

A COUPLES WORKSHOP

Johanna and Deane Shapiro

This workbook for a couple's workshop provides several exercises to help couples better understand and deepen their love and respect for each other, and to explore their goals and values individually and as a team. Emphasis will be on creating a warm, trusting environment in which open communication with one's self and with one's spouse can be shared and explored.

Marriage Communication Workshop

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Six Meetings. Evening 7-10.

Abstract: For couples who are married, or committed to long term relationships, this workshop will develop ways of preserving both intimacy and freedom in a relationship. Communication patterns, expressions of love and hostility, and decision making patterns will be explored. Techniques will be drawn both from Western Psychology; e.g., relaxation training; problem solving techniques; and from Eastern religions; e.g., meditation.

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SECTION ONE: EXERCISES

(reasons for each of these exercises are detailed on pp 11-12).

Section One

EXPERIENCES: Each experience will be followed by two things:
a) instructions ~~and a section for you to write how you felt about the experience~~
b) a section for you to write how you felt about the experience

1. Ear Meditation:

a) in seated position that is comfortable, close your eyes and listen to the sounds around you: silence, your breathing, the breathing of a neighbor (one minute)

b) Comments: How did it feel to "just sit"; what did you hear? Please comment below.

2. Introductory Dyads:

a) In groups of two: partner a tells partner b some things about himself that he feels are positive attributes; then the roles are reversed: partner b tells a what b thinks is good about b; when return to the larger group: a tells the group what is positive about b; b tells the group what is positive about a.

b) comments: how did it feel to have someone else describe you to a group; how did it feel to tell someone else about your good qualities:

3. Trust experience

a) Group forms a circle; one person in the center; eyes shut; legs straight; falls back into the group; group catches him. each person becomes the one in the center.

b) COMMENTS: how did it feel falling; how did it feel to have the responsibility to catch someone else?...

EXPERIENCES (con't)

4. Molding experience:

Part one--verbal

a) Break into groups of two. One of the pair is to be the leader and order the other one around. Then switch roles.

Part two--non-verbal

a) in the same dyads--one of the pair is to be completely passive and the other is to mold his body into different positions. Then reverse roles.

b) COMMENTS: how did it feel to control another person; how did it feel to have another control you...discuss your feelings:

5. Animal game:

a) each person writes down the name of an ~~animal~~ animal that he identifies with or would like to be like; names are thrown into the center and drawn out one at a time; the group tries to guess who ~~was~~ was the one who picked the animal

b) COMMENTS: what did you find out about how others view you from this experience...

6. Chanting

a) OM. As open mouth let the air of heaven come in; as close it, keep the devil out.

b) how did it feel to chant with a group? to listen to the OM sound reverberating in your head?...

EXPERIENCES (con't):

7. Expression of Self through art:

a) Take whatever colored crayons you like: on one side of the page draw your feelings right now; on the other side of the page (with different colors if you like) draw where you would most like to be). (use the back of pages in this manual)

a) After you have done that, break down into groups of two; explain your pictures to your partner; then let him explain his pictures to you; then report back to the group

b) COMMENTS: how did it feel to express yourself in crayons; do you see possibilities for expression of self non-verbally through art? ~~max~~ was it cathartic?...

COMMENTS a): Did you find you had difficulty in listening to others during the exercise? If so, why? Did you find you had difficulty in formulating your thoughts and listening at the same time: 1) forgetting what you were going to say 2) not listening 3) rehearsing your responses When your partner paraphrased your remarks, did he do it in a shorter, more concise way? Did you find you were not getting across what you wanted to say? Was the manner of presentation by another affecting your listening ability? (Answer on back)

8. Aggressive exercise:

a) two people form dyad; partners push against each other

b) comments: who initiated the action; were you pushing with your hands or your total body; how did you feel while pushing and being pushed...

9. RESPONSIBILITY sentence:

a) Pick someone in your life (father, spouse, etc.) and complete the following sentences:

I take responsibility for.....

You take responsibility for.....

b) Compare notes with that person and COMMENT; did you each expect the other to take certain responsibilities; how are your expectations of others different from their expectations of you and viceversa... (comment on back if need more room!)

EXERCISES (con't)

10. Communication Dyads

- a₁) back to back, communicating verbally
- a₂) face to face, communicating only with eyes
- a₃) face to face, eyes closed, communicating through touch
- a₄) face to face, eyes open, communicating with hands
- a₅) finger talk: using only your hands, meet the other person, say hello, go for a walk, dance, have a fight, make up, say good-bye.

b) COMMENT: What was your reaction to each part of the exercise? During which part did you feel most comfortable? During which part did you feel you were communicating the best with your partner? Which parts made you feel most awkward? Which part was most frustrating in terms of communication?

11. Self-Sabotage Game

a) anticipate what you will say to yourself to preserve your status quo, to keep yourself from growing or changing

b) COMMENTS: Be aware of the techniques you use to trick yourself. List some of the excuses you made to yourself and then question their validity.

12. Hate/ Love/ Self: Animals

a) think of a person you hate, a person you love or admire, and yourself; turn all these people into animals; fantasize different combinations of encounters between the animals in a wood.

b) COMMENTS: Compare and contrast the different encounters. Was it difficult to change yourself into an animal? What feelings of involvement did you have during the various encounters in the wood?

EXERCISES (con't)

5.

13. Map-Making

a) What are the maps that you have 1) for yourself
2) for your marriage and/or your family: Draw a map of personal goals. Next draw a "we map" showing what your goals and expectations are for your partnership and/or your family. Be explicit!

b) COMMENTS: Draw the two maps below. Do you notice a lot of uncharted territory? How do you feel about yourself in the role of explorer? Do you feel your partner (or your family) and you can make a good exploring team? Compare maps with your partner (or other members of your family) and see how closely your appraisals of the terrain ahead match.

(see also p. 17 in appendix)

EXERCISES (con't)

14. The Mind Wardrobe

a) List the things that make you feel good about yourself. List the things that make you feel bad about yourself. Now list those things which you think your spouse (parents, child) values in you. Also list those qualities you appreciate in them. List the things you have to be happy about. List the things you have to be unhappy about.

b) COMMENTS: Do you have a basically positive or a basically negative attitude toward yourself? Was it difficult or easy to specify exactly what it is you value in your loved one(s)? How did your list of good qualities compare with the list your partner made about you? How accurately did you predict which aspects of you he valued most? How did you feel when you were listing all the things you have to be happy about? How did you feel when you listed all the things that are oppressing you?

What You Like About Yourself What You Dislike About Yourself

What You Think Your Partner Values In You

What You Value in Your Partner

What You Have To Be Happy About What You Have To Be Sad About

EXERCISES (con't)

15. Sex: Free Association

a) List all the images, words, actions which come into your head when you hear the word "sex." Break down into dyads and compare list with your partner.

^a₁) Sex Tracks. See Bach in Appendix, p.

b) COMMENTS: How would you categorize your images for the first part of the ~~exam~~ exercise: artistic, earthy etc. How accurately could you predict your partner's sexual desires?

16. Resentment/ Demand/ Appreciation

a) In fantasy, place your spouse before you. Voice any resentments you have against him (her). Then make any demands of him that you wish. Finally say what you appreciate about him.

b) Comments: How did you react to this sort of fantasy confrontation? Were you embarrassed to put your resentments, demands, or appreciations into verbal form? Was it a cathartic experience?

17. Sentence Completion

a) Facing your partner, complete these sentences:
1. I want you to... 2. I keep myself from getting involved with you by... 3. I could make contact with you by...

b) COMMENTS: Did you feel constrained by using a prescribed format? Did you feel you were able to verbalize some real emotions? How did your partner react to what you were saying? Did you feel close to your partner or alienated from him when you were finished?

