

Getting it together

Improve communication, but you still need love

It's such a cliché that you probably wouldn't be surprised at how many couples think they have a communication problem. "Every time we try to really communicate," they sigh, "He blows up," or "She clams up," or "We just can't get to the nitty gritty."

Communication problems have become synonymous with marital difficulties. So it's no shock that teaching couples how to communicate has become our most popular approach to solving marriage problems. In coun-

seling, self-help books and classes, the gimmicks and techniques have spread like dandelions in July.

There are more approaches to teaching you how to communicate than there are boxes of pre-sweetened cereal on grocery shelves. With a little effort, you can learn how to listen accurately and actively, how to resolve conflicts constructively, how to assert your needs positively, and how to converse intimately.

These, and many other commu-

nication skills are very teachable. In fact, the number of people who have learned them is probably in the millions. But, do they do any good?

The answer is that they have less benefit than you would think. That's not to say they're a complete waste of time. When applied under the right circumstances, effective communication skills can have some benefits. But, that's the problem.

ONE FRUSTRATED communication teacher after another watches

his thoroughly trained students demonstrate their new capabilities in front of him. And then they go home and do it the same old way that caused their problems in the first place.

Some of the best trained communicators I ever saw are now divorced. Which is extremely perplexing to anyone who believes that marriage troubles are just the result of poor communication.

Obviously, I hope, marriage troubles must be caused by something more

than inadequate communication skills. After going through my own frustrating period of trying to teach couples how to communicate, I've learned what makes up the something more.

Most simply, it's a breakdown in the loving. Unsuccessful communication, even a failure to apply the skills you possess, is almost always a symptom of an emotional relationship that has gone sour.

Because loving didn't get the attention it needed, because individuals tried to live up to and expectations which trapped and stifled them, because unresolved conflicts left a mounting pile of left-over resentment. For all these reasons, the good will and feeling of mutual concern has faded. And so relating has now become strained and minimal. Like bitter roommates, the former lovers restrict their communication to the bare essentials and follow rules of politeness like strangers or co-workers.

ALTHOUGH THIS is an extreme and discouraging state of affairs, all communication problems in marriage mean that this is present to some degree. And it should be clear that efforts to repair inadequate communication must be directed at the love relationship, not just trying to place a

By

BOB TRENZ.

Ph.D.



bandage of new skills on the problem.

It helps me to remember that love is the horse, not the cart. When the loving is working as it should, it brings out the best in us as individuals and couples. It makes a good communicator out of anybody.

Love puts us in a frame of mind that promotes trust, openness and mutuality. It fosters an attitude of looking for solutions that are good for both parties. It makes us want to deeply understand the other person's point of view. It leads us to look for the best in each other, rather than expecting the worst.

Bob Trenz is a psychologist and marriage counselor in Rochester. Comments for Dr. Trenz may be sent to P.O. Box 64, Rochester 48063.

Delta Gamma plans convention

More than 700 women from the United States and Canada will attend the national convention of the Delta Gamma sorority to be held June 26-29 at the Hyatt Regency in Dearborn.

Dorothy Wood Felton, a representative to the Georgia General Assembly and Delta Gamma, will be the keynote speaker for the 1978 gathering. The third woman to sit in the Georgia leg-

islature, she was voted one of the outstanding women in 1976.

Ted Lennox will address members at the Delta Gamma banquet Wednesday, June 28. Although blind from birth, Lennox was able to graduate from Michigan State University with the aid of Delta Gamma students who read class assignments to him. A teacher of blind students for 20 years

in Lincoln Park schools, he will speak about the education and training of visually impaired children and adults.

Delta Gamma sorority was founded at Oxford, Miss. in 1873. With 100 collegiate chapters in North America, it has more than 80,000 members.

At the 1936 Delta Gamma convention, sight conservation and aid to the blind were officially designated as the organization's national philanthropic projects. Delta Gamma has raised and donated more than \$8,000,000 and 100,000 hours of service annually.

The Blind Children's Center in Los Angeles was started by Delta Gamma on October 3, 1938. The center is the largest and oldest locally sponsored institution for the blind.

Pre-school vision testing is the major local foundation project. Each year, during May and June, Birmingham sorority members screen pre-school children at the Oakland County health department, on Tuesday and Wednesday mornings. The organization estimates that 2,500 children are screened annually for amblyopia (lazy eye blindness) and other vision problems.

Since 1966, the national organization has raised money solely through the sale of Delta Gamma cookbooks.

Rah-rah-rah camps set

Alma College again hosts the National Bee Line Camps of baton twirling, cheerleading, pom, pom, drill and color guard courses on campus July 10-13. The camps are open to all ages from the beginner to the most advanced, and there will be a teachers course and a special elementary divi-

sion. More than 25 classes will be taught by champions and experienced teachers in their respective fields. Students may enroll individually or with their school group.

The camps, under the direction of Mary Evelyn Thurman, are sanctioned by the National Baton Twirling Association and TCA cheerleading organization.

For registration information concerning this exciting learning vacation please write to Paul Storey, Alma College, Alma, Mich. 48801, or National Bee Line Camps, P.O. Box 21, New Albany, Ind. 47150.

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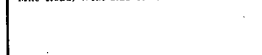
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