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How To Be Your Own Woman

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## ABSTRACT

This book fulfills three purposes. First, it explores, in concise and easily accessible terms, the fundamentals of self-management strategies: functional analysis of the environment, environmental planning, behavioral programming, cognitive behavior modification strategies, the social learning theory principles of reinforcement, extinction, as well as providing a theoretical rationale for the importance of self-management strategies for women. Secondly, it considers the unique situation of women in American society today. It identifies several problematic issues -- career, relationships, children, health care, -- and explores how women can learn to take more responsibility for these areas and develop criteria for making their own lifestyle decisions. Thirdly, the book encourages cultivation of an androgynous behavioral repertoire which allows women maximum freedom for self-expression and interaction with others.

After providing a succinct synopsis of the basic principles in the area of self-management, chapter two discusses why, as women need to be increasingly self-reliant and independent, self-management skills are especially important. Self-control techniques have several special and unique applications for women. First, developing self-management skills can help encourage a positive role change for women: from passive to active, from dependent to self-reliant. As more and more women abandon the traditional role of exclusively wife and mother, and seek to develop other aspects of their lives, this transition will be increasingly important. The practice of self-management techniques can help give women the alternative behavioral patterns of competence and control which are often lacking in their everyday living.

Secondly, the use of self-management techniques helps enable women to understand the environmental context of their problems rather than seeing their problems as unique and self-caused. Too often women accept total personal responsibility for their problems, concerns, fears and anxieties. In fact, often these problems are the direct result of a discriminatory social structure.

Thirdly, self-management stresses a positive rather than a punitive approach to self-change. This is particularly important for women in our culture. Both women and the overall culture are already punishing toward women. Through the socialization process, women have been taught to be their own police, using negative covert statements and self-punishment to maintain a narrow societal role. Using self-management skills provides an opportunity to reinforce and reward oneself.

Finally, self-management skills allow women to get in touch with their enculturated assets, such as nurturance and empathy, and explore how these can be applied to themselves as well as to others.

The book gives concrete illustrations and exercises in the use of self-management strategies. It also identifies special pitfalls for women attempting to engage in self-management strategies: excessive dependence on external (usually male) authority; an inability to see themselves as reinforcing agents; an inability to see themselves as "self-scientists", i.e., mastering the skills of charting, monitoring, data collection; difficulty in generalizing self-management principles to other target behaviors.

However, for women to effectively take charge of their lives, they need not only a set of skills, but also a way to make decisions and choices about how they want to live. In today's society, confronted by a cultural ambiguity regarding how a woman should live her life, such guidelines are especially critical. This book does not attempt to define a single lifestyle, or make value judgements about the efficacy or inadequacy of certain life choices. However, it does explore several areas which commonly concern today's woman. These are enumerated below.

One of the most critical aspects of self-examination involves self-esteem. The issue of self-esteem is discussed in chapter one, with the rationale that a healthy self-acceptance must precede all attempts at behavior change. Self-esteem is important for all individuals, but especially for women. In common with many minority members, women's self-image often tends to reflect their second-class status. Although research in the area of self-esteem finds that women do not state globally that they would rather be men, when specific competency areas are examined, they tend to perceive themselves as inferior to men. Further, the personality characteristics attributed to women by both men and women are generally less socially desirable than those attributed to men. Women's role in society is devalued, their skills and abilities are devalued, and after a certain age, even their appearance is devalued. It is easy for women to internalize this negative evaluation, and to end up with an inherent dislike for themselves.

Thus, the first chapter concentrates on exercises aimed at allowing the reader to explore how she really feels about herself. It also provides a context for whatever disturbing or pleasing discoveries self-awareness may bring, and presents exercises designed to bring into awareness the individual woman's unique strengths

and talents. The chapter encourages a healthy self-acceptance. It also gives the reader permission to like herself, assuring her that this is not selfish or conceited but merely a way of asserting herself in relation to herself.

Chapter three focuses on women and their relationship to their bodies. This is really an extension of the principles delineated in Chapter 2. However, it is an area of particular importance, because so often women are defined exclusively through their bodies: as sex objects, as bearers of children, as dried-up hags, etc. Thus, the intent of this chapter is to help the reader get to know her own body, explore her feelings about her body, identify sources of pleasure, sources of dislike. It also provides exercises for increased body awareness and comfort with one's own body. The chapter uses principles of self-management to help the reader observe parts of her own body, monitor her covert and overt behaviors in relation to her body, set target behaviors in terms of defining a changed relationship to her body, and develop intervention strategies for achieving these goals.

Chapter four explores self-help health care, and includes both physical and psychological health. Again, this chapter embodies the ideas of self-love and self-attention discussed in earlier chapters. It also returns a measure of responsibility to the woman for her own physical and psychological health. A functional analysis is used to understand one's own health behaviors. Then, some common medical problems are discussed, such as overeating, depression, hypertension, nutrition and exercise and broad outlines for behavioral management of these problems are provided. There is also some discussion of skills for developing criteria for choosing a non-sexist physician, who can support the woman's efforts toward self-management.



The second part of the chapter deals with a general discussion of the meaning of craziness for women in our culture, and an exploration of alternative explanations for the diagnosis of "mental illness". Specific exercises are provided to encourage the woman to better understand her own psychological functioning. Criteria for deciding whether one is sick or healthy are explored. Various solutions are also explored, ranging from choosing a nonsexist psychotherapist to seeking support from women's groups or friends. Women are encouraged to develop their own standards of mental health, and to devise strategies for encouraging and supporting themselves in these choices.

The first part of the book is devoted to the use of self-management skills in developing in the reader a positive responsible relationship with herself. The second part of the book focuses on the application of these skills to women in a social context. This section examines two current options -- that of professionalism (chapter 6) and that of wife and mother (chapter 5) -- and suggests a third alternative which intrigues so many women: combining both choices (chapter 7).

Chapter 5 considers the stresses, pleasures, conflicts, and advantages of the traditional female role. Particular attention is paid to the appropriateness of expressive and nurturing qualities in this context. Chapter 6 explores the question, why become a professional woman. The chapter focuses on growing and surviving in the world of work, including both social and psychological obstacles to survival. Benefits and limitations of pursuing a career are discussed, with special emphasis on the opportunity for an increased sense of competence and instrumentality. Chapter 7 devotes considerable space to an indepth exploration of the third option: combining family and career.

The book next concentrates on the use of self-management techniques for developing a wide range of communication and interaction skills. Basic communication skills are considered in one section. Next is a brief examination of assertiveness training skills. The following section is concerned with the development of androgyny, or the simultaneous skills of masculinity and the skills of femininity. Specific exercises are supplied for assessing and evaluating one's own level of androgyny, as well as for effecting self-change in a more masculine or more feminine direction.

In the final chapters of the book, three areas of concern to working, nonworking, and combination women are pinpointed: dealing with sexism day to day; developing relationships; and raising children. Areas of concern are examined from the different perspectives of home and work. In all these situations, exercises are provided for helping the reader to analyze her own particular stressors, set alternative behavioral goals, and devise strategies for successively approximating these goals. The chapter on relationships considers both personal and professional relationships; issues involved in a two-career marriage; an analysis of skills which will help make a two career marriage work; and a section on staying married and living apart. The chapter on raising children deals with how to make decisions about whether or not to have children, when, and how many; selfishness and guilt; full-time vs. part-time mothering; and how to develop and apply criteria for the use of daycare.

Thus, in the first part of the book basic self-management principles and skills are discussed to provide a basis for change and growth. Then, the reader is encouraged to examine her relationship with herself, with her own self-image, with her body, and to take responsibility for her physical and psychological health. The second part of the book challenges the reader to expand these skills

into the interpersonal and societal sphere, and explores the development of interactive skills of assertiveness and androgyny. Finally, an alternative lifestyle model is extensively explored, including both professional and personal aspects of forming relationships, childbearing, and self-growth. Self-management skills are systematically applied to the understanding of all these problematic areas, and to the development of problem-solving interventions for more effectively dealing with them. Thus, the book explores the reader's relationship to herself, to her significant others, to her profession, to her home, and provides skills for developing more satisfactory and flexible relationships with them all.

## PREFACE

Being a woman in today's society isn't easy. Being your own woman, the woman you want to be -- not the woman your husband, children, neighbors, friends, boss, minister, or the liberation movement want you to be -- is doubly difficult. There are no longer clear guidelines to follow, and few role models to emulate. There are, of course, plenty of exhortations. Some insist that the way to realize your feminine potential is by clinging to hearth and home. Others assure you that it is only by flinging aside family and children that you can break out of the restrictive, rigid role to which traditionally women have been consigned.

In the sixties, women voiced resentment about their trapped lives, complained of feeling worthless and dependent. The women's movement in its most popularized and therefore most accessible (although not always most accurate) form tended to convey the impression that a liberated woman was assertive, ambitious, independent, self-centered, employed. There was a widespread need to gain social status and recognition of equal competency with men, and a concomitant flurry of consciousness-raising groups and assertiveness training programs. The implication was that, once liberated, happiness would follow.

However, women have increasingly begun to experience the deficits as well as the advantages of power, ambition, and competition. Increasingly they are aware that liberation does not mean becoming like men. Masculine characteristics of aggression, competition, rationality, goal-oriented striving were often bought at a steep price. The costs included health problems such as stress-related diseases, and psychological and emotional problems: a loss of appreciation of the moment, a loss of ability to express tender and nurturant feelings,

not  
true  
any more

good

an increase in doing at the expense of being.

So what is the answer? This book differs from many currently on the market in that it doesn't propose a solution or offer an answer. It emphasizes not your feminine potential or your feminist potential, but your own-unique individual potential. The book is concerned with opening, rather than closing doors, with expanding horizons and increasing options. - *too often said*

*as all books do*  
*old hat*  
However, this process occurs not through rhetoric solely, but also through the development of skills. One such widely acclaimed skill is embodied in assertiveness training, which addresses itself to a behavioral deficit many women share. Women are socialized to be passive and dependent, and often have trouble standing up for themselves. However, as is suggested above, an assertive approach to life may not provide you with sufficient skills to cope effectively in all situations. This book will explore ways which will enable you to analyze, evaluate, and understand your own behavior, identify specific areas of change, and develop intervention strategies for accomplishing this change. It explores a new synthesis which goes beyond either/or rhetoric. In this vision, you will have an opportunity to develop the abilities to be nurturing, cooperative, yielding, and assertive, motivated, goal-directed, productive; instrumental and relaxed, appreciative of the joys of the moment.

This book focuses on providing you with skills to increase your self-awareness, to develop a more positive relationship to yourself, and to take responsibility for your own physical and mental health. Then it proceeds to examine how such skills are applicable to a wider range of interpersonal and professional situations.

Women today are confronted by an overwhelming array of questions. Should they marry? Should they have children? Should they develop a career? Should they do all three? How are you going to answer these questions for yourself, knowing that some people will feel you are not being traditional enough, while others will feel you are not taking enough risks. Many women say that they want both family and career. If this is true for you, how can you mix and match without ending up frazzled, anxious, and guilty. In interacting with others, is it unfeminine to stand up for yourself? Do you always have to prove that you can't be intimidated just because you're a woman? How can you cope with other people raising your children at least part of the time? How can you develop a marriage when nobody will play "wife"?

In this age of uncertainty, no one is going to answer these questions for you. You will have to answer them yourself, and often you will have to improvise the answers. In this process, especially at the start, it is helpful to have a guide, and this book is designed to serve such a purpose. At the end, you will be better prepared to choose your own self-image, to relate to your intimate others, to make decisions about raising your children, to take responsibility for your mental and physical health, to develop your professional identity -- and, in short, to better take charge of your own life as a woman.

**Finding Out Who You Are:**  
**Identity, Self-Esteem, and Self-Acceptance**

**CHAPTER ONE**

This book is about changing yourself and the way you interact with others in order to make you feel more effective, more in charge of your own life. But before changing yourself, you need to discover who you are, your personal identity. And before you can begin to change this identity, you need to learn how to accept it and even like it.

Does this sound easy? It isn't. Surprisingly, many people, and especially many women, have never taken the time to discover themselves. As a way of illustrating this point, try describing yourself in the space below:

*I would suggest a husband's description + child's description  
Feedback is valuable*

Now look at the kinds of things you wrote about yourself. Is this really you? Or is this the way your boss thinks you are? Or the way your husband would like you to be? Or the way your mother brought you up to be? Or the way your neighbors think you should be?

Read your self-description again. Try to distinguish those characteristics which are "really you", as opposed to those characteristics which belong to the desires and expectations of other people.

Often when we think about who we "really are" for the first time, we find nothing there. We are nothing, beyond what others have made us. In its most extreme form, this experience of the nonexistence of self is a kind of insanity, and can be very frightening.



Frightening, but also deceptive. In a sense, it is too glib to conclude nothing is there. Undeniably, so many years of living, experiencing, feeling are certainly there. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say you don't know exactly what is there, what belongs to others, and what belongs to you. You need to find out.

But how? How do you search out your identity as a woman? Where do you start to look?

In the following pages, you will consider several sources from which self-identity potentially derives: historical and mythological images; cultural stereotypes; socialization practices, the influence of your family and peers; and your own personal criteria. In discussing these various areas, keep in mind how each has acted in your own life. See if you can trace the impact of each area on ways which you currently feel and behave.

#### Historical and mythical images of women

Understandably enough, women often start their quest for identity in images of the past. This can be a mistake. Although the past is filled with examples of notable women, they are rarely models in a positive sense. Search your own mind for historical or mythic images of women. What do you discover?

There are two predominant female images. The first portrays woman as evil, corrupting, a temptress and sorceress. Consider for a moment these mythical figures: Eve, the first woman, responsible for original sin; Pandora, who unleashed misery and suffering on the world; the witches of the Middle Ages, agents of the Devil. Such images contain the seed of a collective guilt: they were

women, we are women, and we must suffer for their sins.

In other anthropological and religious representations, woman is portrayed as unclean (because of menstruation) and as inferior to man. Many religions physically separate women from men during worship, and assign to them severely circumscribed societal roles. According to this interpretation, woman becomes, in Dorothy Sayers' words, "the not-quite-human".

Think about your own religious upbringing. What did it communicate to you about yourself as a woman?

The other prevalent historical/mythological image portrays woman as a goddess/earth-mother, a symbol of fertility, nurturance, and sustenance. In the Victorian era, this glorification of woman was purged of its sexual connotations, and women were elevated to the status of angels. They became the keepers of the moral flame, the guardians of the values of hearth and home.

Thus, two images prevail: the whore, evil, threatening, despicable; and the virgin, pure, good, and chaste. Neither may seem very appealing as an archetype on which to base your own identity.

Many people have explored the reasons for the prevalence of such negative, ominous, and unrealistic images. Possibly such images developed in patriarchal cultures, where men in power feared the threat that women posed to them, and alternately scorned and deified them in an effort to neutralize this threat.

In any case, it is important to look for alternatives. One of the few positive mythic images is reflected in the tales of a long-vanished Amazon culture,

where matriarchy prevailed and women were in power. Think about a society where women hold the power. Women would be leaders in politics and business. They would be the decision-makers and the leaders. Men would support them and take care of them, as well as bring up the children. Elaborate on this fantasy for awhile. Then explore your own reaction. How would you feel about living in such a society? Which aspects would you like? Would anything be missing?

