Development of a Manual for Training Psychiatric Outpatients in Interpersonal Communication Skills

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DEVELOPMENT OF A MANUAL FOR TRAINING PSYCHIATRIC OUTPATIENTS IN INTER-PERSONAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

by

Gary Joseph Fusciardi

A Thesis
Submitted to the
Faculty of The Graduate College
in partial fulfillment
of the
Degree of Master of Arts

Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan
December 1975
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In writing this thesis, I have benefited from the encouragement, advice, and constructive criticism of Professors Dr. Chris Koronakas, Dr. Malcolm Robertson, and Dr. Kass Lockhart. My thanks go to them, as to the many others in the varied departments at Western Michigan University who have contributed to my professional training. I also would like to thank my family, friends, and loved ones for their support of my efforts for this degree. I especially thank my loving wife for her emotional support and for her diligent efforts at editing this manuscript. This University offered me a light in the midst of darkness, and I thank the people that are the university.

Gary Joseph Fusciardi
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COMMUNICATION SKILLS.

Western Michigan University, M.A., 1975
Psychology, clinical

Xerox University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

One of the primary goals of psychotherapy should be to transcend crisis intervention and facilitative problem solving, and branch into re-educating the client in more adaptive ways of working out his own problems. If the focus of therapy could be redirected to developing interpersonal communication skills and problem solving techniques within each client, the client would be far less likely to become dependent upon the therapist for managing his life. The re-education process need not necessitate the elimination of one-to-one psychotherapy contacts, but rather would become an additional facet of therapy.

As the waiting lists at mental health agencies swell with frustrated and confused individuals, the delay periods grow into months. A realistic approach must be devised to decrease the number of individuals that are constantly returning to the mental health system. The purpose of this thesis is to develop a systematic approach to the re-education of clients in adaptive life skills. This thesis includes first, a literature review and critique of several existing manuals and programs designed for training individuals in interpersonal communication skills. Following this review is a presentation
of the author's own manual for developing interpersonal communication skills within the context of the therapeutic setting. It follows a programmed learning format and includes homework assignments and exercises to enable the client to practice the skills being taught. The therapist's role involves modeling, observation of the client's use of the skills during therapy, and giving helpful feedback to the client.

Problem Area

It is truly unfortunate that our society spends so much time and money teaching its members arithmetic and history, and so little showing them how to share thoughts and feelings with one another (Piaget, 1972). The effect of this neglected area of education is a mass of lonely, alienated, and anxious people. There has been much speculation as to the connection between dysfunctional interpersonal communication patterns and an individual's mental health. There seems to be a marked relationship between those individuals with interpersonal communication deficits and those with impaired personal functioning (Ruesch, 1957; Robbins, 1968).

When an interpersonally inadequate individual finally comes into therapy with an obvious problem in living, a therapist might work hard with the client to alleviate the presenting problem. This is analogous to bandaging the bruised knees of a man who falls down
because of a broken leg. As long as the therapist overlooks the underlying skill deficit, the client will return to therapy with his problems in living. This will lead to the client's becoming dependent upon the therapist to manage his life. It is obvious that not every client can or will be involved in a more comprehensive training therapy program; then crisis intervention on the one presenting problem would be appropriate.

The training of interpersonal communication skills is employed as a therapeutic intervention throughout many modalities of psychotherapy. It is probable that much of the worth of psychotherapy results indirectly from the modeling and subtle teaching that takes place during the therapeutic interaction. Unfortunately, the benefits of this limited training are often lost in the process of "doing" therapy.

Adaptive life skills are those skills that enable an individual to be flexible in a world that is always changing and rarely predictable. Problem solving, tolerance, self-confidence, creativity, and the establishment of interpersonal relationships are some of the many adaptive life skills. At the very foundation of adaptive life skills is the ability to communicate effectively with other people. Interpersonal communication is a process whereby two or more people exchange thoughts and feelings by actively transmitting and receiving information. The distinguishing factor in effective communication is that the speaker goes beyond just sending out the information that
he believes conveys his message. The effective communicator assumes responsibility for getting feedback from the receiver and checking out whether or not he received the message that the communicator intended to send. If there is any discrepancy, the effective communicator works to find a way to better communicate his idea.

The effective communicator is also a good receiver. Upon receiving a message from a speaker, he will feedback what he heard and check his perception with the speaker. Again, if the two perceptions do not match, the good receiver will work with the speaker to come to a common understanding. The individual who tries to function with other people without checking out whether he is communicating effectively is likely to end up feeling depressed, angry, and frustrated that no one understands or cares for him.

It is to the purpose of training these ineffective communicators that this thesis has focused on the development of a manual and program for training clients in interpersonal communication skills.

Significance of Interpersonal Communication Skills in Therapy

Psychotherapy is concerned with the problems the individual encounters when relating to himself and to others. Communication is the medium through which this relating is achieved, and is therefore essential to the therapeutic process (Robbins, 1968). Training
in interpersonal communication skills exists as a key element of treatment across the spectrum of mental health problem areas.

Interpersonal skills have an obvious place in the treatment of acute mental disturbances and crisis situations. Primarily, the focus is on the therapist getting in touch with the disoriented client, though some indirect training may take place from this process. Training interpersonal communication skills at this point could reduce the possibility of further and more serious disturbance in the client.

Interpersonal communication skills are also relevant when dealing with chronic hospitalized mental patients. The incidence of schizophrenia has been found to correlate significantly with disturbances in family communication. These disturbances were characterized by tangential remarks, unrelated replies, vague comments, contradictions, incongruencies, and imperviousness (Lamson, 1970). Ravensborg (1972) reported increased interpersonal awareness and improved ward behavior after implementing an operant conditioning program with hospitalized chronic schizophrenics. The results imply that deficits in interpersonal communication skills can be deeply related to many of the mental disorders and that, even when the disturbances are severe, learning to improve these skills is possible.

A study by Giffin (1969) shows the necessity for interpersonal
training in geriatric patients. In general, increased interaction on the part of those people who are troubled, anxious, or disturbed can produce a heightened sense of responsibility for the enjoyment and personal satisfaction of other people. "Much of what is called senility or senile psychosis is nothing more than the reaction of the aged people to isolation (Glasser, 1975, p. 8)."

A final area of psychotherapy that has relied heavily upon the use of interpersonal communication skill training is marriage and family counseling. It seems obvious that any group of people that must share living space and personal endeavors should have an open channel of communication in order to work out the many problems that arise. If, for whatever reason, the members of these groups or couples do not have the skills to communicate their thoughts and feelings to the others, they are almost assured of the failure of the group as a unit. Typically, when the group as a unit fails, one or another of the members of that group will come under fire as the cause of the strife. At this point the family or couple might seek professional help and ask that the problem member or members be "cured." Long-time family therapists will agree that it is rarely the case that a single individual is at fault for damaging a family or relationship.

Many different approaches have been designed to meet the problem of training a family in more effective interpersonal relating.
Daly and Reeves (1973) reported success in training families through the use of a Human Interaction Laboratory that focused on cognitive and behavioral changes in relating to self and others. It is becoming increasingly evident that family and marriage counselors must face the fact that these are relationships involving lonely, alienated, and frustrated people, and the single most significant intervention is to train the members to communicate their feelings and desires to one another (Woody & Woody, 1973; Eswara, 1968; Goodman & Ofshe, 1968; Jones, 1969).

It appears that across all disciplines and areas of mental health there exists one major common element and that is the necessity for the development of the individual's ability to better express his joys, sorrows, and aspirations to his significant others.
CHAPTER II

CRITIQUE OF SELECTED MANUALS AND PROGRAMS

The widespread need for training clients in interpersonal communication skills and other life skill areas has led to the development and publication of manuals and procedures that are designed to systematically approach this task. For the purposes of this thesis, a manual is any text that moves the reader in a step-by-step format toward a specific goal. The use of manuals in therapy can serve several constructive functions for the therapist and client. It can cut down the amount of time the therapist must spend in familiarizing the client with the new material. Manuals allow the therapist the opportunity to focus his energy on the client's integration of the techniques and also allows him to speak intelligibly with the client, employing a specifically defined vocabulary. The client, in turn, is allowed the opportunity to have a written copy of the materials, which he can examine at his convenience, in order to assist in his cognitive understanding. The use of a manual also insures that there will be a consistently thorough coverage of the concepts and principles.

A survey of training manuals and programs for the development of interpersonal communication and other life skills shows three distinct strategies for training clients. First, there are programs that involve only working with the client in the therapeutic session, with
a few homework assignments included. This involves the use of many therapeutic techniques in training the client to behave and feel more interpersonally adequate. The primary focus is on behavioral changes and minimally on cognitive changes. Secondly, there are manuals that involve the client working through the manual and materials completely on his own. These manuals can be used by people who are not in therapy. The primary focus here is on cognitive changes and only limited behavioral changes. Finally, there are manuals that involve the therapist working with the client as the client works through the manual. The manual provides the basis for cognitive change, while the therapist's interaction involves troubleshooting any misunderstandings the client may have, and also provides an opportunity for the client to practice the skills being taught. The primary focus in this approach is two-fold, as it attempts to cover both cognitive and behavioral changes.

**Behavioral Strategies**

An example of a program that fits the first type of training strategy is Piaget's *Training Patients To Communicate* (1972). This article proposes a program of techniques to employ when making behavioral changes in a person's interpersonal communication skills. Performance characteristics of effective communication are listed, and the author suggests that the client be rated in terms of the
presence or absence of these characteristics. From this rating the therapist can assess the deficit areas upon which therapy should focus. Piaget develops a thorough presentation of how this program, which is oriented toward behavioral change, can be set up and implemented. Discussions include setting up the program, collecting data, giving non-judgmental feedback, and setting up contracts. The single most beneficial aspect of this text is the specific description of various techniques that are as diverse in theoretical origin as they are dissimilar in training function. Piaget stresses a two-fold approach to facilitate training. The first stresses the reduction of anxiety through desensitization and relaxation, and the second focuses on training the client in those skills in which he obviously displays deficits. This is accomplished by employing the therapeutic intervention techniques that are suggested. Seven specific techniques are described and resources for others are cited.

Piaget's program concentrates on developing a few specific skills in the deficit areas that are exhibited by the client. There is very little emphasis on cognitive understanding of the principles and concepts of interpersonal communication. This intensified approach has several attractive aspects to it. First, the therapist is not put into the position of having to guide the client through a series of cognitive exercises and principles. Second, the training can easily be accomplished within the confines of an average term of therapy,
and the client can get back to living his life. However, there are also some unattractive aspects to this shotgun approach. By not training the client in any of the cognitive principles, the client will be less likely to be able to work out the interpersonal communication problems that arise in his later life. Since the program is designed to develop skills to fill only the present deficits, there is no provision for the client to learn to generate solutions by himself, when he encounters problems in the future. It is acknowledged that not every person can be, or would be willing to be, involved in a training program that has more depth by covering the cognitive principles of human relating. Therefore, the above program is very useful in the training of that population of people who cannot, or will not, participate in a more comprehensive program.

Cognitive Strategies

Most of the college textbooks for interpersonal communication classes could qualify as the second strategy, the cognitive approach to training interpersonal communication skills. In looking beyond these texts, there emerge several manuals that give an intelligible description of everyday events and disclose how to better interact within them. Some of these make an attempt to teach the concepts to the reader, rather than allowing him to casually read through it.

Open Marriage by O'Neill and O'Neill (1973) is a manual that
focuses specifically on the relationship that exists in marriage. The text is written in a casual, first-person narrative style. The O'Neills discuss their feelings and ideas of what characterizes a good relationship, calling this an open marriage. A closed marriage is one in which the two individuals live in strict roles and under restrictions, not of their own choosing, but rather those forced upon them because they are afraid to cross the boundaries of stereotypes and traditions. Members of a closed marriage do not share their feelings, fears, and aspirations with one another. In short, they do not communicate, and, thus, they do not grow.

