

# Some attitudes self defeating

**By MARILYN FRUMKIN**  
Even the most liberated feminists can sometimes be guilty of self-defeating behavior.

Women attending a recent National Organisation of Women (NOW) workshop at Birmingham Unitarian Church in Bloomfield Hills learned how to recognize that behavior in themselves and how to combat it.

Jane Raitt of West Bloomfield, program coordinator of the Women's Studies Program for Wayne State University's College of Lifelong Learning, conducted the workshop.

"Self-defeating behavior is a problem shared by men and women," Ms. Raitt told the 300 women present.

"But for women, the problem is greater. We are plagued with guilt. We've been told all of our lives that it's unfeminine to be assertive. We

are always looking for acceptance — the pat on the back," she said.

"What we need is more self-worth, not being just extensions of our husbands, boyfriends, children and parents. Take them away and what's left? Recognition is needed but initial self-worth must come from within."

**MS. RAITT** listed some attitudes of self-defeating behavior:

- "In a group, you say what you think they want to hear instead of what you actually think."
- "You make a big deal out of everything you have to do so that you don't feel badly if you can't finish anything."
- "You think a lot about bad or frightening things."
- "You keep that hurts raw by going over and over them in your mind."
- "You set huge, unrealistic

goals for yourself and then feel guilty because you can't do them."

"You think other people's opinions are more important than your own."

Some members of the audience vented personal experiences of self-defeating behavior.

One woman said, "I am a feminist. Yet, in social situations, I am reluctant to express myself as a feminist. And I hate myself for it. So now I'm trying to talk more — and losing friends daily."

Another woman, a successful lawyer, said, "Because I accomplished my goals, I feel uncomfortable with women who haven't. I feel they are thinking I must be some kind of aggressive monster."

**MOST OF** the fears women experience are mythical and most feelings of self-worthlessness can

be dissolved, Ms. Raitt and her assistant, Kay Cornell of Oak Park, said.

"Verbalize your goals," Ms. Cornell advised. "If you can't verbalize a goal, it is too vague. How will you know when you've reached it?"

"Write down five successes each day. They don't have to be big successes. My biggest success every day of my life is getting out of bed."

"Making a good pot of coffee is a success, as is being on time. Being assertive with a store clerk, if it is needed, is another."

Ms. Raitt added that combating self-defeating behavior is a long-term project, but it can be done.

"Start today! I know a lot of 'reflectors.' They reflect. Gee, I wish I could do this — I wish I had the guts to do that." To them I say, "Stop reflecting. Do it — and be a whole person."

# Women discuss communication

**By JOAN WEAVER**  
Twelve women attended the recent "A Day for Me" workshop at Wayne State University's College of Lifelong Learning to discuss communication — with themselves and others.

Jane Raitt, program coordinator, told the women the meaning and significance of IALAC. ("I Am Lovable and Capable").

"IALAC is the sign we're all born with," she said. "As we grow and come in contact with society, parents, friends and even ourselves, the sign gets lost. It is totally from yourself, not dependent on any significant others. How you react to you should come first."

With one or two exceptions, the women agreed that their IALAC sign isn't quite where it's supposed to be. Some said they have reversed the words. Some said if significant others say they are lovable and capable, then maybe they feel they are too.

The women have been meeting one day a month since September to share questions, life experiences and seek lunches while reshaping or reaffirm-

ing their life goals and exploring their own self concepts. Some bring handiwork along, crocheting or macramé.

Ms. Raitt lives in West Bloomfield and has an MA in guidance and counseling from Wayne State University. She coordinates the program that "developed out of the needs of women to help them get a sense of themselves," she said. "I enjoy opening avenues, opening eyes."

**MS. RAITT** alternates as teacher and listener as the group focuses on breaking down the barriers of communication.

"We are all entitled to the feelings that we have," she continued, "and the manner in which we communicate them is important. It is communicating, you give 'I' messages instead of 'you' messages, then it's up to the listeners. What they're going to do with it, how they're going to respond is their problem."

"If you just want to clear the air, you could say 'I'm really angry' or 'I'm really unhappy.' You might not like the response," she said, "but you

do have the right to state your feelings."

**MS. RAITT'S** son, Jason, like most 2½-year-olds, is forever thinking up interesting things to do and she applies the "I" and "you" messages to his pranks to demonstrate how it works.

"I'm apt to say 'Jason, I am really disappointed in your behavior. I'm really angry that you flushed that balloon down the toilet.'"

With the emphasis changed, she said, from the "you are a bad boy," to "I feel this way about what you did," constructive and resolving kinds of communication are more likely to result and you are less likely to get perceived as threatening.

"You have to work in on your own feelings," she said. "The 'you' messages are coming in on the listeners' feelings. You should never put them on the defensive."

All sessions of the WSU College of Lifelong Learning are offered to women in the area. Inquiries will be taken by Ms. Raitt in her Southfield office.

## Workshop explores teachers' options

To help teachers explore the range of career possibilities outside the field of education, the Continuum Center at Oakland University will hold a workshop from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Saturday.

This is the third such program offered by the center within a year. "We want to help teachers examine their strengths, interests and values," said Jane Goodman, a counselor and research associate who will coordinate and lead the workshop.

"We will also stress how teachers can apply their skills in the business world," Ms. Goodman said.

For information on the workshop, contact the Continuum Center at Oakland University.

## Nursery starts fall sign-up

Family Life Cooperative Nursery is accepting applications for fall enrollment. The nursery, which meets in North Congregational Church, Southfield, has Tuesday and Friday morning sessions for 3-year-olds and Monday and Thursday morning sessions for 4-year-olds. An accredited teacher and four mothers attend each session.

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