EXERCISES (con't)

18. The Mirror

a) Break down into dyads. While one person speaks, the other reflects his actions, but says nothing.

b) COMMENTS: Did you find this to be a frustrating or an enjoyable experience? Did you feel you were communicating well or poorly? Did your mirror make you feel uncomfortable? Did you play with your mirror? What sort of things did you learn when you were the mirror? What sort of things did you learn when you looked into your mirror? Did you have any feelings toward your mirror - resentment, like etc.? How is the mirror experience different from true dialogue?

19. Personal Space

a) Have partners face each other about fifteen feet apart and converse. As they continue to talk, partner A walks up to partner B until they make physical contact. Then partner A slowly backs away until he reaches the right distance to make conversation comfortable for himself. At that point A stops and the partners measure the distance between each other with a tape measure. The experiment is repeated with Partner B doing the walking. Repeat the experiment without eye contact. Then, standing no closer than is comfortable, explore each other with sense of touch.

distance
in partner:

b) COMMENTS: What differences did you discover between your personal space and your partner's? What impact did eye contact have on personal space? Did you stand nearer to your partner for touching than for talking?

REASONS FOR THE EXERCISES (and their correlation with areas of concern.)

Ear Meditation: to begin to relax; to open our ears to the sounds around us; to hear our own breathing

Introductory Dyads: to get people to say positive things about themselves; to practice the art of listening; to introduce ourselves to the group

Trust Experience: to work on creating a feeling of group cohesiveness; also to explore non-verbal communication--many different hands catching your body

Molding Experience: to explore "balance" in the relationship: dominance/passivity;

Animal Game: to see how other people in the group view you

Chanting: to explore the feelings a) of singing with a group
b) of developing a rhythm within one's mind which removes thoughts.

Expression of Self through Art: Seeking to be emotionally honest with ourselves; in the second part of the exercise, to practice the art of listening

Aggressive Exercise: expressing your emotions honestly

Responsibility sentence: to see what you expect from others; what you expect from yourself; and what others expect from you

Communication Dyads: to explore both verbal and non-verbal communication with a partner

Self-sabotage game: to explore how we defeat ourselves by our feelings of low-self esteem, feelings of failure. (This awareness of how we defeat ourselves is the first step to stopping the self-defeating process)

Hate/love/self: Animals: to increase the awareness of many different sides of ourselves

Map making: exploration of goals for self, and goals for the family; noticing if there are any areas in which goals conflict; in which there are differences of expectation.

Mind Wardrobe: to see how we feel about ourselves; how we think others feel about us; it is interesting to note that often people when they list things to be sad about become very gloomy; and then when they think about the things to be happy about, become very happy; this suggests that if we can begin to control our minds and thoughts, we can strongly influence our emotions and feelings.

REASONS FOR THE EXERCISES (con't):

Resentment, demands, appreciation: gives each person a chance to express their feelings about the relationship and make suggestions for ways they would like to see it changed; gives the partner a chance to hear these feelings.

Blind Trust Walk (family communication workshop only): give children a chance to guide their parents around; establish parental trust in the children; show parents what it is like to be constantly led around

The following exercises are in the Young Couples workshop only:

Sex: Free association: to begin to explore our feelings about sex; the sextacks scale is a means to show the partner how he/she wants to be touched and carressed before and during intercourse; increasing communication.

Sentence Completion: an exploration of emotional honesty; how open are you with your partner; how much of yourself do you in fact keep concealed

Mirror: non-verbal communication; increasing awareness of self and others.

Personal space: most partners have ^{different} ~~an~~ optimal physical distances; ^{from each other;} this is important to recognize when talking with your partner; George Bach suggests that there is also an optimal psychological distance: how ~~fa~~ close a partner can come without making the intimate feel engulfed; and how far he can move away without making the partner feel rejected.

SECTION TWO: SUGGESTED AREAS OF CONCERN

10
(c)

SUGGESTED AREAS OF CONCERN

1. COMMUNICATION
 - * the art of listening
 - * verbal/ nonverbal
 - * fighting fair
 - * living in the moment
2. EMOTIONAL HONESTY - to self and others
 - * expression of anger
 - * expression of frustration
 - * praise and criticism
 - * expression of confusion, ambivalence
 - * jealousy
 - * possessive feelings a) towards objects b) towards others
3. HANDLING ANXIETIES
 - * low self-esteem
 - * fear of failure
 - * fear of abandonment
 - * guilt
 - * expectations
 - * external pressures: work etc.
4. BALANCE
 - * commitment and freedom
 - * responsibility and sharing
 - * passivity and dominance
 - * feelings of self/ union with other(s)

Below, describe two areas of concern you would like to work on during this workshop with your loved one. You may select an area from the above list, or you may wish to work on an area of your own designing which would be more relevant to your personal concerns.

1.

2.

SECTION THREE: TECHNIQUES

11.

SECTION THREE

TECHNIQUES: (These techniques will be explained in further detail as the course proceeds and as the need arises in individual cases.)

***Self-monitoring:** methods of defining and recording behavior that you want to work on changing or improving (see appendix for sheets on which to record behavior data; also in appendix are sheets from George Bach's The Intimate Enemy on which fights and arguments can be recorded and evaluated) see pp. 15-16

*Meditation

Ear meditation

Silence

flute, bell, drum, (record)

Eye Meditation

one object

non-focused (like a mirror)

inner visual imagery

Breathing

Tactile Meditation

with external objects: e.g., an orange

internally: e.g. tensing and relaxing of different muscles

From outside source: being massaged (try to make body into a mirror so you can feel the hands massaging the inner surface of your skin.)

*Chants

*Kwat (thought-stopping)

*Tea Ceremony (see also Patterson's Time Out in appendix)

*Contingency Contracts: learning to work out and solve problems in the family in ways that are mutually satisfying to all members of the family

*Covert Control: method of using our thoughts to help us feel better about ourselves and others around us

(nags, scolds, lectures)

HOMEWORK: This week count and record the number of critical comments you deliver to one member of your family this week. Record this on the data sheet in the appendix. Note how consistent you are: do you become angry and scold directly after the behavior that bothers you or do you tend to wait? (p. 13)

(other members of the family can help you remember to record this data; however, it is important to remember that to help another person monitor his behavior IS NOT TO SPY. That defeats the whole program. There must be a working together of all people concerned)

Homework #2. Note and record how many times you say nice things—a smile, a word of approval, praise, a hug—to your spouse or your child or your parent. Record these on the data sheet in the appendix. In this way you can begin to get a feel for the nature of the familial interaction—verbal and non-verbal—in your home.

SECTION FOUR: READINGS - READINGS/FURTHER EXERCISES

15

From G. Bach, The Intimate Enemy

Ways of Scoring a Fight: (suggested criteria):

Reality of the issue: how authentic are the reasons for the fight; is the fight issue the real reason for the fight, or are there ~~xxx~~ other, unspoken reasons

Injury: how fair was the fight; were there any below the belt punches

Involvement: were both fighters involved

Responsibility: does the partner take responsibility for his feelings, or does he hide his feelings with lines like (Dr. Bach says I....or Your mother says....)