The authors focus several chapters on the topic of communication and the characteristics of good communication. Some principles and concepts which they present could lead the motivated reader to insights, and possibly even some behavioral changes. But, for the most part, this text provides principles in an advice-giving format that could only be helpful to highly intelligent couples who wish to improve their relationship. There are no suggested exercises, nor are there other opportunities to practice the development of the new skills; there are merely descriptions of the characteristics of an ideal relationship, with anecdotes demonstrating the right and wrong way to apply the principles. Use of this manual, though entertaining and informative, would facilitate minimal cognitive change and negligible behavioral change.
There are several manuals on the market today which are written so as to actually teach the reader their content. They employ several teaching techniques. The primary technique is frequent repetition of the key principles throughout each unit and the body of the text. A second technique involves systematically linking the new material to previously presented concepts. Yet another technique employs the use of fill-in-the-blank and multiple choice questions, providing their answers on the following page.

Carkhuff has developed several manuals to teach parents, teachers, or professionals how to become interpersonally adequate and skilled at problem solving. The Art of Helping (Carkhuff, 1973) is an attempt to instruct the reader in skills which he would need to help those that are important to him. The Art of Problem Solving (Carkhuff, 1974) focuses specifically upon one primary life skill: problem solving. The text attempts to teach the reader personal problem solving and also group problem solving techniques. Both of these manuals, though covering different materials, employ similar techniques. The major issues are broken down into small components and each is explored within the chapters.

The design of the books consists of rectangular pages (with the longer side horizontal) which are secured in a spiral binding. There are simple illustrated drawings of characters who are incorporated into the text. The writing is large and very legible, and
there are only a few short paragraphs on each page. This format can lead the reader to feel as though he is progressing through the manual very rapidly, thus reducing boredom and maintaining interest. These two manuals do not provide questions or exercises for the reader to perform. Primarily, Carkhuff's approach is to break down the complex materials into small parts and present each part in succession, leading up to a final discussion of the entire process presented in each manual. In addition, the two manuals also employ the use of constant repetition of the concepts and principles, in order to better convey their ideas.

Carkhuff's manuals focus on the cognitive aspects of the skills being trained, but do not provide any practice for behavioral changes. The audience at which these manuals are directed are parents, teachers, and professionals; the implied message is that, to benefit from these manuals, the reader should be an intact and responsible individual. In fact, in the introduction to The Art of Problem Solving Carkhuff states that this manual is not for everyone, and that it is meant for responsible people that take responsibility in their lives. The use of these manuals with a population of people that are anything less than very responsible would probably produce minimal cognitive change and no behavioral change.

A final example of this second strategy of teaching interpersonal communication skills is a programmed learning text by
Bullmer entitled *The Art of Empathy* (1975). This manual attempts to teach the principles of empathy in such a way that the reader completes the book with considerable cognitive changes and some practice, in order to facilitate the reader's behavioral changes. This manual is a programmed, self-instructional text with a unique format. Every other page of the book is printed upside down, so that the reader starts on the front of each page, flipping through to the end. Then the book is turned over and the reader covers the back of each page, reading from the back to the front. It is designed this way so that the answers to the questions do not appear on the same page as the questions. Adding to the uniqueness of this manual is the fact that each of the aforementioned pages are not read from the top to the bottom, rather there are several frames down each page, and the manual is read by covering only the first frame of each page. When the reader reaches the end of the unit, the text instructs him to turn back to the first page of the unit and begin reading the second frame on each page. This continues until the unit is completed. Again, this format of turning the pages after each paragraph gives the reader the feeling that he is progressing through the manual very rapidly, and seems to reduce boredom and maintain concentration.

The content of Bullmer's manual covers several general aspects of interpersonal functioning and also some of the basic concepts of empathy. Bullmer describes empathy as "a process whereby
one person perceives accurately another person's feelings, and the meaning of these feelings, and then communicates with sensitivity this understanding to the other person.(1975, p. vi)." This manual was developed for professionals and paraprofessionals in the helping fields and also individuals who want more satisfaction from their relationships with other people. The concepts involved with the development of empathy are divided into five units and one summary unit. Each unit is followed by a brief proficiency test of the materials covered within that unit. The test enables the reader to evaluate his own understanding of the concepts before going on to new materials.

This manual focuses primarily on the reader's acquisition of cognitive principles, and somewhat on the actual behavioral changes that are involved in empathy. The author does provide exercises involving situations and conversations which could typically arise. The reader gets the opportunity to test his understanding of the principles by having to empathically assess the content of sample statements. The answers then provide feedback as to whether the reader is right or wrong. If he is wrong, a statement is provided explaining which defense mechanism the reader might be employing in order to arrive at each of the inappropriate answers. This is a most productive use of integrating materials presented with application of the principles. The reader is provided with a hypothesis about himself, which he can check-out and possibly use to modify his own behavior.
Bullmer's manual has many very good features, but its overall usefulness is diminished by some basic flaws. The manual was designed to meet the needs of too many people. The vocabulary is too complex for the simpler level of the individual for whom the insights are designed. Conversely, the individual who would be comfortable with the complexity of the vocabulary would find the content and experiences too elementary. Thus, the usefulness of this particular manual lies primarily in the demonstration of some very good procedural techniques for developing a manual, but does not go beyond this.

**Behavioral and Cognitive Strategies**

The third strategy for training clients in interpersonal communication skills is logically the soundest. A program that is designed to change behavior in the present and the future must focus on both the cognitive understanding and actual practice of the behavior.

One such manual is the *Training Manual for Counseling Skills* by the National Drug Abuse Training Center (1973). This manual involves the use of descriptions of the principles, exercises that ask the reader to fill in the blanks, and questions that are related to tape recorded statements which a client might say. The primary focus of this manual is on training volunteer paraprofessionals to work in crisis centers and suicide prevention programs. The manual is constructed in a potpourri format. There are pages with just descriptive
writing, pages with simple characters drawn to accent the example being presented, and pages that require the reader to respond to situations presented in a short essay type form. The manual is designed to allow the trainees to progress completely through it in a single day-long training workshop, during which there are group leaders present to help clarify ambiguities and model some of the techniques.

The content encompasses feelings, feedback, owning of feelings, empathy, response to conflicts in the speaker's feelings, and problem solving. The manual also includes a presentation on values and attitudes and how they can harm effective listening and responding. Examples of the content involve typical statements that crisis workers could encounter. These taped and written examples provide the bulk of the practice of the skills. When some of the more complex principles are presented, there are extra exercises for those readers who feel they need more practice before going on. In essence, the design very loosely follows the programmed learning structure. At times there are questions that ask about materials just discussed and always there is an answer immediately beneath it. Many of the questions require the reader to integrate the information presented and apply it to a specific situation.

The manual in general is a pleasant-to-read guide through a very valuable program of training. The cognitive changes in the
individual come primarily from the text and the behavioral changes come from a combination of the examples, the taped listening sessions, and the interaction with leaders and other trainees.

Two other manuals that employ the third, and most comprehensive, training strategy are General Relationship Improvement Program (6th edition, 1972) and Basic Interpersonal Relations: A Course for Small Groups (1969), both developed by the Human Development Institute, Inc. The purpose of these two manuals is to help the participants to become more skillful interpersonal relators and to better understand their own behavior. They are designed to be used either totally separate from a therapy setting or in a weekly therapeutic workshop environment.

The General Relationship Improvement Program (GRIP) was first published in 1963 and has been republished six times. GRIP was one of the major innovations in the area of interpersonal communication. It employs a programmed instructional format and is specifically designed to be used by two people. The manual consists of one booklet, which the participants jointly work through. It combines programmed instruction with semi-structured interactions between the two people. This approach functions first, to teach the cognitive principles, and second, to provide the kinds of immediate interactions with another person necessary to integrate these principles into the participants' normal behavior. The manual is set up to accommodate
pairs of male/male, male/female, or female/female. There are practice dialogues presenting learning situations which are set up with three versions of each, so as to suit any pair of participants.

This manual can be used by spouses, friends, or strangers who are sincerely interested in improving their ability to live and work in a more meaningful way with other people. The material is divided into ten units, each building on the last. Only one unit is to be covered per session. The sessions should be set up regularly, either once or twice a week, necessitating that the program last a minimum of five weeks and a maximum of ten. This enables the participants to practice the principles that are discussed and stressed in each unit.

Basic Interpersonal Relations (BIR) was published in 1969 to utilize the GRIP techniques within small groups of people, rather than exclusively pairs. BIR is an outgrowth of the GRIP manual and, therefore, shares many of the same techniques and principles. In BIR there are only five units and, again, only one is to be read each session, with at least a few days, preferably a week, between sessions. However, unlike the GRIP program, the BIR program has a separate booklet for each unit. With BIR, the participants take turns, each reading one page of the manual, then passing it on to the next person. The primary difference between the two manuals is that BIR is designed for use with small groups of five or six
people. The exercises reflect the group orientation, focusing less on intense personal disclosure and more on practice at expressing and accepting feeling.

Both manuals employ the programmed learning format of frame-by-frame progression. Some frames require answers to fill-in-the-blank questions; some are merely information statements, requiring no answer. There are also examples with multiple choice questions and role playing dialogue exercises, which greatly facilitate an integration of the materials. Many times, in both manuals, the readers are instructed to discuss exercises or questions, thus taking advantage of the interactional value of the other participants.

The text of both of these manuals is written in language which is easily understandable and does not burden the reader with the acquisition of any technical vocabulary. The examples are common situations with which the readers can easily identify. Although the two manuals focus on several aspects of interpersonal communicating, acceptance of feelings in both self and others is the major focus. Neither manual requires the presence of a group leader, although at times it would be helpful in clarifying concepts and providing further examples of vague principles. A leader would also be able to focus the participant's attention upon the presence and absence of the learned concepts in the group's actual behavior. Even without a leader, both BIR and GRIP focus satisfactorily on developing
cognitive understanding and some behavioral expertise in the principles of interpersonal communication.
CHAPTER III

DEVELOPMENT OF A MANUAL FOR TRAINING
PSYCHIATRIC OUTPATIENTS IN INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

All of the manuals that were critiqued in Chapter II were set up to either train professionals and paraprofessionals in the helping fields or to work with groups or pairs of people working on improving their interpersonal communication skills. The Human Development Institute programs were by far superior in design and utility in promoting development of interpersonal communication skills in non-professional people. The H.D.I. programs employ the combined behavioral and cognitive strategy, and provide the clients with the best opportunity for proficient skill development and lasting behavior change. However, the shortcoming of all of these manuals is that they do not meet the need for a systematic training procedure that can be used with only one client in the outpatient psychiatric setting. The therapeutic significance of interpersonal communication skills has been well documented, but there are no training programs available for a therapist to employ with only one client who is lacking several important communication skills. Outpatient psychiatric setting as it is used here refers to community mental health agencies as well as outpatient facilities of state institutions.

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It is essentially any setting involving ongoing therapy where the client is in an environment to freely practice the skills.

In response to the obvious lack of a systematic interpersonal communication skills training program for the outpatient psychiatric setting, this author has developed a manual entitled: A Manual for Improving Your Interpersonal Communication Skills. The benefit of the manual serves both the client and the therapist. The client is introduced to skills and new perspectives of his relations with others, which, in turn, can lead him to more satisfying relationships. The therapist is spared the time and effort of the tedious job of presenting the basic interpersonal skills to the client. The manual also provides the client with a concrete source to refer back to when he is confused and has problems relating to others. As a result of the availability of the basic concepts to the client, the therapist's time and energies can be focused on helping the client to practice and integrate the principles presented.

Goals of the Manual

This program is designed to teach the client the cognitive understanding of the skills and concepts through use of a programmed learning format. It then employs the relationship between the therapist and client to practice and refine the skills that are presented. The skills that are developed and the cognitive learning are all aimed
at equipping the client with the skills to trouble-shoot his own problems in the future, without having to seek professional assistance. This type of performance necessitates integration and implementation of the principles, therefore, the therapist or counselor must be responsible for encouraging the client to practice and refine his skills as often as possible during their sessions together.