Does such a fantasy create any fear or anxiety in you? If so, why?

*Possibly assuming too much historical background on the part of reader + is it relevant anyway?*

As an exercise, think of an historical or mythic female figure whom you admire.

My own list includes Aphrodite, Siva, Marie Curie, Marian Anderson, and Harriet Beecher Stowe. Where does your woman fall on the continuum between the extremes of Virgin and Whore? Identify the qualities you admire in her. Think particularly how she behaved in certain situations, what impact she had on others. What were the consequences for her behavior? Now, in the space provided below, compare yourself to her. What are the similarities? What are the differences?

Similarities to Admired Figure

Differences from Admired Figure

1. \_\_\_\_\_

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

Cultural stereotypes

In addition to considering our mythological and cultural heritage, we are inevitably influenced by the expectations and associations of our culture regarding appropriate characteristics of masculinity and femininity. How many times have you heard the patronizing phrase, "That's just like a woman". How many times has a husband or friend accused you of mechanical incompetence, overemotionality, of being illogical or poor with numbers, just because you were a woman?

How many times has someone expected you to be warm, nurturing, and understanding just because you were a woman?

Take a minute to write down a few adjectives which you think describe the typical woman.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Now note a few qualities which you think describe the typical man.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Are your two lists similar or different? How would you describe the differences? Practice this exercise on a few friends. See if you can discover any patterns emerging.

There is no doubt that most people have stereotypes about men and women and that, while there is some overlap, the perceived differences are striking. A classic study on sex-role stereotyping appeared in the early nineteen sixties authored by Broverman and several co-workers. In this study, mental health clinicians (psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers) were asked to rate the normal, adult male and the normal, adult female. For both male and female clinicians, women were seen as less independent, less adventurous, more submissive, more easily influenced, less aggressive, less competitive, more excitable in minor

*other studies have been done that contradict the above*

crises, having their feelings more easily hurt, being more emotional, more conceited about their appearance, less objective, and disliking math and science more than men. The male's profile dovetailed nicely with the psychological profile of the healthy adult, sex unspecified, whereas the female's profile differed markedly from the profile of a healthy person. This means that what was considered psychologically healthy for a woman was not what was considered healthy for an adult. It would be interesting to see whether the characteristics used to describe a healthy female are related to those used to describe a healthy child -- or a neurotic adult!

In general, other studies have confirmed that men are seen as competent, rational, and assertive, while women are seen as the opposite: passive, subjective, dependent. The feminine stereotype also endows women with a set of more favorable characteristics: expressive qualities of tactfulness, gentleness, nurturance, yielding, ability to express emotions.

Recent research in the area of sex-role stereotypes has reflected the increasing confusion and fluidity that exist in people's minds about the proper roles for men and women in society today. These studies show considerable shifting in the kinds of words used to describe men and women, with some of the positive characteristics formerly ascribed to males now being seen as equally characteristic of both sexes, while some of the negative adjectives used to describe females are now seen as typical of both men and women. Other studies indicate that the ideal woman is now perceived as more instrumental, more assertive than the ideal man.

However, it is hard to know exactly how to interpret these changes. One possibility is that people's attitudes have actually changed. Another explan-

ation is that people have simply become more cognitively sophisticated. Clearly, it's no longer fashionable to publicly assert that a woman's place is in the home, no matter how much you may believe that in your heart. Thus, despite a consistent belief system, people may be reluctant to express it openly.

Further, whether or not people's attitudes have changed, we have no way of knowing if this has actually affected their behavior. It is comforting to believe that our actions reflect our convictions. However, research suggests the reverse: our convictions reflect our actions. Thus, I may believe that women are equal to men in intelligence. But if every time I engage in a discussion with a mixed-sex group, I avoid eye contact with the women (with a consequent decrease in their participation rates), I may begin to believe that women are not so smart after all. Other studies even show that there is not much relationship at all between what we say and what we do. For these reasons, all attitude surveys, such as the ones we have been talking about, must be regarded with some skepticism.

many studies show this is the case  
BAD

We have established that cultural stereotypes about masculinity and femininity are still prevalent in our society. Certainly, such stereotypes have a significant, and often negative impact on the formation of female identity. Of course, the effect of such stereotypes is not all bad. In some ways, stereotypes serve a useful purpose. For example, a stereotype is a prototype for how you should behave. Obversely, a stereotype may function as an explanation, simplifying the complicated task of understanding another human being by labeling a particular behavior as "typically feminine". Sometimes stereotypes may reflect historical realities. For example, the feminine stereotype of nurturance and the masculine stereotype of aggression may have their roots in primitive sex-role divisions of labor.

good

One of the most important functions a stereotype can fulfill is to provide role security and stability. The stereotypes explored on previous pages are often restrictive and in many ways unappealing. But they do have the advantage of spelling out explicitly what a woman should be like and, by implication, how she should think and how she should behave. Just imagine how secure it would be to have a set of specific guidelines governing every situation, a codified set of rules to eliminate ambiguity from your life. For example, when your husband comes home from work, you would know that as a woman you are supposed to be expressive, warm, gentle and yielding. Therefore you could give him a (chaste) kiss, tell him how glad you are to see him, put his hot meal on the table, get out his slippers, and then accept with grace his decision to go out to dinner.

But it's not like that, is it? The above scenario is too pat, too unidimensional, and probably doesn't deal with the realities of your own experience.

The great danger of any stereotype is that, much as it may aid a somewhat facile understanding of other human beings, it reduces a complex and unique individual to a set of ascribed characteristics. In the split second that it takes to ascertain the sex of an individual, the observer will already have determined whether that individual is aggressive, competitive, instrumental and logical (i.e., if the individual is male) or if the individual is inconsistent, irresponsible, overemotional, and weaker (i.e., if the individual is female). It is obvious that this kind of instant predictability might set disastrous limitations on individual potential. Sandra and Daryl Bem, two noted social psychologists, point out that this predictability is more true for women than for men. Their "baby-test" demonstrates that it is impossible to predict the future of a baby

boy; but that looking at a baby girl, it is still fairly safe to say she will one day be a wife and mother.

The list of stereotypes mentioned above points out one further disadvantage inherent in any stereotyping. It is often argued that stereotypes delineate "separate but equal" functions: i.e., woman's sphere encompasses the values of hearth and home, man's sphere encompasses the instrumentality of the outside world. Both are different, both are important. This concept may be theoretically appealing to some, but in practice it simply is not true. Research has repeatedly demonstrated that the words describing the typical male and the typical female are not only different in content, they are also different in desirability. Studies in this area have found that the typical man was seen to have 29 favorable characteristics and only 8 unfavorable ones. The typical woman, on the other hand, was seen as having only 20 favorable traits and 17 unfavorable ones. Other research has confirmed that it is not only different to be a man, it is also better.

*freshman  
research*

*- what studies?*

*women  
don't  
like  
this*

A final disadvantage of any cultural stereotype is that it imposes the burden of "image consistency" on its adherents. In other words, individuals attempt to mold their behavior to conform to the stereotype, to maintain a certain kind of valued behavior across situations. For example, suppose you believe that it is "feminine" to be gentle. Therefore, in order to maintain a consistent image of yourself in your own mind, you are gentle with your children, gentle with your husband, gentle with the family dog -- and also gentle with your in-laws-- gentle with your secretary, gentle with a rival colleague, gentle with the repairman who installs a defective dishwasher. The effort involved in maintaining this kind of personality consistency, regardless of its appropriateness, often leads to increased anxiety, tension, and dislike of self.



Thus we can see that our current cultural stereotypes regarding sex roles contain many dangerous elements. But worse than that, they are increasingly useless. The discrepancy between the stereotype and the potential reality is growing so fast as to completely invalidate the existence of the stereotype. Clearly we have entered an age of uncertainty. For better or for worse, we are rapidly outgrowing our stereotypes. No matter how the future evolves, we will never be able to squeeze back into them again. *yes*

Anthropological literature shows that in primitive societies, the female's identity derived from just "being", from the biological imperative inherent in every woman that she be the carrier and nurturer of future generations. The male's identity, on the other hand, was dependent on "doing", by which was meant the success with which he acted instrumentally on his environment. Without a doubt, contemporary woman has lost the security, such as it was, of a defined biological role function. *I feel gained* The anthropological concept of "being" implied a unity of woman and reproduction. In our society, this is no longer the case. Women now have the power to choose to remain childless. Even those who do have children do not necessarily feel that their lives are justified by the bearing and raising of children. Thus the historical justification for our cultural stereotypes has fallen by the wayside, leaving a void, variously filled with confusion and promise, in its place.

### Socialization practices

Socialization refers to the behavioral and attitudinal norms instilled in you as you moved from childhood to adulthood. Initially, many people believed that little girls were "taught" to be feminine, and little boys were similarly taught to be masculine. However, extensive research in the area of sex role socialization has failed to fully confirm this hypothesis. In many respects, at least as far

*choice equals freedoms*

*very old stuff*

as the pre-adolescent years are concerned, boys and girls are reared in surprisingly similar fashions. For instance, it is not true that little girls are encouraged to be passive and dependent, or that little boys are encouraged to be aggressive. Parents seem to have similar values and behavioral norms to which they attempt to train all children, regardless of sex.

At the same time, it is important not to overlook certain areas of difference, which are so obvious that they may easily be neglected.

Two powerful areas of differential sex role socialization are children's clothes and children's toys. Although many little girls now wear shirts and pants rather than dresses, any mother can confirm that there are definitely masculine and feminine cuts of clothing, and that by the age of two children's clothing is indisputably sex-typed. Similarly, toys continue to be characterized by a fairly strong degree of sex-typing. Boys still play with trucks, and girls with dolls, although the range of play objects is more permissive than twenty years ago. Children's literature is also notoriously sexist, and the raised consciousness of the writers of the sixties cannot adequately compensate for a backlog of nursery rhymes and stories which focus on male children or animals, and portray mothers as housekeepers, girls as helpless princesses, and boys as active, heroic, curious, and scientifically-minded.

very old stuff

It is also important to keep in mind another obvious fact: many of the differences between men and women do not occur until adolescence. Although research in this area is still equivocal, it is possible to speculate, as have several noted psychologists, that socialization practices for boys and girls begin to diverge markedly at this developmental junction. For example, two well-known clinical psychologists, Judith Bardwick and Elizabeth Dovan, have speculated that adol-

escent girls growing up today receive an ambivalent socialization. At least in the middle-class, girls are encouraged to achieve and excel. At the same time, they are prepared for the traditional roles of wife and mother which call for very different personality qualities and behavioral skills.

*8002*  
Think about your own adolescence. Did your parents want you to get good grades, but also be popular with the boys? Did they encourage you to plan for a career, "just in case?" And did they stress that it should be a flexible career, such as nursing or teaching, which could be done part-time and thus accommodate a husband's geographic mobility?

This kind of ambivalence is the product of a culture which has lost its earlier guidelines, but has yet to create new ones. Therefore, the socialization message, which becomes increasingly more garbled and confused, is, in effect, keep options open. Too often this implies a kind of Superwoman role. Faced with a variety of alternatives, today's woman should simply do everything. During the day she is a high-powered executive, commanding a host of admiring underlings. But precisely at 5:30, when her daycare center closes, she is transformed into a jewel of a mother, who picks up her two perfectly adjusted children, returns home, and spends an hour playing an educational game with them. She jogs around the block three times, then prepares a gourmet meal in time to welcome home her equally high-powered and successful husband. In the evening she does laundry, pays the bills, macramés a plant holder, and reads her children a bedtime story. Then she makes love to her husband, feeds the cat, and reads over her papers for tomorrow's board meeting.

If this sounds absurd, it's because it is. But unfortunately, many women grow up feeling this unrealistic model is what it means to be a modern woman.

Personal criteria for a personal identity.

As we have seen, the sources from which a woman's self-image and personal identity derive are treacherous and likely to dead-end. Despite these limitations, women sometimes put great store in such mythic and cultural images. It has been pointed out that, as part of the socialization process which women undergo, they learn to derive their self-image from the opinions of others. While boys learn to base their identity and self-worth on their achievements, girls receive the lesson that their self-worth comes from the degree to which they can successfully affiliate with others -- i.e., the extent to which others like and approve them.

Thus, many women are excessively other-oriented. Their sense of self derives primarily from the opinion of others. For example, you feel you are doing a good job at work if your boss thinks you are doing a good job. You feel you are doing a lousy job at work if your boss thinks you are doing a lousy job. What is disturbing about these conclusions is that your actual performance may be identical, and only the boss (or the boss's mood!) may be different.

Therefore it is particularly important for women to strengthen the internal standards which they apply to themselves, to learn to become responsible to themselves alone. While still paying selective attention to the opinion of the world (and this means that what your friends say should be more important to you than what a stranger says), you begin to develop independent criteria for the kind of person you want to be. Thus, your husband may say, "You aren't warm and nurturing enough." You need the inner resources, the inner confidence to respond, without defensiveness or self-justification, "That's not the way I see it. I'm as warm as I want to be."

Exploring self-concept: real and ideal

Refer back to the profile of yourself you wrote earlier in this chapter. This time include an examination of yourself on all dimensions: your appearance, your personal qualities, the way you interact with people, etc. Now make a similar profile for your ideal woman. Note areas of similarity and areas of discrepancy with your ideal. We will do this exercise again at the end of the book, to see whether your self-perception or your perception of ideal womanhood has changed at all.

<u>Similarities to Ideal</u>	<u>Differences from Ideal</u>
1. _____	1. _____
2. _____	2. _____
3. _____	3. _____
4. _____	4. _____
5. _____	5. _____

Identity as self-awareness

Identity consists of three basic components, self-awareness, self-esteem, and self-acceptance. Self-awareness is the ability to be open to all aspects of your personality. Are you really free to disclose to yourself truthfully and openly? Or do you hide things from yourself as well as from others?

Just as women are encouraged to be deceptive and devious towards others, it is easy to turn this deception inwards. Our lies towards others ("Don't worry, I love staying home with the children") become our lies towards ourselves, and we lose touch with our frustration, depression, or rage. Often, we can be blind to our own natures. A woman who continually makes self-deprecatory, demeaning remarks is surprised to hear that she is perceived as self-critical.

The Socratic command to "know thyself" is a good place for you to begin your search for identity. Until you are able to know, without fear and without judgement, the many faces of your own personal Eve, you will not be in a position to change or develop these faces.

Self-awareness can be enhanced through several means, not least of which is simply paying more attention to yourself. Observe yourself more closely than usual. Keep an internal journal, a diary not about external events, but about your feelings and behavior in response to events. Self-awareness can also come as the result of discussions with friends, particularly other women, or through participation in a growth-oriented psychotherapy.

Identity as self-esteem

Self-esteem is basically how you evaluate yourself, whether you think of yourself in positive or negative terms. Although psychologists agree that positive self-esteem is critical to healthy emotional functioning, liking yourself isn't always easy. As a way of proving this to yourself, in the space below quickly write down three things you don't like about yourself:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

That probably wasn't too hard. Many people, and women in particular, seem to be able to pinpoint easily what is wrong with themselves, areas where they don't measure up. It's part of their socialization. As we have seen, women learn the ways in which they are inferior to men. They learn to see themselves as the opposite of men. Men are powerful. Therefore women must be "not-powerful".