Humor: is the laughter tension-releasing; or is it sarcastic ridicule

Expression: is the partner open and leveling; or is he hidden and camouflaged in his expressions and feelings during the fight

Communication: are both partners communicating; are they asking each other for feedback and clarification

Directness: to what degree is the aggression focused on the here and now opponent and his current actions—with no references to older or irrelevant situations

Specificity: do comments refer to specific actions, feelings, or attitudes of the partner, to directly observable behavior; or are comments labels, generalizations, "analyzing" the partner as belonging to a large category or pattern

THE FIGHT ELEMENTS PROFILE:

Reality	Injury	Involvement	Responsibility	Humor	Expression	Comm.	Dir.	Spec.
authentic, realistic	fair above belt	active/ reciprocal	owning up	laugh w/ relief	open	clear/ feedback	direct focus	specific
imaginary	dirty, below belt	passive/ one way	anonymous/ group	ridicule/ laugh at	hidden	no feedback	displaced focus	general analysis

- + positions represent good or bonding styles of aggression
- represent poor or alienating styles of aggression
- O indicate styles rated as neutral, irrelevant, or unobservable

Fight Elements Profile, (con't)

- Partners may
- 1) independently assign ratings to each other and themselves
 - 2) collaborate in determining the ratings
 - 3) ask a reasonably objective observer to rate them
 - 4) both work together with an objective outsider

The fight elements records the PROCESS of the fight: bonding v. alienating.
 Below is a suggested FIGHT EFFECTS PROFILE:

Hurt:	+ hurt decreased	0	- hurt increased
information	new		old (redundant)
Positional movement (is the fight issue closer to being solved)	ground gained		ground lost
fear (do you feel more or less afraid of your partner)	decreased		increased
trust (do you trust your partner more or less)	increased		decreased
revenge	forgiven		stimulated
reparation (offerings of forgiveness, apologies, etc.)	active		none
centricity (does your partner have hold you more or less more central to his heart and private world)	more central		less central
self-esteem (how do you feel about yourself after the fight)	more self-value		less self-value
catharsis	released		inhibited
cohesion-affection (do you feel me closer or more distant as result)	close		more distant

Bach's assumptions:

*hostile feelings are inevitable between mature intimates (p. 21, 26)

*the talent for airing aggression counts most in shaping a bond ~~ix~~ with an intimate (28)

*aggression management not only can be learned; it can be used to change a partnership constructively (23)

*stress is valuable for keeping the nervous system toned up in the ~~psychological~~ ^{psychological} sense (25)

*partners fear fights because they fear rejection, they fear the fight might escalate out of control, etc; Bach believes "a fight a day keeps the doctor's away (26)" He cites:

Harry Harlow at University of Wisconsin who reared several generations of monkeys and showed that an exchange of hostilities is necessary between mates before there can be an exchange of love. "Harlow's calm, mechanical, totally accepting mothers raised off-spring who grew up normal except that they couldn't and wouldn't make love" p. 27 (Harlow, "Affectional Responses in Infant Monkeys" Science 130, 1959)

Konrad Lorenz: "bonding (loving) behavior: Among birds the most aggressive representatives of any group are ~~ix~~ also the staunchest friends. To the best of our knowledge, bond behavior does not exist except in aggressive organisms."

*partners can drop their masks (for nature of masks, see Games People Play by Eric Berne) and become authentic persons capable of intimacy (32)

*intimacy needs to be taught: it is not a birthright or a talent, like a musical ear. It is "probably the most civilized relationship within the capability of mankind" (35)

*It is advantageous for a therapist to work in GROUPS rather than with individuals and couples for the following reasons: (50)

group work is less expensive, faster, and more effective
couples quickly become less dependent upon the therapist
the group milieu stimulates growth in a natural way
trainees live out, for everyone to see, the patterns and postures that would only be talked about in individual sessions;
the group provides a sounding board and feedback device, pointing out faking, blamesmanship, digging into psychiatric museums
here other's troubles which may offer a better perspective on one's own

*the notion of "unconditional acceptance" of the partner as the basis for true love should be tossed on the junk heap of unworkable, romantic stereotypes (171)

*~~★~~ Insights into the past do not help much (223). People can improve their lot in life when they stop worrying why they have various troubles and start focusing on practicing new ways of being in this world—learning how to live together rather than speculating why one can't

*people who master the fine art of verbal fighting and conflict resolution will be disinclined to commit physical violence

To married couples, to intimates: some ~~may~~ do's, some don'ts, some suggestions, some terms (taken from G. Bach, the Intimate Enemy)

Don't:

Gunny-sack: this involves keeping your grievances bottled up. "when marital complaints are toted along quietly in a gunny sack for anylength of time they make a dreadful mess when the sack finally bursts" (p. 19)

Reach into the "Psychiatric museum": during fights with each other, don't focus on past irrelevancies; don't try to lay blame by psychoanalyzing ~~xxxxxx~~ each other's past.

Do:

Try to keep all arguments up to date "so that the books on marriage can be balanced daily"; each day try to sit down with each other and make sure you are caught up with yourselves and each other. In this way you will be able to...

...Keep all fights in the here and now

Allow for REFUELING. When a partner puts up a sign (either figuratively or literally) that says: Do not Disturb--Refueling! nobody needs to feel guilty or angry. "In realistic intimacy, refueling is necessary and desirable as long as it is not misused as a cover-up for habitual withdrawl" (38)

Don't:

get into name calling, attaching lables: e.g. sadist, game player, con man, mother-fixated, narcissist. "These stereotypes can only lead to insult exchanges or worse because no healthy person can tolerate being an impersonal category." (107)

If this happens, or in other ways you feel you are being attacked below the belt, unfáarily, etc.....

....Do: Yell STATIC!! FOUL!!. Try to keep name-calling, and pyschiatric museum irrelevancies out of the fight. They only cause hurt feelings and do absolutely nothing in moving towards a conflict resolution

Don't:

attribute opinions and traits to partner. Instead, encourage him to level how he really feels.

Some guidelines that may be useful in intimate fighting (adapted from Bach's 17 exercises, pp. 98-101, The Intimate Enemy)

- 1) the partner holds an inner dialogue with himself:
am I really annoyed with my partner; am I sure I have identified the true issue and am not about to fight a battle about a trivial matter that camouflages another deeper grievance; am I ready to follow up my anger with a specific demand for a change in the status quo; how afraid am I of this fight; how afraid am I of being rejected by my partner; am I ready to be honest as well as tactful
- 2) Announcement to partner of intention to fight: FIGHT BY APPOINTMENT ONLY. do not hit the partner in ambush or with a hit and run attack
- 3) Level with the partner: state where you stand and where you want to go
- 4) both partners should pause frequently for feedbacks by asking such questions as "What are you trying to tell me; what do you mean by that; let me tell you how I heard it;" Both partners should make sure the other one has finished speaking before they proceed. This can be done by asking "Is everything off your chest/ may I respond now; or by allowing a few seconds of silence before beginning to speak
- 5) Allow for a quiet time (a refueling from the heat of battle)
- 6) articulate (preferably in writing) what changes the fight has brought about and what each partner has agreed to do to implement the changes

Communication and Message Theory (126-127)

- 1. What is the intent of the message. What is the sender trying to say
- 2. What did he in fact say--"the framing of the message"
- 3. How was the message received; how did the partner interpret what was said

Intimates should be aware of these three different aspects of communication and message sending and make frequent checks on each of them(e.g. here's how I heard what you said/ here's what I meant, but I can see how it sounded to you, etc.)

Sex.

Myth: sex and love must always go together (235)

loveless but lustful sex can initiate subsequent intimacy

sex should never be used for black mail.* Do not contaminate the bedroom sheets with other problems. A good line is "Let's let the sheets air out, let's go in the living room and talk." 246

myth: variety is always the spice of one's sex life (236)

myth: both partners should always be equally ready for sex 238

myth: simultaneous orgasm is a major requirement for good sexual adjustment (239)

myth: men and women have specific rigid roles to play in sex

myth: sexual adjustment is a natural process that happens more or less by itself

SIXTACKS SELF-RATING SCALE: (to be filled out by female), a guideline for her husband's mate during and before intercourse:

- 1. gentle throughout: I never like to be handled aggressively
- 2. primarily gentle: I like things to become occasionally, but very briefly aggressive
- 3. aggressive gentle: I like things mixed, as momentary mood dictates, but never anything as in six and seven below
- 4. Genitally aggressive: I like to be firmly handled in sex, but without extra aggression
- 5. aggressive: I like to be very firmly and very aggressively handled in sex, but not hurt or threatened
- 6. Threatened violent aggression: I like to be threatened with physical attacks
- 7. Violent aggression: I like to be physically hurt in sex; bitten or pinched, or pinned down or hurtfully slapped, squeezed, etc. This turns me on and makes me more passionate

The male should INDEPENDENTLY CHECK the rating scale trying to guess which of the seven levels he thinks his partner would check: "In making love to your ~~wife~~ mate how aggressively do you think she prefers to be handled by you to maximize her pleasure?"