Establishing a common, non-technical vocabulary is also one of the objectives of this manual. This vocabulary serves both the client and the therapist by providing a medium through which clear and effective communication can be achieved. There is an attempt to eliminate technical words and, when possible, to use common words and define them more clearly. If difficulties arise, the therapist is expected to work with the client to resolve the problem.

The manual is divided into five units and each unit is to be read by the client at home during the time between therapy sessions. In this way only small parts of the whole are covered at any one time, facilitating better understanding plus providing the therapist with more time to deal with each individual misunderstanding rather than several at a time.

The format of the program is a modified programmed learning design in that it has some frames which contain questions concerning key points and concepts. The question is presented and the answer is given several spaces below. The client is instructed to
read through the manual using a card or envelope to cover the answers. He is also instructed not to look at the answer until he has formulated one of his own. In addition, this program provides feedback with each answer, whether or not that answer is right or wrong. The client is not left with just a correct letter or number, rather there is an explanation as to why the correct answer is correct and why the incorrect answers are not correct. The questions consist of two main types: fill-in-the-blank questions and multiple choice questions. All of the questions are worded so that the client, when he reads them, must say "I do these certain things," rather than "some people" or another such general and abstract statement. There are data to support that it is actually a therapeutic intervention to get the client to speak in terms of "I" statements, and it is to this end that the technique is employed.

As mentioned above, when the multiple choice questions are used, there is some explanation as to why the answers are correct or incorrect, rather than merely giving the correct answer. This is similar to the format of many of Bullmer's (1975) questions in his manual The Art of Empathy. This allows the client to get some feedback about how he might be thinking, and also explains why some of his common or "automatic" responses are not always appropriate.
Outline of the Manual

The content of the manual develops in a step-by-step format by having each unit build and expand upon the materials covered in the previous unit. The basic interpersonal communication skills are presented, as well as an overview of several of the common pitfalls that obstruct effective communication.

The manual begins by describing communications and explaining how it differs from merely interacting with others. It begins to lay the groundwork for helping the client assume some of the responsibility for having not been understood in the past. Several of the causes of misunderstanding are elaborated upon. The unit ends with a discussion of listening and the importance of listening carefully. Each unit is followed by a set of homework exercises that cover the materials presented in the unit.

The second and third units deal with several different aspects of feelings. The skills of recognizing feelings in self and others are explored. The client is given the opportunity to practice these skills through the use of exercises and sample questions. The skills of communicating his own feelings and his awareness of other people's feelings are also covered. The word "empathy" is not used in this manual; "acceptance of another person's feelings" is the phrase that embodies the concept of empathy. This expression is used in an attempt to minimize the number of terms that must be learned.
Toward the end of the third unit there is a discussion of some of the defense mechanisms which are relatively easy for the non-professional to understand and are common causes of ineffective communication patterns. These are included to provide the client with a working knowledge of some of the typical patterns which he might be employing that thwart his attempts to communicate effectively with others. There is no pressure on the client to totally understand these concepts, rather they are presented as an attempt to round out the picture as to how communication patterns become ineffective.

Unit four discusses some of the skills which are essential to co-existence between human beings: feedback and risking are particularly focused upon. The distinction is made between giving helpful feedback and making cruel or "bluntly honest" remarks to someone. Several guidelines are given to help the client change his remarks so that they are helpful rather than cruel.

The end of unit four and all of unit five focus upon what is perhaps the single most unique aspect of this manual: the presentation of the "emotional banking" model. It stems from a comparison of money banking to the give-and-take processes of interpersonal interactions. The model was conceived by Beverly Freet, a therapist at Kalamazoo State Hospital, Kalamazoo, Michigan. The model was further developed and expanded through the joint efforts of the
author and Mrs. Freet. The primary purpose for including this model is to provide a framework within which the client can tie together many of the principles and concepts so that he feels their cohesiveness. Essentially, the model draws parallels between the banking processes and interpersonal relating. A detailed elaboration of the model can be found in the body of the manual itself. Understanding a model of this type is obviously not a mandatory prerequisite to learning to communicate, but it is the opinion of this author that it will facilitate the integration and understanding of the principles as a total process of communicating. The model was designed for use with severely disturbed, institutionalized mental patients and many times progress was made with this population. It serves the primary purpose of pulling together the techniques, and also functions as a tool to detect where communication difficulties are originating, pointing out some possibilities as to how to resolve them.

The manual is, then, not a substitute for therapy, nor is it a device that will relieve the therapist of his active role in that therapy. The manual presents the basic skills and outlines some helpful exercises, but the therapist or counselor is expected to help the client explore the further uses and implications of these concepts and skills.
CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY

The manual about to be presented has been developed in an effort to combine several techniques that are present in other established manuals with several of the author's techniques to meet the need for a systematic training program for psychiatric outpatients in interpersonal communication skills.

This manual is a prototype of a potentially valuable therapeutic tool. It will require empirical validation in order to make the claim that it can facilitate client behavior changes. At this point, it is an apparently sound model of a program for training clients in interpersonal communication skills. It will not be suitable for publication and general use in therapy until it has been experimentally validated.
CHAPTER V

A MANUAL FOR IMPROVING YOUR INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

By Gary J. Fusciardi

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Notes to the Therapist or Counselor

(These three pages are to be removed before giving the manual to the client.)

This manual is designed to cover a wide range of interpersonal communication skills. It can provide insights and assistance to clients lacking in a few or many of these skills. It presents many of the basic skills of interpersonal communication to a population of people who, for all practical purposes, have had no training in the helping professions. It is not designed to teach a person to become a helping paraprofessional, although many of the skills that are stressed have been presented in paraprofessional training programs. The manual is written so that it requires very little sophistication and educational background to understand the concepts. If misunderstandings arise, your role will be to clarify the ambiguities.

The primary purpose of this manual is to provide you with a teaching tool that will introduce many of the concepts and skills of interpersonal communication, thus reducing your time and efforts needed for presenting and expanding upon the basic concepts. You will be expected to observe the client in the session and provide him with helpful feedback as to how he is improving and where he is misusing the concepts. The manual is designed to be used in one-to-one therapy, but is flexible enough to also be adapted for
The program is set up to work as an adjunct to your therapy, and it is not recommended that the clients try working through this manual without at least some supervision. You will need to assess the client's interpersonal communication skills deficits and if you feel that they warrant a systematic training program, then you would get a commitment from the client to continue to come to therapy for at least the next five sessions. The intended procedure for using this manual is that the client reads the manual between the therapy sessions. There are five units in the manual and the client is to read one unit between each session; thus you need the commitment of five sessions at least. The units have homework exercises that should be covered at least briefly during the beginning of each session. This time could also be used to discuss any complications or confusions that the client is experiencing from the manual. The exercises are kept at a minimum so as not to monopolize your therapy time. You may want to add to the existing exercises if you feel that a client could use further practice in that area. If you feel that one unit was not understood well by the client, you could ask him to reread it and not go on to the next unit. Your responsibility will be to provide a test situation for the client to begin practicing his new skills, and also to provide support as he begins trying them with others in his life.
The therapist should be aware that the client will stand a better chance of achieving the desired changes in his behavior if he is motivated by the belief that the acquisition of these skills can and will benefit him. It is recommended that you spend a little time familiarizing the client with the importance of being an effective communicator. It is also expected that you tailor the learning experience to focus upon each client's major deficit areas as well as working through the general skills that are presented.

This manual is meant to aid your work in moving the client towards a more independent level of functioning and to give him the opportunity to learn many of the skills that are needed to have satisfying and growth-producing relationships with other people. It is recommended that you read through the manual to acquaint yourself with the concepts and how they are presented. This manual is designed to allow you the freedom to use your own techniques for changing the client's behavior. Some other sources of techniques are also available, as for example Piaget's *Training Patients to Communicate* found in Lazarus's *Clinical Behavior Therapy*. 

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HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL

"You cannot teach a man anything
You can only help him discover it within Himself."
Galileo

You are about to begin participating in an interpersonal communication training program. It is assumed that you have made a commitment with your therapist or counselor to work through this manual and follow its format carefully. You will get from this program no promises of riches nor any guarantees to fame. What you will get from your time and effort is a better understanding of yourself and others. You will also have an opportunity to learn, practice, and understand some of the very basic skills that are necessary for developing rewarding and satisfying personal relationships.

The manual is divided into units and it is intended that only one unit is to be read between each therapy session. It is recommended that you stick with only one unit at a time, and work hard on the concepts, exercises, and homework, rather than going ahead in the manual. No matter how simple and common-sensical these principles seem, it is important that you work through them in the presented order and that you practice each skill before moving on to the next. Effective communication requires practicing the basic skills, just as you have to practice the basic skills of bowling in order to be a good bowler or the basic skills of carpentry to become a good carpenter.
This manual tries to give you the benefit of many different types of teaching techniques to help you to grasp the material. The units involve the description of important concepts, examples of each, exercises that you can participate in, and homework assignments to help you practice the concepts, examples of each, exercises that you can participate in, and homework assignments to help you practice the concepts in your home. You should get an envelope or card to use as you go through this manual. Periodically, there are questions over the materials just covered and the answers are separated by a line. You are expected to cover the answer and read the question. Do not look at the answer until you have tried to come up with your own. If your answer matches the one provided, move on; if not, and you don't understand why, look back through the material to find out before moving on. At the end of each unit, there are several exercises that you are expected to complete at home, before your next therapy session.

When working on the exercises, you may find yourself saying, "Maybe someone else can do this, but I can't." Remember, it is not that you can't, but rather that you won't. Yes, you will find some of the exercises difficult, but you can do them. Children can't do things because they don't have the ability. Adults won't do things because they choose not to do them.

This manual may be presenting concepts that are new to you.
or just different ways of looking at the things that you always do, so it is important that you try to understand what is being presented in each unit. Obviously, the manual cannot anticipate all of the questions and problems that you as an individual might have with this manual, so feel free to bring them to your next session and discuss them with your therapist or counselor. Do not put off asking questions because you feel embarrassed, your therapist or counselor is prepared to deal with your questions and it will better enable him to see how much of the materials you are understanding so he can gear the rest of your therapy to fit.
UNIT I

1. Communicating

"He that is not busy being born is busy dying"
Bob Dylan

Interacting with people is as basic a function of our everyday life as eating and sleeping. Each one of us spends a good part of our day interacting with people. Some of these people are more important to us than others, but we still interact with them all. Throughout the bulk of our interactions, we are trying to communicate with these other people. Merely interacting with people is not communicating with them. Communication involves actively sharing our ideas and feelings with the other person. It is not enough to just send our messages, we have to assume the responsibility for checking out if the person received the same message that we sent.

This manual is designed to help you develop different and more effective ways of communicating with the people you meet.

1.1 Just interacting with people does not mean that I am _______ with them.

Answer: Communicating

Each and every one of us is a unique and private individual.
Our thoughts and feelings are as unique to us as our fingerprints. Our thoughts and feelings are private because no one can ever experience life exactly as we do. Because of this privacy, we must find effective ways to let others know what we are feeling and to find out just what they are feeling, too. Interpersonal communication is the process of reaching out of our private thoughts to other people and sharing a bit of information or a feeling with them. It is through interpersonal communication that we let other people know about our private thoughts, values, and feelings. This is also how we can find out about another person's private world.

1.2 I let other people know what I'm thinking in my own head through the process of _______________ _______________.

Answer: Interpersonal Communication

When you do not openly share your thoughts and feelings with others, they are forced to guess what you are thinking and feeling. Also, if other people do not share their thoughts and feeling with you, then you are forced to guess what they are thinking and feeling.