One simple way they have of reducing their power is to define themselves negatively: "I can't do this, I'm not very good at doing that". Now try writing three things that you really like about yourself.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
3. \_\_\_\_\_

If you're like many women, you probably found this last task more difficult than the first. In fact, several women clients I have worked with have spent an entire therapy session (fifty minutes) unable to come up with a single positive characteristic about themselves, and a week later they are still struggling: Why?

Group self-hatred.

Studies which look at global self-esteem in men and women tend not to discover many significant differences. In this sense, women do not seem to feel worse about themselves than do men. But a sociological perspective provides us with a very different, and disquieting insight.

In 1951, Helen Mayer Hacker published a classic article in which she compared women to blacks, and discussed the ways in which the castelike status of women and blacks was similar. In particular, she stressed women's participation in a variety of psychological characteristics imputed to minority groups in general. One of these characteristics was a group self-hatred. For blacks, this meant a hatred of other blacks. For women, it meant a hatred, a fear and loathing, of other women.

*Redundant*

*Very good stuff*

In her article, Hacker points out that women often dislike other women, prefer to work for men, and avoid exclusively female gatherings. Other research confirms that many women wish they had been born men rather than women and that women envy men more than men envy women. Studies on children indicate that more girls than boys would rather belong to the opposite sex. Also, women seem to hold a negative bias against other women, and devalue their intellectual competence.

*changing reality*  
This appears to be equally true for little girls, who say that daddies are smarter than mommies; and for grown women, who rate articles written by the same person as better when they are purportedly written by a man. It also appears to be true that many women would rather be treated by male physicians, analyzed by male psychotherapists, and represented by male lawyers.

*changing*  
Hacker makes the point that women, through their frequent contact with men, are likely to develop their self-image based on men's perception of them. This will often lead to an internalization of inferiority feelings which men ascribe to women. Thus Hacker maintains that because women are devalued by the dominant group, males, they are in effect taught to hate themselves.

#### Esteem about competency areas

While overall the existing literature concludes that women do not exhibit generalized lower self-esteem than do men, when specific competency areas are examined, women do tend to display less self-confidence than men. For example, when asked to predict how well they will perform on a particular task, men consistently say they will do better than women, although in fact their performances will be about equal. It is fair to say that men have somewhat unrealistically positive views about their own performance capabilities, while women have somewhat unrealistically negative views.



Thus, as a rule, women tend to devalue their own performance more than do men, and are more easily convinced that they have failed. Further, when they do succeed, women tend to attribute their success to luck, while men in the same situation attribute success to their own ability. Women are more likely to own responsibility for failure, but to reject it in success experiences. Consider your own thoughts for a moment. When you do something well, do you say, "I am a competent person, I am very good at doing that"? Do you say, "I certainly was lucky"? What do you think when you make a mess of something? "That's unfortunate", or "What an idiot I am"?

As I mentioned above, it may be frightening to get in touch with your own power, especially for a woman, as power violates the sex role stereotype. As long as you attribute success to luck, you don't have to deal with your own strength and potential.

As an experiment, try taking credit for your accomplishments during one day. Stop taking your successes for granted; instead, acknowledge them through a series of I statements:

I did that very well.

I'm very skillful at this.

I have a competent way of dealing with that.

### Negative self-statements

*Good*  
Self-esteem takes many forms, but its most common expression is the way we talk to ourselves. Most people are unaware that they maintain a running commentary on their performance inside their heads. As a way of illustrating this, pay attention today to the negative thoughts you have as you go about your daily tasks. Note the number of times you criticize yourself. Observe the number of times you

devalue yourself. An easy way to keep track of these cognitive statements is by using a golf-counter or similar device. Simply click it each time you make a self-statement. At the end of the day you will have an accurate tally. And you will probably discover that talking negatively to yourself, acting as your own policeman, is a common behavior.

### Assessing your own self-esteem

Let's begin to explore in more detail how you feel about yourself. As a way of approaching this, write down in a notebook all the evaluative comments you make about yourself during one day. Note at the beginning of the day how you are feeling about yourself. Use a global generality to describe your feelings: "I'm feeling really good about myself." Then, during the day, pay attention to what comments you make about yourself: whether out loud, to a friend; or inside yourself, where only you can hear. At the end of the day, count up the number of positive statements you made, and the number of negative statements you made. How are you feeling about yourself now?

This exercise points out the fact that most of us keep up a fairly constant commentary on our own behavior. We don't simply act and feel, but we evaluate how we are acting, and how we are feeling. Unfortunately, as we have already discovered, most of this commentary tends to be negative, and our self-image becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. Pretty soon, after we have told ourselves how bad we really are, we begin to feel that we are really bad people.

### Improving self esteem

One way around this spiral is to change the way you talk to yourself. As an experiment, tomorrow focus on saying at least one good thing about everything you do; whether it is prepare the children's breakfast, dictate an important letter, have a conversation with your boss, play tennis, etc. Don't allow yourself self-criticism. You can survive without it for a day.

At first, of course, this process will seem unnatural and artificial. "But," you may protest, "I really didn't play a good game of tennis." So what? How do you know that? Are the criteria you apply to yourself so trustworthy? The "naturalness" of your self-deprecatory feelings has been conditioned too. Practicing the above exercise for a few weeks can have a noticeable effect on changing the entire way you look at yourself and feel about yourself.

*Chinkesh*

The above exercise has to do with congratulating yourself for specific performance, whether behavioral ("I made an excellent meal") or attitudinal ("I'm proud of myself for not being afraid to confront my boss"). But, in addition to praising yourself for specific things, it is also important to improve your global self-image. One way to do so is as follows: Take several flash cards and on each write one positive word about yourself. For a week, carry these cards around in your purse. Then, whenever you do a frequent action (for example, drinking a cup of coffee, driving the car, looking in the mirror) pull out a card and read it. This may seem a bit confusing at first. So practice it. Close your eyes. Imagine you are glancing into a mirror. Now watch yourself open your purse, pull out a card and read it. What was the word on the card? If you didn't see the word, go back and practice this little mental exercise again. Then actually go look in a mirror, actually take out a card and read it.

#### A final word of caution

Dont' try to undertake this task of improving self-esteem alone. Enlist the support of significant others, both men and women. You may have trouble actually identifying those things which you do well. Years of negative socialization may have blocked access to your own positive attributes. Even worse, assuming that you can identify your positive points, congratulating yourself for them may not be very meaningful. In other words, in your own eyes you don't put much stock in what you say about yourself.

In either case, it's important to turn to a support network. Have your friends, your significant others help you to identify your strengths. Get them to explicitly praise you and point out when you are doing something well. Ask people whom you respect, whose opinion you value, to do this. At the same time, don't forget about your own important role in this process. As long as you remain exclusively dependent on the opinions of others for your own self-worth, you will never achieve a strong sense of self.

### Identity as self-acceptance

Part of a healthy self-image has to do with being willing to change parts of yourself that you don't like, or being willing to strengthen parts of yourself that you do like, but which don't get expressed very often. But another aspect of a healthy self-image is being able to accept who you are, and this includes accepting your faults and weaknesses as well as your strengths.

To understand this point better, think about the thing you hate most about yourself. How does thinking about this characteristic make you feel? If you're like most women, it makes you feel very bad. Now try something a little different. Continue to repeat the word or phrase to yourself. ("I'm a fool; I'm an irresponsible baby"). Now shut your eyes, and start to breathe deeply and evenly. Keep doing this until your feelings associated with this negative characteristic start to diminish. If you are able to do this for 10 minutes or 15 minutes or even half an hour, you will probably notice that you no longer feel it is so terrible to be a fool or a baby or whatever. In fact, you may even realize that it doesn't make much difference at all to you.

*Not clear*

must clarify Ellis theory ABC

Albert Ellis, a psychologist famous for the development of rational-emotive therapy, has pointed out that bad feelings result from a two step process. In the first step, we identify the problem: I have no friends; I don't know how to interview for a job; I'm not a disciplinarian with my children. These statements may or may not be objective statements of fact. Usually whether or not they are true can be determined through careful observation and analysis (which will be discussed in later chapters). But, regardless of their objective reality, we proceed to the second step: "and that's terrible". What Ellis suggests is that we need to learn to diminish the frequency of this reflexive negative evaluation.

Imagine, for a moment, this statement. "I feel really good about myself and I am an extremely manipulative person". Does this sound contradictory? Not necessarily. Self-hatred and self-punishment will tend to make you feel bad, but they will not tend to make you change your behavior. Often we are so busy denying that we have any faults because we are terrified to look at them honestly, to see what they are. When we can calmly and openly look at our faults, as well as our virtues, with acceptance and without condemnation, we are on the road to change.

Self-acceptance does not imply complacency. What it does suggest is that you are not afraid to see who you really are, and that you are not afraid to admit that who you really are is not all that bad. Self-acceptance refers to a high degree of unconditional regard for yourself, independent of specific behaviors. You are able to like yourself for who you are, rather than what you have done.

Self-acceptance and self-rejection can function as self-fulfilling prophecies. People who expect to be rejected often act in rejecting ways towards others, and in turn receive rejecting responses back. On the other hand, people who expect to be liked will behave in an accepting manner toward others and increase the likelihood that this will be reciprocated.

An intimate relationship exists between self-acceptance and self-disclosure.  
You must be able to feel that you do not need to hide things from other people, in order to be able to accept yourself. But the relationship is reciprocal: the greater your self-acceptance and self-confidence in your own worth, the more likely that you will be open and disclosing toward others.

not always

People with low-esteem fear that once they are known by others, they will be rejected. When you doubt your own intrinsic worth, it is easy to believe that others will prefer a facade, and that the more you expose your flaws and weaknesses to them, the more vulnerable you will be to rejection. This feeling is compounded for women by the cultural stereotype which says that women should be a certain way, should respond in certain ways. Therefore it is an easy although dangerous trap to try to create yourself into an Ideal Woman, ignoring or denying your own personal characteristics.

Often, the woman you feel you are expected to be is not the woman you are. The energy required to maintain the deception is overwhelming. Somehow you have absorbed the message that people will punish you for being who you are.

To explore this further, keep track over the next week of the number of times you say to yourself, "That's an unfeminine thought. This is not a very womanly way of behaving." Each time that happens, you are responding to the pressures of the stereotype.

bad

It is a common experience when asking a client to list her strengths, her positive assets, that she will respond in this manner: "Well, I'm fairly tactful, but that's not always true because last weekend I really let my husband have it with both barrels." "I know how to say what I mean, but I guess this can come out sounding pretty aggressive." What is happening here? Psychologists call it a form of self-sabotage. Many women have this skill developed to the level of a fine art.

Self-sabotage refers to the ways in which you undermine yourself, and ensure that self-change will be next to impossible to achieve. To some extent, all of us are familiar with self-sabotaging mechanisms. Think about it for a minute.

What are some ways in which you sabotage yourself?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Sometimes increased awareness of self-sabotaging mechanisms helps diminish their effectiveness. Sometimes it is important to come up with alternative strategies. For example, one academic psychologist I know resents the fact that her husband is "professionally successful." whereas she is not. When pressed further, she specified "But he's more widely published." When asked about her own publications, she said she "didn't have any real ones." I asked her to clarify this. She explained that she "only" had three published articles, and that they had all appeared in low-prestige but professional journals.

After some discussion this woman concluded that one of her favorite self-sabotaging mechanisms was to insist that she was professionally unproductive. When confronted with contradictory evidence, she would then belittle her work, devaluing both its

*redundant*

own quality and the quality of those who had judged it acceptable for publication. We were able to identify several situations in which there was a high likelihood that she would devalue her own accomplishments. Then we developed an alternative response. At first, this woman felt that acknowledging the value of her work was too "boastful". So initially her goal was to make simple factual statements, without attaching a negative evaluation ("I've published three articles"). Later, we added a component of positive evaluation ("...and the one on differential learning in newborns contains some very interesting premises").

To what extent do you feel you are a self-accepting person? Take a moment to rate yourself on the following checklist. Put 5 if you are very much like that, 4 if you are like that, 3 if you are fairly much like that, 2 if you are slightly like that, and 1 if you are not at all like that.

1. I believe in certain values and principles and am willing to defend them in the face of group opposition.
2. I can modify my beliefs if new experience suggests I am in error.
3. I can act on my own best judgement without feeling guilty if others disapprove of my actions.
4. I live fully in the present, not worrying too much about the past or future.
5. I have confidence in my ability to deal with problems, even in the face of failure.
6. I feel equal to others, not superior or inferior, irrespective of differences in specific abilities, family backgrounds, or attitudes of others toward me.
7. I take for granted that I am a person of interest and value to others.
8. I can accept praise without the pretense of false modesty and compliments without feeling guilty.
9. I am inclined to resist the efforts of others to dominate me.
10. I am capable of experiencing a wide range of impulses and desires.
11. I am able to enjoy myself in a wide variety of activities, including work, play, self-expression, companionship.



12. I am sensitive to the needs of others.

If you feel you have some of these qualities, but not others, it might be interesting to analyze which of the above statements most easily apply to you, and which are most unlike you. In light of the sex-role stereotypes which we have discussed earlier, consider whether you lean in a masculine or a feminine direction, or have about equal number of the more traditionally masculine and feminine attributes.

Finally, in developing your own self-acceptance, it's important to pay attention to the discrepancies, the things that don't fit. A psychological phenomenon exists called "cognitive consistency", which refers to people's need to have a consistent image of themselves and others, and the consequent tendency to prune out all discrepant data points. However, it is possible to try too hard to maintain a uniform self-concept. Further, such a concept can be self-limiting and ultimately psychologically stressful. Dr. Sandra Bem, in her research on sex-typing, has concluded that people who stick faithfully to a pattern of sex-typed behavior (that is, they consistently make choices which reflect either the traditional feminine or the traditional masculine stereotype) have only a limited set of options open to them, and often display more neurotic symptomatology than those who do not strive so hard for characterological consistency.

*redundant*

Pick three words that describe you as a person. First note whether they fall into a common group (for example, yielding, understanding, compassionate; assertive, instrumental, ambitious); or whether there is a discordancy among them (for example, nurturant, gentle, assertive). Now consider each word in turn. Try to think of all the exceptions to this rule, all the examples of times when you have not behaved in this way. This is a good way of proving to yourself that the range of your behavioral repertoire is wider than you may initially have imagined.

Self-concept should be congruent with your experiences, not with your mental set. Therefore, it must be broad enough to include contradictory experiences and modes of behaving.

### Summary

This chapter has provided an opportunity for you to get to know yourself a bit better. It explored the historical/mythic images which may have influenced the formation of your self-image, as well as the power of cultural sex-role stereotypes. The chapter also considered the impact of early socialization practices, and the impact on self-image of the kinds of things you say to yourself about yourself. Next, the chapter stressed the importance of developing personal criteria on which to base the formation of one's personal identity, and the dangers of relying excessively on the opinions of others. Real and ideal self-concepts were examined. Finally, identity was considered as a three-fold concept, consisting of self-awareness, self-esteem, and self-acceptance. Exercises were provided at all stages of the chapter to enhance the development of personal awareness and skills.

