

THE EXCHANGE

This issue's featured subject is "Gender."

MEN AND WOMEN ARE A SCREAM!

Hey ladies, ever wonder why when you say to guys, "Stop yelling at me," they say in a booming voice, "I AM NOT YELLING!"

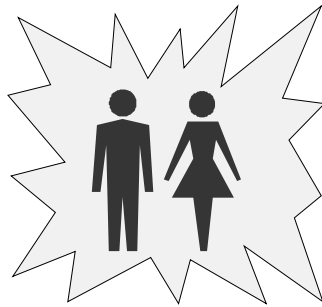
Or fellows, how about when you ask women to stop nagging and they say in a higher pitched voice, "I'm not nagging. What do you mean nagging? Oh you will know when I am nagging, but don't sit there and tell me what I am doing. I know what I am doing, and I am just talking, not nagging. And another thing..."

Regardless of your age, race, size, etc., when you make or receive a call from a new individual, what is the first piece of information you have to form your opinion of them? You guessed it, their voice! Although men and women have more in

common than not, our voice differences are obvious. About 40 % of our communication is based on how we sound.

There are some humorous stereotypes about the differences between men and women. Let's look at some actual examples of how our voices are physically different.

All people, including men, women, and children, have the same basic vocal instruments. We all have lips, teeth, tongues, cheeks, and a larynx (voice box).



Above our voice boxes are layers of tissue called vocal folds. When people shout, these folds are blown apart like curtains of an opened window. When we are stressed, our vocal folds are stretched like a pulled rubber band.

Most men have bigger vocal folds than women. Sorry guys, but you have fat folds! When excited, men's voices get louder (most of the time without realizing it!). So when someone says, "you are shouting," instead of defending yourself, just lower your volume and soften your tone. Guys, remember to refrain from speaking so loudly that your words are not received.

Women have thinner folds. Since women have less tissue in their vocal folds, when they get excited their voices increase in pitch. This is similar to a plucked string on guitar. It is totally unfair that when men shout and their volume increases they are seen as "take charge" leaders while when women shout and their pitch goes up there are seen as the "B" word, **Bossy!** Women remember, when you are getting frustrated, talk slower and lower your pitch to sound more in control. The first part of controlling the situation is controlling your voice. Life is a scream when shared with one another, but we don't have to scream at one another to enjoy life!

What Our Clients Are Saying

"Because of TLC's coaching, the process of interviewing has been much easier. I was able to adapt to who wanted more detail, who wanted the bottom line, and who just wanted to chit-chat. I have been offered a better job making more money than I ever was before. Thank you for all the coaching. I believe it has helped me and I think the learned skills continue to benefit me."

John Roy, Chattanooga TN

"I really enjoyed your presentation. There were definitely things I needed to improve and your session is going to be helpful. You were outstanding and thanks for a wonderful session."

Nissa Williams, Atlanta GA



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LOOKING AHEAD:

◆ The July issue of The Exchange will focus on The Power of Questions.

LOOKING BACK:

- ◆ For previous editions of The Exchange, go to our [back issues](#).
- ◆ Re-read the [11/2001 edition: The Importance of Voice](#).

If you want your spouse to listen and pay strict attention to every word you say...talk in your sleep.



After a quarrel, a husband said to his wife, "You know, I was a fool when I married you." She replied, "Yes dear, you were, but I was in love and didn't notice."

Quick Tips:

- Men, using a pen and paper, jot down your advice when listening rather than interrupting the speaker to tell her what to do.
- Women, when you just want to talk, tell the man you need a listener.



To learn more about it, click here!

ADVICE FOR A MARTIAN, FROM A MARTIAN; *LEND ME YOUR EARS!*

By Ben Cairns, M.A.

This week I had an interesting question from an individual who is the lone male in a department of female professionals. He related that his crowning ability to quickly see solutions to problems was not appreciated and he felt that he was becoming more and more alienated from the rest of the staff. It seemed that the more helpful he was, the more removed everyone else became. Even though he had just met me on the street, he wanted my expert opinion as a communication coach on exactly what he should do. He wanted an instant solution to his gender challenge!