* Example of a woman who used sex as a means of making her husband a captive audience:
He: with me inside you I feel alive, like a man.
She: So why did you have dinner at your mother's last night?

An exercise: Have partners face each other about fifteen feet apart and converse. As they continue to talk, partner A walks up to partner B until they make physical contact. Then partner A slowly backs away until he reaches the right distance to make conversation comfortable for A. At that point A stops and the partners measure the distance between each other with a tape measure. The experiment is repeated with partner B doing the walking and backing up. Almost invariably the partner's distance preferences vary.

space

Reason for exercise: just as partners have different optimal physical ~~distances~~ distances from each other, they also have different optimal psychological distances: how close an intimate can come without making the partner feel engulfed; and how far he can move away without making the partner feel rejected (pp.37-8) These sort of fight--in which partners try to find and set their optimal range (the psychological distance that makes them feel most comfortable)--Bach calls Optimal distance fights. (37)

Suggestion: when third parties become involved in intimate two way conflicts, make sure that no alliances or classified information is allowed to mushroom within the triangle. The third party should deal with the fighters face to face. If something is said behind one fighter's back, it should be subject to later confrontation in front of all.

Exercise: What are the maps that you have a) for yourself b) for the marriage. Draw out a map of what your personal goals are for yourself. Draw out a "we map" showing what your goals are for the partnership. Be explicit about your expectations of the partner.

listening skills paraphrase - clarify
reflect emotions - making clear emotional statements
discrepancy between verbal & nonverbal
verbal & nonverbal

22

COMMUNICATION THEORY - Virginia Satir

* a functional receiver does not immediately agree or disagree but asks sender to clarify and qualify

* mutual clarification and qualification enable one person to check out his reality against another person's reality; it cuts down on the tendency to project one's own wishes, perceptions etc. onto others; and it cuts down on the efforts of one person to speak for another

* a dysfunctional person overgeneralizes; he sends incomplete messages; he operates from the assumption that in fact he can communicate perfectly well

* metacommunication - communication on a nonverbal level
metacommunication conveys the sender's attitude toward the message, toward himself, and toward the receiver

* whenever a person communicates, he is not only making a statement, he is making a request: this is the "command aspect" of the message; all messages contain the request "validate me;" a functional receiver must be cognizant of and respond to this message

* congruent communication - where two or more messages are sent via different levels, but aren't contradictory

* incongruent communication - different level messages which seriously contradict each other; such messages catch the receiver in a double bind, because he can't obey one level without disobeying on another level

* importance of clear communication: check out the meaning given with the meaning received

* good clarifying questions:

1) what did you say? 2) what did you hear me say? 3) what did you see or hear that led you to make that conclusion? 4) what message did you intend to get across? 5) you look calm, but how do you feel?

* importance of accurately expressing emotions

* importance of making covert questions, expectations etc. explicit

3 positive char. - paraphrase why down
exercises - tell what did today (statements)
subverting - making feelings statements toward others
- tell what felt today (emotions)
draw feelings
discussion: what are good ways of clarifying
verbal & nonverbal dyads
use of I statements

SECTION FIVE: Workshop Summaries

Workshop #1: Introduction and discussion of expectations.

Animal Game (see page 5 in manual): people discussed an animal they associated themselves with; others discussed why they thought certain people were like certain animals;

I pointed out the danger of labels: e.g. one person saw a cat as sly, cunning, independent; another saw it as cuddly, soft; In communication labels are dangerous and it is important to SPECIFY exactly what we mean.

Mind wardrobe (see page 6 of manual): each person~~the~~ asked to write what they like about themselves, what they dislike about themselves; what they think their partner values~~in~~ them; what they value in their partner; what they have to be happy about; what they have to be sad about.

These were done separately and then, as part of their homework for next week, they were asked to compare how they felt their spouse saw them with how the spouse said she/he saw them.

Lazarus inner circle: drawn, explained: the fear of revealing ourselves; (I was conscious of modeling self-disclosing behavior, for one of the meta-goals, communication, involves people being willing to talk about themselves)

Lecture~~te~~: From S. Freud to Eric Fromm, The Art of Loving. Discussion of Freud who believed that there was only a certain amount of id energy. Therefore, if you used that energy, you wouldn't have it for other tasks. FREUD only gave part of his hand when shaking hands, for he felt that he wanted to conserve his id energy for other, more important things (via sublimation). Fromm, a neo-Freudian, says, on the contrary, Freud, the more you give, the more you have to give.

Session ended with reference to page 10 of manual, the suggested areas of concern. Each~~er~~ couple was to decide by next week what sub-area they wanted to work on in the area of communication.

Assignments: a) discuss with spouse the mind wardrobe (see above)
 b) pick an area of concern to work on throughout the workshop
 c) map-making: draw a map (see page 5 of manual for details)
 (see attached sheets of map)

WORKSHOP # 2:

*discussion of mindwardrobe: if anyone noticed discrepancies in what they felt their spouse believed, and what they^{spouse} actually believed. Couple A (T male and K female): K said that even though T said some nice things about her, it was hard for her to believe it. She felt uneasy whenever he complimented her.

Couple A:
 Behavioral
 Objective:
 a) Monitoring
 "problem area"

We talked this out (see notes, Tape 2.), and ~~XXX~~ T. decided that he didn't give his wife very many social reinforcers at all. His objective was to begin to say some nice things to his wife. She, in turn, was going to monitor how she felt when he said them, and try not to say "Oh, I don't believe you mean that," which had been her past behavior. We discussed how the fact that he says few things made her feel uncomfortable when he did say them; and how her uncomfortable response would make him want to say even fewer.

Both agreed to monitor the social reinforcers he dispensed and her reaction on the data sheet in the manual, p. 13. I noted that they were going to be experimenting with new behavior, and that at first it would not feel "natural." I told them to expect this and not let it bother them.

A second couple (P male and N female) discussed feelings of neededness: how Pat was at first afraid to admit that he needed Nellie. This came out when they discussed the mind wardrobe and their responses: he put down as one of the things he liked about his wife as "super-caring." He felt that he didn't care as much about her, or at least didn't show it. We discussed how his wife felt. She said that he has improved a lot since they married and we talked about what we could do now, this week, that would make them both feel better. She said that she wanted him to listen to her when she talked, and not crawl behind the newspaper. After long discussion, he decided to do the following:

- Couple B:
Behavioral
Objective
- a) say "good point" when she did make a good point
 - b) give her a chance to talk: try for fifteen minutes a day
 - c) use of reflection instead of telling her what she means.
- "monitoring problem area" She, in turn, would try to organize what she wanted to say before going to their fifteen minute rendezvous; she would try to speak more slowly; and would try to speak clearly. (

We discussed how her fear that he would cut her off made her speak quickly and rapidly; and how this rapidity made him cut her off because he couldn't keep up with her.