This is an age of uncertainty for women. Anthropological literature shows that in primitive societies, the female's identity <sup>derived</sup> from "being," <sup>(A) on back</sup> while the male's identity was based upon doing, <sup>on the other hand,</sup> "could just ~~be,~~" <sup>upon the success with which he acted instrumentally on the his</sup> ~~be,~~ <sup>without a doubt</sup> environment. <sup>(B) on back</sup> However, contemporary woman has ~~without a doubt~~ lost the security, such as it was, of a defined biological role function. The anthropological "being" implied a unity of woman and reproduction. In our society, <sup>this</sup> ~~that~~ is no longer the case. Women now have the power to choose to remain childless. Even those who do have children do not necessarily feel that their lives are justified by bearing and raising children. <sup>(C) on back</sup>

Several contemporary social movements have had a profound and often contradictory impact on women today. Women's liberation has exerted <sup>the most direct influence</sup> ~~been the most obvious of these.~~ In its most obvious (although not necessarily most accurate form), women's liberation has appeared to make happiness and self-fulfillment synonymous with having a career. <sup>(D) on back</sup> Thus the "liberated female role stereotype was born. Its values of assertiveness and self-worth, its acknowledgment that women too could seek status and power in society, <sup>were</sup> ~~was~~ reinforced by the human potential movement, which stressed the importance of self. <sup>(E) on back</sup> On the other hand, the influence of Eastern <sup>philosophy</sup> religions has stressed <sup>values of</sup> yielding and acceptance, the emptiness of material success, the absurdity of power. Concepts <sup>which also have developed a widespread following,</sup> such as the Total Woman <sup>(F) on back</sup> have reinforced values of hearth and home.

Thus there is no clear message for today's women. Adolescent girls growing up today receive an ambivalent socialization. <sup>(G) on back</sup> ~~They are trained to be homemakers, but also prepared to go out and get a job.~~ <sup>to opt for the role of Superwoman:</sup>

The most deceptively simple solution is ~~a sort of Supermomism:~~ <sup>to opt for the role of Superwoman:</sup> faced with a variety of alternatives, today's woman simply does everything. During the day she is a high-powered executive, commanding <sup>cap the</sup> ~~subservient~~ <sup>a host of</sup> ~~and admiring minions.~~ <sup>underlings</sup> ~~But~~ However, precisely at 5:30, when her daycare

center closes, she is transformed into a jewel of a mother, who picks up her two perfectly adjusted children, returns home, and spends an hour playing an educational game with them. She jogs around the block three times, then prepares a gourmet meal in time to welcome home her husband from his job. In the evening she does laundry, pays the bills, macramés a plant holder, and reads her children a bedtime story. Then she makes love to her husband, feeds the cat, and reads over her papers for tomorrow's 8:00 a.m. meeting.

Sound impossible? It is. Yet it is precisely this difficult juggling of roles which causes most stress in women. Studies have shown that professional women tend to be highly satisfied with their work. What concerns them most is how to balance their various role commitments.

The difficulty of this dilemma has no easy solution. Often, it produces rigidities which, in effect, lead to a cold war between women. Some mothers become supermoms, aided and abetted by a new growth industry of childrearing and housekeeping. These women malign working mothers as incompetent, neurotic, and selfish women. Other women forswear the wife and mother role. They pursue satisfying or not so satisfying careers. And they, in turn, malign the homemakers as ~~in~~ incompetent, neurotic, and selfish ~~women~~ women.

In this <sup>part</sup> chapter, we will explore a middle ground, one which suggests that compromise between roles is possible, but also provides some hints as to how to avoid the Superwoman syndrome. It suggests that one reason ~~why~~ today's woman feels so conflicted is not <sup>simply</sup> just because she receives a double message from society, but because she is confronted by two positive options. In this situation, exclusive choice is not always the best option. At times it is preferable to look for the third alternative, a way of experiencing the best of both worlds

Both the traditional and the nontraditional roles have risks and advantages. Clinging to the traditional feminine values as we move into the nineteen eighties smacks of anachronism and neurotic self-denial. Thus ~~it~~ <sup>the traditional role</sup> no longer promises the psychological security it once provided. The traditional role may also be accompanied by a <sup>crippling</sup> ~~real~~ sense of lack of self-esteem and personal identity, and a dangerous vicarious living through one's husband and children. On the other hand, the traditional role provides an optimal environment for the development of nurturing values, emphasizes skills of being in the moment, and stresses thinking of the group rather than the individual.

The nontraditional role has its own risks. It is accompanied by its own sense of stress, uncertainty, and guilt. Am I selfish? Have I betrayed the feminine side of myself? In the end, as many men have already discovered, power and influence are as empty as an empty nest. Further, most women who seek work outside the home will not end up as powerful executives, but rather in more lowly and less challenging positions. Thus the romance of the work world may easily lose some of its sheen. The assertive woman may find she has cut herself off from opportunities for nurturance and unconditional positive regard. Children love mother because she is mother, but a professional is appreciated and valued because of the quality of her work. However, work often provides a sense of competence and independence. Through work, through acquiring a measure of status and power, women become equals in a world of men. They grow up, they are no longer aging children, they have the satisfaction of directing their own lives.

Being a Professional Woman; What It Means

More women than ever before hold jobs outside the home. Labor Department statistics indicate that approximately million women are participating in the labor force currently. Of these, millions are single parents and heads of households. A percentage of them are married; another percentage of them have children over the age of six; and a further percentage of them have one or more children between the ages of 0 - 6.

Just why so many women are entering the labor force is a matter of some dispute. The influence of the social movements, such as women's liberation, cited earlier may be a contributing factor. But several noted economists feel that economic, rather than ideological factors, *for the increased representation of women in the labor force.* are primarily responsible. The spiraling cycle of inflation and recession, according to these experts, has made two-job families a necessity for many. Further, it is significant to note that of the women returning to work, a high number still end up in the low-paying, dead-end, menial jobs. This is particularly true for middle-aged women rejoining the labor force. Even the statistics on sexually stereotyped occupations <sup>are</sup> ~~is~~ not particularly encouraging. Women are still choosing to be nurses rather than doctors, elementary school teachers rather than high school principals, telephone operators rather than telephone linepersons, waitresses rather than chefs etc.

Those women who do enter atypical professions often suffer the consequences. Female psychologists and female doctors have a significantly higher suicide rate than women as a whole. Professional women often report feeling isolated and deviant. *See back pg. 5*

Women entering the professions still face many social and psychological obstacles. *See back*

In the late sixties, Dr. Matina Horner, a psychologist at Radcliffe University, identified an apparently intrapsychic syndrome to which women were particularly susceptible; the fear of success. Psychologists <sup>have</sup> had long been interested in achievement motivation, and the need to achieve <sup>S</sup> had been extensively researched. Need to achieve represented a complex relationship between <sup>the</sup> fear of failure and <sup>A</sup> need for success, which varied depending on the individual. However, Horner's work indicated that in a competitive situation, women not only feared failure, but feared success as well! Later work by Dr. Marlaine Katz suggested that social environment was an important variable in this finding. In other words, "fear of success" was not necessarily intrapsychic; its intensity and presence varied depending on the environmental context. When women perceived ~~the~~ female success to be deviant in a given situation, they scored high on fear of success. When the situation was normalized, fear of success decreased. Katz found that fear of success could be manipulated in males as well.

However, granted that women are not innately more afraid of succeeding than are men, today's realities merits further attention to the fear of success phenomenon. Women with jobs outside the home, and especially women entering a nontraditional career, face continued social discrimination. Women entering an all-male profession are in a deviant and isolated situation. Thus it is reasonable to anticipate fear of success in many working women, which leads to psychological anxiety and a decrease in professional productivity.

A series of studies by Goldberg, <sup>Dr. Harriet</sup> elaborated by Mischel, suggests that people respond to <sup>identical</sup> <sup>achievements by</sup> the professional worth of men and women in <sup>very</sup> different ways.

Goldberg found that female subjects were prejudiced against other women in the areas of intellectual and professional competence; they valued the professional work of men more highly than that of women, even when the work (professional writing) was the same, and only the sex of the author was varied. However, in a sample including both male and female high school subjects, Mischel found that they tended to prefer authors whose sex was the same as that associated with the professional field in which the article was written ( a female author was preferred in dietetics, a male author in city planning). <sup>An even more discrepant finding was that in</sup> Cross-cultural follow-up, <sub>n</sub> ~~however, indicated that~~ Israeli subjects, while holding the same occupational stereotypes as the American subjects, did not exhibit the same evaluative biases. <sup>Ⓛ on back</sup>

Sandra and Daryl Bem, two noted <sup>social</sup> psychologists, identified in the late sixties what they termed a nonconscious sex-role ideology. . This referred to an underlying, pervasive cultural assumption that, because of biological sex, women were suited to ~~learning which~~ being wives and mothers, homemakers and housekeepers. They pointed out that it was possible to predict on the basis of sex alone, <sup>to</sup> major components of a newborn baby girl's adult life (ie., <sub>n</sub> marry and have children) but what the newborn baby boy would do with his life was much more problematical.

Of course such an assumption mitigates against the existence of a <sup>e</sup> class of professional woman, and it is further compounded by the sex-role socialization which occurs to all children. Little boys are encouraged to be independent and <sup>m</sup> competitive, while little girls are allowed to cling to passive, dependent behaviors. Two obvious and powerful areas of sex-role socialization are <sup>children's</sup> clothes and <sup>children's</sup> toys. <sub>n</sub> Although many little girls now wear shirts and pants rather than dresses, any mother can confirm that there are definitely masculine and feminine cuts of clothing, and that by the age of two, children's clothing is quite



Similarly, toys continue to be characterized by a fairly strong sex-typing. Boys still play with trucks, and girls with dolls, although the range of play objects is more permissive than twenty years ago. Children's literature is notoriously sexist, and the raised consciences of the <sup>writers of</sup> the sixties who ~~write stories for children~~ <sup>adequately</sup> cannot compensate for a backlog of nursery rhymes and stories which focus on <sup>male ~~jobs~~ or even animals,</sup> boys, portray mothers as housekeepers, girls as helpless princesses, and boys as active, heroic, curious, and scientifically minded.

The end result of this process is that, regardless of their unique characteristics as individual human beings, the majority of women end up in the same role; that of <sup>homemaker</sup>.

Today, most working women are married; over two-thirds have child-rearing responsibilities <sup>in addition</sup> to their jobs; they represent the entire socioeconomic spectrum; more than half of them are 40 or over. Since the mid-sixties, the greatest increase in labor force participation has been in women in the 25-34 age range, precisely the optimal child-bearing age range. <sup>40%</sup> of women in this age range are in the job market (1973). Women with more education more likely to <sup>o</sup> wrk while their children are preschoolers than women with less than a high school education. This may be a function of child-spacing patterns, <sup>t</sup> differences in previous work experiences, and nature of work opportunities.

Many problems <sup>a</sup> face the professional woman. In addition to the stress of dual or more roles discussed earlier, it is also true that sex-typing of occupations still exists in a major way, and that women seeking to enter the labor force will be likely to end up in positions of elementary school teaching, nursing (which make up 46% of all professional women) or some other service profession. Also, income differentials <sup>t</sup> between men and women holding the same positions remains surprisingly stable. "If women had the same occupational status as

full-time employment in 1966, their income would be... 62% of that received by men" (Suter and Miller, 1973).

Through work that is moderately meaningful and challenging, a woman can meet several needs. First, she is able to establish and maintain a sense of independence; certainly economic independence, and with it a psychological independence that frees her from the childish dependency on males that characterizes the full-time homemaker. Immediately she becomes a survivor in the real world. Secondly, as an extension of this point, she has confronted the lion in its den; she has gone out into reality and found she could succeed there. Depending on the nature of <sup>her</sup> the job, it may also serve to confirm the woman in her own eyes as a source of power and influence. Thus a job enhances a woman's self-confidence and self-esteem. It provides her with action opportunities for her assertive, instrumental, ingenious, and creative qualities, and rewards her with some measure of status and power. She is able to develop a sense of responsibility for and commitment to her work. She also learns to function in a group, in which she has more power than some members of the group, and less power than other members.

Thus, it is apparent that work, provided it is not simply a dead-end menial job, can give expression to significant aspects of a woman's life. But all too frequently, it does not represent the sum total of a woman's needs. Despite an effort to humanize the industrial, business, or professional settings, work normally does not really provide much of an emotional support system. This is not to say that friendships do not develop as the by-products of work, but often they are simply that: by-products of a collaboration and other products, and once this essential link disappears, the friendship <sup>often</sup> disappears as well. Further, work rarely provides unconditional support for the worker, whether male or female.

The work environment provides reinforcement for the quality of work produced, which is both <sup>a</sup> positive and <sup>a</sup> negative <sup>attribute</sup>. On the one hand, a woman can have the ~~experience of satisfaction~~ <sup>of</sup> at having produced a significant accomplishment. On the other hand, she loses unconditional positive regard. ~~It is possible to find~~ <sup>S</sup> such unconditional acceptance and esteem <sup>are usually attained only through</sup> ~~through~~ an affectional relationship <sup>outside of work</sup>. Other needs which work settings often inhibit are the expressive needs - nurturance, warmth, a compliant ability to yield, a here-and-now orientation.

Assuming these to be legitimate and valuable needs, how are they to be met? Certainly one solution lies in the humanization, or possibly the feminization of the work world. It is ~~at least~~ ~~undeniably~~ clear that a person's emotional state effects his or her work performance. Therefore, the dichotomy described above is somewhat artificial. <sup>ⓔ on back</sup> Nevertheless, it is true that the world of work has evolved according to certain values and certain criteria, and it will take a long time to change these. Therefore, many women look to marriage and family as a way of meeting their expressive needs.

Marriage (or a long-term commitment; the term marriage will be used for simplicity, although it does not necessarily denote a legal marriage) for the professional woman implies a two-career marriage. Certainly in some cases <sup>a</sup> complete role reversal will occur as illustrated in the advertisement below (male painter, wife going <sup>insert here</sup> off to work), but the househusband is still enough of a unique phenomenon to deserve a book on the subject. Most often, the husband will have a career as well. Thus it is worthwhile to spend some time considering aspects of the two-career marriage.

Sandra and Baryl Bem, the psychologists cited earlier, used to describe the following relationship and gauge audience reaction:  
(describe seemingly non-sexist relationship)

*insert here*

According to Sandra Bem, in the late nineteen sixties, audiences would generally respond by saying, "Now there's an egalitarian relationship." Recently, however, the audiences have become more sophisticated, and are quick to perceive the subtle sexism inherent in almost every sentence of that description (if you have trouble with this, reverse the pronouns in the paragraph and then assess your reaction).