It is hard to tell someone what to do when you do not know much about him or her, or the context in which their challenges occur. Much of the significance of communication is bound up in the context. My first hunch was that this fellow was experiencing a typical gender miscommunication, and his answers to further questions from me seemed to confirm this.

John Gray did a good job describing some typical male/female dynamics and predictable miscommunications in his book *Men are from Mars Women are from Venus*. Men tend to be task-oriented thinkers, logical, active, and solution focused. In general, women tend to exemplify a more global thinking process. In addition to the logic needed for finding solutions, women pay more attention to the relationship aspect of interactions. Feelings, the manner in which things are said, and being an attentive listener are often more important than what is being discussed. And not only that, it isn't just "how you say it" that makes more of a difference for women, *it is also what you don't say*. Men who offer solutions without listening thoroughly have missed a good opportunity to shut up.



The best approach is to listen before you talk. In addition to listening to *what* the other person talks about, *listen beyond the words for their feelings*. Is there frustration, aggravation, or excitement? Reflect the emotion you hear to make sure you understand ("that sounds frustrating!"). Avoid saying "I know just what you mean." When emotions are high, the other person may not feel you are capable of knowing their emotional state and may become defensive. Encourage the other person to talk as much as he/she wants to before you provide any information. Resist the temptation to "one up" them with something worse, more impressive, or more dramatic. Use head nods, encouraging sounds (OK, uh-huh, alright, etc.) and ask open questions to communicate fully. After all of this you may ask, "Would you like to know what I think might be helpful?" Sometimes, all the other person wants you to do is listen and understand. So, instead of offering solutions, lend your ears!

ASK THE EXPERTS



Dear TLC,

I just can't handle it when women get emotional at work. They cry and I feel like I have ten legs with each foot in my mouth. Help!
Feet in Mouth Male

Dear Feet,

Our culture is more accepting of women crying than men expressing their fears and frustrations in that manner. Most women who cry when they become angry hate it. Break eye contact, tie your shoe, get a glass of water or tissue for her. In other words, give her a few moments to compose herself. Sometimes, rescheduling the meeting can be helpful. Just make sure you reschedule it the same day or she may close up all communication.

WHO SAID BOYS WEAR BLUE AND GIRLS WEAR PINK?

By Vincent Ivan Phipps, B.S.

This is still one of our oldest mysteries. As common as it is to dress little boys in blue and little girls in pink, how many of us know the reasons behind this gender color scheme?

The oldest explanation dates back to approximately the 1400's, originating in England. It was believed that demons and evil spirits hunted young males. Boys were dressed in blue because it was the color of the sky – and consequently a resemblance of Heaven and God.

Girls were not dressed in blue because people felt that demons had no desire to possess girls. About a century later, little girls were given a color, too. Since boys and girls were "opposites," it was decided that girls would wear the opposite of blue, which is red. Red was considered to be too harsh a color for little girls. Instead, the pastel pink was used.

Even as children, we are made aware of our differences as boys and girls. As we get older, those childhood separations perpetuate our views of how we see each other as we mature into men and women. Some mature around age 16. Others may mature around 61, if ever! Regardless of when you physically (or mentally) mature, look for the wonderful differences in both sexes. Explore your true colors!



CLASSES for men and women at our local high school. Sign up by Aug. 15th. Note: Due to the complexity and difficulty level of their contents, each course will only accept a maximum of 8 participants.

CLASSES FOR MEN:

Topic 1 - How to Fill Up the Ice Cube Trays. Step by step, with slide presentation.

Topic 2 - The Toilet Paper Roll; Do They Grow on the Holders? Round table discussion.

Topic 3 – Fundamental Differences Between the Laundry Hamper and the Floor. Pictures and explanatory graphics.

Topic 4 – The After-Dinner Dishes and Silverware. Can they levitate and fly into the dishwasher? Practice and discussion.

Topic 5 – Loss of Identity: Losing the Remote to Your Wife. Help line support and support groups.

Topic 6 – Health Watch: Bringing Her Flowers is NOT Harmful to Your Health. Graphics and audio tape.