We discussed SOCIAL REINFORCEMENT and used the mind wardrobe as an example: the positive things you wrote down about your spouses: tell them, sometimes, it doesn't have to be a secret that stays between you and the paper. It feels good when people say nice things about us. We also discussed SELF*CONCEPT in relation to the mind wardrobe: when you're feeling good it's because you are sub-vocalizing positive things to yourself. We discussed how by just focusing on the negative things we had written down

down in the manual, we could bring ourselves down, and by focusing on the positive things we had written, we could begin to feel better.

WORKSHOP # 3

We discussed with the third couple Don and Dorothy the particular area of concern that they wanted to work on. He said that he was a person who liked to touch, whereas his wife ~~xxx~~ said she liked to be reinforced verbally. ~~xxxx~~ Don said that he would make an effort to say positive statements to Dorothy and Dorothy said she would make an effort to give Don non-verbal signs of affection. Both said they would monitor that on p. 13 of the manual.

Couple
C
Behavioral
Objective
"monitoring
problem
area"

We received progress report from couple B. They had had two evenings of communication that were "really fine" by agreement of both of them. He felt that was enough per week, and she ~~xxxx~~ said that she would like more. They agreed that their objective would be to talk for fifteen minutes at least three times per week under the conditions provided in ~~the~~ ~~section~~ Workshop number 2.

Couple
B
"Formal
Behavioral
Objective"

We broke down into dyads: discussed the maps that we had made. Then each person told the group about ~~the~~ his partner's map. This gave us a chance to practice the ART OF LISTENING and then feedback to the group. It also gave us a chance to get to know each other better.

Assignment for the following week: keep working on behavioral objectives; fill out the sex-tacks scale (how you like SEX: aggressive, gentle, etc. see page 21 c of manual)
To be filled out alone and then discussed with partner.

WORKSHOP #4

Couple C (verbal-nonverbal) said that things went so well that they stopped monitoring in the middle of the week. Both had made "terrific" improvement, and they decided that it was no longer necessary for them to work on that area. They decided that they wanted to form a new area of concern: the question of freedom and responsibility. He felt that he was never given a chance to have time by himself. A long, historical

discussion ensued. I brought it back to the present and asked "what could we do this week that you would both agree on and feel good about in relation to this problem?" He said that he would like to be able to take off on Saturday afternoon for a bike ride if he felt like it without being made to feel guilty. His wife said "Well, the stove has to be fixed and sometimes you just don't get around to taking off because of things to do around the house." I pointed out that it would be really helpful if she ~~forced~~ him to take the bike ride. (her message above was a would encourage bit of a double bind, I felt.) She said, yes, it seemed like a good idea that he do it and she would encourage him to be independent Saturday afternoon.

Couple C.
Formal Behavioral Objective

Couple A: the male felt that because he had listened to his wife "more carefully" that he had found that often ~~at~~ she did make intelligent statements, and that it wasn't as hard to find things to compliment as he had expected. She said that she had found it much more easy to accept his statements. (They kept no hard data in terms of number of times, both said they just "felt better.") ^{NOTE!} This whole question of data is very frustrating to me. I very much believe in its importance, I mentioned it several times during each session, I provided blanks for them to do it on; I reinforced the couple that did keep data; but it's like pulling teeth to get people to explicitly monitor their own actions.

(not always)
often
keep
reppd
a
"cop out"

Yes - but like many good things in life you have to arrange the env't to encourage data keeping. s.g. your attention & the group's concern is on keeping data.

We did a role play of couple B: they had only talked together for fifteen minutes two times this week, which wasn't up to their criteria of three. They had had a big argument, and I had them ROLE PLAY it before the group. They both found this helpful: and I pointed out various points in the role play (Played it back on tape-recorder) when he could have REFLECTED instead of confronted; we practiced the art of paraphrasing, and the use of I-STATEMENTS. For example, I said that recently I had said to my wife:

You just aren't being clear, damnit.

This didn't help to make her any more coherent!!! Instead, I said, it would have been helpful to say:

Stallent!

I'm feeling really confused.

By use of I-statements, you don't confront the other person so directly,

and you are involved in the sharing of responsibility. The real question is "what can we do together to clear up the confusion, not the assignment of responsibility."

Assignment: write down five non-verbal cues that your partner expresses and what these cues mean. Continue to work on behavioral objective.

Workshop # 5:

Couple B not present.

Couple A gave us (Joie and I) lots of reinforcement, saying how good they felt about the group, how much they felt they had improved, how much more open there were with each other; how they had bragged to their parents about their "new success" in their relationship. [See end of session, p. 7.]

Couple C: he had been free to go Saturday, but hadn't. He said he felt ok about that, that just having the freedom was important. They, too expressed feeling "much better about themselves."

We went through non-verbal cues: how the partner, without words, sometimes expresses himself. The spouse demonstrated a non-verbal cue ~~and~~ ~~the~~ of the partner, and then the group tried to guess what was being said. It was really funny! It's too bad this wasn't being audio-taped, too.

We then did three non-verbal exercises:

- a) this was back to back communication (a verbal exercise: talking without facing your partner). This was to give the feeling of the importance of non-verbal medium.
- b) face to face: communicating only with eyes.
- c) face to face, communicating only with hands.
- d) mirror exercise: one person talks, the other person can't say anything, can only mirror back non-verbal cues.

We then summarized our goals for the course, and the techniques we had tried to use to meet them:

- *How do we see ourselves, how do others see us:
 - animal game
 - mind wardrobe
 - sex-track
- *What are our goals in life; what are our partners goals; how do they fit together: our expectations of each other:
 - map-making
- *communication:
 - listening and paraphrasing
 - importance of social reinforcers:
 - verbal
 - nonverbal

communication (con't):

- use of I-statements
- use of self-disclosing statements

• working on "area of concern."

- verbal communication skills: paraphrasing, acknowledging
clarifying

Just as we were about to wrap it up, couple A, who had just been so happy and reinforcing, broke out into a huge fight, she began crying; in G. Bach's terms, a historical psychiatric museum was brought out. We spent time talking, we went back over the tape to see where the problem of communication breakdown had occurred: she had felt she was attacking ~~her~~ ^{him}; she had replied hostilely. We decided to meet one more week. They were going to talk it out to see what was up.

Workshop number 6.

Couple B. They had met their behavioral objective: had talked three times this week for fifteen minutes, under the right conditions; he made such statements as the following:

It's so nice to be able to reflect back what she's saying when I'm confused, rather than blowing my top. It never felt very good when I'd get so angry. I feel better about myself now that I've found other ways to communicate.

He also said that she had been speaking slower, that she said some interesting things now that he could understand her, and that "listening to her is a lot better than reading the newspaper" which he used to do every time she would begin to talk to him.

Couple C. He had taken a three hour bike ride this week and was so excited to report it to the group about how free he was to do such a thing. His wife said it was fine with her (I think she was still a bit reluctant), and so I suggested that maybe next time he take off for a few hours he make a date with her when he got back, say for example, for dinner, or a show. She got excited by that. So I was feeling good about them.

Couple A then reported back. He said he had done a lot of thinking, and finally had just said to his wife, "Hey, you know, I really need you, and that's ok." They had both had a terrific week. He said that it was

so good to not be afraid of being attached; that in their past conversations, he had almost been afraid to find too much good in her, for fear that he might lose her. I got really good feelings from both of them, and they both said they were really thankful for what had happened to them in this group.

My reflections: a) The idea of having the group meet for only five times was very good. We got right down to work on ourselves, we saw a definite time limit, so each session had to count.

b) In ~~the~~ initial sessions, I was not doing enough reinforcement by reflecting back. I monitored this in the ~~third~~ session and the very act of consciousness increased the number of reflections as reinforcers.

c) I feel good about my use of self-disclosure and the "warm" climate--cohesive--that was created; there were several positive reinforcers given by members of the group to each other: e.g. I'm really glad to see you this week, Pat.