1.3 When I don't directly and openly tell other people my thoughts and feelings, I force them to _______________ what I am thinking and feeling.
2. Misunderstanding

When we have to resort to guessing what the other person is thinking and feeling, we are more likely to misunderstand him. Misunderstanding is one of the most common sources of problems in interpersonal relationships. Usually we expect the other person to be able to read our minds, then we get angry or frustrated when they misunderstand us.

Employer: (Thinking: I have got to get a raise pretty soon, or I'll have to find a new job. I don't dare ask the boss because I know that he hates employees to ask for raises. He would rather it be his idea, as a reward for good work. I'll just work harder.)

Boss: (Thinking: There's that hardworking Jones. He is certainly content at his position; I never hear a complaint from him, so he must be happy. I like to see happy employees.)

It is easy to see that this employee may never get his raise, as long as he continues to try to guess what the boss wants and continues to make his boss guess what he wants. The misunderstanding could result in the employee not getting the raise, and the boss losing a very good employee. By directly and openly sharing his thoughts with his boss, the employee might have a lot better chance of getting the raise, because he would not be forcing the boss
to guess what he wants. Mind reading is better left to night club performers.

1.4 When I force other people to guess what I'm thinking, they are more likely to ___________ me.

Answer: Misunderstand

Misunderstanding can result from several other things that people do. One such thing occurs when two people use the same words, but have entirely different meanings in mind. There is a wise saying that goes: "Words don't mean things, people mean things." The point is that the words do not have any natural meanings; we attach our own meanings to them. If we use a word to describe an event or feeling from our own private experience, we must speak in such a way that the listener gets the idea we intended him to get.

Wife: (Thinking: I'm mad at John; I have to do all of the housework. I want him to be more responsible by helping me around the house.) "John, you're a lazy bum. Why can't you be a responsible husband?"

Husband: (Thinking: What the hell is wrong with her? I am a responsible husband; I go to work and pay the bills.) "What are you bitching about? I am a responsible husband."

In the above interaction, the misunderstanding does not arise from the use of the word "responsible," but rather from the two
people's personal meaning for the word. If the couple had shared their thoughts openly and directly rather than using vague, general statements, there might not have been a disagreement, and the housework problem might have been worked out.

Wife: "John, I feel really overworked. I'm having to do all of the housework. I would like you to be more responsible by doing some of the work around the house."

Husband: "I feel that it is my job to work and pay the bills, and it is your job to care for the house. But it does seem unfair that I work eight hours a day and you have to work sixteen hours. What are some of the things that you would like me to do?"

There is no guarantee that if you speak clearly and say exactly what you mean that no one will ever argue with you, but if you don't, you are almost assured of a lot of battles. The example you read demonstrates the importance of speaking in a clear and precise way, so as to get your message to the other person and have him understand it. Imagine this same conversation taking place between a parent who is trying to get his child to do more chores around the house, and the child who feels he is already doing enough. As the parent, can you think of a constructive way of saying what you would like from the child?

1.5 When I don't explain clearly what my words mean, I am increasing the chances that other people will _________ me.

Answer: Misunderstand
3. Listening

Another source of misunderstanding occurs when the listener is not listening carefully to what the speaker says. Listening carefully is a very tricky skill. We have to work very hard at listening carefully because we may not have had the training to do so, as listening is not a skill that has been traditionally thought to be very valuable. Lately, however, there has been a trend towards teaching people how to listen carefully. There are workshops, college classes, high school classes, and even seminars for businessmen who want to learn to listen more carefully. People are beginning to realize that if you don't listen to what the other person says, you will probably misunderstand him.

Despite the fact that listening carefully is a lot of hard work, the skills which it involves are very simple. The difficult thing about listening carefully is that it requires effort to keep using the skills; it would be so much easier to go back into your own head, thus hearing what you want to hear. The opposite of listening carefully is hearing what you want to hear. Unfortunately, most people fall into hearing what they want to hear because it is easier. The price they pay for this easier way of listening is, unfortunately, misunderstanding others and, undoubtedly, a lot of unnecessary interpersonal problems.
1.6 When I am not listening carefully to the other person, I am usually back in my own head hearing ________________.

Answer: What I want to hear

The two most basic things that you must do in order to listen carefully are simple and involve common sense. First, you must look at the person who is speaking. (It is equally important when you are the speaker that you look at the listener.) Many researchers feel that about 70 percent of our communication with other people is transferred by our movements, gestures, and tone of voice. This is called non-verbal communication. Non-verbal communication simply means that we communicate without words, in many different ways. Speaking and writing are both verbal forms of communication. The tone of voice or the darkness and pressure of the writing on a page are examples of non-verbal communication.

When you are not looking at the speaker, you will miss many of the cues he gives which help to explain exactly what he is trying to say. This one action (looking at the speaker) will become increasingly more important as you progress in this program. Looking at the other person also tells him that you are paying attention and care enough about him to listen. On the other hand, when you don’t look at the other person, you are telling him that you don’t care to listen and
that you do not feel that he is an important person to you.

1.7 One very important step that I can make to become a careful listener is to _______________________.

Answer: Look at the other person

The second step to becoming a careful listener is to listen to what the other person is saying so closely that you could repeat word-for-word what he has said. The trick is to force yourself to pay attention to what is being said. Some people find it helpful when first learning to listen carefully to try to repeat each word in their head after the person has said it. This technique may be of some assistance, but there is no easy way to learn to pay attention.

Your counselor or therapist will be working with you in the sessions, providing you with the perfect place to practice your listening skills.

The two steps of listening are of equal importance, as listening carefully tells the speaker you are paying attention to him. Paying attention to the speaker serves several functions. He feels better because you have shown him that you are listening, plus you are more likely to understand him, thus opening the way to a good relationship.
1.8 There are two steps that I must follow in order to become a better listener. The first is to ____________ the other person. The second is to ____________ so closely that I am able to ____________ his statement word for word.

Answer: Look at, listen, repeat

Homework Exercises

For your next session with your counselor or therapist have these exercises worked out:

1. Write down three examples of misunderstandings that happened to you this week and try to figure out which of the three causes covered in this unit were the reason for the misunderstanding.

2. Pick out one person who is very important to you and practice listening to him/her, using the two listening techniques discussed. Write down the problems that you have when doing this and bring them in for discussion during the session.
UNIT II

1. Feelings

"When I repress my emotions, my stomach keeps score."

"Emotions" and "feelings" are words that people use everyday, but what do they really mean? The above statement relates a common message: don't sit on your emotions; don't hold back your feelings.

Emotions and feelings do not exist in a vacuum; they are closely involved with our daily lives. There are many things which we must have in order to maintain life. These are called needs. On the other hand, there are many things that we would like to have, such as money, respect, prestige, a big car, or a beautiful home. These are called desires. As we go about our daily life, these needs and desires are motivating and influencing us to do certain things, such as stopping work to have lunch and, perhaps, cutting lunch short to buy a new pair of shoes. We could say that these needs and desires are the motivation behind our behavior.

The word "emotions" usually refers to an individual's feelings of pleasantness or unpleasantness, as a result of satisfying or not satisfying a need or desire. Fear, joy, and anger are considered the primary emotions. Primary emotions are general categories of individual feelings.
2.1 My emotions and feelings are a result of my satisfying or not satisfying my __________ and __________.

Answer: needs, desires

2. Recognizing Your Own Feelings

Identifying feelings is a good place to begin in training a person to communicate his feelings. After all, how can you communicate or share your feelings if you don't know what they are? The reason it is hard to find your true feelings is because we often talk about a lot of other things that sound like feelings. We must learn to keep our opinions, physical sensations, and finally, feelings separate from one another so that we may become aware of, and in tune with, our feelings.

Opinions or beliefs are particular views that we have about a subject or situation. An opinion of the presidential election might be "I feel that the Democrats are going to win this year." Despite the fact that this sentence uses the word "feel," it is not a feeling statement. It is an opinion.

Physical sensations are perhaps most closely related to feelings, but there is still a difference between them. Some physical sensations are crying, smiling, laughing, or anything else your body does that tells you how you are reacting to a situation. They are your
body's cue signs, but they are not the feeling itself, for example:

"I feel a headache."

Feelings are the word labels which we place on emotional cues to try to describe what is going on within us in a given situation.

Below are two lists of some of the positive and negative feelings which people have. Place a check next to those words that describe feelings which you have experienced.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>accepted</td>
<td>great</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>amused</td>
<td>happy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>calm</td>
<td>jolly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>carefree</td>
<td>joyous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>charming</td>
<td>jubilant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cheerful</td>
<td>lovable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>comfortable</td>
<td>loving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>competent</td>
<td>open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>confident</td>
<td>optimistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>content</td>
<td>playful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cute</td>
<td>pleased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>delighted</td>
<td>pretty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>elated</td>
<td>romantic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>enchanted</td>
<td>safe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>encouraged</td>
<td>serene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>energetic</td>
<td>silly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>excited</td>
<td>stimulated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fine</td>
<td>strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fit</td>
<td>supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>free</td>
<td>tall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>frisky</td>
<td>tender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>funny</td>
<td>tickled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gay</td>
<td>thrilled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>giddy</td>
<td>up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>glad</td>
<td>uplifted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gleeful</td>
<td>warm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>goofy</td>
<td>well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gratified</td>
<td>zestful</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

aggravated  furious
agitated    frustrated
angry       angry
anguished   gloomy
annoyed     hostile
anxious     hurt
bitter      inhibited
blue        irritated
bored       lazy
cautious    lonely
cold        mad
concerned   miserable
confused    mournful
crazy       nervous
crushed     pained
dejected    perplexed
depressed   perturbed
disappointed pessimistic
disgusted   pissed off
down        put down
downhearted regretful
desolate    scared
desperating tormented
disturbed   troubled
uncomfortable
edgy        undermined
enraged     unhappy
fearful     unnerved
frightened  worried
Below are some sample statements to help you practice identifying feelings from opinions and physical sensations. Label each of the statements in each block either 1) feeling, 2) opinion, or 3) physical sensation.

2.2  A. I am delighted with my new shoes.
     B. I feel that my new shoes will be comfortable for walking.
     C. When I wear my new shoes, my ankles feel stronger.

Answer: A. Feeling, B. Opinion, C. Physical sensation

2.3  A. My stomach has butterflies in it.
     B. My dog's death has hurt me very much.
     C. I stepped on a nail and hurt my foot.

Answer: A. Physical sensation, B. Feeling, C. Physical sensation

2.4  A. It can be very spooky walking down a dark alley.
     B. My heart was thumping very hard as I walked through the dark alley.
     C. I was terrified, thinking about what could happen to me while walking down the dark alley.
3. Communicating Your Feelings

By now you are beginning to see the difference between feelings, opinions, and physical sensations. Recognizing your feelings is the first step toward becoming able to communicate those feelings clearly and openly to others.

2.5 ____________ is the first step in learning to communicate my feelings clearly and openly to others.

Answer: Recognizing my feelings

The second step in learning to communicate your feelings is being able to own your feelings. This means that you become aware of the feelings that you are having, and you accept them. Owning your feelings also suggests that you take responsibility for them. If you aren't aware of your feelings, you don't have to be responsible for them. Being responsible for your feelings means accepting that you are having them, and not blaming others for making you feel that way. For instance, you may be one of many people who have been taught that it is bad to get angry or mad at someone. When you are
in a situation and you do get mad (for whatever reason, right or wrong), you probably deny the angry feeling and try to show that you are composed and calm. This is not owning the angry feelings. The person who owns his angry feelings might say that he is getting upset or frustrated with the situation, but he would not deny that the feeling exists, thus he is taking responsibility for it.

The tricky thing about trying to hide your emotions and feelings is that you can't completely hide them. Oh, you can talk and sound as if you really aren't angry with the situation, but the message always leaks out somewhere. It might be the way that you stand, your tone of voice, or the tension in your arms and hands, but it will surely leak out. So as you proudly walk away, thinking that you fooled your listener, he walks away thinking, "What was he so angry about?" The sad part about this is that you have accomplished nothing in the way of improving your relationship with this other person, and, perhaps, even hurt your chances of it becoming better. The person who is always agitated and tense, and doesn't say what is bothering him, tends to discourage other people from being around him.

