Gender and Conversation

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Communication between males and females is cross-cultural

- There are feminine and masculine styles of discourse—like 2 cultural dialects
- Female and male styles of conversation are equally valid
- Men are not trying to dominate women
- Women are not trying to manipulate men
Feminine Focus/Masculine Focus According to Tannen

Women seek human connection

Men are concerned mainly with status

Girls and women feel it is crucial to be liked by their peers

Boys & men are working hard to preserve their independence

Symmetrical connections

Men are jockeying for position on a hierarchy of competitive accomplishment

Asymmetrical status
Men Asking Questions

- Asking a question whittles away at the image of self-efficiency
- Men ask questions of the expert to engage in verbal sparring
- Public face is important to men
Women Asking Questions

- To establish connection
- To soften the sting of potential disagreement
- For information in a way that validates other’s expertise
Report Talk vs. Rapport Talk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public Speaking</td>
<td>Private Speaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice</td>
<td>Understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>Feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orders</td>
<td>Proposals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict</td>
<td>Compromise</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Effective Communication: Listen up

- The Disarming Technique - you find truth in what the other person is saying, even if you feel convinced that what they are saying is totally wrong, unreasonable, or unfair.
  - *I hadn’t thought about the situation that way, but you may be right.*
Effective Communication: Listen up

- Empathy- put yourself in the other person’s shoes.
  - Thought empathy- paraphrase the other person’s words.
  - Feeling empathy- acknowledge how they may be feeling.
    - *I can understand how you might be feeling devalued.*
Effective Communication: Listen up

- Check-in with the other person so as not to make assumptions.
  - *I want to be sure that I understand you. Are you saying that you want to spend more time together?*
Effective Communication: Body language

- Be aware that your body is a tool of constant communication. Eye contact, distance from a person, and posture are all important aspects of body language and can have an effect on communication.
Effective Communication: Express yourself

- **Behavior** – be specific about the behavior
- **Impact** – how the behavior has affected you
- **Feelings** – how you feel as a result
- **Future** – what you would like to see happen differently in the future