessment sessions during which you will complete questionnaires and participate in a short conversation with a male. This conversation will be videotaped; these videotapes will be viewed only by the experimenters and experimental assistants.

During Sessions 2, 3, and 4, we will be presenting the program. This program consists of written suggestions for talking to guys, which you can read privately.

We will not be able to present this program to everyone this semester. If we do not get to you this semester and you are still interested, let us know and we will arrange for you to participate in the program sometime next semester. If we do not get to you this semester, you will still receive three credits.

If we are not able to offer you this program this semester, you will still get 3 credits. You will not get any credits, however, if we offer you the program and you do not participate.

If you agree to it, we might also send you a short follow-up questionnaire within the next several months.

3. Confidentiality Every participant will be given a number. Your questionnaires will be identified only by this number, not by your name. The videotapes of your conversation will not include your name. Your questionnaire and videotaped conversations will be seen only by the experimenters and experimental assistants.

4. Risk or discomfort We do not expect this experiment to cause you any risks or discomfort.

5. Benefits This program is an experimental program. It may or may not be helpful.

6. Your right to participate or discontinue It is your choice to participate or not. However, to get the three credits, you must participate in both assessment sessions and all three program sessions (if offered to you). If you do not participate in both assessment sessions and all three program sessions (if offered), you will not receive any credits.

7. Answering your questions You are encouraged to ask questions at any point during this study. The experimenters will answer your questions if they can; if they cannot, you may contact Dr. Muehlenhard, 424 Academic Building, 845-2508.

8. A copy of this form You are entitled to a copy of this form. If you want one, ask the experimenter.

I have read the above information. My signature indicates that I am willing to participate.

Name (please print) _____

Signature _____

Social Security number _____

Date _____

Experimenter's signature _____

Date _____

Consent Form for the Conversation Study

1. Purpose The purpose of this study is to help women feel more comfortable starting conversations with guys.
To do this, we need to get more information about women's typical conversations.
2. Procedure You will be asked to come in for two sessions. During each session you will be asked to complete questionnaires and participate in a short conversation with a male. This conversation will be videotaped; these videotapes will be viewed only by the experimenters and experimental assistants.
If you agree to it, we might also send you a short follow-up questionnaire within the next several months.
3. Confidentiality Every participant will be given a number. Your questionnaires will be identified only by this number, not by your name. The videotape of your conversations will not include your name. Your questionnaires and videotaped conversations will be seen only by the experimenters and experimental assistants.
4. Risk or discomfort We do not expect this experiment to cause you any risks or discomfort.
5. Your right to participate or discontinue It is your choice to participate or not. However, to get any credit, you must participate in both sessions. If you attend only one, you will not get any credit.
6. Answering your questions You are encouraged to ask questions at any point during this study. The experimenters will answer your questions if they can; if they cannot, you may contact Dr. Muehlenhard, 424 Academic, 845-2508.
7. A copy of this form You are entitled to a copy of this form. If you want one, ask the experimenter.

I have read the above information. My signature below indicates that I am willing to participate.

Name _____

Signature _____

Social Security Number _____

Date _____

Experimenter's signature _____

Date _____

Follow-Up Consent Form

I give my permission for you to mail me a short follow-up questionnaire within the next several months. This questionnaire will be identified only by _____ subject number.

Signature _____

Print name _____

Mailing Address _____

I do not want you to mail me a short follow-up questionnaire within the next several months.

Signature _____

Print name _____

Debriefing

The purpose of this study is to assess different ways of teaching women how to feel more comfortable with men. Some of the subjects received training via a written manual while others received training via a computer program. However, we were not able to offer the training to everyone. Because some subjects received the training while others did not, we will be able to make comparisons between the two teaching methods to determine which was more effective, and we can compare both methods to no training at all.

The skills taught in this program have been shown in previous studies to be effective in helping women feel more at ease with men. Such skills include asking open-ended questions, which are questions requiring more than a "yes" or "no" answer; giving more than the shortest possible answer when asked a question; backchanneling, which is letting someone know you are listening by responding every now and again with a short phrase (i.e. "I understand what you're saying" or "Oh really?"); and cueing, which is asking someone further questions about something he already mentioned.

The methods used to teach these skills have also shown to be effective by previous studies. For example, modeling was used by presenting situations with fictitious characters for participants to read and evaluate, so that they could observe an example of what an effective response would be in that situation. The participant was then asked to imagine or verbalize her response, a process called rehearsal. Response-contingent feedback was given, meaning that the feedback the subject saw depended upon her answer to the question asked. Positive feedback was given for a good answer while corrective feedback was given for an incorrect answer. Finally, practice assignments were stressed as vital to the effectiveness of the training. In order to maximize the benefits of this program, it was necessary that the participants implement what they had learned in real, every day encounters.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Dr. Muehlenhard, 424 Academic, 845-2508.

Appendix B

Survey of Heterosexual Interactions--Female Version

This questionnaire is concerned with the social behavior of college females. In part of the questionnaire we are interested in what might be broadly defined as "dating behavior". The term "date" here is used to mean any behavior in which social activity was participated in and planned with a member of the opposite sex. Examples of this type of behavior might include going to the movies, a football game, a party, a coke-date, or even just getting together with some friends.

For the next five questions, use the boxes marked 1-8 on the GREEN scantron form provided. For example, the first question reads, "How many 'dates' have you had in the last 4 weeks?". If you counted that you have had 3, then you would code a "0" in box number one and a "3" in box number two. Likewise, if you had had 10 dates in the last 4 weeks, you would code a "1" in box number one and a "0" in box number two. Please WRITE your answer in the correct box AND FILL in the appropriate circle underneath.

Use box #

- 1 & 2) How many "dates" have you had in the last 4 weeks? Please be exact.
- 3 & 4) Estimate the average number of "dates" per month during the past year.
- 5 & 6) How many different males have you "dated" during the past year?
- 7) How would you compare yourself with other persons your age with regard to the amount of social behavior you participate in with the opposite sex? Please code the number you feel best describes you.

0	1	2	3	4
participate in less than an average amount of social behavior				participate in more than an average amount of social behavior

- 8) How would you compare yourself with other persons your age with regard to physical appearance? Please code the number you feel best describes you.

0	1	2	3	4
less attractive than most people your age				more attractive than most people your age

Each of the items below describes a social situation. Read each item and think about how you would respond if you were actually in that situation. Code your answer in the appropriate box using the five point scale immediately below. Please be careful to mark your answer in the box corresponding to the question.

- | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| You would be UNABLE in every case | | You would be able in SOME cases | | You would be ABLE in every case |
-
- 9) You want to call a guy you like about a homework assignment. This is the first time you have talked to him on the phone as you only know him slightly. When you get ready to make the call, your roommate comes into the room, sits down on her bed, and begins reading a magazine. Would you be able to call?
 - 10) You are at a dance. You see a very attractive boy whom you do not know. He is standing alone and you would like him to ask you to dance. Would you be able to walk over to him?
 - 11) You are at a party and you see two guys talking. You do not know these guys but you would like to know one of them better. Would you be able to initiate a conversation?
 - 12) You are at a bar where there is also dancing. You are with a girlfriend who is talking to a fellow who is standing by the booth. These two get up to dance leaving you sitting alone. A guy you have seen around, but don't really know, comes over and sits down with you. Would you be able to converse with him?
 - 13) On a work break at your job you see a guy who also works there and is about your age. You would like to talk with him, but you do not know him. Would you be able to talk to him?
 - 14) You are on a crowded bus; a guy you know only SLIGHTLY is sitting in front of you. You would like to talk to him but you notice the girl sitting next to him is watching you. Would you be able to talk to him?
 - 15) You are at a party. You see an attractive boy whom you do not know standing alone. You want to dance. Would you be able to ask him?
 - 16) You are at a drugstore counter eating lunch. A guy whom you do not know sits down beside you. You would like to talk to him. After his meal comes he asks you to pass the sugar. After you pass the sugar, would you be able to initiate a conversation with him?
 - 17) A friend of yours is going out with her boyfriend this weekend. She wants you to come along with an old friend of theirs who she says would be a good date. You are not doing anything this weekend. Would you be able to go?
 - 18) You are at the library. You decide to take a break, and as you walk down the hall you see a boy from one of your classes. He is sitting at a table and appears to be studying. You decide that you would like to ask him to get a coke with you. Would you be able to ask him?

0

1

2

3

4

You would be
UNABLE in
every case

You would be
able in SOME
cases

You would be
ABLE in every
case

- 19) Your dorm or sorority is having a dance and you have to bring a date. You want to ask a guy you met at a party last weekend. Would you be able to call him?
- 20) You are taking a class at the university. After one of your classes you see a guy whom you know. You would like to talk to him; however, he is walking with a couple of other guys you do not know. Would you be able to talk to him?
- 21) You have been working on a committee for the past year. There is a banquet at which you are assigned a particular seat. On one side of you is a guy you do not know; on the other side a girl you do not know. Would you be able to initiate a conversation with the guy and talk with him as freely as you talk to the girl?
- 22) You are in the lobby of a large apartment complex waiting for a friend. As you are waiting for her to come down, a boy whom you know well walks by with another boy whom you have never seen before. The boy you know says hello and begins to talk to you. Suddenly, he remembers that he left something in his room. Just before he leaves he tells you the other boy's name. Would you be able to initiate and continue a conversation with the other boy?
- 23) You are at a party at a friend's apartment. You see a guy who had come alone. You don't know him, but you would like to talk to him. Would you be able to go over and talk with him?
- 24) You are walking to your mailbox in the large apartment building where you live. When you get there you notice that two guys are putting their names on the mailbox of the vacant apartment beneath yours. Would you be able to go over and initiate a conversation?
- 25) You are at a record store and see a guy you once were introduced to. That was several months ago and now you have forgotten his name. You would like to talk to him. Would you be able to start a conversation with him?
- 26) You are at the student center or local cafeteria where friends your age eat lunch. You have gotten your meal and are now looking for a place to sit down. Unfortunately, there are no empty tables. At one table, however, there is a guy sitting alone. Would you be able to ask the guy if you could sit down and then initiate a conversation?
- 27) A couple of weeks ago you had a first date with a boy you now see walking on the street towards you. For some reason you haven't seen each other since then. You would like to talk to him but aren't sure what he thinks of you. Would you be able to walk up to him and say something?
- 28) Generally, in most social situations involving guys whom you do not know, would you be able to initiate a conversation?

For the following 20 statements, use the scale immediately below to indicate how often you feel the way described in each statement. If you NEVER feel the way described, then code in a "0". On the other hand, if you OFTEN feel the way described, then code in a "3". Please remember to take care and write the number in the correct box as well as filling in the corresponding circle.