Yet is the ideal, <sup>two-career marriage</sup> a perfect egalitarianism, an impeccable division of responsibilities? "One night you get up with the baby, I'll do it the next night." Existing evidence suggests this is still a rare phenomenon. Women who work also continue to maintain major responsibility for childrearing and household tasks. This trend may be disappearing somewhat among younger couples, but will probably take a long time to disappear completely, if ever. A more practical approach may be to examine which aspects of family life it will be possible to liberate, which aspects demand compromises with your raised consciousness, and which must either be abandoned or turned over to a third party?

All these practical questions presuppose two major psychological premises. The first is that you and your husband have an equal commitment to a two career marriage. He believes as strongly that you should work as you believe that he should work. Studies have shown that the critical factor in a successful professional woman is usually the support of a significant male other. Thus no amount of negotiating about who washes the dishes will be effective if this basic commitment to egalitarianism is absent. Conversely, the presence of such a commitment can balance out deviations from the ideal. You may end up washing all the dishes (or installing a dishwasher) because you know that in the areas where it really counts, your partner is ready to support you, plan with you, and compromise for you.

The second major commitment is to an interdependence. Compromise does not only involve the chauvinist male; it also involves the liberated woman. As Judith Bardwick has eloquently pointed out, the human potential movement of the sixties stressed individualism at the expense of others, self-growth instead of mutual fulfillment. These values nicely complemented the woman's movement, which at that time had begun to free women from a falsely selfless, pseudo-sacrificial role which left them depressed, without a sense of identity. Thinking of others became anachronistic; narcissism was often justified as self-actualization. The professional woman in particular is in danger of succumbing in excess to this philosophy. Success at her job implies an assertiveness, an aggressiveness, a forcefulness in which she overcomes objections.

This same style is ultimately self-destructive in a relationship.

In a workable two-career marriage, both men and women must remember respect for other, as well as respect for self; consideration of other, as well as consideration of self; and love of other, as well as love of self. In this situation, compromise is not sacrifice, but a gift of love, which both partners are capable of making.

Despite commitment from both parties, a two career marriage is headed for problems unless certain other salient issues are thoughtfully considered. The first has to do with maintaining two separate ego identities within a unitary relationship. This model contradicts the traditional model of marriage, in which one strong ego identity (the male's) is nurtured and supported by a second person (the wife) who is never allowed to develop fully on her own. In the traditional marriage, it is hoped <sup>of course</sup> that the wife will be intelligent, <sup>t</sup>attractive, creative, strong. But these attributes must be used in service of <sup>her</sup>the husband, thus further enriching and enhancing him.

In contrast, the two-career marriage will flounder without the existence of two separate and strong ego identities. This is not as easy to achieve as it may sound. From the man's point of view, he may have been socialized to the role of breadwinner and decision-maker. Therefore, although he may be prepared to wash the dishes on alternate nights, he may still conceive of himself as the "head of the household." He may tend to assert his leadership qualities, and in subtle but unmistakable ways assume that his life is the more important. Referring back to the example cited by the Bems, he is willing to make concessions to his wife, but it <sup>s</sup>is clear that he has the power, which he agrees to share in some aspects with her.

From the woman's perspective, she may have doubts about her ability to assume a truly egalitarian role. Men tend to build a sense of ego identity through accomplishment, which in most cases means their work. Women, on the other hand, are socialized to be more other-oriented, and their sense of self-esteem becomes dependent on the extent to which they are <sup>and validated</sup>valued by others. Therefore, the woman may be more dependent on her spouse than he on her. A strong sense of self is

cultivated in the male, and has a survival value in the competitive marketplace. But society has stressed the yielding, nurturing supportive aspects of a woman's character, primarily because these support and strengthen the traditional marriage.

These qualities are still important in the nontraditional marriage. Everyone needs tender loving care. But the point is that they must be qualities endorsed by both the man and the woman. Just as the woman must know how to care for the man, so <sup>too must</sup> he ~~must~~ have the affective skills necessary to successfully care for and nurture her.

~~To return to the question of ego identity,~~ A woman in the process of strengthening her ego, her sense of self, often finds herself in <sup>who is precisely the person she normally depends on most</sup> conflict with her spouse or significant other, <sup>when engaged</sup> Also, in this process, she must confront several antagonistic social realities. The woman has usually married a man a few years older than herself. This can mean that he is more professionally established. Therefore, objectively, her career may not be as important as his. Social pressure may convey the message that she is selfish, thoughtless, not a good wife. This message may often be reinforced either by her own or her spouse's family.

Problems exist <sup>at</sup> on the other end of the spectrum as well. Because the woman's role is traditionally the more passive and yielding one, the newly assertive woman may have difficulty discriminating when she should yield and when she <sup>h</sup>ould stand her ground. In a marriage, everything and anything can become an issue of sex bias and sexist stereotyping. The woman may find it ideologically impossible ~~for her~~ to back down, <sup>ever</sup> to concede a point.

Two strong ego identities imply some of the following characteristics: two individuals, whose relationship is more than the <sup>some</sup> some of its parts; able to be independent, and able to be interdependent; both possessing a secure sense of self-worth and competence, about themselves and about

each other; able to assert their personal needs, and able to adapt their personal needs to the mutually identified needs of the relationship.

Another issue <sup>of importance in a two-career marriage is that of professional & personal</sup> ~~is that of competition.~~ <sup>competit</sup> Individuals involved in a two-career marriage will tend to have the competitive aspects of themselves well-developed. Some form of competition is bound to transfer into their relationship. Most obviously this occurs when the two people are in the same professional field; then competition is clear and easily measurable, and takes the form of number of papers published, rate of promotions, general standing in the field etc. This kind of competition can be harmful, but because of its obviousness, is not so destructive as other more subtle forms of competition.

Even individuals not in the same field may compete with each other. They covertly compare salaries and benefits, their relationships with their bosses, their professional status etc. Competition may have its healthy aspects, but certainly most professional people have plenty of outlet for their competitive instincts. A personal relationship is not the area for competition. Also, it makes the other person the yardstick by which to measure oneself, <sup>instead of relying on a more internalized set of standards.</sup>

Competition can occur on other levels as well. The two people can compete to see who is the better parent (we will discuss this further at the end of the chapter). They can compete over who is the more integrated person, who is the more intelligent person, who is the more assertive person. The list is endless, limited only by the person's own insecurities. ~~However,~~ In general, competition with a significant other in this fundamental sense is not productive. Competition undermines the sense of unconditional positive regard and support so essential in a working relationship.



One way to resolve competitive feelings is to acknowledge different areas of expertise. I am more creative on the job, and John is more of a leader. John is the best cook in the house, and my province is the garden. The kids would do anything to hear me tell a story, but only John can get them to jump when he wants.

A more difficult, but ultimately more supportive approach, is to avoid continual evaluation in a relationship. Evaluation is a precursor for change. And change in any relationship should not be undertaken lightly. Acknowledgment, rather than evaluation, of differences can remove us from the exclusively competitive model. John is <sup>I am</sup> more nurturing with the children, ~~John is~~ firmer, they are two different approaches, and they both get the job done.

Perhaps the most important ingredient in a successful two-career marriage is trust. Trust implies a variety of things. In a two-career marriage, there is always the fear that the spouse's job will become the spouse's lover; a rival for <sup>his or her</sup> ~~one's~~ attentions and affections. This is <sup>not entirely</sup> ~~by no means~~ a neurotic fear. Any career is demanding, time-consuming of both physical and psychic energies.. Therefore the trust must exist that each person will ensure that the job does not consume him or her totally., that if forced to make a choice the other person comes first, and the job second. There must also be trust that mutual support will occur, and that open communication can always exist.

People involved in a two-career marriage will often find themselves isolated from their contemporaries. Even <sup>implied by the two-career-marriage</sup> at this point in time, there is something deviant about this lifestyle. This makes a trust in mutual support and encouragement particularly important. For the professional woman especially, embarking on a pioneering venture, trust in her partner is essential (we will talk later about how professional women can support each other).

The traditional marriage stressed a separation of roles: the man was the breadwinner, the woman wife and mother. In this model, it made sense for the man to embody the instrumental, aggressive attributes necessary for interacting effectively with the external world. It also made sense for the woman to develop her nurturant, yielding, accommodating, reconciling qualities because these were critical for success in the wife-mother role.

On the other hand, in the two-career marriage, the goal becomes a psychological androgyny for both partners. Androgyny refers to a psychological state where the individual endorses equally both male and female personality characteristics as describing him or her. In the two-career marriage, there is a significant overlapping of function. Both persons engage in all roles necessary for professional and familial development. To succeed in this undertaking, it is critical that both individuals have the psychological resources to handle the differing demands of these different roles.

A well-known psychologist, Dr. Judith Bardwick, has argued that women are unprepared for the competitive, assertive nature of the masculine world because their socialization and behavioral opportunities have stressed passivity and dependence. How, she asks rhetorically, can a nurturant, tender woman survive in the world of work?

The answer depends in part on whether you believe that people are their characteristics, or whether they merely engage in certain behaviors. For example, do you say, "I am a caring person, or do you say, I am very skillful at engaging in caring behaviors? It is logically contradictory to say, "I am an accommodating, yielding person and an assertive, forceful person." However, it makes more sense to assert, "In certain situations I know how to be yielding, and in other situations I have the skills to be assertive."

In the two-career marriage, both man and woman must develop masculine and feminine qualities, so that the man can be a nurturing caretaker, and the woman professionally successful.

Preliminary research by Sandra Bem on the concept of psychological androgyny indicates the individuals who are androgynous, rather than sex-typed (that is, endorsing either primarily masculine or primarily feminine characteristics) do tend to be both more nurturant and more independent. One might hypothesize that it is this sort of person who would succeed best in a multi-role lifestyle.

A critical issue for most professional women is whether or not to have children. Most commonly this decision is made within the context of a marital relationship, but several single professional women have chosen either through adoption or natural means to raise a child. Conversely, many professional women choose to postpone children or decide not to have them at all. Labor Department statistics reveal that more and more women are remaining childless. Often people involved in contemporary two-career marriages assert that such arrangements could not work if they involved children. Still other women are choosing to become mothers in their mid to late thirties, and others opt for the single child.

The relationship of women to childbearing and childraising is a complex one. Historically, woman's sex role identity has been defined by her ability to bear children (and preferably male children). In many cultures today, inability to conceive (which is usually attributed to the woman) is seen as a great curse. Having a child fulfills the biological function of a woman. *Motherhood is perceived to be the height of feminine accomplishment* A childless woman is somehow an incomplete woman. (E) on back

The ~~question~~ <sup>life</sup> of whether or not to introduce a child into your ~~family~~ has no easy answer. Childbearing is an experience unique to women, and given the right conditions, can ~~have~~ <sup>create</sup> a sense of the miraculous. As such, it shares qualities with any outstanding, positive experience and has much to recommend it. But, like any other single experience, no matter how significant, it will not define anyone's life, either the mother's or the father's. Certainly children will lend direction to a woman's life, for a time, <sup>-limited period-</sup> But, as life expectancy increases and family size diminishes, the nature of this direction is increasingly transient.

The argument is often tendered that it is selfish for a professional couple to have children. A column in Newsweek magazine described the urge toward professional fulfillment as fraught with anxiety and chaos. It concluded, "I'm too confused to subject any child of mine to me." ~~Women, and people, when they are confused, stressed, or~~ <sup>extremely</sup> ~~anxious, are probably not~~ <sup>psychologically prepared</sup> ~~in a place to become parents.~~ However, it is a fallacy to assume that fulltime housewives are necessarily ~~in a~~ <sup>more</sup> ~~superior psychological place to have children.~~ <sup>centered & psychologically at ease,</sup> The ~~guilts~~ and the anxieties may be different, but they are surely there.

Another <sup>related</sup> ~~argument~~ runs that, even if a woman would like to have children, no one can be a good part-time mother. There is little evidence to support this contention. Indeed several studies suggest that when work is a source of positive satisfaction, the maternal role is positively effected. The most damaging parent-child interactions come from women who want to work, but stay at home out of guilt.

Any professional woman considering having children needs to think about the following questions: In what way <sup>a</sup> will my life be positively affected by this child? In what way will <sup>the child</sup> it negatively

affect my life? What impact will a child have on my relationship to my husband? On my relationship to my work? What will I be able to give to a child? Why do I want to have a child? What do I anticipate will be fun and joyful? What do I anticipate will be <sup>difficult or stressful</sup> hard? How will my child be cared for, and how will I ~~be~~ feel about other people being involved in his or her <sup>upbringing?</sup> care?

Guilt is the worst enemy of the part-time mother. Research suggests that many working mothers overcompensate for the fact that they are not physically with their children twenty-four hours a day, and consequently tend to over-mother, be overprotective, and ~~not~~ <sup>set</sup> limits when they are with their children.

Fulltime versus part-time mothering is a controversial, but dimly illuminated issue. For example, no research has been done on how much contact time full-time mothers have with their children. In other words, how much time is spent on direct interaction, and how much time spent on dishes, laundry, <sup>shopping</sup> etc. We have not yet identified the variables in the complex mother-child relationship which promote psychological security and well-being in the child. Quantity vs. quality time is a much used argument, but at this point we are still unsure as to how either affects the child.

Even in contemporary society, the working mother is confronted with enormous social pressures. Paradoxically, in a two-career family the father often comes out ahead. As he tends to be more androgynous than the traditional male, and as he tends to participate more equally in child-raising responsibilities, he easily wins brownie points <sup>S</sup> as an ideal father. His <sup>C</sup> commitments to child responsibilities, while generally not equal to the woman's, easily surpass those of the traditional <sup>f</sup> father.

The working mother, however, is in competition with the superMoms.

By the very nature of her split role function, the working mother cannot be as involved with her children as is potentially possible for the supermom. Therefore, where<sup>a</sup>s her husband surpasses societal expectations for the father role, the mother generally tends not to meet societal expectations for the mother role.

The implication<sup>a</sup> <sup>of this perceived role failure</sup> is that the child will suffer and will somehow be psychologically and emotionally damaged by not having one fulltime parent. Yet most research done to date involving daycare children does not support this contention. Most researchers have found differences between individual children on dimensions of intelligence, dependency, and affectional ties, but the distinguishing characteristic has not been care outside the home. (Of course, these findings generally come from high-quality, carefully controlled daycare settings).

An issue of critical importance is how caretaking responsibilities are apportioned after the birth of the child. Most healthy young women will find that pregnancy scarcely impedes their ~~pursuit~~ of a career. Nor is it true that working full or part-time prevents appreciation of the joys of pregnancy. Despite the commitments of an active, professional life, there is still plenty of time to feel the baby kick, to watch the baby grow inside ~~you~~ <sup>the womb</sup>.

But once the baby is actually born, a monumental disruption of lifestyle patterns occurs. An infant is a small, but powerful bundle and the mother will ~~be~~ find herself responding to these <sup>infants</sup> demands, <sup>and</sup> both physical, affectional, ~~feeding~~.

Traditionally, the mother was the "baby-expert," the father awkward and out-of-place. However, in today's society, many young mothers are as ignorant about newborn infants as are their young husbands. <sup>⊕ on back</sup> Both parents need to learn, but society's tendency will be to allow only one to learn.