Topic 7 – Real Men Ask for Directions When Lost. Real life testimonials.

CLASSES FOR WOMEN:

Topic 1 – How to Expertly Apply Make-Up While Driving: It Can Be Done Without Holding Up the Traffic Behind You. Driving simulation and demonstration provided.

Topic 2 – Ignoring the Sales: You Really Cannot Save Money While Spending Money. 10% discount on all merchandise purchased in class.

Topic 3 – How to Postpone Conversations Until Half-Time. Shock therapy session while watching a video of the 1998 University of Tennessee National Championship game on large-screen tv.

Topic 4 – Ten Reasons Not to Ask Him If You Look Fat. Fashion show follows.

Topic 5 – Mood Swings Can Be Avoided. Sponsored by Herschel's Chocolate Company.



MEN, Remember to...

- Pay attention to your vocal tones and body language when speaking to a woman.
- Listen without feeling like you need to advise.
- Ask questions when you receive indirect or unclear communication.

WOMEN, Remember to...

- Refrain from jumping to the conclusion that he is yelling at you purposefully.
- Choose your words more carefully when talking to a man.
- Realize that you may be "reading" something that is not there.

A woman was telling her friend, "It is I who made my husband a millionaire." "And what was he before you married him?" asked the friend. The woman smiled and replied, "A billionaire."



CEO CORNER: THEN AND NOW

By Beverly Inman-Ebel

My parents had clear perceptions of what males and females should and should not do. For instance, I was not allowed to mow the yard because it was considered too dangerous for a girl. I could not telephone a boy, but he could call me. I was encouraged to be a spectator of sports, not a participant.



I remember that it was very important to my parents that I know how to cook. I had absolutely no interest in the culinary arts until I discovered fried egg sandwiches when I was thirteen. I cooked those grease-sodden delights for my family every Sunday night for six months. Then, as suddenly as it emerged, my interest in the kitchen abated. My parents never encouraged me to enter the kitchen again!

While more tolerant today, our culture still focuses on the gender differences. Take communication for instance. Men communicate to report information while women communicate to establish rapport. Men interrupt while women overlap each other in conversation. Men rely on word content while women concentrate on how those words are spoken. Men talk more in groups and women talk more in one-on-one conversations.

Let's look at the similarities. There are no statistically significant differences in genders with the prevalence of behavioral style. Men and women experience the same emotions, although our culture may not always be tolerant of showing those emotions. Both genders are guilty of being stubborn, refusing to listen, and creating perceptions that are not founded in reality.

I like differences in people and that certainly includes the differences between the sexes. Since we do occupy the same planet, workplace, and at home the same bathroom, tolerance is called for. Listen more. Talk less. Ask questions. Be careful not to jump to a conclusion just because someone belongs to a particular gender.

My parents were products of their upbringing. Fortunately, they were able to look ahead and accept change. I know this because they very firmly instilled in me that I could do anything I set my mind to do. They accept that my husband and boys cook more than I do. They smile when they see my utter delight of mowing our seven-acre meadow. They know their daughter participates in football every Saturday afternoon in the autumn and they are rather proud that their grandsons get so many calls from girls. I believe their perceptions of what males and females should and should not do are clearer than ever! Pass it on and live your dreams.

FEATURED SERVICE: Y.E.S.!!

Beverly Inman-Ebel, our CEO, will be presenting a two day course on "Y.E.S.! You, the Effective Speaker," in Gatlinburg, TN, on August 5 & 6, 2002. This course is open for anyone to attend. Call us at 1-888-BECAUSE or check this link for more details. talklisten.com/speakers.html



TLC establishes long-term relationships with our clients. If we have helped you or if you believe our approach to change would work for someone you know, please communicate with us by email [tlc@talklisten.com] or phone [1-888-232-2873]. We work with individuals and groups on the following subject areas: attitude, listening, body language, voice, leadership, compliments and corrections, behavioral style, teamwork, effective meetings, public speaking, accent reduction and much more!

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And finally... Women will never be equal to men until they can walk down the street with a bald head and a beer gut and still think they are beautiful.

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