As you can see, owning your feelings can have quite an impact on your communicating and your relationships. A big part of owning your feelings is communicating them to others in a clear fashion. When describing your feelings, you should make clear what feelings
you are experiencing by identifying them. The statement must first refer to "I," "me," or "my," and second, specify some kind of feeling by name. For example: "I am angry," or "My feelings are hurt by your words," not "You could hurt somebody talking like that." Again, you must take responsibility for your own feelings.

Below are some sample situations and statements. Some show owning of feelings and some do not. Decide which is which.

2.6 Example A: My girlfriend broke up with me for another guy. We'd been going together for almost two years. I really don't care, though. She and I didn't have that much in common.

Example B: I'm feeling depressed since my girlfriend and I broke up last week. We'd been going together for almost two years. She dropped me for another guy. I'm really angry at her for deserting me that way. It makes me feel like I'm inadequate.

Example C: My girlfriend and I broke up last week. I was a little upset; we'd been pretty close for almost two years. She started seeing another guy. But I suppose that it is better that we break up, even though it does hurt some.

Answers:

Example A: The speaker is not owning his feelings; he denies having any feelings about the break-up.

Example B: The speaker owns his feelings very well. He specifically talks about being depressed, angry, and inadequate. He is also very much in touch with where his feelings are coming from (his girl started to see another guy).
Example C: This example should have been a little tough for you. The speaker is half way between owning his feelings and not owning them. He does talk about having feelings, but he tries to minimize their importance: "a little upset," "it does hurt some." He also uses very vague words throughout the statement, trying to convince us, or himself, that the break-up is really not bothering him.

4. Acceptance of Other People's Feelings (Part I)

Now that you are beginning to learn how to recognize your own feelings, you'll find that you'll begin to recognize other people's feelings also. When you recognize your own feelings, you should own them. But what are you going to do when you recognize other people's feelings? Suppose a friend walks up to you, looking quite tense and concerned. He says to you, "I have a big important meeting with my boss first thing in the morning to discuss a new idea I have." You recognize that he is tense and very concerned about the outcome. What would you say to him?

You might have said something to the effect of "Don't worry. I'm sure that he'll like your idea," or "Don't be nervous. Just act confident and the boss will love your idea." These statements are common, and are somewhat comforting in certain situations. There is one major problem with these advice-giving or comforting statements: they deny the person's feelings. In general, we are afraid to, or at least prefer not to, talk with others about their feelings.
We will listen for hours on end to a friend complain about an unjust parking ticket or an overbearing boss, but if that friend should mention a feeling, very rarely will we accept it. Usually we find a clever way to side-step the feeling.

Accepting another person's feelings is one of the best ways to tell them that you care about them. Obviously, if you are interacting with someone who is not important to you and you do not want to convey your caring, you can just give advice or comforting, and ignore their feelings. Showing acceptance of the other person's feelings involves focusing your attention on what the person is telling you, both verbally and non-verbally. To repeat, you should focus in on both the verbal and non-verbal messages that the person is sending. By doing this, you almost have more information about the other person than he does. Remember that many times we try to fool ourselves or others into thinking that we are cool and calm by saying that we are, but it is very hard to control our physical messages our body send out. His body messages provide a source of information that perhaps even the other person is not aware of. You can take in all the information and identify what feeling that person is communicating.

Now that you have identified what you believe is the feeling, it is important to share it with that person. Communicating the feeling that you think he is having can be done by naming the feeling and
presenting it in such a way that the other person can either accept it or reject it. Phrases like "I hear you saying . . . ," "Is it the case that . . . ," "Could it be that . . . ." or "You appear to be feeling . . . ." can be used as they allow the person to say 'No. That isn't what I feel.'

Work through the example below and try to pick out which response is accepting of the speaker's feelings.

2.7 Teenage Girl: "My parents have been fighting and it really hurts me to watch it." (She has her head down, and speaks slowly and depressed.)

Response A: "Parents can really be insensitive sometimes, but don't worry. They'll work it out, I'm sure.

Response B: "It sounds like you feel hurt."

Response C: "I hear you saying you're hurt, but I also get the feeling you're pretty frustrated."

Answers: A. This response has the appearance of being accepting but notice that there is no mention of the girl's feelings. It's basis is in glib advice-giving.

B. This response does meet the requirements of accepting feelings. The feeling that the girl is experiencing is mentioned, so it does show acceptance of her feelings. However, it provides no further information for the person.

C. This response is an excellent example of accepting the girl's feelings. The feeling is mentioned, plus there is an added observation that can assist the girl in better understanding herself.
In the above example it is shown that you can be helpful to the person and still be accepting of his feelings. Do not underestimate the value of your perception of the person's body messages. These non-verbal cues often go unnoticed by others, as well as by ourselves. You should also be trying to focus on your own body messages when you are in situations. Your counselor or therapist will work with you in helping you identify your body messages.

Showing acceptance of another person's feelings involves two things: first, as we have seen, you let the other person know that you are aware of his feelings; and second, you do not make him wish he had kept them hidden. Suppose a friend of yours is looking very down, even close to crying. You see his sadness, but don't know what caused him to feel this way. Suppose you say, "I don't know what it is, but something seems to be making you very sad right now."

Does your response here show acceptance of his feelings? Yes, it does: first, it shows awareness of his feelings, and second, it would not make him wish that he had kept them hidden.

2.8 When I am trying to show acceptance of another person's feelings, first I must show him that I am ________ of his feelings, and second, I must try not to make the person wish that he had kept his ________ hidden from me.

Answer: Aware, feelings
Showing acceptance in no way suggests that you have to do anything about the feeling, such as give advice, give reassurance, or even say that the feeling is justified. If you do want to do something, the course of action suggested earlier is the best. You should report your observations of the person's verbal and non-verbal messages to him in a statement that shows him how you see his feeling. This should be done in such a way that it is easy for him to answer "no" if he does not think it fits.

When you recognize another person's feeling, it is easy to say something that might make him feel foolish, ashamed, or inferior, without even realizing it. This leads to the speaker regretting having revealed his feelings; it makes him wish he had kept them to himself. Consequently, you are not showing acceptance of his feelings.

Read the example below and decide if the response shows acceptance of the speaker's feelings. If not, can you pinpoint why?

2.9 A friend has been working very hard at a project for the last year, and has been trying very hard to do a good job. One day, the friend comes to you and says that his supervisor criticizes him all of the time and never mentions his good work. You sense that he is discouraged and frustrated. You say, "It's ridiculous for you to get sore about that; my boss never pats me on the back, and it never bothers me."

Answer: This response shows no acceptance of the speaker's feelings. First, he does not show his awareness of the other's feelings. Second, he lectures him, and probably makes him wish that he had kept it to himself.
2.10 Think of an accepting response for the friend in example 2.9.

Answer: Your response should be something that first, shows awareness of the frustration and discouragement, and second, does not make your friend wish that he had kept it to himself. "It sure is discouraging to work so hard and not get recognition for your work, isn't it?"

People often find the concept of showing acceptance confusing because of the difficulty in separating it from familiar ideas, such as being courteous, helpful, or diplomatic. It is important to recognize that these other ideas do not need to be involved, although, of course, they may be. Bring any specific questions to your counselor or therapist, for further clarification.
Homework Exercises

For your next session with your therapist or counselor have these exercises completed:

1. Turn back to the list of feeling words that was presented in this unit. Choose three words from both the positive and the negative lists that you have experienced this week. Write a complete sentence communicating each feeling.

   a. ____________________________________________

   b. ____________________________________________

   c. ____________________________________________

   d. ____________________________________________

   e. ____________________________________________

   f. ____________________________________________

2. When you are involved in a conversation with an important person, try to show acceptance of his feelings. Do this three different times. Write down which feelings you accepted and how you showed acceptance of each. If you have any difficulty doing this, also write a brief description and bring that in to your next session so that you can discuss what happened.

3. Notice at least one situation when someone ignored and failed to show acceptance of your feelings. Write down the situation and bring it to the next session.
UNIT III

1. Acceptance of Other People's Feelings (Part II)

In the last unit we talked about how to show acceptance of other people's feelings. We saw that there are two important aspects to showing acceptance of another person's feelings. These are first, showing awareness of the other person's feelings by mentioning specifically the feeling that you see him as having, and second, to not make him wish that he had kept his feelings hidden.

3.1 Showing acceptance of another person's feelings involves showing __________ of his feeling and not making him wish that he had kept them __________.

Answer: Awareness, hidden

You might think that showing acceptance of feelings means that you have to agree with what the person says, but this is not necessarily true.

Here are a few more exercises to help you feel more confident that you have mastered the skill of accepting other people's feelings.

3.2 You are giving directions to a friend to get to a nearby town and you suggest using the expressway. He tells you that he would rather not go that way because expressways are so dangerous. You do not agree with his opinion about the danger. Which of the following responses would show acceptance of his feelings?
A. "I guess expressways are dangerous, but I don't let myself worry about it. There are so many dangers in modern life."

B. "There is another road. I feel pretty safe on expressways myself, but if it makes you uneasy, of course there is no need to go that way."

Answer: A. This answer is incorrect as it shows no acceptance of his feelings of concern, and could make him wish that he had kept his feelings to himself.

B. This answer is correct as it shows acceptance of his feeling of concern without agreeing with his opinion.

3.3 My showing acceptance of another's feelings does not mean that I must _______ with his opinion.

Answer: Agree

Usually when we see that someone is upset, we react as if it was our duty to help them stop feeling that way. When you try to make someone stop having a certain feeling, the result is usually that the other person wishes that he had kept his feelings hidden. Thus you are not showing acceptance of their feelings, and are telling them that you are not interested in their feelings.
3. 4 A friend approaches you and says that he has a big job promotion coming up and is very nervous about the outcome. One statement below shows acceptance of feelings, the other shows that you are not interested in his feelings and would likely make him wish that he had kept them hidden.

A. "I'm sure that you will get the promotion. You are the best man for the job, so stop worrying."

B. "It really sounds as though this position is very important to you."

Answer: A. This response shows that you wanted to stop the person from having the feeling, and it probably would keep him from sharing feelings with you in the future.

B. This response shows acceptance of feelings. Note that this reply does not repeat what the person says, but rather guesses at an even deeper feeling that the person might be having.

The last example shows how you can go beyond merely repeating the feeling that the other person tells you, and try to help him by making a statement disclosing what he is feeling on a deeper level. This can be done by watching for the non-verbal cues, like tone of voice, stance, and facial gestures. This addition of depth to the feelings that you share with the person requires extra work, but it also has more value for the other person.

It is not an easy thing for us to risk sharing our feelings with other people because we are afraid that the other person will reject
us or laugh at us. Rejecting the feelings, laughing, changing the subject, or giving advice are all ways of responding to another person's feelings that will make him wish that he had kept them hidden. These are things that we can easily do if we do not work hard at staying aware of what the other person is saying. The effect of these statements is to bind the person and make him ashamed or closed in.

There are obviously times when you would want to bind or shut off another person, and these are times when you should use these techniques. They also carry the message that you don't care or are not interested in the other person. If this is the message you wish to communicate, then they are most appropriate.

Acceptance of feelings has a freeing effect on the other person. This freeing effect shows itself in several ways: the speaker gets a message that says that you do care and are interested in hearing from him, which encourages him to talk more. You need only to try showing acceptance of feelings with one person to see these effects very clearly. Before you decide to show acceptance of feelings decide if you have the time and are willing to get involved. If you choose not to get involved, yet still would like to communicate caring, share this with the person. Example: "I hear you saying that you are very disappointed and I feel that you would like to talk with me more, but I do not have the time right now. Perhaps we could
meet later." This allows you to communicate your caring and also lets you be honest with your own feelings. This is still acceptance of feelings and you are still helping him to see himself clearer and encouraging him to explore his feelings further. By doing this, you can also benefit from exploring his feelings with him. Your relationship with the other person will probably grow stronger and more meaningful. When you learn to show acceptance of other's feelings, you also learn to identify and accept your own feelings, freeing yourself to explore your own feelings deeper.