Modeling appears to be an important factor in the establishment of <sup>a</sup> the mother-child relationship, and today's women generally do not have models for the type of relationship they wish to develop with their children. They look to their own mothers, and they find women who stayed at home full-time, or perhaps took part-time jobs while their children were adolescents. It is rare to encounter <sup>in current culture</sup> the middle-aged woman who worked fulltime while her children were two <sup>years old</sup> or younger.

This lack of models has the advantage of cultivating a pioneering <sup>in the young professional women-</sup> spirit. In the young families of today, there is often a sense of adventure, of trail-blazing. Many of the <sup>new</sup> young parents ~~today~~ came from homes in which, despite full-time mothering and other so-called advantages, divorce, unhappiness, and lack of emotional communication were rampant. So there is some security in the thought that we can't do worse.

However, for ~~any~~ <sup>e</sup> number of reasons, this sense of pioneering can easily give way to self-doubt. Guilt can become the overriding aspect of the mother-child relationship. I remember spending <sup>a great deal of time</sup> ~~hours~~ counting up the number of contact hours I had with my first daughter, calculating how much the average mother spent with her child, figuring what percentage I ~~have~~ <sup>had</sup> given my child.. My husband and I would <sup>the</sup> have ~~terrible~~ fights about leaving our daughter in daycare two more hours a week, because <sup>this</sup> ~~it~~ would lower the overall percentage of time spent with her. <sup>It is easy to lose perspective.</sup>

<sup>working mothers give their children quality time.</sup> And then there is the quality argument. This is supposedly an argument in support of part-time mothering. Yet in the mind of the guilty, confused working mother, it ~~also~~ becomes a double-edged sword. True, she can console herself that she is giving "quality" time. But what about when she has to wash the dishes? What about

when she tries to talk to her husband? What about when she screams at the kids? Her failures at perfect motherhood loom much more significant, because, as she can't give time, all she can give to her child is perfection.

This is a self-destructive but subtle trap, one which must be avoided in order to escape an ever-spiraling cycle of guilt and recrimination. Time with your child is time. Measuring it is meaningless, quantifying it is nonsense. Controlling for quality is also by and large a waste of time. Some of the time will be good, and some of it will be bad, just as in any mother-child relationship. Of course, this doesn't mean that you shouldn't make an effort to maximize the good times, but merely emphasizes that you must <sup>be able to</sup> let go of the failures and imperfections.

Another insidious trap <sup>a</sup> that working parents fall into is the idea that every spare minute, of which there are precious few, must be spent with their child or children. Some parents who work half-time are meticulous about having the nonworking half doing the childcare, and then switching roles. ~~Such~~ <sup>family such</sup> models as these quickly result in the parents completely losing contact with each other. Neither is the answer to ~~all~~ <sup>all your</sup> "spend time" together as a family." It is a painful but true lesson that family time is not identical to relational time. <sup>parents'</sup> once a child or children have been introduced into the equation, And more than ever, <sup>the</sup> relationship between the two primary people caretakers in the family needs constant work and attention.

It is easy <sup>for the young professional woman</sup> to begin to feel embattled, at odds with the rest of society. On the one hand will be women who extol the glories of wife and motherhood, and sleep with a copy of Total Woman under their pillow. On the other hand will be the suave, assertive career women, <sup>who never come to work with baby food stained into their suits, and</sup> who feel you have compromised yourself by getting involved with babies. Such isolation also encourages self-doubt, and it is



important to find a support group of other women who have <sup>also</sup> chosen this path. Such a group can function as a practical support, providing last minute baby-sitting or transportation to school. But much more important, they alleviate the sense of deviance and the sense of isolation which imperil the successful combining of family and career.

The Superwoman phenomenon is particularly crushing for women with families. Ambitious, motivated women tend to see life as an ever-expanding pie, into which they can squeeze more and more experiences. However, at some point or other, every professional woman encounters her own finiteness. This encounter is often not pleasant, and may be met by denial or rejection. However, in the end it is more sensible to accept one's limitations. Not everything can be accomplished. Therefore, rather than simply leaving this process to chance, it is better to sit down and <sup>set priorities</sup> prioritize. Does the baby have to have its bath tonight? Does the laundry need to be done? Does this book really need to be read? Set two or three major goals to accomplish during the day. When they are done, congratulate yourself for your competence, rather than focusing on what remains undone.

In this regard, it is important to <sup>point out</sup> ~~stress~~ that women often find it easiest to put their own personal needs at the bottom of their priority list. They acknowledge readily the importance of their work, of their relationships with their husband and children. But, while giving lip-service to their own personal growth, this is often squeezed in last minute or ignored entirely. Yet such an approach longterm is irresponsible. It is naive to think that without attention to the self the professional woman will be able to maintain the equilibrium necessary to meet all these other needs.

Professional <sup>overriding</sup>  
 Women have two personal priorities. One involves their physical health. Again, good health is a prerequisite to maintaining <sup>the</sup> this kind of demanding lifestyle, <sup>they have chosen to undertake</sup>. But as the lifestyle is <sup>generally</sup> not geared to physical activity, <sup>the latter</sup> it often falls by the wayside. Most professional work tends to be physically nontaxing, and it is easy for the busy, multiroled woman to decided to work during her lunch hour rather than jog around the block. Similarly, it is difficult to be physically active around small children. Most physical exercise demands the presence of a babysitter, whether it is playing a set of tennis, swimming, running etc. The part-time mother, pulled by her guilt, may easily decide to forgoe <sup>physical</sup> this activity in order to spend more time with her child.

The solutions are numerous, but all require a commitment to the importance of one's own physical body. Some women may excuse themselves on the grounds that their professional success compensates for their poor physical condition. Others may justify it on the grounds of lack of time. But unnecessary physical decay is too large a price to pay for a career, no matter how successful.

Therefore, it is important to develop an exercise routine and stick to it. In doing so, above all you must be realistic. Evaluate your <sup>v</sup>situation. Don't say you will jog around the block at 5:30 a.m. if you love to sleep in, <sup>the morning</sup>. Don't commit yourself to playing tennis every evening if it means lining up a partner and a babysitter. Also set realistic goals in terms of the amount of exercise you do. Running 4 miles may seem too demanding, and after a week you will begin to avoid it. Choose a goal which can be comfortably sustained, and which can accommodate to your work and home schedule. Consider activities such as yoga or jumping rope, which can be done inside your home. Also identify someone at work with whom you can share some physical activity.

Another important aspect of physical health is nutrition. For many women, stress becomes a cue for eating, and often the food consumed under such conditions has little nutritional value. Eating is a cheap, convenient, and quick pleasure in a world which seems overweighted in the direction of responsibility and performance. Thus food becomes the vice of many professional women.

Again, it is worthwhile to take the time to monitor your food intake, and learn to control this aspect of your personal life. Set realistic goals for yourself in terms of your eating habits, and develop a system of reinforcement to sustain these new patterns. Understand what function food plays in your life, and then devise substitute pleasures.

The other personal commitment which professional women should not ~~gix~~ ignore is their emotional and psychological well-being. Much has been written on centering, on "being together " and integrated, and these are skills which the professional woman needs at least as much as other <sup>people</sup> ~~women~~. It is easy to get caught up in the striving, competitive world of work, and less easy to unwind from it. The professional woman who is also the mother of small children must develop a facility for switching gears, for making the transition from work to home easily and smoothly. Practices such as meditation, deep breathing, autogenic training, and a variety of ~~o~~ther techniques can facilitate this transition, by providing the woman with an experience in centering and oneness.

Journal-writing is another way the professional woman can keep on top of her own psychological processes. It is important to have the space to reflect on what is happening to you, professionally and personally.

Once the decision to be a part-time parent has been made, various caretaking arrangements need to be explored. Ideally, this can be a joint project for both spouses. Often, empirically, it is the woman's responsibility.

One of the most complex issues in part-time parenthood is role definition. Since the traditional model is being rejected, a new model has to be created, often somewhat extemporaneously. One possibility is a completely egalitarian parent-child relationship, in which the child views the parents as somewhat synonymous, interchangeable figures. Mother and father both know how to change diapers, prepare formula, read bedtime stories, make dinner, wash dishes, go for bike rides, play games etc. However, sometimes such a model will not be suited to the idiosyncracies of a particular couple. For example, mother may not enjoy reading bedtime stories, or father may not enjoy cooking. Thus an alternative, but still theoretically egalitarian model allows some division of labor according to parental preference. Something to watch out for in this situation is a break-down of preferences in sex-typed directions: ie., mother cooking the meals and washing the dishes, father fixing the child's toys.

However, all sorts of complications quickly set in. Suppose father works fulltime, while mother has a part-time job? Then, despite ideology, it makes sense for mother to do more of the childcare. Also, it seems to be true that mothers assume psychological responsibility for their children, so that even though on the surface there is an equal division of labor, it is all at the mother's initiative; she has made the childcare arrangements, told her husband when <sup>and where</sup> to pick up the <sup>kids</sup> ~~child~~ etc. Mothers also seem to spend more time away from their d children thinking about them. On the other hand, fathers apparently

are freer to talk about their children at work. Women seem to feel <sup>the existence of</sup> it threatens their professional image to acknowledge <sup>of</sup> their children.

Perhaps most important is that each parent assume responsibility for his or her relationship to the child. Some people, both men and women, may find the day-to-day caretaking responsibilities a way of forming a close, physically <sup>grounded</sup> ~~based~~ relationship to their child. Other people, again <sup>both</sup> men and women, may feel burdened by <sup>daily</sup> caretaking. In this case, it is important to discuss equal apportionment <sup>of tasks</sup> ~~or~~, as one's financial situation permits, delegating these responsibilities to a third party.

In all but a few cases, it is virtually impossible for two working parents to provide complete care for their child. Thus it becomes critical to involve other people in the child's care. This is not as easy a matter as it may appear, for ~~both~~ social, psychological and financial reasons.

First, although millions of children are currently in some form of alternative care arrangement, America by and large is not a daycare oriented society. Social expectations still assume childcare by the mother, in the home. Thus we do not have either the social set of the physical facilities of countries such as Sweden or Israel, where somewhat different patterns of childrearing exist. ~~Thus in~~ <sup>American formal</sup> many <sup>can be</sup> communities, daycare provisions ~~formal~~ are scant. Even more difficult ~~is~~ locating such facilities.

Once pinpointed, parents are faced with the problem of evaluation. Most parents considering daycare arrangement have formulated ambiguous criteria at best. <sup>Probably</sup> They personally have ~~probably~~ had no experience with daycare, thus they have no idea what to expect. Should it be like a school? How many children is best? What kind of ~~personnel~~ teacher-child ratio should they look for? What kind of turnover rate

is there among staff? How are they funded? What kind of snacks and/or lunches do they provide? Will your child be eating what you want him or her to eat? How do these people regard their work? What do they think of daycare children and daycare parents? How do they interact with the other children? Etcetera, etcetera/

Partly the motivation behind such questions lies in the person's own psychological attitude toward daycare. Daycare is by and large a strange concept to Americans. Sometimes poor mothers have to leave their children in large, government sponsored centers. And during the war, several industries provided both sick and well baby care for a labor force suddenly consisting primarily of women. But for the young, professional woman, often many stereotypes about daycare need to <sup>considered and</sup> be overcome.

Try to free associate to the concept of daycare. What images come to your mind? What do you see?

Even women who have consciously intended to work after the birth of their baby may harbor unacknowledged feelings of guilt about turning over the mothering of their child to someone else. These feelings need to be brought to light and examined. Often a woman who has proceeded blithely through pregnancy working fulltime and enjoying every minute of it is deluded into thinking that she has successfully combined family and career. Then, during her maternity leave, she discovers all sorts of maternal, nurturing feelings which tie her deeply to her baby and make it seem impossible for them ever to be separated.

The subsequent response is panic. How can I leave my baby? And on the other hand, how will I ever be able to <sup>continue my career</sup> ~~go back to work~~? Thus a vicious cycle develops in which guilt over abandoning your child is complemented by resentment and anger at having this tiny thing destroy your ~~career~~ professional opportunities.

Under these circumstances, the best course of action is patience. New mothers are often subject to noticeable mood swings, and it is not uncommon for all <sup>new</sup> mothers, both working and nonworking, to shift rapidly from elation to depression. Usually, much of the intensity of the conflict dissipates with time. It is difficult to imagine leaving your two-week old baby, ~~if~~ even for a few hours. But once the baby is 3 months old, or 6 months old, routines have been established, and it is easier to see that he or she can function without you.

A difficult consideration for the working mother is breastfeeding. It has now been medically established that breastfeeding is a superior form of infant nutrition than bottlefeeding. Thus many working mothers are determined to breastfeed, or are overwhelmed with guilt at the thought that they might not be able to do so. However, there are several ways of handling this situation.

A woman who returns to work immediately following the birth of her child may have some difficulty in nursing her baby, as it is during the first month that breastfeeding patterns are established. However, a mother who does not elect to nurse her baby should not be consumed by guilt. Generations of children were brought up on the bottle without serious consequences. Also, from a psychological viewpoint, it is easier for both parents to participate equally in the care of the child ~~when~~ the bottle is the method of feeding.

For mothers who have breastfed their child during a maternity leave, there is often the assumption that they must switch to a bottle ~~tax~~ when they return to work. Again, this is not necessarily the case, and depends a great deal on the nature of the child and the desires of the mother. Mothers at work may be embarrassed by the letting down reflex, and find their clothes spotted. However, nursing pads inserted in the bra can alleviate this problem. Other

mothers may find their breasts engorged while on the job, and feel it is too much trouble to use a breast pump to relieve the fullness.

~~HOWEVER~~ Also, some infants, once a bottle is introduced, soon lose their desire to nurse. However, it is often possible to continue nursing once work is resumed. Depending on the location of your work, it may be possible to return home during lunch to nurse your baby. Often, with a somewhat older infant, which does not nurse as frequently, a combination of bottle and nursing works well. The bottle can contain either expressed breastmilk or <sup>low-fat cow's</sup> ~~regular~~ milk.

There is a common, although unsubstantiated, belief that mother's care is something special, something unique and precious, and to deprive a child of this is to risk emotional and psychological crippling. Without rejecting the special nature of the mother-child bond, I would suggest that nurturing behavior on a daily basis is on the whole <sup>less unique than we might like to believe for about 2 years</sup> rather ~~standardized~~. I ~~remember when I had~~ <sup>was</sup> my oldest daughter <sup>n</sup> enrolled in a cooperative daycare center, where parents volunteered hours to help reduce the staff-child ratio. Even though I knew that I loved my child, <sup>whereas I</sup> ~~and~~ did not love the other children, from a behavioral viewpoint I observed that I <sup>could</sup> scarcely distinguish <sup>between</sup> ~~in~~ my treatment <sup>my own child & the other children</sup> of <sup>n</sup> them, even going so far as to ~~you~~ use the same forms of endearment, the same nonverbal forms of comfort, disapproval etc. It appears crucial that a child experience a warm, nurturing, and secure environment. But surrounded by caretakers who generate these feelings, it is debatable how inferior this experience is to mother love.

There are several forms of daycare available. The first and most commonly used is babysitting in the home by either a friend or relative. This system has both advantages and disadvantages.



