

For Permanent & Positive Change

The Exchange

FEATURED TOPIC: GENDER DIFFERENCES

The Seventy Percent Rule

As you read the articles in this month's issue, please note that 70% of men and women will fall into the gender specific criteria that are described. Of course that leaves 30% of people that do not fall into these categories.

Do Men and Women Listen Differently?

Most men and women would agree that the genders listen differently. Men might say that women read too much into what they hear, while women may report that men do not listen at all, not when it really counts anyway. Their styles of listening have differences, as long as you remember the 70% rule.

For instance, men focus more upon word content. How something is said is not nearly as important as what is said. Subtle changes in the speaker's voice and body language may be overlooked or not noticed at all. When talking to men, choose your words carefully. Do not hint or rely on delivery of the message to carry the intent. Bottom line: use vocabulary that says what you mean.

Women, on the other hand, focus more upon how something is said. An increase in rate, volume or pitch demonstrates excitement to them. A quick look at the speaker's face will help to interpret whether that excitement is negative or positive. When the speaker lowers pitch, volume, and rate, the woman listener hears the seriousness of the message and will respond accordingly. When talking to women, think about the delivery of the message. If you do not have the confidence that your delivery will correctly send the message, use words to describe, such as, "I do not want to do this. I am not mad, disappointed, or indifferent. I simply do not choose to spend my time in this activity."

What Our Clients Are Saying

"Vincent's subject matter knowledge on how to interact with different types of people exceeded my expectations. The day was money and time well spent."

Kevin Tarver, Director, Credit Payment Services, Chattanooga, TN

A technique that will help anyone become a better listener is to seek to listen first, before you speak. After listening, use your own words to summarize what you think the other person has said and then check for verification. Here is an example: "I'm understanding that you want to email all of the attendees from the conference with a personal response by this Friday, right?" Using this Para-Probe, you will accomplish two things. First, you get credit for listening, even if you misunderstood. Second, you are able to determine if what you heard is what the speaker meant to say. Because we all use so many filters when listening, verifying can be important.

Another listening technique that helps between the genders is to stop what you are doing when you decide to listen. Cease your activity and give eye contact to the speaker. In a world where we boast of being able to multi-task, focusing on listening is the one activity that will help to build positive relationships. ❖

Why Do Pirates Wear Earrings?

Ever see a pirate movie where the scruffy water and sun-drenched villain did not wear an earring? (Gee, those closed negative questions are tough to answer, right matey?)

The habit of these worldly man's-men wearing jewelry was not a fashion statement. Acupuncturists report there are pressure points just above the earlobe that help improve eyesight, reduce hunger, and boost energy levels. You can see that these benefits would be appreciated on a long sea voyage.

Why do cowboys wear high heels? The raised heel keeps their feet from slipping in the stirrup. Years ago, even in the cities, men wore

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Looking Forward

Our next issue will focus on Presentations.

Looking Back

You might also be interested in our November 2006 edition: [Keeping Employees Happy](#) or read other [previous issues of The Exchange](#).

"We must learn to live together as brothers and sisters or we will perish together as fools."

Martin Luther King, Jr.

For Permanent & Positive Change

Talking Heads

Men and women can talk differently. Unless you are tuned into the purpose of the communication, you may think the other is just a talking head. Men communicate in order to report information. They tell you something because you need to know, a decision is necessary, or your input is valued.

Women communicate in order to establish rapport. They tell you something because it offers the opportunity to get to share feelings and opinions that lead to establishing a relationship. Tangents of information that may not seem relevant to the male ears often accompany this rapport building.

Men often complain that women talk too much. Actually, research reports that women talk more frequently in groups of two, while men talk more frequently in larger groups. A wife may ask her husband how a conference went and he will say, "Fine." Only when they are at a large social gathering does she hear the details of the trip. A husband may ask his wife how a conference went and she will give minute descriptions on the spot.

Women tend to use adverbs and adjectives more frequently than men do:

Man: It was nice.

Woman: It was very nice.

Man: Put it in the first room on the left.

Woman: Put it in the first room, to the left, - don't count the bathroom as a room - it's the big room with the blue walls and red carpet.

Research reports that women use more words each day than men. Does this mean simply that they talk more? Can it mean they have more extensive vocabularies? The answer may depend upon the gender that you ask. ❖

The Perfect Valentine's Day Gift

This Valentine's Day, give the gift of listening. Make several coupons for a "listening date". Below are the step-by-step instructions to have a successful date:

- » You begin this date by asking your significant other a Start Probe beginning with "What" or "How". Strive to pick a topic that the other person will be willing to discuss. For instance, "What kinds of things would you like to do for vacation this year?"
- » Next, you listen. No talking. No interrupting. Tilt your head slightly. Nod slowly. Occasionally say, "uh-huh".

- » The third step occurs when the person stops talking. Ask another question based upon something he or she said in the answer to the first question. Do not change the subject or explore new areas. For instance, if she mentions that she wants to go somewhere to relax, doesn't want to spend a lot of money, definitely wants to get out of town and would like to have nice weather, you could ask, "What kinds of activities would you find relaxing?"

Repeat the third step as often as necessary until you want to change the subject and begin a new listening topic.

The above process is called, "The Bridge Probe," because it bridges people together and allows true listening to occur. Too often we spend our listening time striving to think of what to say. The bridge process puts you in the role of listener rather than interrogator. (It works great with teenagers also.) Add in a dinner or home cooked meal and you have a lovely evening. Listen and it will happen. ❖

Ask The Experts

Dear TLC,

I used to play professional sports. Now I work in a large company. I am getting complaints that I am rude and abrupt to the females in the office. That is not my intention. I used to be paid big bucks to knock the offensive line down and I am obviously not adjusting well.