2. Self-Concept vs. Self-Ideals

Upon exploring your feelings deeper, you will begin to see things in yourself that make up the "real you." Many times we speak of revealing our real selves, or that we are trying to find ourselves and discover who we are. Being a person is a process that is always changing from day to day. I am all that I think, feel, value, honor, love, fear, and desire. What most people call the "real you" is your self-concept. Your self-concept is what you think of yourself as you function in everyday life. Your successes and failures contribute to your self-concept. The more successes that you have, the better your opinion of yourself will be. Also, the more failures you have, the lower your opinion of yourself will be. Having a clear self-concept tells us our limitations and our strong
points.

Many times we confuse our self-concept with our self-ideals. Our self-ideals are the ways we would like to be. Some self-ideals are: to be trusted by all, respected by the community, loved by all, hard working, or friends with all people. Self-ideals are guidelines by which you can direct your life. Although some self-ideals are realistic, some are unrealistic in that we can never really be as perfect as we would like to be. People who try to function in life from the viewpoint of unrealistic self-ideals have a lot of problems and many failures because they are never quite as good as their unrealistic self-ideals. On the other hand, the person who tries to live up to realistic self-ideals will usually have many successes and only a few failures, thus he will develop a good self-concept.

3.5 The way that I see myself function in the world, which leads to how I feel about myself, is my ________________________.

Answer: Self-concept

3.6 The way that I would like to be is my ____________. These can be either ______________ or ____________.

Answer: Self-ideal, realistic, unrealistic
Many people have an unrealistic self-ideal that tells them they should never get angry, nor should they show fear. For example, a person might think that, ideally, he should not get angry at certain things, or not get angry at all. This person will bottle up all of his angry feelings trying to live up to an unrealistic self-ideal. In the end, he will be frustrated and may even get ulcers.

By becoming aware of the differences between your realistic and unrealistic self-ideals, you can begin to have more successes in your life, and thus develop a sense of security and a good self-concept. One good way of weeding out the unrealistic from the realistic self-ideals is to check them out with other people. Many times unrealistic self-ideals come from the type of thinking that says, "If I get angry at my wife, she'll be hurt and never forgive me." If this individual tried telling his wife about this ideal that he holds, he probably would find that it was quite unrealistic.

3.7 The best way for me to decide if my self-ideals are realistic is to ____________________________ with other people.

___________________________________________________________

Answer: Check them out

___________________________________________________________

Remember, as long as you stay only in your own head and do not check your ideals with other people, you are just guessing as to
what they really might be thinking—and you are likely to be in error.

3. Self-Awareness

So far, we have been concerned mostly with the other person in a relationship: with your awareness of his feelings and your responses to them. Another important aspect of interpersonal communication is being aware of your own feelings when you are relating to others. Self-awareness often gets overlooked when you are interacting with another person. One of the best ways to develop accurate self-awareness is to get involved in a special kind of relationship: a growth-producing relationship. Showing acceptance of feelings is a very necessary part of developing a growth-producing relationship with another person. As you enter into a relationship and encourage the other person to explore his feelings and experience the freeing effect that this has on him, he will begin helping you to explore your feelings and the relationship will produce personal growth for both of you.

It requires a lot of hard work to develop a growth-producing relationship with another person, and you should be aware that not everyone can share this type of relationship with you. You will probably have, at the most, one or two of these relationships at any one time, as they are somewhat time consuming, and very emotionally fulfilling. You should try to choose carefully the person
with whom you want this growth-producing relationship.

3.8 One of the best ways that I have of developing self-awareness is to enter into a ____________ relationship with another person. This can best be achieved by showing ____________.

Answer: Growth-producing, acceptance of his feelings

Even with the help of your friend, accepting your own feelings is not always an easy thing to do. We have seen that the first step to accepting the feelings of others is to gain awareness of them. By the same token, gaining awareness of your own feelings can be a first step toward accepting those feelings.

One of the things that you can do to gain greater awareness of your own feelings and the feelings of others is to make focusing on feelings a habit. When you focus on something, you turn your attention to it. Focusing attention on one thing usually involves turning your attention away from something else. A good exercise to help you learn to focus involves becoming more aware of your breathing. Take a few minutes right now and try to put everything else out of your mind. Focus entirely on your breathing.

Did you become more aware of your breathing? If you had just run up a flight of stairs or run to catch a bus, you would probably become aware of your breathing without even trying. Most of the time
our breathing goes unnoticed, unless we consciously focus our attention on it. Similarly, no special attention is required for awareness of strong feelings, but the milder and less obvious feelings may go entirely unnoticed. Your sensitivity to these can be increased by making a habit of focusing on feelings, both in yourself and others.

It is important to be aware of the differences between having a feeling, expressing it, and acting upon it. There are times when it would be inappropriate to act on a feeling, but it would be all right to express it. You might not want to act on a feeling because of the bad consequences to yourself or others, or because the person involved is not important to you. For example, the man next to you on the bus keeps clearing his throat and making an annoying noise. You might like to grab him and shake him, but rather you say, "Excuse me, but that noise is very annoying to me."

At other times, it might not even be acceptable to express a feeling, but it is never wrong to have a feeling or to be aware of it. Imagine that the boss comes in and tells you that you haven't been working up to standard and that your attitude had better shape up. You might feel angry and frustrated with him, but the situation dictates that it would be wiser to hold expressing these feelings till later. But be sure to be aware of them and own them when you do express them.

As you become aware of your own feelings and begin to accept
them more fully, you will tend to express them to others more openly and freely. Expression of feelings plays an important part in a growth-producing relationship and in the process of gaining awareness and understanding. This allows the growth of the other person, and can possibly be the best thing that you could ever do for him.

3.9 As I become aware of my feelings, I will tend to _______________ them more openly and freely.

Answer: Express

4. Defense Mechanisms

Why is it so hard for people to have a good self-concept and to express their feelings openly and freely? We tend to be cautious or defensive when we are around other people. There is an amazingly strong desire for people to protect their self-concept from evidence that may suggest that it is wrong. We'll often find ways to defend our self-concept rather than face the truth. This defensive tendency is especially strong when the image we hold of ourselves is more favorable than our actions suggest it really should be.

3.10 _______________ is one of the major ways that I have of protecting my self-image. This is also one of the reasons that expressing feelings openly and freely is so hard.
Answer: Defensiveness

Suppose that I think of myself as an honest person. This is a favorable self-concept, yet every year I cheat on my income tax. Admitting my dishonesty would not be consistent with my self-concept, so rather than face the truth, I make the excuse that "I'm just getting even with an unfair system," or "The government expects a certain amount of this."

Another example might be that I have a bad day at work, and, in my frustration, I come home and yell at my family. To admit that I'm unfairly taking out my problems on innocent people wouldn't fit my self-concept as a fair person, so instead I make up excuses to get mad. These reasons that I make up aren't true and hurt my relationships, but they do let me maintain my self-concept.

These ways of avoiding one's true self in favor of a more attractive self-concept are examples of defense mechanisms. In the following pages, we will discuss some of the defense mechanisms that people most often use to protect their unrealistic self-concept. In general, each defense mechanism is a way of distorting reality so that the world will look the way that we want it to be. The fact that these defense mechanisms become habits which we perform without thinking makes them difficult to recognize in ourselves, or others.
We don't want to suggest that defense mechanisms are always undesirable. There are definitely times in most of our lives when these techniques of distortion are valuable. However, using too many defensive techniques can damage your relationships with others. Therefore, acquainting yourself with these common defense mechanisms may be profitable. Here is a list of some of the harmful defense mechanisms you would wish to avoid:

**Rationalization:** One of the most common ways to avoid a threat to your self-concept is to rationalize, that is, to think up a logical, but untrue, explanation which protects the unrealistic picture that you hold of yourself. The income tax example mentioned earlier is a good example of rationalization. Saying things like "everyone does it," or, "I really deserve to get this break and no one will give it to me" are also ways to rationalize.

**Compensation:** This is another technique a person uses for avoiding what he thinks is a personal shortcoming. Rather than face the shortcoming head on, the person compensates for it by stressing a strength in some other area of his personality, hoping that it will cover up what he feels is his fault. There are many instances when people try to cover up for a personal shortcoming. A girl who cannot make friends with other women may make as many boyfriends as she can, rather than trying to
work on the real problem. People using drugs or alcohol can be compensating for empty spaces in their lives. In these cases, compensation keeps the problem covered up so that it is never brought out in the open, consequently there is no possibility of a solution to the real problem. Another example might be the person who feels insecure, so he puts on a leather jacket and goes around pushing others around and scaring them, to prove (to himself and others) that he isn't weak or insecure.

**Projection:** We use projection in two ways. The first is to blame our shortcomings on someone or something else, rather than admit to the fault. An example is the student who gets kicked out of class because "the teacher is a mean person," rather than because he threw a book across the room. A second use of projection is when we attribute our own unacceptable or unpopular attitudes to others. An example is the teenager who cuts his hair short, then tells his disapproving peers that his parents will not tolerate him at home with long hair, rather than merely saying that he prefers his hair short.

**Repression:** Sometimes, rather than face up to an unpleasant situation and try to deal with it. We protect ourselves by denying its existence. Quite simply, we try to forget what would otherwise be painful to us. The person who represses his feelings and problems is very likely to develop physical problems,
like stomach aches, headaches, intestinal problems, and ulcers. This is the worst defense mechanism as far as its toll on a person's well-being. The others at least have the individual doing something with the individual doing something with the pent-up feelings, but this defense mechanism makes person hold the feelings in until he can "forget them," which is rarely ever accomplished. The family who tries to ignore the father's drinking problem or the child's drug involvement will probably never solve the problems that are at their root.

**Dependency or Regression:** Sometimes, rather than admit that we don't want to do something, we convince ourselves that we can't do it. This refers directly to the "children can't, adults won't" saying. Many times adults will make excuses for not doing something by saying that they can't do it, as if they were a helpless child. The person who says, "I'd like to improve my life, but I can't" could be hiding from the fact that he isn't willing to put in the work necessary to change his present situation.

**Displacement:** This occurs when we vent our angry feelings against people or objects that are seen as less dangerous than the person who caused the feelings originally. The fellow who gets angry at his boss for suggesting that he work a little harder might take out his angry feelings on the car on the drive home.
or yell at his wife for apparently no reason. A young child, upon being told to go to bed instead of being allowed to watch the late movie, might slam the door and beat up on his brother or sister to release the anger he feels toward his mother for sending him to bed.

What is it that makes us defensive? We have already said that the cause of defensiveness is a threat to our self-concept. When person A in a relationship becomes threatened and begins to use defense mechanisms to protect himself, his behavior will cause person B to begin putting up his defenses. This, in turn, threatens person A even more, and so a spiraling defensive cycle is started, making communication more and more difficult. Fortunately, this defensive cycle can be corrected. When person A behaves supportively of person B, person B has less cause to be threatened and so lowers his defenses. In turn, this openness causes A to become even less defensive. In other words, both defensive and supportive actions work in a repeating cycle.

3.11 I get defensive when I feel a ______________ to my self-concept.

Answer: Threat

There are many ways that people can be made to be defensive.
One occurs when a message is received that is evaluative and judgmental. This message increases the defensiveness in the receiver and is likely to make him behave in a way that will protect his self-concept. Most people dislike any situation where they will be evaluated because there is the chance that the outcome will be unfavorable.