0	1	2	3
NEVER	RARELY	SOMETIMES	OFTEN
feel	feel	feel	feel
this way	this way	this way	this way

- 29) I feel in tune with the people around me
- 30) I lack companionship
- 31) There is no one I can turn to
- 32) I do not feel alone
- 33) I feel part of a group of friends
- 34) I have a lot in common with the people around me
- 35) I am no longer close to anyone
- 36) My interests and ideas are not shared by those around me
- 37) I am an outgoing person
- 38) There are people I feel close to
- 39) I feel left out
- 40) My social relationships are superficial
- 41) No one really knows me well
- 42) I feel isolated from others
- 43) I can find companionship when I want it
- 44) There are people who really understand me
- 45) I am unhappy being so withdrawn
- 46) People are around me but not with me
- 47) There are people I can talk to
- 48) There are people I can turn to

Dating Behavior Pattern Questionnaire

This questionnaire is designed to obtain an index of the variety of behavior patterns women use in dating interactions. THERE ARE NO RIGHT OR WRONG ANSWERS. Just mark the response which most closely corresponds to your natural behavior!

Notice that some questions are designed so that you may mark any answer that applies to your situation, while others ask you to mark only one answer. Please BE CAREFUL and follow the instructions telling you which box to mark in order to answer each question. Please remember to also fill in the corresponding circle under each box on the scantron. This is VERY IMPORTANT!!

If you were attracted to a guy and wanted to ask him out or wanted him to ask you out, how would you show him you were attracted to him without being too obvious? For each box number, fill in a "0" if you WOULD do what the statement says or a "1" if you WOULD NOT do what the statement says.

box #

- 49) ask him questions about himself
- 50) let him know you had noticed him before (perhaps by saying something like "I noticed you weren't at work the other day.")
- 51) touch him occasionally
- 52) smile
- 53) play hard-to-get
- 54) tell mutual friends that you are interested
- 55) not do anything

Do you enjoy striking up conversations with guys?

box #

56) Fill in "0" to answer YES

Fill in "1" to answer NO

Which statement best describes you in conversations with guys?

Fill in only one.

box #

57) Fill in "0" for: I usually find it easy to keep a conversation going

Fill in "1" for: I sometimes find it easy to keep a conversation going

Fill in "2" for: I almost never find it easy to keep a conversation going

How does your voice sound when you are talking to a guy you are interested in?

box #

58) "0" = moderate, even tone

"1" = soft, even tone

"2" = somewhat animated

"3" = very animated, really bouncy and peppy

What, if anything, causes you problems when starting a conversation with a guy you are interested in? For each statement, fill in a "0" if the statement CAUSES you problems or a "1" if the statement DOES NOT CAUSE you problems.

box #

59) finding something appropriate to talk about

60) finding the right time to say something

61) deciding whether to wait for him to start the conversation, or to start it yourself

62) I don't have any of these problems

"0" = TRUE

"1" = FALSE

When there's a guy you'd like to get to know, which approach would you usually take? Fill in only one.

box #

63) "0" = do something to attract his attention so he'll notice you

"1" = initiate a conversation yourself

"2" = do nothing, but hope he'll notice you

"3" = have a mutual friend help you initiate a conversation

"4" = have a mutual friend tell him you're interested in him

What's your primary concern when interacting with a guy you'd like to date? For each statement, fill in a "0" if the statement IS a concern or fill in a "1" if the statement is NOT a concern.

box #

- 64) that he'll think you're boring
- 65) that you won't be able to keep the conversation going
- 66) that you'll say something inappropriate or dumb
- 67) that he won't like your looks
- 68) none of the above "0" = TRUE
"1" = FALSE

If you're flirting with a guy, does he: (fill in one)

box #

- 69) "0" = almost always respond positively
- "1" = sometimes respond positively
- "2" = almost never respond positively
- "3" = I never flirt with guys

How do people generally react to you when they first meet you?
Fill in one number between "0" and "6" according to the following scale.

box # 70)

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
somewhat negatively: it takes awhile for them to get to know me and like me			people think I'm pleasant enough: I don't usually notice any overly positive or negative reactions			positively: most people like me right from the start I tend to make a good first impression

How easy do you find it to look at a guy during a conversation with him?
Fill in one number between "0" and "6" according to the following scale.

box # 71)

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
very difficult			fairly easy			very easy

How would you rate yourself in terms of your personality?
Fill in one number between "0" and "6" according to the following scale.

box # 72)

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
negative						positive

If you are attracted to a guy, do you usually hint to him that you are interested? Fill in one only.

box #
73) "0" = YES

"1" = NO

If you do hint, how good are you at hinting? Fill in one number between "0" and "6" according to the following scale.

box # 74)

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
not very good						very good

Hello,

My name is Laurie Baldwin and last semester you participated in a study that I am conducting as my senior thesis. I would like to thank you again for your participation; I really appreciated your help.

In a couple of weeks, I have to write my thesis and turn it in for a grade; however, I would like to conduct a short follow-up study before I write the final paper. At the end of your participation last semester, you signed a consent form saying it would be all right for me to send you such a follow-up questionnaire. I would greatly appreciate it if you would please take a few minutes and fill out this questionnaire so that you can send it back to me in the envelope provided within the next few days. I need to start analyzing the data by Thursday, April 10, so that I can complete the paper on time. Your name does not appear anywhere on the return envelope and only your subject number will be used, as always. No scantrons are necessary. Just answer each question directly on the questionnaire.

Once again, I do thank you for your help. This final participation on your part will help me tremendously (not only will you help me secure my final grade, but my mental health will be stable at last!!!). If you have any questions, do not hesitate to call either me at 693-3016, or my advisor, Dr. Charlene Muehlenhard at 845-2508.

Thanks again and
good luck on finals!

Laurie Baldwin

Survey of Heterosexual Interactions--Female Version

This questionnaire is concerned with the social behavior of college females. In part of the questionnaire we are interested in what might be broadly defined as "dating behavior". The term "date" here is used to mean any behavior in which social activity was participated in and planned with a member of the opposite sex. Examples of this type of behavior might include going to the movies, a football game, a party, a coke-date, or even just getting together with some friends.

For each of the following questions, please answer as accurately as you are able. Please write your answer on the line provided.

- 1) How many "dates" have you had in the last 4 weeks? Please be exact. _____
- 2) Estimate the average number of "dates" per month in 1986. _____
- 3) How many different males have you "dated" in 1986? _____
- 4) How would you compare yourself with other persons your age with regard to the amount of social behavior you participate in with the opposite sex? Please circle the number you feel best describes you.

0
participate in
less than an
average amount of
social behavior

1

2

3

4

participate in
more than an
average amount of
social behavior

- 5) How would you compare yourself with other persons your age with regard to physical appearance? Please circle the number you feel best describes you.

0
less attractive
than most people
your age

1

2

3

4

more attractive
than most people
your age

Each of the items below describes a social situation. Read each item and think about how you would respond if you were actually in that situation. Write your answer on the line following the situation. Remember to use the five point scale immediately below.

0 1 2 3 4

You would be
UNABLE in
every case

You would be
able in SOME
cases

You would be
ABLE in every
case

- 6) You want to call a guy you like about a homework assignment. This is the first time you have talked to him on the phone as you only know him slightly. When you get ready to make the call, your roommate comes into the room, sits down on her bed, and begins reading a magazine. Would you be able to call? _____
- 7) You are at a dance. You see a very attractive boy whom you do not know. He is standing alone and you would like him to ask you to dance. Would you be able to walk over to him? _____
- 8) You are at a party and you see two guys talking. You do not know these guys but you would like to know one of them better. Would you be able to initiate a conversation? _____
- 9) You are at a bar where there is also dancing. You are with a girlfriend who is talking to a fellow who is standing by the booth. These two get up to dance leaving you sitting alone. A guy you have seen around, but don't really know, comes over and sits down with you. Would you be able to converse with him? _____
- 10) On a work break at your job you see a guy who also works there and is about your age. You would like to talk with him, but you do not know him. Would you be able to talk to him? _____
- 11) You are on a crowded bus; a guy you know only SLIGHTLY is sitting in front of you. You would like to talk to him but you notice the girl sitting next to him is watching you. Would you be able to talk to him? _____
- 12) You are at a party. You see an attractive boy whom you do not know standing alone. You want to dance. Would you be able to ask him? _____
- 13) You are at a drugstore counter eating lunch. A guy whom you do not know sits down beside you. You would like to talk to him. After his meal comes he asks you to pass the sugar. After you pass the sugar, would you be able to initiate a conversation with him? _____
- 14) A friend of yours is going out with her boyfriend this weekend. She wants you to come along with an old friend of theirs who she says would be a good date. You are not doing anything this weekend. Would you be able to go? _____
- 15) You are at the library. You decide to take a break, and as you walk down the hall you see a boy from one of your classes. He is sitting at a table and appears to be studying. You decide that you would like to ask him to get a coke with you. Would you be able to ask him? _____

0

1

2

3

4

You would be
UNABLE in
every case

You would be
able in SOME
cases

You would be
ABLE in every
case

- 16) Your dorm or sorority is having a dance and you have to bring a date. You want to ask a guy you met at a party last weekend. Would you be able to call him? _____
- 17) You are taking a class at the university. After one of your classes you see a guy whom you know. You would like to talk to him; however, he is walking with a couple of other guys you do not know. Would you be able to talk to him? _____
- 18) You have been working on a committee for the past year. There is a banquet at which you are assigned a particular seat. On one side of you is a guy you do not know; on the other side a girl you do not know. Would you be able to initiate a conversation with the guy and talk with him as freely as you talk to the girl? _____
- 19) You are in the lobby of a large apartment complex waiting for a friend. As you are waiting for her to come down, a boy whom you know well walks by with another boy whom you have never seen before. The boy you know says hello and begins to talk to you. Suddenly, he remembers that he left something in his room. Just before he leaves he tells you the other boy's name. Would you be able to initiate and continue a conversation with the other boy? _____
- 20) You are at a party at a friend's apartment. You see a guy who had come alone. You don't know him, but you would like to talk to him. Would you be able to go over and talk with him? _____
- 21) You are walking to your mailbox in the large apartment building where you live. When you get there you notice that two guys are putting their names on the mailbox of the vacant apartment beneath yours. Would you be able to go over and initiate a conversation? _____
- 22) You are at a record store and see a guy you once were introduced to. That was several months ago and now you have forgotten his name. You would like to talk to him. Would you be able to start a conversation with him? _____
- 23) You are at the student center or local cafeteria where friends your age eat lunch. You have gotten your meal and are now looking for a place to sit down. Unfortunately, there are no empty tables. At one table, however, there is a guy sitting alone. Would you be able to ask the guy if you could sit down and then initiate a conversation? _____
- 24) A couple of weeks ago you had a first date with a boy you now see walking on the street towards you. For some reason you haven't seen each other since then. You would like to talk to him but aren't sure what he thinks of you. Would you be able to walk up to him and say something? _____
- 25) Generally, in most social situations involving guys whom you do not know, would you be able to initiate a conversation? _____

Dating Behavior Pattern Questionnaire

This questionnaire is designed to obtain an index of the variety of behavior patterns women use in dating interactions. THERE ARE NO RIGHT OR WRONG ANSWERS. Just write the response which most closely corresponds to your natural behavior directly onto the questionnaire.