Did you make it? Set this as goal of group beginning
d) I don't know how to get people to keep more accurate records and data (see note of frustration, p. 5)

good
e) I think it was important that Joie and I also had a project that we were working on: communication breakdowns: antecedents and consequences. This at least showed them what we wanted in terms of behavior charting, and provided a model. It was important that we were also members of the group.

f) we provided a strong structure at the start: the manual, ^{got} the exercises, the homework. We ~~wanted~~ good feedback about this: people liked having homework assignments to do: it gave the group continuity they said, during the week between meetings. Towards the end, people looked to us much less for leadership and there was a great deal of inter-member communication.

(after the last session we all went out to a good steak dinner. ummmmm)

SECTION SIX: Workshop Participant Comments on Some Exercises

b) comments: how did it feel to have someone else describe you to a group; how did it feel to tell someone else about your good qualities:

I felt at times I was being described inadequately - I wanted to intervene and show the others I was better than that.

5. Animal game:

a) each person writes down the name of an ~~animal~~ animal that he identifies with or would like to be like; names are thrown into the center and drawn out one at a time; the group tries to guess who ~~picked~~ was the one who picked the animal

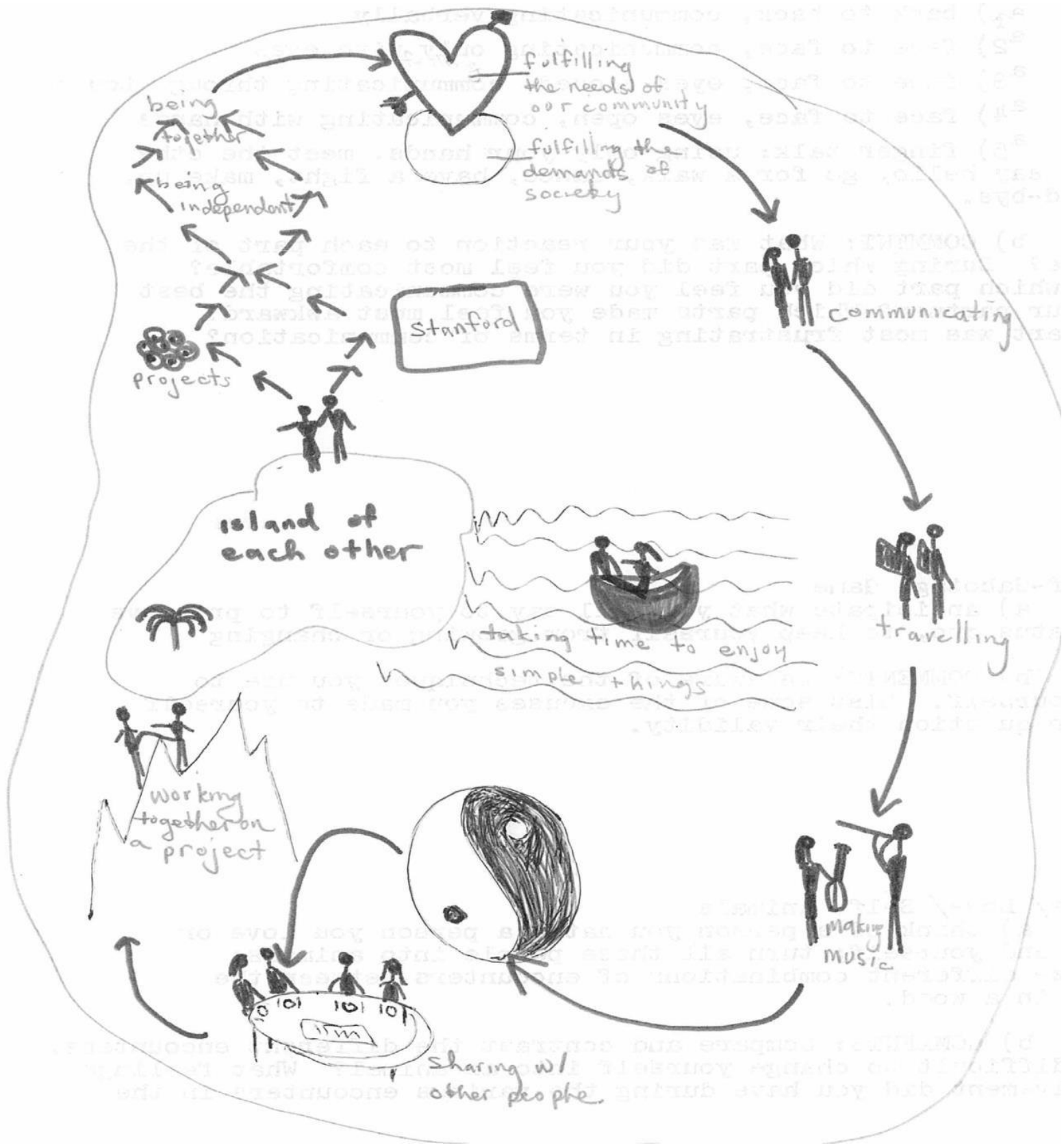
b) COMMENTS: what did you find out about how others view you from this experience... *To others, I appeared as variously - motherly; independent; reserved; graceful
To myself, I was intelligent, playful, immature (monkey)
It was interesting what different animals suggested to different people!*

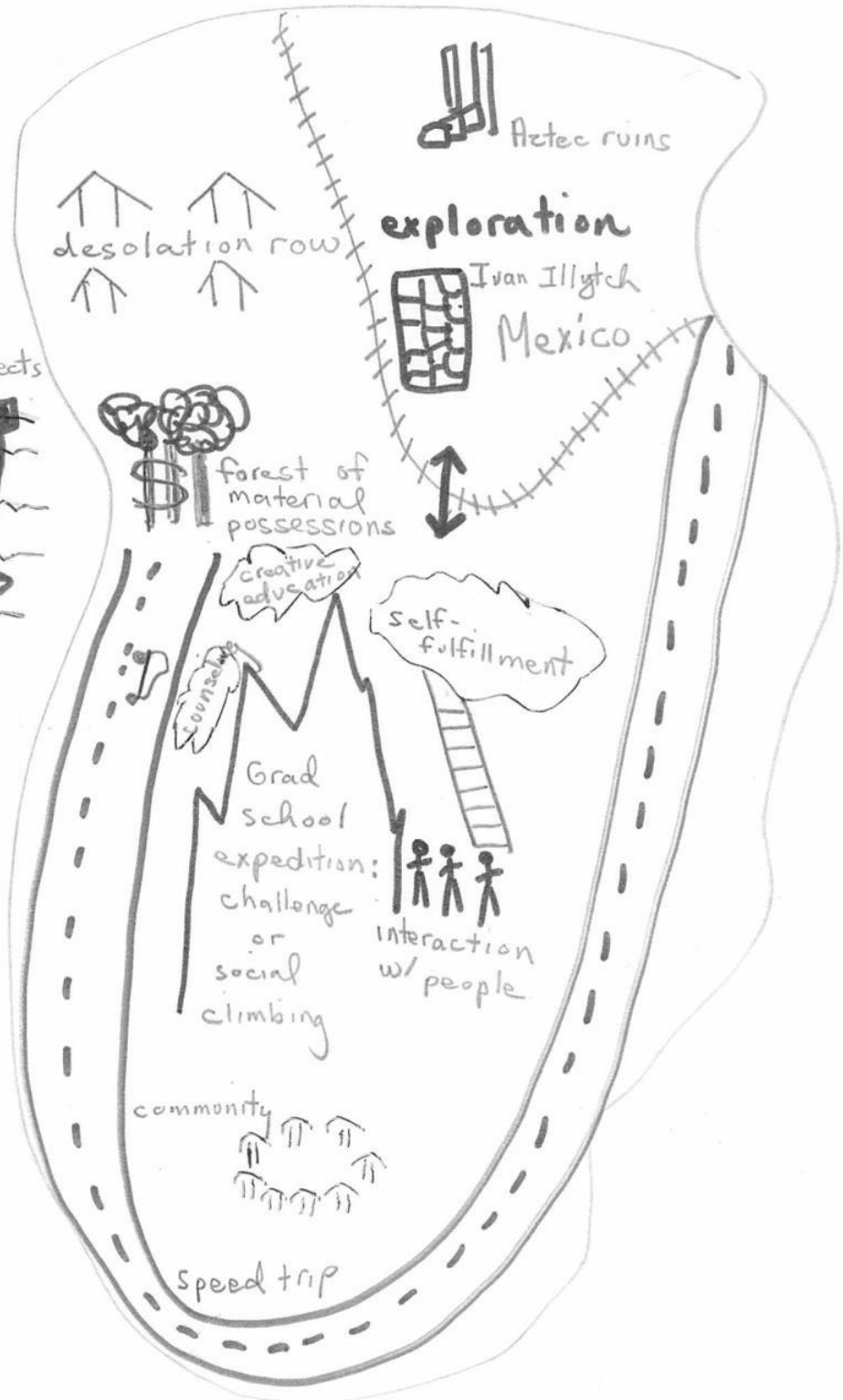
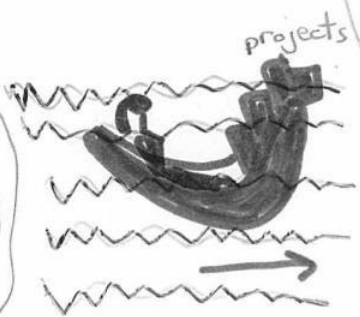
EXAMPLE OF MAP MAKING: A COUPLES JOURNEY