3.12 A sure way for me to make another person defensive is to ____________________________ him.

Answer: Evaluate or judge

Another sure way to make someone defensive is to get caught trying to manipulate him into doing something for you. The fact that you tried to trick him instead of just asking for what you wanted is enough to build mistrust. Nobody likes to be a guinea pig or a sucker, and even well-meant manipulation can cause bad feelings.

Like the other behaviors that we have talked about, an individual who talks as though he is superior arouses feelings of inadequacy in the other person. Usually it doesn't matter what type of superiority is presented to us; we just become defensive. Money, power, intellectual ability, physical appearance, and athletic abilities are areas that our culture teaches us we must excel in. Consequently, we often feel a need to feel superior in these areas, so we feel threatened by
someone "better" in them than we are.

3.13 When people try to manipulate me or treat me as though they are superior, I get _______________.

Answer: Defensive

Defensiveness ruins communication with other people. If we're lucky, the damage that we create in this way is short-lived and heals with time; unfortunately, in some cases a single defensive outburst can destroy an entire relationship. The sooner you become aware of your part in producing defensiveness or reacting defensively, the sooner you'll find your interpersonal relationships more satisfying.
Homework Exercises

For your next session:

1. Make a list of at least five words that describe your self-concept.
   A.
   B.
   C.
   D.
   E.
   F.
   G.
   H.
   I.
   J.

2. This week keep track of the following:
   a) the number of times you are made defensive by others and the circumstances involved
   b) the number of times you caused others to be defensive and how
UNIT IV

In the last unit we discussed what our self-concept is and many of the lengths that we go to in order to preserve it. These lengths that we go to were called our defense mechanisms. We typically use our defense mechanisms whenever our self-concept is threatened by another person. There are two negative consequences that are a direct result of being defensive. First, you miss out on information from the other person that could be valuable to your growth as a person. When you are defensive you block out this information that could help you to see how the other people in the world see you. This information could help you to find out what changes you could make in your behavior in order to become more satisfied in relating with other people. Secondly, being defensive straings relationships by disrupting communication. This disruption takes place when your defensiveness threatens the other person and makes him defensive, thus starting the defensive spiral.

4.1 Two negative consequences of being defensive are: first, I am missing important ________ about myself from other people, and second, I'm ________ my communication with the other person and jeopardizing the relationship.

Answer: Information, disrupting
1. Feedback

The information from other people that is missed as a consequence of being defensive is very important to the person who is trying to grow and become skillful in developing satisfying relationships. The computer age has labeled this type of information "feedback." Feedback is sharing with a person your observations of his speech and behavior. It is a way of helping another person to consider changing his behavior. It helps him to understand how his behavior affects other people. Feedback is both given and received.

The single most important factor in helpful feedback is that it is intended to help the other person. You should ask yourself, "Do I really feel that what I am about to say is likely to be helpful to the other person?"

Helpful feedback is:

-- Descriptive

It is descriptive rather than evaluative. By describing your own reaction, it leaves the other person free to use it or not, as he sees fit. By avoiding evaluative language like, "do you know what's wrong with you . . .," or "you shouldn't have said that . . .," you reduce the possibility of the other person getting defensive.

-- Specific

It is specific rather than general. To be told that you are
"dominating" will probably not be as useful as being told,
"just now, when we were trying to decide this issue, I felt
forced to accept your arguments or you would be angry at me."

--Appropriate

It takes into account the needs of both the receiver and the
giver of feedback. Feedback can be destructive when it serves
only our own needs and fails to consider the needs of the person
on the receiving end.

--Useable

It is directed toward behavior which the receiver can do some­
thing about. Frustration is only increased when a person is
reminded of some shortcoming over which he has no control.

--Requested

It is asked for by the receiver, rather than imposed upon him.
Feedback is most acceptable when the receiver himself has
asked the question which you answer. "I have been trying not
to seem pushy; did I come across to you as pushy?"

--Timely

It is well timed. In general, feedback is most useful when
offered at the earliest opportunity after the given behavior.
Timing comes into play when you take into account the
receiver's readiness to hear it. Your wife has just come back
from having three teeth pulled and you notice that she forgot to
turn the lights off when she left this morning. Timing and common sense would say that this is the wrong time to give her this feedback, even though it is helpful and intended to help her change a behavior. It would be far more desirable to tell her about it later.

--Clear

It is checked to insure clear communication. One way of doing this is to have the receiver try to rephrase the feedback he has received to see if it's the same as you had in mind.

2. Giving Feedback

If feedback is offered in a supportive, responsible way, it can serve to inform the person about what is useful in their behavior and what does not seem to contribute toward others responding well to them and their ideas. It is most helpful when given as close to the moment or event as possible. Feedback is not helpful if it is so superficial as to be meaningless, "That was a very good speech you made," or so threatening that the meaning cannot be accepted, "You should never try to give speeches."

3. Receiving Feedback

When you receive feedback, try to look at what is being said with an open mind; try to understand it and try not to explain to yourself and others, "You simply don't understand; that isn't what I meant
at all." To be sure that you understand, it is a good idea for you as the receiver to try to summarize briefly to the speaker what you understood him to be saying. Try not to get defensive, but explore openly some of your feelings about why you tend sometimes to behave in a given way.

Learning takes place when feedback is honestly given and received, especially if it is feedback about specific behaviors which are being discussed.

4.2. You are involved with planning a picnic at work and one person is beginning to get quite anxious whenever you don't agree with what he suggests is the right way to have a picnic. Below are two responses. Pick the one that is useful feedback.

A. "I don't know how you see it, but the feeling that just came to me is that you are trying to control me. How do you feel about that?"

B. "I see you as trying to take over the whole picnic. Why don't you sit down and give the rest of us a chance to tell our ideas."

Answer: A. is useful feedback. It does not judge the person, and it is offered as a personal perception of the situation. Also, the receiver is left with the option to agree or disagree.

B. is judgmental and defensive. The speaker feels that his opportunity to speak is being threatened and has chosen to get defensive by projecting that the rest of the people want an opportunity to speak and demands that the person sit down.
Be aware that there are inappropriate uses of positive feedback. You might be interacting with someone and get a feeling that this person is very pleasant and well-adjusted. Inappropriate feedback might be "You are a pleasant, well-adjusted person," as this involves no specific description of the person's behavior and actually shows stereotyping of the person. It has grouped him in a category of "nice" people, and has ignored his individuality. Appropriate feedback might be "Whenever you spoke, I felt warm and accepted. You never did anything that threatened me." This is very specific and provides the person with information about how his behavior is affecting you.

Feedback serves two general functions. First, it can point out the positive things of another person's behavior and encourage him to continue doing them. "You really helped me when you told me how I'm coming across." Secondly, it can serve to help the person change his behavior so that it is more in line with the meaning he wants to get across.

4. Risk

"Behold the turtle who makes progress only when he sticks his head out."  
Cecil Parker

By now it should be clear to you that if you are to improve your relationships and experience personal growth, you must risk a
little pain and embarrassment by letting down your defenses and
giving clear feedback to people who are threatening to you. The
quote above brings the point home that if you want to play it "safe"
and live an isolated life, you can, but if you want to grow and have
satisfying relationships with others, you have to "stick your neck
out" and risk by letting down your defenses. You will have diffi­
culty as you begin this process, but you have learned to show accept­
ance of feelings and to give and receive helpful feedback: use these
as your tools, and set aside your binding defense mechanisms.

4.3 If I want to improve myself and my relationships, I must
________ a little pain and embarrassment.

Answer: Risk

Remember, people who make the biggest improvements in their
interpersonal relating are those who will accept the risk involved in
letting down their defenses. It is of the utmost importance that you
realize that your willingness to risk a little pain or embarrassment
is the key to more satisfying relationships. Now, to reap the bene­
fits of your knowledge of defenses, you must begin to look at your
own defense mechanisms and start opening yourself to those with
whom you are communicating.
You might be saying, "This all sounds fine, but let the other guy drop his defenses first!" This type of attitude is probably good for military strategy, but it is hardly growth promoting in the area of interpersonal communication. If you risk a little pain or embarrassment and are supportive and open in your behavior toward others, they will tend to respond the same way. If you decide to play it "safe" and wait for your friend to lower his defenses first, you can expect that he'll respond in the same way, and the defensive cycle will be set in motion. Risking by being open and supportive has no guarantee that the other person will be supportive back, but at least you have done your best to insure that your relationship could grow. If you try several times with the same person and all you get is defensiveness in return, then you have not lost a battle nor have you lost face, but rather, you have learned that this person does not want to have a satisfying relationship with you. You can then make your decision about whether or not to stop trying with him.

5. Putting It All Together

For the most part, we have covered the basic skills necessary for you to have satisfying relationships and to help you grow into a better person. Remember, reading about these skills and being able to practice them as daily habits are two different things. You will be keeping this manual, and you can refer back to it whenever you hit
rough spots, but you must continue to practice these skills or, just like a bowler or basketball player, you'll get out of practice. It is unrealistic to think that you could carry this manual around with you during your everyday life, nor could you refer back to it for every situation. There is, however, a model of interpersonal communication which is easy to understand and remember; one you can carry around with you in your head. You can think back to this model whenever you are interacting with people and can't quite figure out what the problem is with the relationship. Thus, it will be a tool that you can use to find out how your relationships can be improved.

It is called the emotional banking model. It was developed by a very competent therapist who has worked for many years with people having interpersonal communicating problems. Apart from the various other problems these patients have, they also have many problems in interpersonal communication. This model has enabled these people to see how they are keeping themselves from having satisfying relationships. The model has been altered somewhat to fit the situations that you are encountering. If you work at understanding it, you will be able to more clearly see how you are keeping yourself from having satisfying interpersonal relationships.

6. Emotional Banking (Part I)

The emotional banking model is a convenient and easy to under-
stand framework which can help us to look at our interpersonal relationships. The concept of emotional banking is identical to the procedures of money banking (from which it received its name), only it involves our patterns of emotional interactions with other people instead of money. It will be helpful to you if we discuss some of the similarities between the two.

Just as you could be either the person who starts the conversation or the person on the receiving end, you also could be either the bank depositor or the banker. A relationship between yourself and another person is an emotional bank account, just as the transactions that take place between you and the bank are your banking accounts. The time, energy, and effort that you put into a relationship is considered a deposit, and the support, comforting, and security you get from that person is considered a withdrawal.

When you are dealing with a bank, if you do not keep your deposits equal to or more than your withdrawals, the bank will close your account due to insufficient funds. When you are dealing with people, you also have to keep your deposits in line with your withdrawals, or the person will break off the relationship as he will feel that he is always giving and giving and getting nothing in return. The account becomes overdrawn and empty.

Take a moment and think of all of the different comparisons you can make. Your short term relationships could be like checking
accounts and your long term relationships would be like savings accounts that pay interest. Checking out how your relationship stands with another person (getting feedback from him) is like receiving a bank statement. You collect interest on your emotional banking accounts when you receive extra emotional support from a friend when you really need it.

Below are two lists comparing several of the other similarities between money banking and emotional banking:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Money Banking</th>
<th>Emotional Banking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Choosing a Bank: Involves checking into the bank's services, reputation, interest rates and convenience</td>
<td>Choosing a Person to Interact With: You try to assess the willingness of the other person to interact with you, by checking out his eye contact, facial cues, and distance away.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opening an Account: Actively getting up and going to the bank and making an initial deposit</td>
<td>Initiating a Relationship: Actively getting up and going to the person and investing part of yourself in him. This initial investment can be by spending time, concern, looking directly at him when you speak, listening so close that you could repeat what he says word for word, waiting until he is finished, and responding to exactly what he said.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checking Account: Being able to withdraw from your account without having to go to the bank. However, you get no interest on your money.</td>
<td>Short Term Relationships: Relationships without deep emotional commitments. These types of accounts are typical of acquaintances. You get back only what you put into the relationship, and there is no interest accumulated.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Money Banking

Savings Account: Investing large sums of money for the purpose of building interest and more security.