Notice that some questions are designed so that you may mark any answer that applies to your situation, while others ask you to mark only one answer. Please BE CAREFUL and follow the instructions telling you how to mark your answer to each question.

1) Do you enjoy striking up conversations with guys?

Circle one: YES NO

2) How does your voice sound when you are talking to a guy you are interested in? Circle only one.

"0" = moderate, even tone

"1" = soft, even tone

"2" = somewhat animated

"3" = very animated, really bouncy and peppy

3) What, if anything, causes you problems when starting a conversation with a guy you are interested in? For each statement, write a "0" if the statement CAUSES you problems or a "1" if the statement DOES NOT CAUSE you problems in the blank next to each response.

finding something appropriate to talk about _____

finding the right time to say something _____

deciding whether to wait for him to start the conversation, or to start it yourself _____

I don't have any of these problems _____ ("0" means True and "1" means False)

4) When there's a guy you'd like to get to know, which approach would you usually take? Circle only one.

"0" = do something to attract his attention so he'll notice you

"1" = initiate a conversation yourself

"2" = do nothing, but hope he'll notice you

"3" = have a mutual friend help you initiate a conversation

"4" = have a mutual friend tell him you're interested in him

5) What's your primary concern when interacting with a guy you'd like to date? For each statement, write a "0" if the statement IS a concern or write a "1" if the statement is NOT a concern.

that he'll think you're boring _____

that you won't be able to keep the conversation going _____

that you'll say something inappropriate or dumb _____

that he won't like your looks _____

none of the above _____ ("0" means True and "1" means False)

6) If you're flirting with a guy, does he: (circle only one)

"0" = almost always respond positively

"1" = sometimes respond positively

"2" = almost never respond positively

"3" = I never flirt with guys

7) How easy do you find it to look at a guy during a conversation with him? Circle one number between "0" and "6" according to the following scale.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
very difficult			fairly easy			very easy

8) How would you rate yourself in terms of your personality? Circle one number between "0" and "6" according to the following scale.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
negative						positive

9) If you are attracted to a guy, do you usually hint to him that you are interested?

Circle one: YES NO

10) If you do hint, how good are you at hinting? Circle one number between "0" and "6" according to the following scale.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
not very good						very good

Appendix C

global
rating

subj. #

RATING FORM FOR SKILLS TRAINING STUDY-MALE RATERS

1. How well do you think the subject did at starting the conversation and keeping it going?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
not very very
well well

2. How comfortable do you think the subject felt during the conversation?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
very very
uncomfortable comfortable

3. How would you rate the content of the conversation?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
not very very
interesting interesting

4. How would you rate the appropriateness of the conversation?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
not very very
appropriate appropriate

5. How would you rate eye contact made by the subject?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
not enough too much

6. How would you rate the smiling by the subject?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
not enough too much

7. How would you rate the subject's voice and facial and body movements? (animated speech)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
not enough too much

8. How would you rate the backchanneling of the subject?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
not enough too much

9. How would you rate the quality of the questions asked by the subject?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
bad quality questions good quality questions

10. How would you rate the quality of the replies given by the subject in response to questions?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
bad quality replies good quality replies

11. How would you rate the quality of the comments made by the subject?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
bad quality comments good quality comments

12. Did the subject "break character"? YES or NO

global
rating

RATING FORM FOR SKILLS TRAINING STUDY-FEMALE RATERS

subj. #

1. How well do you think the subject did at starting the conversation and keeping it going?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
not very very
well well

2. How comfortable do you think the subject felt during the conversation?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
very very
uncomfortable comfortable

3. How would you rate the content of the conversation?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
not very very
interesting interesting

4. How would you rate the appropriateness of the conversation?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
not very very
appropriate appropriate

5. Number of questions asked by the subject:

Close-ended

Open-ended

TOTAL:

6. Number of replies given by the subject in response to a question:

Shortest possible answer

More than shortest

TOTAL:

7. Number of abrupt topic changes:

8. The length of each silence that is longer than 10 seconds:

TOTAL:

1. How well do you think you did at starting the conversation and keeping it going?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not very well						very well

2. How comfortable did you feel during the conversation?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
very uncomfortable						very comfortable

1

Appendix D

CONVERSATIONAL SKILLS MANUAL

Part I

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SOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING PROGRAM

Hi! Before we begin, I'd like to say on behalf of the research group that developed this program: THANK YOU for your participation!

We sincerely believe that you will benefit from our work and are very excited that you are willing to try.

Throughout the session, if you encounter any problems or have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask the experimenter.

Okay, let's get started

Has a guy ever walked up to you and started talking to you, but you were nervous and didn't know what to say? Or, have you worshipped a guy from afar because you weren't confident in your ability to walk up and start a conversation with him? Are you ever afraid you might say something foolish or dumb?

If so, this program is for you!

Conversations are such a large part of our daily lives, it is important to feel comfortable about your ability to start them and keep them going.

Thus, this program will help you "brush up" on your conversational skills. It will give you valuable tips and lots of practice dealing with the "ins and outs" of conversations.

Once two people have started talking, a process often occurs in which both people send and receive signals of interest. In developing a relationship with a guy, it is important to send him signals that you're interested in him.

Therefore, this program will teach you some of these signals and give you some practice using them.

The skills you will learn here will help you meet guys. Consider the following example....

Imagine a guy, Greg, who's out at a club one night having a really good time.

A girl at the next table introduces herself as Carol and asks him to dance.

While dancing, Carol asks him questions about his job, his favorite sports, and his hobbies.

She also compliments him on his dancing. When he's talking, she smiles and nods and looks at him a lot, so she really seems interested in him.



As they leave the dance floor, Carol tells Greg that she needs to go because her friends want to leave, and then she asks him if he'd like to go dancing with her next weekend.

Imagine another girl, Cindy, who is sitting at another table next to Greg's. She notices Greg and is interested in him, but doesn't say anything to him, doesn't smile, and hardly looks at him.

Who do you think is more likely to get a date with Greg -- Carol or Cindy?

Let's compare the effects of Carol's and Cindy's behavior:

1. People like people who are friendly and who seem to like them.

By being friendly and showing that she likes him, Carol has probably caused Greg to like her more. Since Cindy didn't say anything to Greg, he didn't get a chance to know and like her.

2. Guys don't like to be rejected, so they're more likely to ask out girls who seem to like them.

By showing that she liked him, Carol increased the chances that Greg will want to ask her out. Even if Greg had liked Cindy, he might not have asked her out because he wasn't sure if Cindy liked him.

3. After talking with Greg and showing her interest, it seemed appropriate for Carol to ask him to go dancing the next weekend.

If Carol would have asked Greg out without talking to him first, it would have seemed unexpected and inappropriate.

So, as you see, the skills you will learn here will be useful in helping you meet guys.

Once two people are out on a date, these skills are still important. Talking will help the two people get to know each other better. Sending positive signals will convey that they like each other.

Even once two people have been dating for awhile, these skills are important to help strengthen the relationship.

THINK ABOUT IT . . .

Would YOU want to be in a relationship where you and the guy never had good conversations, or where neither of you showed that you liked each other?

PROBABLY NOT!!!

Talking and letting the other person know that you like them will help make a good relationship even BETTER!

BUT WAIT . . .

These skills are not limited to dating relationships. They are also useful in making new friends.

When people are getting to be friends, they talk to each other and send positive signals that they'd like to get to know each other better (for example -- smiling, nodding, and complimenting each other).

Thus, this program not only can help you improve your relationships with guys, but also can help you make friends more easily.

So tackle this training program with an optimistic attitude. It's a lot of hard work, but you'll emerge from it more confident in your ability to handle social interactions.

One final note before we begin:

We'll be asking you to use your
IMAGINATION quite a bit in this program.

It may be somewhat difficult at first,
but please keep trying. Imaginery
practice has been shown to be very
effective.



It allows you to try out various responses with no risks, BEFORE you
actually enter the real-life situation.

You can do it anytime your mind is free!!

So,

Use your IMAGINATION and...

PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!!!

STARTING A CONVERSATION

To start a conversation you can use any one of the thousands of opening lines. Once you've practiced and gotten the hang of it, starting a conversation can become rather easy, so that you'll be doing it with little or no effort. You can start a conversation for many reasons.

Mostly we begin talking to people we're attracted to in order to show our interest in them and our desire to get to know them better. There are a few good points to keep in mind as we start our conversations...

1. GOOD TOPICS TO DISCUSS CAN COME FROM WHATEVER YOU KNOW ABOUT THE OTHER PERSON.

For example, if you know that a guy went to a rock concert last weekend, you could ask him, "HOW WAS THE ROCK CONCERT LAST WEEKEND?"

2. YOU CAN ALSO LOOK TO THE ENVIRONMENT FOR CLUES ON GOOD TOPICS.

For example, if you're at a health club, you could say, "HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN COMING HERE?" and then follow up with, "I'M THINKING OF JOINING THIS CLUB. HOW DO YOU LIKE IT?"

3. AS THE OTHER PERSON TALKS, KEEP A MENTAL LIST OF TOPICS YOU CAN FOLLOW UP ON.

For example, if the guy you asked about the rock concert says, "EVEN THOUGH I USUALLY LIKE JAZZ BETTER, I THOUGHT THIS CONCERT WAS REALLY GOOD," you can make a mental note that after you're finished discussing the rock concert, you could ask him, "WHO ARE SOME OF YOUR FAVORITE JAZZ MUSICIANS?"

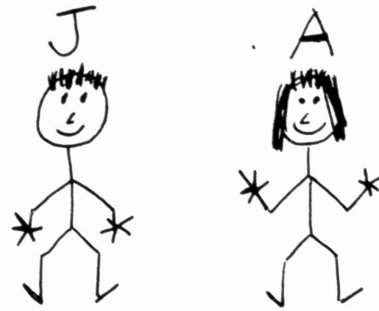
4. USE OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS. THESE ARE QUESTIONS THAT REQUIRE A LONGER ANSWER THAN YES OR NO. AN OPEN-ENDED QUESTION USUALLY BEGINS WITH WHAT, HOW, WHEN, OR WHY.