13. Map-Making

a) What are the maps that you have 1) for yourself 2) for your marriage and/or your family: Draw a map of personal goals. Next draw a "we map" showing what your goals and expectations are for your partnership and/or your family. Be explicit!

b) COMMENTS: Draw the two maps below. Do you notice a lot of uncharted territory? How do you feel about yourself in the role of explorer? Do you feel your partner (or your family) and you can make a good exploring team? Compare maps with your partner (or other members of your family) and see how closely your appraisals of the terrain ahead match.





EXERCISES (con't)

14. The Mind Wardrobe

a) List the things that make you feel good about yourself. List the things that make you feel bad about yourself. Now list those things which you think your spouse (parents, child) values in you. Also list those qualities you appreciate in them. List the things you have to be happy about. List the things you have to be unhappy about.

b) COMMENTS: Do you have a basically positive or a basically negative attitude toward yourself? Was it difficult or easy to specify exactly what it is you value in your loved one(s)? How did your list of good qualities compare with the list your partner made about you? How accurately did you predict which aspects of you he valued most? How did you feel when you were listing all the things you have to be happy about? How did you feel when you listed all the things that are oppressing you?

What You Like About Yourself

ability to listen
openness of emotions
my perception
my honesty
my value system

What You Dislike About Yourself

compulsive habits
excessive guilt feelings
slothfulness / mushiness

What You Think Your Partner Values In You

my ability to listen and understand / independence
my playfulness
my value system

What You Value in Your Partner

his insight
his moral honesty & integrity
his kindness
a feeling of oneness w/ him

What you have to be happy about
loving relationship with spouse

good relationship w/ family
taking control of my own life —
Godland, clothes
having enough to eat
having a place to live
being able to see nature
no external pressures

What You Have To Be Sad About

my weight
my disorganization
confusion about this house
unable to form a community

CHARTING: BEHAVIOR TO BE RECORDED:

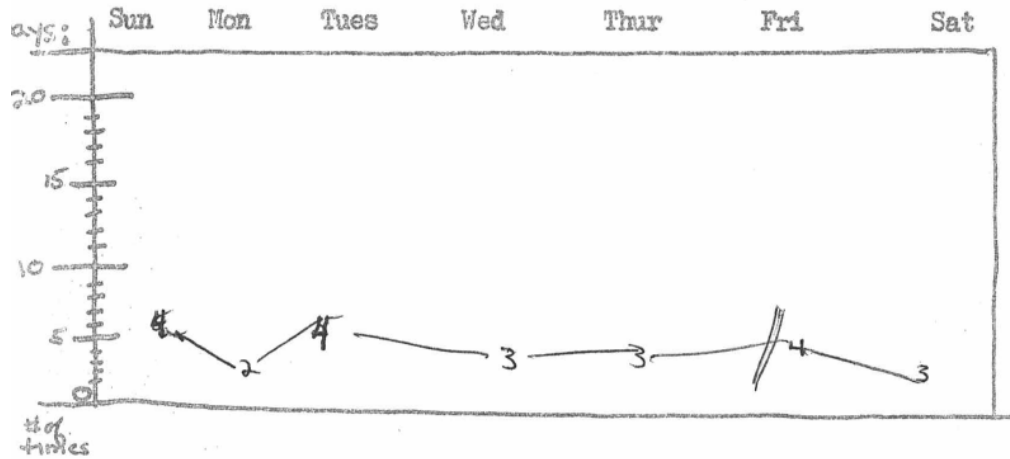
NUMBER OF TIMES HUSBAND COMPLIMENTS HIS WIFE: DAILY, WEEKLY

Behavior to be recorded _____

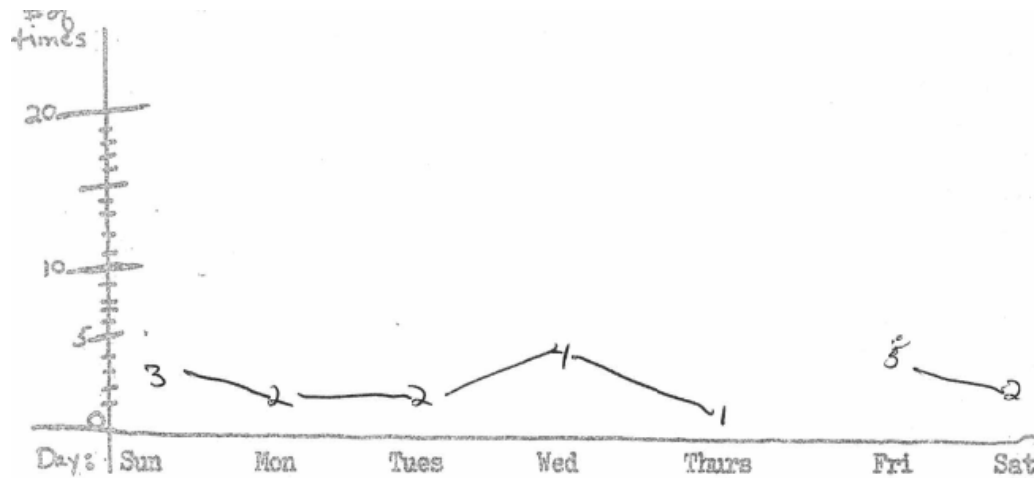
(e.g., number of nice things I say and do towards (a member of your family) this week.