-Outdated Tackle

Dear Tackle,

Because of your size, be sure to give more distance between you and the person you are talking to. Also tone down your voice making sure your volume does not swell upwards. Whenever possible, sell rather than tell. Ask open questions and listen thoroughly to the responses. These tips, along with your intention to do better, should tackle your problem.

Helpful Hints

- ✓ When shaking hands with someone of the other gender, give a firm, yet not hard grip.
- ✓ When communicating with someone of the other gender, refrain from using phrases that are gender specific such as, "that will put hair on your chest."

"There are risks and costs to a program of action. But they are far less than the long-range risks and costs of comfortable inaction."

John F. Kennedy

"... and know that the greater faults that ye find in others are reflections of that ye have caused, or are a part of thine own reflection."

Origin Unknown

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TLC Research

Did you ever wonder which gender handles pain better? Or which one hears better? What are the educational differences that you need to know for your son or daughter? Can women be as competitive as men?

The answers to these and other questions can be found in the links below. TLC has done the research for you:

http://www.gender.org.uk/about/00_diffs.htm

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2003/11/031105064626.htm>

<http://www.geocities.com/Wellesley/2052/gendiff.html>

<http://www.enotalone.com/article/4316.html>

<http://www.stanford.edu/~niederle/Gender.pdf>

TLC Featured Services

Therese Padgett

The TLC half-day seminar, Gender Differences, is informative, fun and revealing. We review the differences between men and women, boys and girls:

- » Biological
- » Neurological
- » Cultural and
- » Communicative

Most importantly, potential solutions are practiced to help us bridge the gender gap.

Remember that we mentioned, in the first article this month, the statistics on gender differences referred to throughout this issue of The Exchange apply to approximately 70% of the population. What about the other 30 per cent? Are there other factors that affect the ways we communicate with each other?

Yes! Communication styles run the gamut and this diversity makes life both interesting and challenging, as do the differences between the genders. TLC offers seminars and individual coaching to help understand these tendencies in ourselves and to adapt to the styles of each other.

Call TLC today to discuss the needs of your organization for one of our seminars on Gender Differences or Communication Styles. Our number is 1-888-BECAUSE – because you ALWAYS communicate!

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Why Do Pirates Wear Earrings?

high heels to keep their pants clean as they walked through the muddy streets. As drainage improved, men stopped wearing heels on their everyday shoes. However, women continued the fashion to make them look taller. When fashion introduced shorter skirts, the raised heel also made the woman's calf look tighter giving more curves to the leg.

It seems we have borrowed much from the other gender in the way we dress. The fashion changes with time. Men used to wear wigs and lace in Europe and now women do. Perhaps what is good for the goose is good for the gander. We may realize that much of what makes us different from each other is driven by our culture.

Remember To

- ✓ Adapt your communication to the person that is listening to you.
- ✓ Ask questions rather than jump to incorrect conclusions.
- ✓ Watch for changes in body language and voice to uncover disagreements before they become verbal.

"Until Eve arrived, this was a man's world."

Richard Armour,
American artist

"... I don't know what immutable differences exist between men and women. Perhaps there are some other unchangeable differences; probably there are a number of irrelevant differences. But it is clear that until social expectations for men and women are equal, until we provide equal respect for both sexes, answers to this question will simply reflect our prejudices."

Naomi Weisstein

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Chief Officer's Opinion

Beverly Inman-Ebel

I have a female client who works in an all-male office. Although she is a professional peer, she thinks the men treat her like a subordinate because she is a woman.

I am sure that gender prejudices are still around in some work environments. In my experience, this has leveled out in the last twenty years. Some times we tend to place too much emphasis on our perception of the cause of unwanted treatment. Perhaps my client is being treated differently because of her behavioral style or her foreign accent rather than because of her gender.

Interestingly, there are no statistically significant differences between the genders on the DISC behavioral style. Basically, there are just as many female dominant communicators, focused on task rather than people, as there are male ones. Culture plays a role in how those people will be accepted. Dominant women get called the "B" word. I cannot recall a particular word for dominant men.

Women have the solace of being able to express their emotions more than men in our culture can. How many times do little boys hear the message that big boys don't cry? Yet in the workplace, women are embarrassed if they cry and a few tears shed from a female can immobilize men.

I believe that in the work environment we all strive to minimize our differences. We blend into our corporate gender. What affect does this have on us when we go home? Is there a place for masculinity and femininity at work?

There were times when TLC had an all-female staff, times when I was the only woman, and other times of gender balance. Right now, we are 75% male. I miss the women. I got a beautiful necklace for Christmas that I wore for three consecutive days. Not one male in the office noticed it. We had a strategic planning meeting one day and were deciding where to go to eat. All of their suggestions were joints that served large portions of meat.

I think men and women are quite different, yet there are many aspects that cause us to cross gender boundaries. Things like common projects and activities, hobbies, skill levels, preferences, goals and friendships. One thing I know for sure: I like variety. I do not want you to blend into my style and habits. Let me be me and I will strive to be the best me that I can be. And I will respect you for who you are and find your differences interesting instead of challenging.

I have asked several questions in this article. If you have some answers or opinions, I will appreciate hearing from you. Until then, live your dreams!

bie@talklisten.com ❖

"If you want truly to understand something, try to change it."

Kurt Lewin

"My race and my gender have never been an issue for me. I have been blessed in knowing who I am and I am part of a great legacy."

Oprah Winfrey

"After the verb "to love," "to help" is the most beautiful verb in the world."

Bertha von Suttner

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 e-mail 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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