For example, if a guy says he likes mountain climbing, you could ask, "HOW DID YOU GET INTERESTED IN MOUNTAIN CLIMBING?" Open-ended questions are likely to elicit longer answers that will keep the conversation going.

5. DON'T BE TOO PERSONAL--AVOID USING QUESTIONS OR STATEMENTS ABOUT THEIR WEIGHT OR OTHER GIRLFRIENDS OR ANYTHING THAT MAY EMBARRASS THEM.

6. AVOID NEGATIVE SUBJECTS. YOU WANT THE OTHER PERSON TO FEEL GOOD ABOUT YOUR CONVERSATION.

Okay, now that you have a list of guidelines to help you decide upon an appropriate start, let's look at Alison who wants to talk to John.



It's lunchtime and Alison sees John walking down the hall. Alison has been wanting to talk to John and get to know him better. She's talked to him a few times before but never for very long. Alison could:

- a. Bring up the fact that John has sat in something and has a stain on his pants.
- b. Say, "Hi John, I see you're signed up for the company picnic. What dish are you going to bring?"
- c. Mention she was sorry to hear that the boss yelled at John the other day.

WHICH OF THESE WOULD YOU CHOOSE?

Let's go through each one to see what might be best:

a. *BRING UP THE FACT THAT JOHN HAS SAT IN SOMETHING AND HAS A STAIN ON HIS PANTS.*

a. Personal subjects should be avoided when you're trying to start up a conversation with someone you're interested in. It's a good idea to use neutral or positive subjects.

b. *SAY, "HI JOHN. I SEE YOU'RE SIGNED UP FOR THE COMPANY PICNIC ON SATURDAY. WHAT DISH ARE YOU GOING TO BRING?"*

b. This response is good because Alison thought of a subject of interest to both of them. After John answers, Alison might ask him more questions cueing off his answer (e.g., if he's cooking something interesting, they could discuss cooking).

In addition, Alison could also reciprocate by telling him what she is bringing to the picnic. Or, they could discuss what happened at last year's picnic. Once Alison has found a topic they are both interested in, the conversation could go in many directions.

c. *MENTION SHE WAS SORRY TO HEAR THAT THE BOSS YELLED AT JOHN THE OTHER DAY.*

c. Alison should avoid starting off with negative topics like a run-in with the boss.

Now let's try another scene--this time choose what you think is the best response.

Kurt and Margaret had a CPR class together last month. Margaret was always very attracted to Kurt. One day, Kurt and Margaret end up waiting next to each other in the check-out line of the grocery store. Margaret should:

- a. Say, "EXCUSE ME, BUT DID YOU TAKE THAT CPR CLASS SPONSERED BY THE RED CROSS LAST MONTH?" When he says yes, Margaret should say, "I WAS IN THAT CLASS TOO. HOW DID YOU LIKE IT?"
- b. Say, "EXCUSE ME--I THINK YOU TOOK THE SAME CPR CLASS I DID LAST MONTH--" and then ask him if he has a girlfriend.
- c. Say, "HAVEN'T I SEEN YOU SOMEWHERE BEFORE? OH YEAH, YOU WERE THE GUY WHO FAILED THAT CPR CLASS."

Which response do you think is best? CHOOSE which one you think is best, then LOOK down and READ the appropriate evaluation.

- a. Response 'a' gives the conversation a good start. Margaret has established something in common between them. Kurt now has a good opportunity to respond and help keep the conversation going. Notice the topic is not too personal. Good choice. Keep up the good work! Skip over to the REVIEW OF THE GUIDELINES on page 8.
- b. Response 'b' is too personal. Margaret shouldn't ask about girlfriends. Mentioning the class they had together is a good idea, but it's not wise to be that personal at first. Go back and read the choices again. Then pick a more appropriate response.
- c. A negative comment about failing a class is not a great way for Margaret to start talking to Kurt. It would probably embarrass him. Therefore, it would be a good idea for Margaret to come up with a better topic. Go back and read the choices again. Then pick a more appropriate response.

REVIEW OF THE GUIDELINES

1. Use what you know or have noticed about the person as a "starter."
2. Look around you for clues.
3. Keep a mental list of what you could talk about next.
4. Ask open-ended questions.
5. Don't get too personal at first.
6. Stay away from unpleasant or negative subjects.

Let's take a look at another scene...

There is a guy sitting in the seat next to you. You're both waiting for the Alfred Hitchcock festival to start. You'd very much like to get to know this guy better. How might you start up a conversation?

Think to yourself what you might say.

Do not read any further until you have thought about what you might say. Picture it in your mind. Think of the EXACT words you would say and then say them out loud.

Let's go ahead and look at your response:

DID YOU LOOK TO THE ENVIRONMENT FOR CLUES?

IF YOU DID: You're getting the hang of it. Looking around the environment (the Hitchcock festival in this case) is a smart idea for starting conversations.

IF YOU DID NOT: You obviously both like Hitchcock or you wouldn't be at the festival. Hitchcock movies may be a great way to start up a conversation. Always remember to look around you for clues. Think of another way to open a conversation using this pointer.

DID YOU USE AN OPEN-ENDED QUESTION, OR A YES-NO QUESTION WITH AN OPEN-ENDED QUESTION IN MIND AS A FOLLOW-UP?

IF YOU DID: Great!! Open-ended questions are good for eliciting those longer responses that can lead to longer conversations.

IF YOU DID NOT: Open-ended questions like "WHAT DID YOU THINK ABOUT THAT MOVIE?" or "WHICH IS YOUR FAVORITE SCENE?" are very helpful in getting someone to talk. It would also be fine if you asked a "yes-no" question, but then had an open-ended question in mind to follow up with.

For example, if you asked, "IS IT ALMOST TIME FOR THE FIRST FILM TO START?", after he answered yes or no, you could come back with, "I'M REALLY EXCITED ABOUT SEEING THIS MOVIE. WHICH IS YOUR FAVORITE?" Think of an open-ended question you could use as an "opener."

WERE YOU TOO PERSONAL?

IF YOU WERE NOT: Staying away from personal subjects makes for a more comfortable conversation. Good job!

IF YOU WERE: Try to keep things "light" at first. You might make the other person feel awkward or embarrassed. Think of a less personal conversation starter.

DID YOU AVOID A NEGATIVE TOPIC?

IF YOU DID: Good idea--keep things on a positive note at first.

IF YOU DID NOT: You might not leave the other person with a good feeling about the conversation if you start off negatively. Try to think of something more positive to start off with.

THE LAST POINTS TO REMEMBER ARE:

If you have noticed something about a person before, or if you know something about him, use that information to strike up a conversation.

And finally, once he has started talking, remember what he says for future reference.

If you would like more practice using this skill, continue reading on to OPTIONAL SCENE I (below). Otherwise, if you feel comfortable, skip to the PRACTICE ASSIGNMENT on page 11.

OPTIONAL SCENE I

In this next scene you think of a good question or topic. However, try not to just mimic the ones we have given you. Really think about the scene and the six pointers you've learned.

YOU'RE AT THE HEALTH CLUB WORKING OUT. YOU SPOT SOMEONE WHO CATCHES YOUR EYE. HE'S CARRYING A TENNIS RACQUET. YOU DECIDE YOU'D LIKE TO TALK TO HIM. WHAT MIGHT YOU SAY?

Picture the situation in your mind. Think of the EXACT words you would say and then say them out loud.

After you know what you would say, continue reading and answer the questions as best you can.

DID YOU USE WHAT YOU KNOW OR HAVE NOTICED ABOUT THE PERSON, OR LOOK TO THE ENVIRONMENT?

If you answered 'yes,' you are getting the hang of it. GOOD JOB!

If you answered 'no,' remember, an enormous amount of information can come from what you already know or from what is around you.

DID YOU USE OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS AND KEEP A MENTAL LIST OF FUTURE TOPICS TO DISCUSS?

If yes: Marvelousssss! These are the tools of a skilled conversationalist.

If no: An open-ended question usually pulls out the longer answer that you can pick information from in order to keep the conversation going.

DID YOU AVOID NEGATIVE OR PERSONAL SUBJECTS?

If yes: You understand that negative or personal subjects can make for an uncomfortable talk---GREAT!!

If no: Negative or personal subjects can make for an uncomfortable or awkward conversation so please try to avoid them if possible.

Now you have finished OPTIONAL SCENE I. If you still want more practice, continue reading on to OPTIONAL SCENE II. Otherwise, skip to the PRACTICE ASSIGNMENT at the bottom of this page.

OPTIONAL SCENE II

YOU ARE IN A RECORD STORE LOOKING FOR YOUR FAVORITE ARTIST'S NEW ALBUM. STANDING A LITTLE WAYS DOWN THE AISLE IS A MAN WHO KEEPS LOOKING OVER AT YOU.

YOU DECIDE TO MOVE DOWN TOWARDS HIM AND THEN STRIKE UP A CONVERSATION.

Picture this scene in your mind and then think of what you would say.

Think through your six pointers. Does your starter sound promising?

Did you look to the record store for hints?

Did you ask some type of open-ended question?

Did you stay away from personal or negative topics?

If you feel good about your starter, say it out loud. If not, think up a new one and say it aloud.

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*                                     *  
*           PRACTICE ASSIGNMENT      *  
*                                     *  
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Congratulations!! You have completed the lesson on starting a conversation.

IN ORDER TO MAXIMIZE THE BENEFITS OF THIS PROGRAM, IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT YOU PRACTICE WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED.

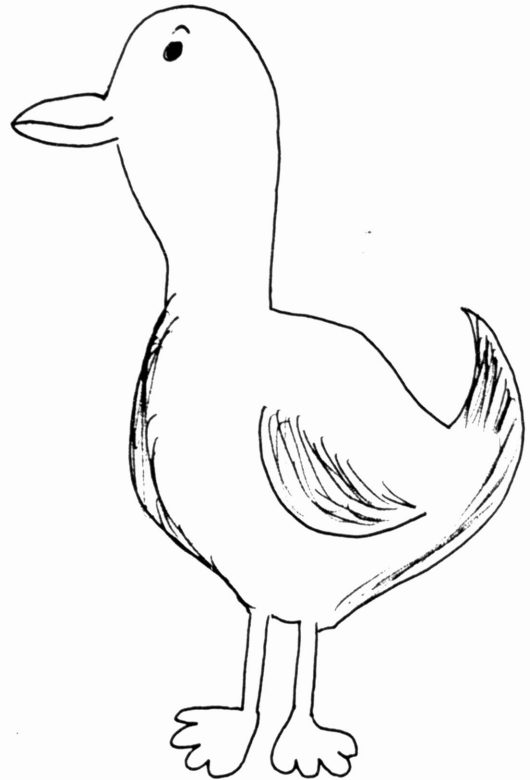
We suggest that you go right out and start up conversations with people you do not know.