## Self-Management Strategies for Women

In the last decade a great hue and cry has been raised over the inadequacies of existing counseling and psychotherapeutic methods in meeting the needs of contemporary women (Friedan, 1963; Greer, 1971; Chesler, 1972). Often traditional therapy has tended to reinforce the limited passive role to which women are expected to conform in a larger society (Chesler, 1972).

As increasingly critical examination points up the limitations of conventional therapy, demands for new feminist therapies have flourished (Gardner, 1971; Rice and Rice, 1973). In general these demands have been long on rage and short on specifics. This paper attempts to bridge the gap between the legitimate anger of the feminists and the dearth of concrete proposals for working in innovative and non-sexist ways with women in educational and therapeutic settings.

In considering the application of self-control strategies to women, we must first examine the question "What is self control?". Self-control is often confused with willpower but in the sense in which it will be used in this paper it refers to an awareness of and the skills to manipulate one's controlling variables (Mahoney and Thoresen, 1976). It might be useful to consider an actual case involving a female client. This woman habitually made negative statements about herself: "I'm not attractive, I never do the right thing, I'm always complaining." Exercising self-control in this situation would not be simply refraining from making negative statements ("willpower"), but rather programming herself to make positive statements; engaging in activities resulting in positive consequences; and programming significant others in her life to praise, support and reinforce her. This example illustrates some of the important components of our definition of self-control. First, it includes the concept of self-awareness. The woman knows which aspects about herself she is dissatisfied with, and how she wants to change. Secondly, it includes the concept of environmental awareness. The woman knows how her physical and social environments affect her, how being with different people makes her behave differently. Finally, the definition includes a competency in knowing how to use specific strategies or techniques to effect change (i.e. changing self statements, programming others).

Based on this definition, let us consider why behavioral self-control techniques are important to women. Self-control techniques have several special and unique applications for women. Research in the areas of attribution theory and perceived locus of control suggests that, for many women, the sense of personal competency and a sense of control over their external environment are seriously deficient (Feather, 1969; Feather and Simon, 1975; Maccoby and Jacklin, 1974). Women are enculturated to rely on others, especially men, rather than themselves. They are encouraged to conform to the helpless woman role. Conversely, women who have the skills to control themselves and to act effectively on their environment will also feel more confident and less buffeted by the winds of fortune. Thus, teaching self-control techniques in therapy can help encourage a positive role change for women: from passive to active, from dependent to self-reliant. This restructuring of the therapeutic experience (in which traditionally the female client has been dependent on a powerful male authority figure, the therapist) can become a self-modelling experience for the way in which women may want to act in the larger society. The practice of self-control techniques can help give women the alternative behavioral patterns of competence and control over their own lives which are often lacking in everyday living. Secondly, the use of self-control techniques will enable women to understand the environmental context of their problems rather than seeing their problems as unique and self caused (Gornick and Moran, 1971). Too

a woman may feel that she never expresses her needs. By monitoring how often she tells someone "I want to do this or I don't want to do that", she accumulates reliable data. It is also important to note where the behavior occurs (location). Through monitoring eating candybar behavior, a client may learn that every time she goes over to her mother-in-law's house she eats a candybar. Again this gives important information which can be used in changing her subsequent behavior. Finally, it is important to consider with whom the behavior occurs (person), because of the information this provides.

This process essentially describes a functional analysis of the environment, in which the client's antecedents, behavior, and consequences are all examined. Familiarity with the antecedents of a particular desirable or undesirable behavior can act as an effective cue for either increasing or decreasing that behavior, as has been illustrated above (Kanfer and Saslow, 1968). Thus it is important to be aware of the overall context in which a behavior occurs. Women are not passive or dependent or illogical. However, it is possible for them (and for that matter, for men as well) to exhibit passive behaviors or dependent behaviors or illogical behaviors given a particular context. It is this integral relationship between behavior and situation which is crucial to identify.

After a period of self-observation the next step is one of self-evaluation, or defining areas of personal change. Once the client has an objective familiarity with herself, how does she want to be different? Exercise: One way to help the client decide on a personal self-change area is to have her make a list of all her good qualities, then make a list of the good points of the ideal consciousness-raised woman. Finally the client should make a "discrepancy" list, which highlights areas in which she differs from her model woman. This list may provide a basis for possible future change.

Now that we have identified target behaviors, we face the question: How does the self-controlled woman obtain her target, her goals? Self-control is not simply saying, "I will do it" (be nicer to myself, discuss more things with my husband, eat fewer candybars). Self-control involves linking the target behavior to an effective reinforcer, systematically having the client reward herself as she comes closer toward realizing her desired goal. Rewarding herself for desired behavior change is a crucial component of any successful behavior change program, so it is important to find effective rewards that work for her.

Let us examine the nature of rewards a little more carefully (for a more complete discussion, Whaley and Mallott, 1970). First, and foremost, an effective reward must be important to your client regardless of how it appears to other people or to you. To someone, taking a long walk might be very rewarding, to others it might appear to be cruel and unusual punishment. Secondly, the reward must be available. It does no good to choose as a reward a new Porsche if the funds do not exist to acquire such a car. Finally, rewards must be strong enough to be meaningful. If your client chooses as a reward some stimulus which she only mildly likes, for example a cup of coffee, to change a strongly ingrained behavior pattern there will be little hope of success. The strength of the reward must be proportionate to the strength of the maladaptive behavior pattern. There are many kinds of rewards. Rewards can be tangible (food, buying clothes, engaging in leisure activities, money), rewards can be symbolic or social (praise, smile, professional recognition). Improvement itself can be a reward; thus one of the most effective reinforcers for behavior change is small increments of that change. Some rewards, perhaps some of the more important, exist only cognitively. For example, what your client says to herself ("I expressed that thought clearly," "I look attractive today," "I'm being very honest."). Such positive

covert self-statements (Meichenbaum, 1977) are particularly important because women tend to rely on negative rather than positive self-statements. Thus the technique is normally used as a punishment rather than as a reward. Further, in addition to what the client says to herself, what she imagines can also be a kind of reward system. Images such as herself being thin, or conversing openly with a friend, or eating in a restaurant alone, can become very reinforcing and can enhance self-esteem. Finally, a reward may be what has been called a high probability behavior (Homme and Tosti, 1971). Women often have difficulty in recognizing reinforcers. They are so conditioned to care for others that they do not know how to care for themselves, they do not know what is rewarding to them. One way to begin to get your client in touch with what she enjoys, what is important to her, is to have her examine what she does frequently without any external pressure to do so. If she notices that she takes several long walks during a day she may begin to realize that she enjoys walking. If she drinks several cups of coffee during the day she may become aware that she actually enjoys drinking coffee. Exercise: Have your client use the following space to make a list of personal rewards, remembering that the rewards must be meaningful to her alone.

Once the client has identified a set of personal rewards, she needs to learn to know when to use them. It is important to vary rewards, as rewards begin to lose their effectiveness when used continuously over time. Don't try to have your client change her relationship with her mother-in-law on the basis of her love for hot fudge sundaes. She will soon discover that long before her relationship with her mother-in-law changes, she will have habituated to eating the sundaes. Rewards must be used immediately following the change the client wishes to occur. For example, the client should praise herself immediately after doing something well, such as feeling comfortable spending time alone, drawing another woman out in a male-dominated conversation, broadening her interests by reading the financial section of the newspaper, conversing about politics instead of children. It is important to experience the reward in close proximity to the actual behavior. Even if the performance wasn't perfect, the client should praise those parts which were successful. If she got half-way through reading the financial section, if she spent a few minutes talking about foreign policy before talking about her dishwasher, this deserves praise. This process is what is known as successive approximation of behavior and it is important to reward it rather than waiting for a perfect product. Further, the client should reward herself immediately after substituting an alternative behavior for a behavior she is trying to decrease. For example, instead of sulking at dinner with the family your client expresses her feelings openly. She should then reward herself by not doing the dishes and reading a magazine. If your client is prone to use negative self-statements covertly, for example, "Now why did I do something so stupid?", and this time she says instead, "I'm not going to cry over spilt milk," she should follow up this covert behavior change with, let's say, a pleasant image of herself as a competent, capable person and covertly congratulate herself as well for the change. Improvement in behavior, no matter how slight, must not go unnoticed. Finally, the client may wish to make use of what is known as the Premack principle (Homme and Tosti, 1971). According to this principle, common, automatic behaviors are used to increase uncommon behaviors. For example, if your client wishes to improve her physical fitness she will have a higher likelihood of success if she does her exercises before eating breakfast rather than waiting until afterwards. Or, she decides to finish writing that difficult letter before rather than after watching TV.

It is also important learning when not to use rewards, as rewards can easily

maintain old behavior patterns that the client wishes changed. The client must learn to be careful not to reward herself unintentionally through self-pity or complaining. Sometimes it is harder than it seems to stop a self-defeating behavior pattern which has nevertheless become reinforcing. Some women spend a great deal of energy complaining about imaginary somatic symptoms. While this does not seem to be a very pleasant way to spend one's life, nevertheless there is considerable secondary gain involved in terms of getting attention this way from significant others. The client must learn to use self-reinforcement strategies with intentionality, to strengthen behaviors which she has previously identified as positive.

Self-management skills involve not only changing oneself, but also acting in a positive way on the environment. It is important to remember in this context that the term "environment" includes not only physical environment but social environment, such as friends, relatives and acquaintances with whom the client interacts. The client needs to learn how to evaluate environments and choose environments which she finds psychologically healthy for her. She also needs to learn how to structure her environment so that it is supportive and reinforcing to her. One important aspect of this kind of behavior change involves enlisting others' help. One way to do this is through contracting. A contract is a specific arrangement made with another person in which contingencies for accomplishing a certain goal are clearly laid out. The contract specifies who does what and for what reward. Here is an example of an actual contract signed by a client and her family:

The client was a depressed woman who often stayed in bed, would not get up and would not get dressed for whole days at a time. She contracted to get out of bed 5 times during a week. Each time she got up the husband agreed to make her breakfast. She agreed to get dressed 3 times during the week. The husband and daughter agreed to praise and compliment her whenever she did so.

In addition to contracting with others, it is possible to contract with one's self. In essence this is what self-management strategies are -- an informal self-contract.

Now let us consider the use of rewards from significant others, as a means of positively structuring one's environment. Women are not always too successful at reinforcing themselves. Because of their own poor self-concept they may not see themselves as effective reinforcing agents. Therefore sometimes the woman's self-reinforcement strategies need to be supplemented by making use of reinforcement from others. In this regard a woman's group provides an effective transition from stereotypic reinforcing figures (such as the client's husband or the client's parents) to self-reinforcement.

A further way of using the environment to work for the client is through modeling. Have the client examine her environment and identify stimuli which will support and encourage her new goals. Positive models may be discovered in books, in clippings, in other people. Also have the client be aware of negative models in the environment, models which she may wish to avoid. Negative role models are all too prevalent in contemporary culture. Finally it is important to help the client learn how to build a hierarchy for change. Change is not an instant process,

it can be overwhelming unless approached gradually with a high probability for success experiences. This final change method involves the development of hierarchies which gradually increase the client's behavioral skills while maintaining an ability to cope. Let us consider this situation. Suppose your client was very anxious about an upcoming business party which she and her husband plan to attend. Suppose she dreads entering a room with professionally important people, having to function independently of her husband and make conversation. One way she might approach this problem is to imagine herself engaging in various component behaviors: entering the party, separating from her husband, talking independently to another person. She should keep practicing until she felt comfortable with these images. Already what she is doing is specifying different components of a larger target behavior and practicing them covertly in her mind. She might also role play the act of separating from her husband, i.e. by saying "I need to get a drink", or "There's someone I know". Again this could be practiced covertly. It could also be practiced with a friend until a certain level of comfort was achieved. Finally, the client might actually rehearse the entire behavior change by attending several parties, practicing leaving her husband and striking out on her own. Ultimately she would be prepared to execute her new behavioral skills in the ultimate test situation.

By way of summary let us briefly mention some pitfalls which may inhibit the successful application of self-management strategies to women and some of the ways in which they can be alleviated.

1. The woman client may be excessively dependent on external (often male) authority. In this case the counselor may need to employ successive approximation of self-management strategies involving a gradual development of independence on the part of the client. As mentioned earlier, a woman's group may provide a successful transitional data point.

2. A sub-set of this problem is that the woman client may not see herself as a valid reinforcing agent, and therefore has difficulty applying self-reinforcement strategies, making covert positive statements, and implementing self-control processes in general. In this case the counselor may need to focus on increasing the client's self-esteem. Also the implementation of self-control strategies themselves can mitigate the problem. By helping women identify their strengths, reinforcement strategies provide ways for women to feel good about themselves. Reinforcement strategies help women to make the transition from an over-dependence on others as reinforcing agents to themselves as reinforcing agents. Reinforcement strategies help women identify what is uniquely rewarding to them alone. Women learn when and when not to use reinforcement strategies in ways that are important to them personally rather than in ways in which they have been conditioned by the cultural stereotype. Often women tend to be self-punishing and derogatory about themselves. Self-management strategies help women recognize and stop self-punishment. These strategies help them change the environment so that it has a positive rather than a negative effect on them.

3. Often the woman client will not see herself able to act as a "self scientist" -- charting, monitoring, collecting data seem too scientific and technical. The counselor will need to overcome the stereotype of the non-scientific woman before progress is possible. By engaging in the process of self-observation women can recognize that this cultural sex role stereotype is not necessarily accurate for them. Self-observation further gives women an opportunity to change their focus from others and to get to know themselves better. Through self-observation women learn that they can monitor, chart, be objective, master a technical skill.

4. As mentioned above, because women are not trained to be analytical and objective, there may be considerable difficulties with initial problem identification.

5. <sup>+their likes</sup> Women clients may have difficulty applying strategies to other aspects of ~~her~~ life. The counselor must stress the generalizability of self-control techniques: i.e, women can learn to predict developmentally difficult periods in their lives and implement self-control strategies for coping with these periods. (the empty nest syndrome Bart, 1971, divorce, menopause etc.).

6. The client may lack understanding of the cultural and societal origins of many of her problems, and of the interrelatedness of her problems to the "male dilemma". Self-management techniques should stress environmental variables when attributing causality to personal-psychological problems.

7. There is a danger of teaching self-control skills in such a way that the client remains isolated and alienated from other women. Alternatively, the teaching of self-control skills can easily be paired with a woman's group, encouraging the idea that self-reliance does not mean distrust of other women (Franks and Burtle, 1974). Because most women function under similar cultural oppressions, working with other women can be an important step toward a facilitating self understanding.

8. Finally, self-control strategies give women new methods of positive communication with significant others, including men, again helping them to free themselves from traditional sex-role conditioning.

## RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS FOR THE PSYCHOTHERAPEUTIC TREATMENT OF WOMEN

Counseling women has become an important sub-area for psychologists and psychotherapists. Self-styled feminist therapies have proliferated, as well as journal articles and tapes prescribing counseling techniques for women clients. Yet little of this proliferation is substantiated by research findings. Many of the basic questions of the field--for example, the issue of same-sex counseling--have only been touched upon in research designs. This fact makes particularly regrettable the publication in the January 1977 issue of the American Psychologist Monitor, "Implications of Research for Psychotherapeutic Treatment of Women", which has as its implicit thrust that the major questions of the field have been solved and that future research in this area is needless. For a prestigious journal such as the American Psychologist, a widely read organ of the psychological profession, to make this its public statement is doubly dangerous:

1. It leads to a false sense of complacency--our problems are over.
2. Its conclusions are at best questionable.

It is worthwhile to consider this article in some detail. In the area of same-sex counseling, a topic laden with emotionalism and ideology, after a survey of the literature, Dr. Stricker sweepingly concludes "the sex of the therapist per se is of little consequence with regard to sexist practices". He seems to imply that the topic is closed for future discussion. Yet his summary of the existing literature in the field is selective. He mentions articles which reflect his viewpoint that no differences in sexist practice exist between male and female therapists. However, he excludes

contradictory findings already in the literature. For example, one study (Nafsziger, 1971) concluded that female counselors were more accepting of working mothers than were male counselors, and that female counselors tended to describe the female ideal as more extra-family oriented than did male counselors. In another study (Friedersdorf, 1969) the author concluded that male counselors associated college-bound girls with traditional occupations rather than with careers more congruent with college degrees. My own research (Shapiro, 1977) suggests that female counselors gave more reinforcement to role-atypical female clients than did male counselors and were more supportive of both typical and atypical female clients than were male counselors. Thus, at best it seems premature to conclude that sex is an irrelevant variable in the counseling process. The contradictory findings point to the need for further and better controlled research.

Secondly, Dr. Stricker chooses to criticize the concept of a double-standard of mental health for men and women on methodological grounds, attempting to invalidate analogue studies recording a difference, and substituting for them analogue studies tending to minimize this difference. However, while some of Dr. Stricker's methodological points are well taken his criticisms do not invalidate the overall conclusions of the original research findings. For example, regarding the often-cited Broverman study (Broverman, 1971), Dr. Stricker asserts that the discussion grossly exaggerates the data. Granted that one may conclude from the study only that clinicians see women as less logical than men (rather than illogical); that clinicians hold even such a relative stereotype seems highly disturbing. Dr. Stricker explains away the often mentioned equivalency found between the clinicians' descriptions of the



healthy adult male and the healthy adult sex unspecified as a linguistic artifact. Yet certainly language has a pervasive effect on attitudes and behavior. Clinicians who think of adults as "he's" and "she's" may hold highly stereotypic views of what "he's" and "she's" should be like.

To give another example, let us consider Dr. Stricker's handling of Steinmann's pioneering research in the area of sex stereotypes (Steinmann, 1974). Dr. Stricker explains the significant discrepancy between what women think a man wants in a woman (more stereotyped behavior), and what men report wanting in a woman (less stereotyped behavior), as a result of a misconception held by women that men are sexist. In fact, this post-hoc explanation is only one of four possibilities suggested by Steinmann herself, including a discrepancy between male verbal and actual behavior. The study does not provide any explanatory data for the findings. In fact, in looking further at Steinmann's results we discover a discrepancy between responses to more general questionnaire items (where sexism is not evident among men), and responses to more specific questions where the males in her sample appear to be considerably less liberated.

Finally, Dr. Stricker summarizes the studies to which he is sympathetic in such a way as to support his points without providing enough information for an independent conclusion to be drawn. For example, Dr. Stricker concludes from the Oppedisano-Reich dissertation (1976) that psychologists and social workers rated females as less mentally ill than did psychiatrists, and that male professionals preferred treating female psychotics to male psychotics. He uses these findings as evidence of a positive bias toward females. Yet

the fact that women are more often psychologists and social workers than they are psychiatrists, while psychiatry as a profession is dominated by males, suggests that this positive bias may be related to sex of therapists. Similarly, the sex difference between male and female professionals regarding female psychotics might be open to a variety of interpretations, not all of which would reflect a "bias toward rather than against females." For example, mental health professionals might simply feel more comfortable seeing a woman rather than a man filling a "sick" role, and this stereotyped expectation could be reflected in more positive feelings toward such patients.

In summary, Dr. Stricker's conclusions in both the areas of same sex counseling and of double standards for male and female mental health seem premature, if not unwarranted. The evidence suggests much ambiguity and contradiction, rather than the crystalline conclusions he presents. Most seriously, despite the caveat at the start of his article, Dr. Stricker pays only the briefest lip service to behavioral as opposed to attitudinal evidence, thus lending tacit support to those who argue that issues such as the above may be resolved through the use of paper and pencil tests alone. Yet, relevant behavioral evidence in this area does exist (Parker, 1967; Schlossberg and Pietrofesa, 1970; Shapiro, 1977). In ignoring this crucial aspect of research design, Dr. Stricker makes his definition of sex stereotyping and sexist practice an extremely superficial one, based on attitudinal self report alone, rather than on actual behavior in the therapy setting. Suppose for example, that research findings show clinicians ceasing to report the double standard of mental health for men and women. With this evidence as a data base, it is impossible to conclude definitively whether or not a double standard still exists--i.e., we still have no idea how

clinicians behave verbally and non-verbally in the therapeutic situation. Quite possibly the clinicians have simply become more sophisticated in terms of answering self report questionnaires. My own research (Shapiro, 1977), leads me to conclude that while attitudinal changes in the area of sex bias and therapy may be occurring, it is a real possibility that sexist practices still exist on a behavioral level. The APA Task Force report provides important attitudinal data regarding the existence of such practices in therapy. Rather than dismissing this information as Dr. Stricker does, it would be well to consider the encouragement of research in areas defined by the Task report.

I fully endorse Dr. Stricker's summary recommendations: Increased course work in counseling women, and the psychology of women; increased supervision sensitive to sexist practices in therapy; the teaching of androgynous personality theories; and consciousness-raising of consumers. Insofar as the article cautions against hasty generalizations from a limited data base in the service of an over-eager ideology, I am also in full agreement. However, insofar as the article hints that all the answers are in it must be questioned. Hopefully, Dr. Stricker does not feel that his article represents the last word on research in this area. Certainly for good teaching and good supervision to occur, a solid research base must exist to provide a theoretical and an empirical rationale. Unless research is encouraged which specifies and defines sexist practices, training and education will continue to be haphazard based only on stereotypes of stereotypes.

Attitudinal research during this time tends to reflect primarily the social flux around male and female sex roles. My own research in this area (Shapiro, 1977) suggested that both healthy males and females were seen to cluster around an androgynous concept. However, women were seen as significantly more "masculine", more instrumental than the healthy male. Other studies also suggest that, perhaps as a compensation for a previous sex stereotyping, women were perceived as more adventurous, bolder, more instrumental than their male counterparts (source).

Thus, a brief review of existing attitudinal evidence suggests a murky picture at best. Paper and pencil tests do not provide clear evidence of sexual bias among respondents. At the same time they do not provide clear-cut evidence of a non-sexist attitude.

Another significant area to consider in sex stereotyping is diagnostic assessment, labeling, and treatment. In this area research by Masling and Harris in the late sixties and early seventies provides a series of studies. Masling and Harris focused on TAT and Roschach administrations. They concluded that male experimenters gave sex-romantic cards to female clients significantly more often than they did to male clients. Also, they concluded that male experimenters gave more cards overall to female clients than to male clients. Their analysis of these findings included references to the voyeuristic tendencies of male experimenters. However, in this area as well, the evidence is far from clear. Herson (1971) reports a failure of replication. Wolfe provides alternative explanations: females are more likely to have romantic concerns, or males may need to spend more time getting to know their female clients.

Another area worth considering is that of sex typing in diagnosis. Women's psychological diagnostic profile tends to be psychoneurotic rather than sociopathic (an emphasis on self-deprivation, turning against the self, for women; an emphasis on self-indulgence, turning against others, for men; Zigler and Phillips, 1960. Phyllis Chesler promoted the hypothesis (1972) that a faithful adherence to the feminine sex role stereotype tends to result in the label of mental illness, while deviance from the feminine sex role stereotype also results in the same label. In her widely read book, Women and Madness, she gives examples of sexual conformity in mental illness, such as depression and hysteria, as well as sexual deviance in mental illness, notably schizophrenia.

It is also worthwhile to consider sex stereotyping in treatment. Looking at clinical outcome studies, very often the measure of success is the reestablishment of behavior consistent with one's sex role. An early study by Orr (1955) showed that women who were non-intellectual, had domestic skills and were married tended to be discharged more frequently than women without these qualifications for mental health. Another study (Daniels, 1963) showed that women who leave psychiatric wards against medical approval display more masculine behaviors (angry, attacking, acting out) than those women who do not leave under such circumstances. Across all categories of deviance improvement in mental health is measured exclusively in terms of return to conventional sex role conformity.

Finally, an important although largely ignored area is an examination of behavioral bias in counselors. Studies which examine actual behavioral bias are difficult to execute and consequently appear infrequently in the literature. However, Parker (1967) discovered that male therapists gave more nondirective responses to female than to male clients. He argued that male therapists

assumed that female clients know better how to fill the patient role than do male clients. Schlossberg and Pietrofesa (1970) showed that while female counselors displayed as much bias as male counselors, 81.3 percent of the total bias statements toward a woman choosing between a deviant and a conforming career goal were negative, while only 18.7 percent were positive. My own research (Shapiro, 1977) suggested significantly more reinforcement of typical career and typical values in traditional women with more reinforcement of atypical career and atypical values in non-traditional women. This was interpreted as a verbal and non-verbal reinforcement of image consistency on the part of the therapist.

The APA Survey in 1975 defined four areas of perceived sex bias in counseling women. The first is the fostering of traditional sex roles. In this approach, problem resolution comes from marriage or perfecting the wife role. The therapist tends to lack sensitivity to the woman client's career, work and role diversity. The female client's attitude toward childbearing and rearing is viewed as a necessary index of her emotional stability. The therapist supports the idea that childbearing and the child's problems are solely the responsibility of the mother. Finally, the therapist defers to the husband's needs in the conduct of his wife's treatment. The second point has to do with biased expectations and devaluations of women. In this condition the therapist denies self-actualizing potential or assertiveness for female clients, and fosters concepts of women as passive/dependent. The therapist often uses theories to condone violence toward women, uses sexist jokes, and employs demeaning labels when describing female clients. A third category is defined as sexist use of psychoanalytic terms, including insistence on Freudian interpretations, vaginal orgasm

as a prerequisite for emotional maturity, and assertiveness identified as penis envy. Finally, the Task Force Report identifies the problem of responding to women as sex objects, either when the therapist explicitly seduces the client; or when the therapist holds a double standard for male and female sexual activities; or when the therapist weighs the physical appearance in the selection of patients or in setting therapeutic goals. Sexual feelings between therapist and client on an implicit level are a particularly difficult although important concept to identify; for example, the insecure male therapist may encourage dependency or sexual overtures in a client. My own research suggested that while clients liked both male and female counselors, they liked them for very different reasons. Female counselors were liked because they were understanding and able to establish rapport, while male counselors were liked for their sexual attractiveness and their ability to fulfill a sublimated boyfriend role.

Finally, a word needs to be said about the issue of same sex counseling which Dr. Stricker addressed so definitively in his article. Phyllis Chesler argues that therapy is a patriarchal institution similar to marriage. The therapist is white, middle-aged, and male. The female patient, usually younger, also white, is generally in a position of subordination and dependence. Some feminist therapists argue that men because they are men will never understand or recognize the needs of women. On the other hand, from a behavioral viewpoint where little attention is paid to relationship variables, it is argued that any adequately trained therapist can effect a successful therapeutic outcome with any client, regardless of sex. The experimental evidence pertinent to same sex counseling is mixed. Let us consider the area of differential clinician concepts of mental health. In the classic Broverman study there was no difference between male and female therapists. In Fabrikant's study two years later, male therapists

argue that women could be fulfilled and satisfied through the wife and mother role, whereas female therapists disagreed. Male therapists saw the males as provider of income, whereas female therapists felt that income could come from one or both. In my study of counselors, females tended to see both healthy, well-adjusted males and females as having more masculine or more instrumental characteristics than did the male counselors.

In the area of differential clinician attitude toward women and careers, the evidence is also mixed. One study of counselors (Thomas & Stuart, 1970) indicates that male counselors tended to show increased and female counselors decreased acceptance of deviant goals as the counselors became more experienced. Also, female counselors tended to assign higher need for counseling status to deviant female clients. Nafsziger's study (1971) showed that females tended to describe the female ideal as more extra-family oriented and were more accepting of working mothers. Friedersdorf's study (1969) indicated that male counselors associated college-bound girls with traditional feminine occupations, whereas female counselors perceived girls as interested in occupations requiring college degrees and more androgynous careers. However, all of these studies contained evidence of supporting the position of no difference as well. For example, the Thomas and Stuart study found no difference between male and female counselors in considering deviant career goals for females as significantly less appropriate than conforming career goals.

In the Thomas and Stuart study both male and female counselors tended to give more negatively biased statements to deviant goals. In the Nafsziger study female counselors were more accepting on careers for women and working mothers, while male counselors were still oriented toward the importance of women's role in the



family. One might argue that in the broader areas of general conceptualization of sex roles there does not seem to be much difference between male and female counselors. However, in examining more specific aspects of sex role definition, for example, female pursuit of careers, it is possible to argue that female counselors and therapists have a somewhat more tolerant view.

Behavioral evidence in the area of same sex counseling is minimal. The Schlossberg and Pietrofesa study found no difference in male and female clinician reinforcement of deviant and conforming careers for female clients. My own study found female counselors to be more reinforcing of atypical clients than were male counselors.

There are still many issues in the area same sex counseling which have received insufficient attention. In a theoretical article (Rice and Rice, 1973) several advantages were enumerated which deserve further research exploration: greater sensitivity to issues; greater ability to emphathize; provision of role modeling; offering solutions stemming from therapist's own experience.

In view of the broad play given to Dr. Stricker's article, it may be important to consider an alternative summary of the existing literature. Let us start with a consideration of the evidence for sex bias in attitudes of contemporary psychologists. The 1971 Broverman study found no differences between the healthy adult sex unspecified and the healthy male. However, the healthy female was seen as less adventurous, more submissive, less independent, more easily influenced, less aggressive, less competitive, more emotional, more conceited, less objective, and disliking math and science as compared to her male counterpart. Further, male characteristics were seen as more socially desirable than were female characteristics.

Certainly, it is not surprising to expect that attitudes influenced by the women's liberation movement would begin to change. A study done by Fabrikant (1973), found that both male and female psychologists could agree with the following statements: Women do not need to be married to have a full life; marriage can be a co-equal partnership; women cannot expect to be completely satisfied by the wife and mother role; women can experience sexual satisfaction with someone other than their husband. Characteristics describing the male were: Aggressive, assertive, bold, breadwinner, chivalrous, crude, independent, virile. The female on the other hand, was seen as a chatterer, decorative, dependent, busy, domestic, fearful, flighty, fragile, generous, irrational, nurturing, overemotional, passive, subordinate, tempermental, and virtuous. Seventy percent of the female words were rated as negative, while seventy-one percent of the male words were rated positive. However, in a 1974 follow-up, some of the positive words had gone from male to equal, while some of the negative words had gone from female to equal.