(e.g., number of nice things I say and do towards (a member of your family) this week.

for clo



NUMBER OF TIMES HUSBAND CRITICIZES HIS WIFE: DAILY, WEEKLY





Travel

Katie
Loves
Tim

Among Mountains

forest

house

friends

Present Job

friends

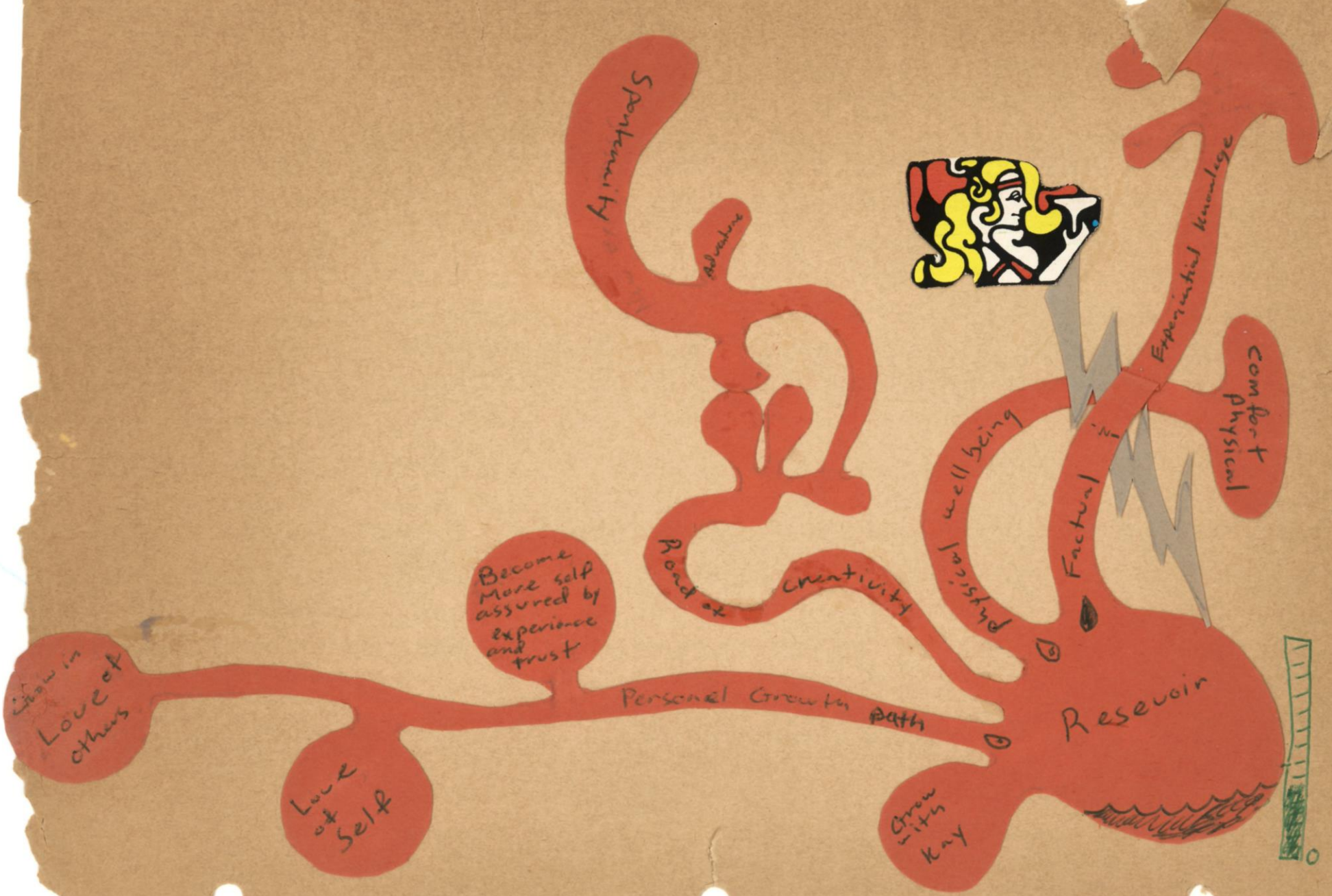
New Job

Trunkled water

Protection Fuzzies

and Carol

b



SECTION SEVEN: MONITORING FORMS AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

NAME _____ DATE _____

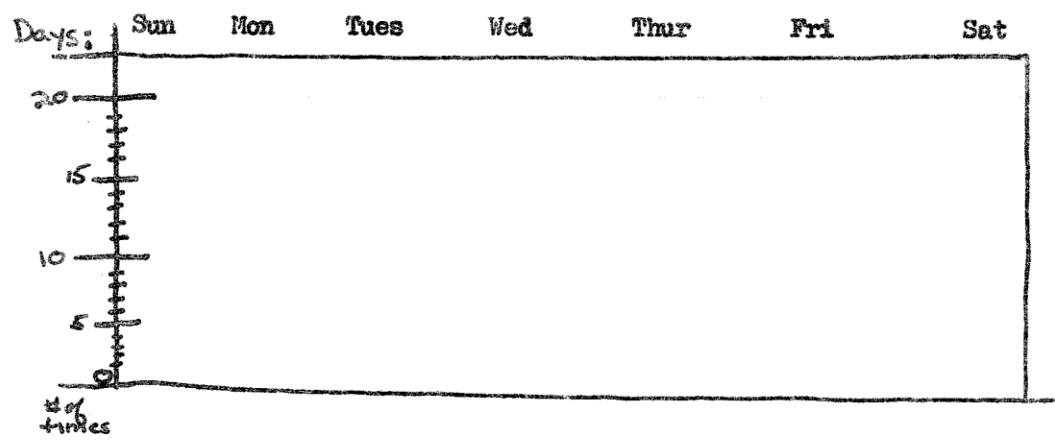
BEHAVIOR TO BE RECORDED _____

Before Where? Who was present? Doing what?	After How did situation change as a result?	time	SUN	MON	TUES	WED	Thurs	Fri	Sat	TOTAL:
		7-9								
		9-11								
		11-1								
		1-3								
		3-5								
		5-7								
		7-9								
		9-11								
		11-7								
		Totals:								

PM

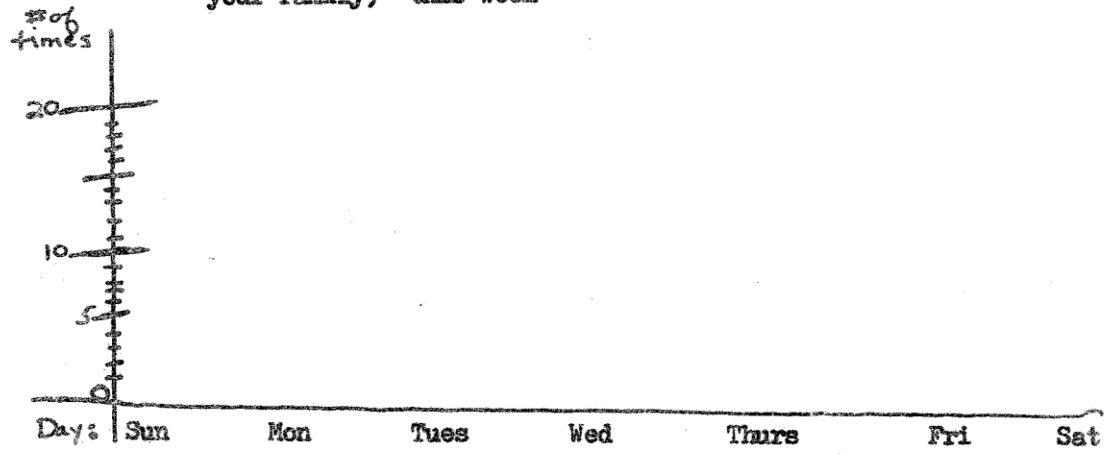
Your name _____ Date _____

Behavior to be recorded _____
(e.g., number of nice things I say and do towards (a member of your family) this week.



Name _____ Date _____

Behavior to be recorded _____
(e.g., number of critical things I say and do towards (a member of your family) this week



NOTE: a wrist counter or little golf counter is an easy and inconspicuous way to record this data and saves the problem of having to remember or having to have a piece of paper lying around.

12
C

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