Use what you have learned whenever you get the chance----in an elevator, while standing in line, before a class etc...

Use the people around you (whether they be guys or girls) to help you gain confidence in starting conversations.

Please practice these pointers. They will help. With practice, comes comfort and ease.

GOOD LUCK!!!



EYE CONTACT

Starting a conversation is a way of striking up communication with another individual. Along with verbal speech however, people also communicate using nonverbal signs such as facial expressions, gestures and body position.

People form impressions of us based not only on WHAT we say, but also on HOW we say it using this nonverbal communication. Thus, it is important to use "body language" properly since it conveys so much information to others.

EYE CONTACT is one of the many forms of nonverbal communication that can be used to add emphasis to what you say. It can also be used to show interest in what a person is saying to you.

There are two basic types of eye contact --> mutual glances and face-gazing.

1. MUTUAL GLANCES:

When you exchange mutual glances with someone, you are looking each other directly in the eye. This type of eye contact occurs during intimate exchanges and daily exchanges.

In daily exchanges, mutual glances usually last only a few seconds, then eye contact is broken. If you engage in a mutual glance for too long, the other person might feel uncomfortable, like he is being stared at.

2. FACE-GAZING:

Face-gazing involves looking in the vicinity of someone's eyes, but not directly in them. This process usually occurs for brief periods broken up by brief glances away from the face.

Face-gazing is quite useful in casual conversations because you can show interest without making others uncomfortable. When we say, "EYE CONTACT," we usually mean a lot of FACE-GAZING mixed with occasional MUTUAL GLANCES.

To illustrate better the techniques of eye contact, consider the following scene.



Janice is in the library studying when Jack sits down next to her and starts talking.

Janice decides that she can spare a few minutes to talk with Jack. During the conversation Janice looks at Jack's face frequently and into his eyes occasionally. She keeps her attention on the conversation instead of her notes.

After ten minutes or so, Janice tells Jack that she needs to study for a test, even though she'd rather talk with him. Jack apologizes, saying that he didn't know she had a test, and agrees to talk to her later.

There are times when someone will try to start a conversation with you when you are doing something else.

Janice could have studied during the conversation, but this would have insulted Jack.

This does not mean that you should drop everything to talk to a guy you like, but if possible, it's a good idea to do as Janice did and talk for a short while, giving him your full attention.

Before going on, let's look at a quick list of suggestions for proper eye contact.

A QUICK LIST OF SUGGESTIONS FOR PROPER EYE CONTACT

1. Be as attentive as possible during a conversation.
2. Mix a lot of "face-gazing" with a few "mutual glances" during a conversation.
3. Do not stare at the other person.
4. Try not to let your gaze wander from the person you are talking to for long periods of time.
5. Do not engage in distracting activities during a conversation (i.e., combing hair, reading, etc.).

Here is another situation involving eye contact:

Brian is sitting at the food court of the local shopping mall when Jenna, Wendy, Tammy, and Beth, some girls he knows from the gym, sit down at his table.

Tammy is constantly primping--whether it's her hair or her makeup, Tammy is always rearranging herself.

Wendy talks to Brian and looks at him a lot; however, she also manages to sneak in several glances at a group of guys across the court.

Beth gives Brian her undivided attention, never looking away from his eyes.

Jenna looks frequently into Brian's eyes, but averts her gaze for short periods to look at his face, his body, or to look down a little--but not all the way to the floor.

Which girl do you think Brian would feel most comfortable talking with?

Let's evaluate the effects of each one's behavior.

Tammy's primping is very self-centered and doesn't convey much of an interest in what Brian has to say. It would be better if she paid more attention to Brian, then excused herself to the bathroom to "fix-up."

It is okay if Wendy looks around the mall at the other people as long as she doesn't give Brian the impression that instead of listening to him, she has more interest in the guys across the way.

Beth probably made Brian feel uncomfortable by never averting her gaze. All that attention is nice, but constant eye contact can be overwhelming.

Jenna did a good job of paying attention to Brian without staring. It's probable that Brian would feel most comfortable talking with her.

Now imagine Jean, who is at a party. She has noticed that a guy named Alan is also at the party. Alan is in one of Jean's classes and she has always found him to be attractive. Jean would like to talk with Alan.

Based on what you know about eye contact, choose which "meeting" you think would increase Jean's likelihood of making a good impression on Alan.

- a. Jean approaches Alan and begins a conversation. However she is nervous and stares at the floor or into her drink the whole time they are talking.
- b. Jean approaches Alan and begins a conversation. However, after a few minutes of talking, she takes out her comb and combs her hair, not paying much attention to Alan.
- c. Jean approaches Alan and begins a conversation. She takes interest in what Alan has to say, looking frequently into his face and eyes.

Choose a, b, or c. Then turn the page to view the appropriate feedback.

a. Because Jean kept looking away from Alan, she probably appeared disinterested or preoccupied even though she really wanted to talk to him. Jean should try to overcome her nervousness and look Alan in the face every now and again.

b. Since Jean really wanted to talk with Alan, she should not start combing her hair while she is doing it. It probably makes Alan feel like Jean is more into herself than into talking with him. If Jean is really worried about her hair, she should excuse herself to the restroom.

c. Jean did a good job here. She approached Alan, started a conversation, and then continued to show her interest by keeping effective eye contact. Alan probably enjoyed Jean's company and was flattered by her attentions.

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*   PRACTICE ASSIGNMENT       *
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As we conclude this lesson there are a few suggestions we would like you to consider:

Just like learning to start conversations, it is VERY IMPORTANT that you practice using eye contact. Practice helps you gain confidence and self-assuredness.

We suggest that as soon as possible, you make eye contact with someone (girl or guy) and smile. You may be suprised by the reaction you get.

If you find someone attractive and want to talk to him, look him in the eyes and say hello (then use what you learned in the previous lesson to start a conversation).

TRUST YOURSELF AND YOUR CAPABILITIES.

ALL IT TAKES IS SOME EFFORT AND PRACTICE.

Thank you very much for participating in this week's session. We hope you will practice these lessons and have great success. Please give it a try. Thanks again. We'll see you next week. Have a great day!!!

GOOD BYE! and GOOD LUCK!

CONVERSATIONAL SKILLS MANUAL

Part II

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KEEPING A CONVERSATION GOING

Have you ever been carrying on a conversation with someone and all of a sudden found yourself stuck with nothing to say?

A pause in the middle of a conversation can be an uncomfortable experience for both parties involved, but it may not be as unfortunate as you might think.

If you establish a conversation with someone once a pause has occurred he may recognize that you are interested in him.

By keeping a conversation going, you show the person you want to keep talking to him.

A good rule to follow during conversations is the:

ASK/ LISTEN/ RESPOND/ ASK rule.

Using this rule, you ask a question and wait for a reply. Then you respond to what the person has said, perhaps by commenting on a similar situation in your own life, before asking another question.

This rule helps conversations flow by preventing you from seeming like an interviewer firing off questions (since you comment on his responses) or from being a monopolizer (because, by asking questions, you give him a chance to talk too).

You have already learned a lot that will help you in following this rule. Think about what you have learned on starting conversations (i.e., asking open-ended questions and using the environment for topics).

Pauses are also excellent opportunities to change the topic of conversation if the previous topic was an uncomfortable one, or if it has been exhausted.

Our goal here is to teach you to convey your interest in someone by maintaining a smooth-flowing conversation.

In the following situation how could Patty most effectively follow up this conversation to regain communication with Wayne?

Patty and Wayne, two college students, are walking across campus together after history class. So far they have been discussing the test they both just finished taking. The conversation moves along quite well as long as they are talking about the test.

When the first pause occurs Patty restarts the conversation by asking about Wayne's weekend (ASK). He tells her he spent the weekend skiing at the lake (LISTEN). She tells him she spent the weekend studying for their history test (RESPOND), then there is another pause.

Patty decides once again to show her interest in Wayne by restarting the conversation. Here are three possible responses. Read each response and decide which one you think is most appropriate.

- a. "SOUNDS LIKE YOU HAD THE BETTER WEEKEND."
- b. "DO YOU GO SKIING OFTEN?"
- c. "WHAT ELSE IS NEW WITH YOU WAYNE?"

Now read the EVALUATION for EACH response.

- a. *Sounds like you had the better weekend.*

a. This response is good, but it leaves little room for FURTHER conversation. Wayne could just agree with Patty and there might be another pause. MAKING A COMMENT that will lead him to say more or ASKING A QUESTION, will encourage him to keep TALKING.

- b. *Do you go skiing often?*

b. This is Patty's best response. She REFERS back to something Wayne mentioned earlier, which shows him she LISTENED to what he said. Also, her question forces him to talk and gives her a chance to listen for more things to elaborate on. Notice in this example, Patty followed the ASK/ LISTEN/ RESPOND/ ASK rule.

- c. *What else is new with you Wayne?*

c. This response would be okay if they had not said much already. However, here Patty could go back to something Wayne said earlier--> he WENT SKIING. If she really doesn't want to hear about his skiing, she could use a GENERAL TOPIC to restart the conversation.

Things that are current concerns, such as news events, upcoming holidays, and other areas of mutual interest should be kept in mind at all times.

It is a good idea to make it a point to be well informed about current topics.....

To do this, you could simply read a newspaper or listen to a 30 minute newscast once a day, and then think about the news to try to form an opinion on what you hear.

It might also be helpful to cultivate an area of expertise such as a hobby. You can then feel free to introduce this as a topic of conversation, especially if you think the other person might be interested.

In this sample situation below, you decide what the best response might be.

Sandy and Tom, on their first date, are waiting in line for a movie. They discuss Tom's family, where both of them have lived, and things they like to do. While on the subject of hobbies, Tom mentions several things at once. He likes scuba diving, sailing, playing the guitar, and raising dogs. Sandy loves dogs, so they talk about different breeds of dogs until they've exhausted the subject.

There is a pause in the conversation. Sandy decides to show Tom she likes him by ending the pause. How could Sandy go about doing so? Think about it, then choose the response you feel is best.

- a. "MY EX-BOYFRIEND NEVER LIKED DOGS VERY MUCH. I'M GLAD YOU DO."
- b. "I WONDER HOW MUCH LONGER WE'LL WAIT BEFORE THEY LET US IN TO SEE THE MOVIE."
- c. "YOU SAID YOU PLAYED THE GUITAR. WHEN DID YOU LEARN HOW?"
- d. "DID YOU SEE THE GRAMMY AWARDS ON TELEVISION LAST NIGHT?"

PICK the one you think is BEST. Then LOOK down and READ the appropriate feedback for the response you chose.