Bank Statement: A regular statement of the condition of your account with the bank, i.e., notice of balance, service charges, and interest accrued.

Interest: Money paid to you for leaving money in a savings account without drawing on it for a long time or, money that you pay to the bank for the privilege of borrowing money from them for awhile.

Financial Counseling: Advice on how to invest, save, and use money to its best advantage.

Emotional Banking

Long Term Relationships: Relationships with deep emotional commitments. These types of accounts are typical of friends, intimate friends, and family members. These are relationships that last over time, and return more than the initial investment.

Checking out the Condition of Your Relationship: This involves getting to the other person and verbally checking out inconsistent messages that you may receive. It includes checking out and sharing feelings of displeasure as well as pleasure. This helps you to get a good idea of the condition and balance of your account with the other person, and to give them the balance of their account with you.

Interest on an Emotional Account: Emotional support above and beyond what you invested in the person because you have not drawn on it over a period of time, or, extra emotional support that you give to someone who loaned you some support when you really needed it.

Emotional Counseling: Psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, family counselors, preachers, ministers, and others who help with emotional investments.
Money Banking

Travelers' Checks: Guaranteed money for purchasing power when you are away from the bank.

Credit: Establishing an account and showing your ability to repay loans. Past accounts with the bank are considered before they allow the opening of a new account.

Over-drawn on Checking Account: Drawing more money from the account than you have invested into it. Can be due to miscalculation, not looking at the bank statement, or adding wrong.

Bankruptcy: When your debts and your ability to pay them are so far apart that it is impossible to catch up. The account is closed and the bank will be reluctant to deal with you for quite a while.

Emotional Banking

Travelers' Checks on Emotional Accounts: Getting emotional support from a stranger because you are a friend of someone they know.

Emotional Credit: Your reputation as a warm and supportive person in your interactions with others. The way that you have interacted with people in the past that makes them willing to establish an account with you in the present.

Over-drawn on Emotional Account:Demanding emotional support or comforting from someone with whom you have an account, but not sufficient balance to cover the withdrawal. This usually occurs if you don't keep checking the status of your relationship with the other person.

Emotional Bankruptcy: When you demand too much of the other person or continually draw from that person without giving back to them, the person will break off the relationship and want nothing to do with you for awhile. The only way to reopen the account is to demonstrate that you will be a better friend.

When you are interacting with other people, a quick check of your emotional bank account will let you know where you stand with them. It is not necessary for you to explain the emotional banking model to them; you can use different words and still get the same
information. For example, you might say, "I'm wondering if you feel that I have been taking more from you than I have been giving back?" It is also important to give out feedback to these other people as to how they stand with you. For example, "I'm feeling as though you have done so much for me lately and I hope that I can make it up to you," or, "I'm feeling that you have been taking more from our relationship than you have been giving back, and I'm getting angry!"

The important point of the emotional banking model is that people do not like to feel used by others. If you borrow money from the bank and don't pay it back, you have used them only for your own private gain. If you feel like you are being used, you'll feel bitter and angry toward that person and probably avoid contact with him. If he is feeling used by you, he'll avoid you and be angry and intolerant of you. Notice above that we say "feel used." It is not important whether or not the person is really using you, but if you feel that he is using you that is how you will react towards him. Clear communication can help to straighten out the times when this is just a misunderstanding, but on those occasions when you have been using the other person, your relationship will be severely damaged.

4.4 It is very important that I do not give other people the feeling that they are being ___________.

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The best way to insure that your money credit is good is to keep all of your accounts paid up-to-date. The same is true of your interpersonal relationships. If you do not give as much as or more than you take, you will be avoided and lonely. By keeping in touch with the balances in your accounts with other people (by checking it out with them), you can avoid giving them the feeling that you are using them.

Some people risk too much and with the wrong people, only to be hurt in the end. This usually leads to vows like, "I'm through with men," or, "All women are fickle." Just as people can take bad financial risks, people can make bad emotional risks. The best way to insure against bankruptcy, in both cases, is to take your time and check out the credit and reputation of the other party. You may find that you have invested too much in someone you know too little about, or that you have invested too much too soon in the relationship. Risking obviously involves no guarantees, but you can narrow the chances of a bad emotional risk by checking the person out and waiting before you make large emotional commitments.
Homework Exercises

Before your next session, complete the following:

1. Keep track of how many investments you make this week.

2. How many of those investments brought you a good deal of pleasure?

3. Of the investments, how many and which proved disappointing? Why?

4. How many withdrawals did you make in relationship to investments?

5. Are you approaching bankruptcy? If so, explain how. Also, plan a way to avoid it.
UNIT V

1. Emotional Banking (Part II)

In the last unit, you were introduced to the emotional banking model. The usefulness of this model comes from its application to interpersonal interactions. If you have been working with the model in your everyday life, you may be beginning to see why you are not getting along well with some people but you are getting along well with others.

In money banking, you have to pay your debts, and not try to borrow money with bad credit or lend money to bad credit holders. Emotional banking is very similar. It stresses that you have to be as responsible in your interpersonal relationships as you are with your money matters.

Below is a review of some steps to take to increase your emotional bank account:

Steps in talking with people that increase your "bank account"

1. Look at people who are talking (when you are looking away, your mind is wandering away).
2. Listen closely enough to people so you can repeat their message back to them in your own words.
3. Listen carefully enough to people so you can reflect back their feeling message to see if they are feeling the way you
think they are.

4. Always respond to something that is said to you.
   a. Respond openly with what you like about what they said
      (you can always find something positive if you look hard
      enough). Always be willing to "give in" and tell a person
      about the good point they made. It doesn't take anything
      away from you and it increases your "bank account" with
      them.
   b. Repeat back their message and reflect back their "feeling
      message" if you don't understand what they said. Check
      it out. Ask any questions that occur to you while listen-
      ing to someone.

5. Stay on the topic. If you want to change the topic, be sure
   to ask the person if it's okay.

Some suggestions for checking things out:

A good way to start to check out what someone has said is
to say, "I'm not sure I understood you. Are you saying . . . ?"
It is also good to get people to check out your viewpoint.
You can start this by saying, "I'm not sure you got my
point. Would you please check it out for me? What do you
hear me saying?"

You may find yourself saying that you have tried very hard with
other people, but they just don't try back and you're ready to give up.
It may be the case that you have tried very hard in the past and really did not get anywhere. It may help for you to think of your efforts as very much like trying to bake a cake without the recipe. You may have all of the ingredients, but not the knowledge as to how to get it done right. Some people find it easy to bake by hit-and-miss methods and make delicious cakes, but you weren't so lucky. So now you have the recipe and the ingredients, but, because you're afraid of making another bad cake, you say, "I don't want to try anymore because I failed so many times in the past." Maybe you'll even try once, and the cake will not turn out as great as it could have, so you'll say, "See? I can't do it." and give up. Even the best communicators don't always get great results from their efforts, but if you don't risk and try the new "recipes" you have learned, you surely will never get any results.

5.1 Even though, in the past, I have been frustrated by my efforts at relating to others, I must __________ if I am to benefit from my new knowledge.

Answer: Try again

One reason why you may have had a lot of difficulty with relationships in the past is that you did not see clearly what your relationship was with the other person. It is appropriate to expect support
and comforting from a loved one, but it is unrealistic to expect it
from a casual acquaintance. Below is a diagram that will help you to
see the different levels of involvement that exist between people.
Not everyone can be as close to you as your intimate friends are.
Take a pencil and fill in the names of the people who fit in each of
your circles.

2. Social Interaction Diagram

The diagram above represents you, the individual, and the
people who surround you in your daily life. Each level is composed
of individuals who relate to you in similar ways. The levels represent
barriers that separate these four groups of people from you. A person
can move into another level if you and he both invest time and effort in the relationship.

Strangers are those people who are emotionally furthest away from you. They know very little about you and you share only an occasional "Hi. How are you?" Your investments into people on this level would be minimal and you would not expect to get anything back from them. In money banking terms, it is like giving to a charity; you feel good about doing it, but not good enough to devote your continuous time and effort, so you interact on a very surface level with them.

Acquaintances are people who you interact with and communicate with frequently. These interactions involve mostly talking about facts; you share very little personal involvement away from the setting that brings you together. These are usually people who work with you, ride the bus with you, or are you neighbors. These conversations may seem very personal and involved, but if you are not actively involved with them and their problems, your relationship is usually still on the acquaintance level.

Friends are those people who you have spent more time with and have made many investments into. These people share more information with you, and also many of their feelings. They also typically take part in family activities and holidays with you. There is a strong emotional bond between you and more intimate feelings.
are shared. As we move inward on the diagram, there are fewer and fewer people on each level. This level may have as many as five or six, but it is doubtful that there would be time in your life to have many more than this at any one time. If you feel that you do have more, try to examine each one again and see if they don't belong in another level.

Intimate friends are those few people to whom you are very committed and with whom you feel the least cautious about sharing yourself. These usually are family members, spouses, and very tried-and-true friends. You are very involved with them and with their lives, and any major change in them affects you in some way. Personal growth takes place primarily from the interactions on this level, although a certain amount does take place on the other levels. The further you move toward the outside level, the less potential for growth exists.

Do you have any revisions to make on your original diagram? Is anyone in the wrong circle? If so, go back and change it now.

If you can continually look at your relationships and decide where each person fits on these interaction levels, you will have an idea of how to respond to them and what you can realistically expect from them in return. Usually, the person who is frustrated with his interpersonal interactions is someone who has tried to jump the levels too soon or expects too much from people who are not as committed.
to him as he thought they were. Not everyone can be your closest friend. This is a common mistake and can be avoided if you take the time to look at the relationship with which you are involved and begin to interact with them with more realistic expectations according to the level of the relationship.

5.2 When I am frustrated in my interactions with others, it is usually because I am expecting __________ from the person for the level of our relationship.

Answer: Too much

The main way to tell the difference between the four levels of relationships are to look at the amount of time the relationship has been going on, the amount of honest, non-defensive investing on the part of both of you, and the amount of involvement between you and the other person.

You might, upon close evaluation of the people you interact with, find that many or all of these people fit in the first two levels: strangers and acquaintances. If this is the case, they you must begin risking more and making more emotional investments with these people. By becoming more involved with them, you can bring them closer to you. Try accepting the feelings of another person or giving helpful feedback; these are both very good ways to make an investment.
Many people have a great deal of trouble deciding when to interact and what they should say to the other person when they do choose to interact. Perhaps the biggest reason for this is their fear of being rejected or having their actions misread. As was covered in the section on risk, you have to stick your neck out in order to get at least a chance for a satisfying relationship with the other person. If you think about your relationship with the person in terms of one of the levels in the diagram, you will begin to see some of the things that you can do with him and expect from him. By doing this, you will be able to respond to him more realistically and will be more likely not to be rejected.

Timing also comes into play here. The person may be a friend, and asking for emotional support from a friend is quite appropriate, but today he has too many problems of his own and hasn't time to help you. To ask him now would be poor timing, and would probably cause you to feel rejected by him. Looking at the person and listening carefully to what he is saying is a good way of finding out if the time is right. If you feel your problem should be taken care of right away, you might share your indecision with him. Tell him that you know he's busy, but you'd like to speak to him, and let him decide if he will help you. You should always leave him the option to say "no" if he wants to. Speaking clearly and using specific emotional words can be very helpful to you in this situation, as well as many others.
3. Saying Goodbye

You are at the end of this manual, but the beginning of many new satisfying relationships. We have gone over and practiced many of the skills you need to be an effective communicator. It is up to you to continue to practice them and try to make them into habits. If you find you are becoming confused, you can refer back to this manual for support and guidance in your new life.

The best of communicating to you.

Homework Exercises

1. List the investments that you have made with intimate friends this week.

2. This week open at least one account with someone from your strangers level. Describe how you went about this.

3. Give a "statement" of their account to one of the people from your friends level.
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