A. Mentioning her ex-boyfriend on their first date may put Tom in an AWKWARD position. He might not know how to respond to her comment, and he may feel like she is comparing him to someone else. Read the responses again and choose a more appropriate one.

B. This comment probably will not lead to extended conversation. Also, it may send Tom the message that she wants to get inside to avoid talking to him. Read the responses again and choose a more appropriate one.

C. GOOD CHOICE!!! This is a good way to restart the conversation since Tom has mentioned several hobbies they have not yet discussed. By PAYING ATTENTION to what he says, Sandy can go back to those subjects they haven't discussed, or things Tom mentioned that she has questions about. Skip to the section named "SOME ADVICE FOR KEEPING A CONVERSATION GOING" on page 4.

D. This is a good silence breaker if they have not found enough to talk about. In cases where a pause occurs early, Sandy would need a GENERAL LIST OF TOPICS IN MIND to discuss, but in this situation Sandy has several choices of things to talk about. Read the responses again and choose a more appropriate one.

 * * * * *
 SOME ADVICE FOR KEEPING A CONVERSATION GOING!!
 * * * * *

1. While he is talking, make some mental notes of things you could talk about when a pause occurs.
2. Construct a mental list beforehand of possible topics you could discuss if the conversation needs regenerating. Things you are interested in may be good to bring up when you find yourself searching for something to say.

FOR EXAMPLE, if summer is approaching, you could ask how he plans to spend it. If a new restaurant has opened, you could ask if he has been there. The news is always a good possibility.

3. Remember that asking questions is a great way to revive dead conversation. Open-ended questions that require more than a yes or no answer, are best for continuing conversations. They allow you to listen rather than worry about what to say next. As long as one person is talking, the conversation is flowing.
4. Pay attention to how others respond to your questions. If you get minimal or negative responses to your questions on one subject, don't be discouraged. Just change the topic, using your mental notes or your preconceived list for possibilities.

FOR EXAMPLE, if talking about music results in little enthusiasm from a person, then you could ask him about his hobbies and interests.

5. Try to emphasize your own good qualities as well as those of others in conversations. Look for and comment on people's assets rather than their faults. Research has shown that being positive is one of the most effective techniques for getting others to WANT to continue talking to you, and even to seek you out.

BE POSITIVE!!!!

Now that you have been exposed to suggestions on how to keep a conversation going, think of how you could restart the following conversation with Paul...

As you are seated in the cafeteria Paul joins you for lunch. You don't know Paul very well, but one of your friends introduced him to you once and he seemed like a nice guy.

You want to get to know Paul better especially since he has shown interest in you by joining you for lunch.

When Paul first sits down, he comments on how crowded the cafeteria is today, then there is a pause.

How would you keep this conversation going?

****Remember the ASK/ LISTEN/ RESPOND/ ASK rule****

Now THINK of the EXACT words that you would say and READ ON when you're ready to evaluate your response.

AGAIN, KEEP YOUR RESPONSE IN MIND AS YOU ASK YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS.

1. Did you respond to what Paul said earlier?

YES or NO???

Y: GOOD!!!! You let him know you are paying attention to him.

N: Although Paul hasn't said much yet, you might at least agree that the cafeteria is crowded to let him know you noticed what he said. Think of another response that refers to what Paul just said.

2. Did you have something general in mind to talk about?

YES or NO???

Y: GREAT!!!! Since you know a little about Paul, a general topic in mind HELPS you to continue a conversation and AVOID what otherwise might be a quiet lunch.

N: Having a list of subjects in mind to discuss with anyone can put your mind at ease when a pause occurs. You may tell him about something that happened today, or if nothing exciting has happened, ask him about his day.

3. Did you ask a question or make a comment that would lead to extended conversation?

YES or NO???

Y: GOOD FOR YOU!!!! You can find out more about him and show him you're interested in talking more when you ask a question.

N: Asking Paul a question could ensure more conversation with him. Also, a question will let you know more about him, and then perhaps you can elaborate on Paul's answers to KEEP THE CONVERSATION GOING.

A good example would be: "Yes it is crowded, by the way, what do you think of the food here?"

Repeat your response out loud and decide if it would KEEP A CONVERSATION GOING between you and Paul.

If you don't feel satisfied with your response as it is, change it and re-ask yourself the previous questions.

Now you have reached the point where you can read on to OPTIONAL SCENE I below, or skip to the PRACTICE ASSIGNMENT on page 8.

OR, if you want to, take this time to think of your own situation or experience and what you would say to keep the conversation going.

OPTIONAL SCENE I

Suppose you are at a party and a friend introduces you to Mitchell whom you'd like to get to know.

When you are first introduced, a crowd of people is around, and you don't get to say much to Mitchell.

Later, when the crowd thins out, you and Mitchell begin a conversation about the song on the stereo. You BOTH like it.

The song is over and you want to keep talking to Mitchell.

WHAT COULD YOU SAY????

Think of what you would say to CONTINUE A CONVERSATION with Mitchell and read on to evaluate your response.

1. Did you listen to what Mitchell said and comment on something discussed previously?

Y: GOOD!!!! You're getting the hang of it.

N: Here you could have TALKED about your favorite music artists or about something you might have HEARD HIM SAY when the crowd of people was around.

2. Did you have something general in mind to discuss?

Y: GREAT!!!! You know the importance of using the THINGS AROUND YOU or even things not immediately present to KEEP A CONVERSATION GOING!!!!

N: At a party, you could DISCUSS things like music, the refreshments, etc., to learn each others' tastes, or you could TALK about ANYTHING IN GENERAL - even the weather if it is particularly unusual.

3. Did you ask a question or make a comment that could lead to extended conversation?

Y: VERY GOOD once again!!!!

N: REMEMBER-- A QUESTION is always good for RESTARTING CONVERSATIONS. Most people like to ANSWER QUESTIONS - especially if they're about THEMSELVES!!!!

If you're confident in your knowledge of how to keep a conversation going, GREAT!

But, if you still have doubts about your response, try thinking of a new one and read on to evaluate.

1. Did you respond to what the persaon said earlier?
2. Did you have something general in mind to talk about?
3. Did you ask a question or make a comment that would extend the conversation?

Now THINK of a conversation you have been in or one you can see yourself in in the near future that might need restarting.

HOW WOULD YOU RESTART IT?

Remember what you've learned about conversations and how to keep them going.

If you remember the ASK/ LISTEN/ RESPOND/ ASK rule, and what you've learned so far about how to carry it out, YOU should be able to START and CONTINUE interesting conversations with people you like!!!!

* PRACTICE ASSIGNMENT *

Now practice those skills which you have been thinking about and using in this manual before the next session.

Here are a few pointers from this lesson to use in practice:

1. *GOLDEN RULE* -- ASK/ LISTEN/ RESPOND/ ASK METHOD.
2. USE PAUSES AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO CHANGE A TOPIC WHICH IS NOT SPARKING ANY MORE CONVERSATION.
3. KEEP UP WITH CURRENT EVENTS, OR HAVE IN MIND EVENTS THAT YOU HAVE BEEN, OR ARE INVOLVED IN, SO THAT YOU CAN USE THIS KNOWLEDGE FOR CONVERSATION TOPICS.
4. KEEP A MENTAL LIST OF THINGS BEING SAID.
5. ASK QUESTIONS WHICH HAVE TO BE ANSWERED WITH MORE THAN A YES OR NO. (open-ended questions).
6. PAY ATTENTION TO HOW OTHERS RESPOND TO YOUR QUESTIONS.
7. BE POSITIVE ABOUT WHAT YOU ARE SAYING, AND ESPECIALLY WHAT HE IS SAYING!!!!

So now START and KEEP some conversations going with anybody. In the grocery store, in class, anywhere!!!!

After you START A CONVERSATION with someone, KEEP THAT CONVERSATION GOING!!!!

YOU CAN DO IT!!!!

ANIMATED SPEECH

Animated speech is speech which varies in loudness and pitch. It is lively and accompanied by slight movements of hand and body.

Each of the components of animated speech will be explained on the following pages.

LOUDNESS

Low voice volume can indicate shyness, or even sadness. Also, when talking in a low voice, the content of what is being said often takes on a more subdued tone, even if it is usually an exciting subject. Using a low voice sometimes makes it hard for people to hear you and so you could be misunderstood.

But the worst part of using this volume in everyday talk is that it is dull..dull..dull..dull..dull..dull..

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*****
* Of course, if you are talking about a very *
* serious or sad subject use a lower voice *
* volume. *
*****
```

On the other hand, a loud volume speaking voice may intimidate your partner in conversation.

This may make him feel uncomfortable and even make him physically back away from you.

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*****
* Even if the subject is exciting, you don't *
* have to be overpowering. Just use pitch *
* (explained in a moment) to get the point *
* across. *
*****
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So, it seems that the volume with which you speak should be at a happy medium.

A voice of appropriate loudness communicates confidence and assurance.

PITCH

People are perceived as more dynamic and extroverted when they change the pitch of their voices often during a conversation.

So, even if speech is just right in volume, it might have an earth shattering shrill or squeak to it. Basically, varying pitch slightly will make your voice more interesting. That way, others are more likely to want to listen to what you say and are more likely to find what you say much more interesting.

SLIGHT BODY MOVEMENTS

This means: be consistent with your body movements and the way you are speaking or what you are talking about. If you are very still and hardly moving your hands, you shouldn't be talking excitedly about something. More appropriately, use this lack of movement to portray a serious or sad topic. If you are talking in a lively fashion, accent it with a few hand movements, etc...

Here is a situation in which animated speech is used.

Leslie is talking with Alex. She has been sitting next to him most of the semester, and sometimes they study together. Alex tells Leslie that he won a \$2000 lottery. Her response is "That's great, Alex--I'm really excited for you-- I bet you've already thought of a hundred ways to spend it."

Read on to see the various ways in which she could have said it. Think about which way is best.

A. Leslie says this while standing with her feet together, arms at her side, and an unchanging expression on her face. She says every word exactly the same way--in other words there is no rise or fall in the tone of her voice.

B. Leslie says this while moving around, expressing herself with excitement in her voice. She smiles and grins and may even shake his hand with congratulations or give him a quick hug.

C. Leslie says this while jumping up and down shouting, "You won! You won! WOW!! Great!!"

Now let's look at the feedback for each of the responses.

Response A:

When Alex mentions the good news Leslie is probably excited too. By standing with her feet together and arms at her side she is restricting her body movements and at the same time she is controlling her tone and pitch. Inflection or variations in tone and pitch, goes hand in hand with body movement because it relays a message of consistency that makes it seem as though what you are saying is being backed up by how you really feel.

Response B

This is the best way for Leslie to show Alex her interest in him. By sharing his excitement Leslie lets Alex know she paid attention to what he said. By using different tones and inflections and by varying the way she says her words, Leslie makes great use of animated speech.

Response C

Leslie acts more like a cheerleader than a person truly glad for another. Even though the news is great news, dramatic cheering is probably going to make him think she is insincere, and just being fake.

*** It is possible to alter the way you present your conversation ***

FOR INSTANCE:

If you are talking to a guy in a low tone of voice and at the same time staring at your books with an occasional glance at him, you will probably encounter him asking you to repeat some things during your conversation. When you look up, he may also be looking at his books or at something other than you.

As you can see you would be talking too low in this situation (since he kept asking you to repeat). Not using any body movement or eye contact during a conversation can result in the other person not paying much attention to you. He might also think you didn't really want to be talking to him at that time.

So, it is possible to know how well you are doing by paying more attention to how the other person reacts to you.

In conclusion, ANIMATED SPEECH is not a matter of cheerleader enthusiasm. It is a way to promote interest in whomever you are talking to, and a way to show considerate and appropriate interest in what he has said.

AS YOU MIGHT HAVE GUESSED:

ANIMATED SPEECH

HELPS

KEEP A CONVERSATION

GOING!!!

* PRACTICE ASSIGNMENT *

The next time you are engaged in a conversation, experiment by varying your loudness, pitch and body movements. Pay attention to the other person's reactions as you experiment. Determine what elicits the best response.

Keep in mind what you have learned about animated speech when talking with another person. All the skills you have learned so far work well when used together.

Keep practicing--> it is very IMPORTANT!!

THANK YOU!!

GOOD LUCK!!

HAVE A GREAT WEEK!!

CONVERSATIONAL SKILLS MANUAL

Part III

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SHOWING AND KEEPING INTEREST

IN A CONVERSATION

Once you have initiated a conversation, or are engaged in one, it is necessary to show the person you are talking with that you are interested and listening.

This lesson is closely tied to "Keeping a Conversation Going," which you read last week, so keep those pointers in mind as you learn more about SHOWING AND KEEPING INTEREST IN A CONVERSATION...

There are three ways in which you can let someone you are talking to know you are interested in what he is saying, thus encouraging him to talk more:

1. Giving more than the shortest possible answer.
2. Backchanneling
3. Cueing

These techniques deal with responding, listening, promoting more talk, and keeping interest in a conversation. Although each of these techniques will be explained separately, they are meant to be used together during the course of a conversation.

MORE THAN THE SHORTEST POSSIBLE ANSWER

This means that when a question, during the course of a conversation, is directed to you, the answer you give promotes more conversation.

Here is an example:

A guy, Harry, asks Sue during a conversation, "I NEED TO TAKE AN ENGLISH CLASS. WHO DID YOU HAVE?" If Sue replies, "MR. JONES", she is only giving Harry the shortest possible answer, leaving him with the responsibility of picking up another topic or extending this one.

However, if Sue were to give Harry MORE THAN THE SHORTEST POSSIBLE ANSWER, she might reply, "I HAD MR. JONES. HE'S OKAY, BUT HE GIVES HARD ESSAY TESTS. ARE YOU GOOD AT TAKING ESSAY TESTS?"

Now it is more likely that Harry will answer Sue's question, and then elaborate on the three points she has mentioned: the teacher, his tests, and how good Harry is at taking essay tests.

In this manner, Sue promoted more conversation with Harry. However, when giving more than the shortest possible answer there is something to BEWARE--> answers that are TOO LONG!!!

For example, if Sue would have said, "I HAD MR. JONES. HE WAS OKAY, BUT HE GAVE HARD ESSAY TESTS. I REMEMBER ONE TEST IN PARTICULAR. I WROTE FOR THE WHOLE 50 MINUTES JUST FOR ONE QUESTION, AND HAD THREE LEFT! THE GIRL SITTING NEXT TO ME ONLY GOT TWO DONE. THEN ON THE NEXT TEST....."

Harry would most probably have gotten the idea with one statement about the difficulty of the test. Furthermore, the long answer would not keep his interest for long.

Remember you are trying to promote interest and participation in the conversation with him.
Don't do all the talking yourself.

BACKCHANNELING

Backchanneling simply means to let the person know you are listening by making encouraging short statements or sounds, like:

"Oh really?"

"Uh-huh"

"Mm..hmm"

You could also nod your head at an appropriate time to show you are listening.

Here is a short conversation demonstrating the backchanneling technique:

Dennis: "I SURE ENJOYED THAT TALK!"

Sally: (nods her head and says) "YEAH!"

Dennis: "I CAN'T BELIEVE IT WAS THAT INTERESTING. ESPECIALLY WHEN I READ A NEGATIVE REPORT ABOUT IT IN THE NEWSPAPER."

Sally: "Mm..hmm"

NOTICE: almost any short comment can be used in backchanneling.

Use this technique when the other person is making general statements -- not when he is asking you a question.

Be CAREFUL not to do TOO MUCH backchanneling. It may make you sound impatient. When it seems as though you are backchanneling too much, you could elaborate on something he has said.

CUEING

By taking what a person has said and "cueing off" of it, you let him know you are listening closely.

This is done by using one or two of his points to make your own comment. It will show him that you were listening very closely to what he had to say.

This technique will also promote more talk from the other person since he gets such positive feedback from you.

Here is an example of a conversation where Sally cues off of what Dennis has said:

Dennis: "I CAN'T BELIEVE IT WAS THAT INTERESTING. ESPECIALLY AFTER I READ A NEGATIVE REPORT ABOUT IT IN THE NEWSPAPER."

Sally: "NEITHER CAN I. I SAW THAT SAME ARTICLE, AND WAS A LITTLE HESITANT ABOUT EVEN COMING HERE TONIGHT. I'M GLAD I DID!"

Here, Sally made a mental note about the newspaper report Dennis had mentioned. She then used it in her replying statement to him.

So, as we witnessed in the previous situation, it is good to keep a mental list of those things which the other person has mentioned, before you comment. That way you can implement them in your statement, so he will know you were listening attentively.

One thing to be CAREFUL of is "cueing off" of NEGATIVE statements.

For example:

Joel: "I am very interested in art, but my brother was better at it than me. He died in a car accident last year."

Amy: "A car accident, really? I had an uncle who was a stunt driver and he was always involved in accidents. He also died in a car accident last year!"

Continue reading to see why Amy's statement was not a good one.

This is not a good way to keep Joel talking. It may lead Joel to think of Amy as a negative person since she concentrated on the NEGATIVE aspect of his statement.

A more appropriate statement from Amy could be:

Amy: "I love art. In fact I sketch a little. Do you like sketching, or do you prefer some other kind of artistic expression?"

Here, Amy avoided the negative comment (which was not Joel's main subject), and instead picked up the topic of art from her POSITIVE MENTAL LIST of things he said.

In the previous statement, Amy also used a question to involve Joel after already showing him her interest in his topic.

POINTERS FOR:

GIVING MORE THAN THE
SHORTEST POSSIBLE ANSWER

1. If it is appropriate, use a question in your own response to stimulate more conversation from him.
2. Be careful not to make your response TOO long. Watch his reaction for signs of boredom or impatience.

POINTERS FOR:

BACKCHANNELING

1. Show you are listening to the other person by making short comments every now and again (i.e., "Oh really" or "Uh-huh").
2. Use this technique when the other person is making general statements--not when he is asking you a question.
3. Do not overdo it! If you feel you are backchanneling too much, elaborate on something that has been mentioned instead.

POINTERS FOR:

CUEING

1. Use this when you feel you are backchanneling too much, or when he has not asked you many questions, but has done all the talking himself.
2. Use your mental list of things he has been discussing to "cue off" from, so that when you make your comment he will know you have been listening to him.
3. With this technique, it is wise not to "cue off" his NEGATIVE statements, because this could give him a negative view of you. Keep a POSITIVE MENTAL LIST so you won't do this.

Now let's look at some situations....

Below is a conversation that is being started by a guy, Tommy.

Tommy: "I saw a really good movie this weekend. It was about a lady on a farm, back in the 1930's, whose husband dies. It was really interesting because it made me think about the terrible position women are put in when they are financially dependent on a husband who dies. What do you think about this?"

Now read each response and its feedback that Karen could have given.

RESPONSE 1:

"Yeah, it really is kind of bad. My mom is in that position and I've always wondered what she would do if anything happened to dad."

Do you think that was a good or bad response? Think about the techniques she used and read the following feedback-->

FEEDBACK: This is a very RESPONSIVE interaction with Tommy. Karen didn't interrupt him or seem impatient. She avoided changing the topic before she responded to what he said by using MORE THAN THE SHORTEST ANSWER.

Karen's reponse could have been even better if she had BACKCHANNELED a little during his explanation of the movie.

Although in the previous response Karen agreed with everything Tommy said, that isn't a necessary part of showing INTEREST. You can be just as RESPONSIVE to what someone has said by expressng a different opinion.

As long as you are polite and try to IMPLEMENT some of those things which he has mentioned, he will appreciate different input and the fact that you were paying close ATTENTION to what he said.

RESPONSE 2:

"I know. It's really sickening to me how some women do that. I just can't believe how stupid they are to depend on men that way."

FEEDBACK: In this response, Karen is "CUEING OFF" Tommy's NEGATIVE comments. It is not a very good idea to do this, because it makes Karen seem like a negative person, and may cause Tommy to see her in an unfavorable light.

RESPONSE 3:

"My best friend just broke up with her boyfriend and she's really upset about it. I'll bet she's going to have a rough time coping."

FEEDBACK: This is not a good response. Karen changes the topic without even answering Tommy's question. And even then does not use proper CUEING techniques because she brings up something totally different from what he was saying (she didn't use her mental list of things he mentioned!).

Tommy most likely would get the distinct impression that Karen was not listening to him attentively, since she did the things above, and did not BACKCHANNEL either.

RESPONSE 4:

Tommy: "I saw"

Karen: "Oh?"

Tommy: "Yeah, it was about....."

Karen: "Really?"

Tommy: "..... whose husband...."

Karen: "Too bad."

Tommy: "It was interesting."

Karen: "Good."

Tommy: "....because it made.."

Karen: "...mmm"

Tommy: "What do you think?"

Karen: "I agree."

Well obviously there is too much of something. Read on to see what it is.

FEEDBACK: Karen uses too much backchanneling here. By doing this she is communicating to Tommy that she is impatient, even if she really isn't.

Also, Karen gives the SHORTEST POSSIBLE ANSWER to Tommy's question. This would even further lead Tommy to believe Karen does not want to to continue this conversation.

Now that you have seen a potential conversation and its feedback, it is your turn to evaluate the responses before seeing the feedback.

You will read a short conversation each time, and will have a multiple choice of responses to choose from.

WHAT FUN--> A PRACTICE DRILL!!!!

Mark: "Hi, my name is Mark. Didn't you just start working as a computer programmer for Arco?"

Jennifer:

(a) "Yes, I did."

(b) "Yes, I did. My name is Jennifer. I've seen you around the office. How long have you been with the company?"

(c) "Yes. I am really disappointed at the salary they have started me out at though. Really cheap company! What do you make a week?"

Decide which response you think is best. Then look down and read the appropriate feedback.

A. This is definitely THE SHORTEST POSSIBLE ANSWER. Jennifer is leaving Mark no choice but to try to think of something new to talk about, if he wants to continue talking at all!!!

B. VERY GOOD!!! This is the best response. She answered his question with MORE THAN THE SHORTEST POSSIBLE ANSWER, and then finished off with a question to help KEEP THE CONVERSATION GOING!!

No BACKCHANNELING was needed since his comment and question were very short.

C. This is a VERY NEGATIVE response!!!!!! It is MORE THAN THE SHORTEST POSSIBLE ANSWER, but very negative.

It is not that Jennifer "cues off" of Mark's negative statement (because he made none), but rather she made his positive observation negative.

And even though she asked him a question, it was one that he probably won't want to answer. This definitely will not help to continue the conversation.

~~~~~

Now we will try something different. You will be given a short conversation between two people and then asked questions about it.

Allen: "I am so full right now. My roommate and I just got back from lunch. We went to this Italian restaurant that just opened, and the food was great. I haven't had Italian food that good in ages."

Angie: "Sounds like you had a great lunch! Where is that Italian restaurant, maybe I can go try out their food too."

Did Angie give MORE THAN THE SHORTEST POSSIBLE ANSWER? YES or NO?

No: Of course not, she wasn't even asked a question. But she did use CUEING and a question in order to show interest and attention and to stimulate more conversation.

Yes: Angie was not asked a question. So she used CUEING and a question, to show interest and to promote conversation.

-----

Rick: "I've had a lot of tests this week. I am so tired. Most of my grades will be posted tomorrow, so I am getting a little nervous now. Do you get nervous before you even see your grades?"

Charlene: "Sure. I think everybody does. One time though, I was justified. I got a D on a test that I was most confident taking. Sometimes when people have a lot of tests too close together they don't do as well in the classes they would normally do well in."

Since we see here that Charlene gave MORE THAN THE SHORTEST POSSIBLE ANSWER to Rick's question, how well did she do at stimulating more conversation?

WELL.....OR.....NOT WELL?

She did WELL: Not really. Charlene did very well at the beginning, but then brought up a negative aspect of the conversation--> receiving bad grades.

You have to watch for clues in what the other person is saying and doing so as to pick out those things which are most positive.

It is not necessary to agree with everything somebody says, but it is necessary to be positive in the statements you make to continue the conversation.

She did NOT DO WELL: C O R R E C T!!!!!!! Mentioning bad grades when he just said he was nervous would not be a good idea for trying to continue a conversation with him.

Don't forget:

YOU MUST PRACTICE

ALL THE THINGS

YOU LEARN IN

THIS MANUAL

Practice with anyone. It will help you feel more at ease with the techniques you've seen here and the others you have learned before.

So, use:

BACKCHANNELING

CUEING

and.....

MORE  
THAN  
THE  
SHORTEST  
POSSIBLE  
ANSWER

to help you show interest in a conversation with someone you'd like to talk to.

Well, we wouldn't want you to only have a couple things to work on, so continue reading to see something else that should help you out with your conversations.

GIVING COMPLIMENTS

AND SMILING

"My, you sure look nice today," Doug says smiling. If he said that to you, how would you feel?

Paying a compliment and smiling will usually make a person feel good. And if you make someone feel good, he is likely to want you around him.

\*\*\*\*\*

Our goal here is to give you some things to think about concerning compliments and smiling, so that you can use these to convey your interest in someone.

\*\*\*\*\*

COMPLIMENTS

Compliments are an effective way to SHOW INTEREST in someone, and some compliments communicate INTEREST better than others.

Following are some guidelines to use when dealing with compliments:

(1) BE POSITIVE

Sarcastic compliments are usually easy to pick out. If you are really jealous about a certain good quality or good fortune of another, but you want to talk to him, don't even attempt a compliment that will probably end up being negative (or taken that way).

(2) COMPLIMENTS SHOULD NOT SOUND EXAGGERATED OR GUSHY

Too much complimenting may sound fake. Overcomplimenting turns people off and they may eventually lose respect for your opinion. Also, OVERCOMPLIMENTING may EMBARRASS some people.

(3) GIVE A COMPLIMENT WHEN THE OPPORTUNITY ARISES NATURALLY

Don't be so eager to compliment that you sound like you are complimenting just to be saying something. Wait until something really grabs your attention. COMPLIMENTING only to save a dying conversation is not SINCERE and he will pick it up. BEING INSINCERE WHEN COMPLIMENTING IS NOT A REAL COMPLIMENT.

Now that you've been exposed to some guidelines for complimenting, help Ellen select the best compliment.....

While Frank, Cindy, and Ellen are out driving, they decide to stop and get something to eat. Frank helps Ellen out of the back seat, opens doors for her, and offers her his jacket when she comments on the cold temperature in the restaurant.

Ellen notices his polite behavior and decides to give him a compliment.

WHAT SHOULD SHE SAY? READ EACH RESPONSE.

- a. "You are a real man, Frank. You have the best manners of any guy I've met in my life. I wish everyone was as nice as you are."
- b. "I like your shirt Frank. It makes you look rugged."
- c. "You sure know how to pick a restaurant, Frank."
- d. "You sure are a gentleman. It's always nice to be treated with good manners."

Decide which response you think is best. Then read the feedback for EACH response.

- a. This is too much. Remember, OVERCOMPLIMENTING can make him doubt sincerity.
- b. It isn't the time to compliment his shirt when you notice his manners.
- c. Frank might take this compliment as insincere since Ellen thought the temperature was too cold.
- d. Good! This is Ellen's best response. Frank probably believes she means it, and therefore he appreciates her compliment.

SMILING

Smiling at someone communicates acceptance or approval of him. Since everyone needs to feel approved of and accepted by other people, it follows that smiling at a guy is one way to suggest nonverbally that you are interested in him.

Smiling can increase a person's attractiveness. It makes you look happy, warm, and accepting-----all of which are attractive qualities.

People who look directly at others and smile are seen as more approachable and more likely to encourage others to walk up and talk to them.

\*\*\*\*\*

So SMILING not only helps SHOW INTEREST in a conversation and KEEPS A CONVERSATION GOING, but it also helps START A CONVERSATION.

\*\*\*\*\*

Here are some pointers for smiling:

(1) DO NOT BE FAKE

Too much smiling, or smiling at the wrong times (like when the other person is angry or sad) is not appropriate and looks fake. A perpetual smile is not attractive. YOU AREN'T A MANNEQUIN, but you are a thinking, feeling, and communicating human being.

(2) SMILE EVEN WHEN THERE IS NO VERBAL COMMUNICATION OCCURRING

This is a nonverbal sign that you are interested in the other person. Smiling reassures him you probably will not reject him, which a lot of times is a guy's biggest fear when approaching a girl.

(3) LOOK AT HIM WHILE YOU SMILE

Maintaining good EYE CONTACT is always important when talking to someone or just smiling at them. Looking while smiling communicates confidence and sincerity.

{DON'T STARE HIM DOWN. JUST CATCH HIS EYE.....BE NATURAL!!!}

PRESENTING .....

THE NEW POETIC FORM -----

A SITUATION WILL BE PRESENTED, IN THE NEW FORM, AND YOU WILL IMPLEMENT YOUR  
NEWLY LEARNED TECHNIQUES OF COMPLIMENTING AND SMILING TO MAKE UP A PERFECT  
RESPONSE.

You've danced most the night with

Steel-Toe Joe,

Whose boots wouldn't let him feel

your poor toe.

When he asks you to dance again

you say no.

"I think my friends are

ready to go."

Then off the dance floor

steps gorgeous Pete.

You've admired him

afar for weeks.

He asks if he may

have this dance.

And thrilled you are at

such a chance.

A potential romance,

could there be?

Try giving a

compliment and see.

After being stepped on by

Steel-Toe Joe,

You really appreciate  
 Pete's smooth flow.  
 You want so badly to  
 let him know,  
 But how on earth will you  
 tell him so?

Now write down on scratch paper what you could say to Pete to let him know he's light on his feet. {It's hard to write down smiling, so just keep in mind where you would smile, etc.}

Was your compliment sincere? YES or NO?

Yes: Good for you!!! Smiling would also be more natural in this case, since you wouldn't be TRYING to make your compliment sound good.

No: Remember, it is important that a guy feels like you mean it when you give him a compliment. (Or anybody for that matter).

Think of some of the reasons you weren't sincere, and in the future try to avoid making compliments if they really aren't sincere.

Was your compliment believable? YES or NO?

Yes: Great! He would probably appreciate your compliment. And of course, if you smile along with it and look him in the eye, you would probably quickly spark a conversation with Pete.

No: Exaggerated compliments sound fake. You can be nice without overdoing it. If Pete really believes you are sincere, he may be worried about living up to that exaggerated standard.

Was your compliment appropriate? YES or NO?

Yes: Great! You don't want to compliment something irrelevant. Then your conversation starts on that thought----- WHERE DO I GO FROM HERE???

No: Try making the compliment fit the context. In this situation, you want to



comment on how well he dances. A conversation that starts with an irrelevant compliment (i.e., COMPLIMENT ON HIS BELT) usually is not very smooth and is hard to continue.

\*\*\*PRACTICE\*\*\*

Practice giving compliments and smiling along with all of the things you have learned so far.

Smile more often, even if you usually don't, so you can watch the responses you get from other people.

And if you do smile a lot, practice not smiling as much so you can see the difference between when you do smile and when you don't.

WATCHING OTHER PEOPLE'S REACTIONS ARE THE BEST GUIDELINES IN CONVERSING WITH THEM.

CONCLUSION

This concludes our conversational skills manual. We would like to CONGRATULATE you for completing the program. We would also like to THANK you.

We APPRECIATE your time and effort VERY MUCH!!

We have great hope that you will CONTINUE to practice and learn on your own. In this manner, you should gradually become more comfortable with your ability to initiate conversations and keep them going with anyone you choose.

We realize there is a certain risk involved and that the guidelines put forth here are easier said than done. However, you could gain SO MUCH by trying.

All it takes is practice and effort. You'll never know how far you can go until you try!

GOOD LUCK!!!

and

THANKS AGAIN!!!

Have a great Thanksgiving!