

HE SAID, SHE SAID ... BRIDGING THE GENDER COMMUNICATION GAP!

Presented By:



www.RhondaHamilton.com

'60s and '70s

- ⦿ Much effort spent to prove
 - Other than physical, no intrinsic differences
- ⦿ Prior to...women job possibilities were very narrow
 - Teachers, nurses, secretaries, store clerks
- ⦿ Brought about much change – doors began to open

'60s and '70s

⊙ Interesting realization

- Men and women are not the same!
- Can never be the same!
 - Think differently
 - Speak differently
 - Decide differently
 - Act differently
- Shouldn't strive to be the same!

***Pretending men and
women are the same
hurts rather than helps!***

The Takeaway!

- ◎ Men and Women need to
 - Recognize, understand and appreciate the differences
 - Learn how to use the differences for improved communication and success

Generalizations?

Generalizations

Capture similarities, (general tendencies)
obscure differences

Generalizations?

Everyone is unique

◎ Shaped by many influences

- Ethnicity
- Religion
- Class
- Age
- Geographical regions
- Personality
- Family

Stereotypes and Assumptions

- ◎ Some common stereotypes
 - Women cry too much
 - Real men don't cry
 - Women are warm and caring
 - Men are cold and uncaring
 - Women are passive and unaggressive
 - Men are aggressive and dominant

Negative Stereotypes

- ◎ Where do they come from?
 - Often, there is one small grain of truth that has been exaggerated!
- ◎ Are fed by our own perceptions, frustrations, assumptions regarding others behaviors and motivations

Stereotypes or General Tendencies?

- ◎ If there is a “grain of truth” in there, how can you tell the difference?
- ◎ Best way to avoid negative impact of stereotypes
 - Think in terms of general tendencies
 - Observe individual behavior
 - Focus on interaction of personal experiences

Everyone is unique

- ◎ Generalizations

- ◎ Norms

- Understanding primary differences between group norms can be helpful

- ◎ Stereotyping

Communication Impact!

◎ Studies have shown:

- Average person wastes up to 38% of each day dealing with miscommunications!
- Up to 70% of verbal communication with the opposite gender is either misunderstood or not heard

Excellent Communicators

- Have better relationships
- Have better marriages
- Raise more functional children
- Have more career success

Great communicators are people who change their approach based upon the person they are talking to.

-Bruce Christopher, Psychologist

Gender Communication Gap!

Gender Communication Gap!

◎ Men and women

- Interact and interpret differently
- Communicate and respond differently
- Can see or experience the same experience or conversation and walk away with two totally different perspectives

Research shows...

- ◎ Many men engage or approach the world
 - As an individual in a hierarchical social order
 - Either one-up or one-down

Research shows...

- In the masculine world
 - Conversations are negotiations
 - to achieve and maintain the upper hand
 - Protect themselves from attempts
 - to put them down or
 - push them around
 - Life
 - is a contest
 - A struggle to preserve independence, and
 - Avoid failure

Research shows...

- ◎ Women approach the world
 - As an individual in a network of connections

Research shows...

- ◎ In the feminine world
 - Conversations are negotiations for closeness
 - To seek and give confirmation and support
 - To reach consensus
 - Protect themselves from attempts
 - to push them away
 - Life
 - Is a community
 - A struggle to preserve relationship and/or intimacy
 - Avoid isolation

Research shows...

- ◎ Women are also concerned with achieving status and avoiding failure
 - Are not the goals they are focused on
 - And tend to pursue them through efforts of connection
 - *We're close and the same*

Research shows...

- ◎ Men are also concerned with achieving connection and avoiding isolation
 - But not focused on these goals
 - And tend to pursue them in the guise of opposition

Research shows...

⦿ Women value

- Communication
- Connection
- Relationships

⦿ Men value

- Independence
- Power
- Accomplishments

Relationship and Independence

- ◎ Relationship is key in a world of connection
 - Establish complex networks of friendship
 - Minimize differences
 - Seek consensus
 - Downplay superiority, which would highlight differences
 - The essential element of connection: symmetry
 - Intimacy/relationship says, “*We’re close and the same*”

Symmetry of connection creates community

Relationship and Independence

- ◎ Independence is key in a world of status
 - Taking orders from certain individuals is a marker of low status
 - Telling others what to do is a primary means of establishing status
 - The essential element of independence: asymmetry
 - People are differently placed in a hierarchy
 - Independence says, *“We’re separate and different.”*

Asymmetry of status creates contest

Relationship and Independence

- ◎ Women's social world=
 - A network of cooperation
- ◎ Men's social world=
 - A hierarchy of power
- ◎ Men are externally focused
 - Often view situations as issues to be resolved
- ◎ Men talk to inform others
- ◎ Women are internally focused
 - Talk as a way to connect and relate with others

Relationship and Independence

These differences can give women and men differing views of the same situation!

Metamessages

- ⦿ Frame a conversation
- ⦿ Let you know how to interpret what someone is saying
 - Identify the activity going on
 - Chatting, arguing, helping, advising, scolding
- ⦿ Identify the position the speaker is assuming and the position you are being assigned

Metamessages

⦿ Offers to help

- This is good for you! I care about you!
- You don't think I'm capable. You think you are more competent.

⦿ Offers of sympathy

- I feel your pain. I care for you!
- You have managed to avoid this unfortunate situation. You are smug in your confidence.

Metamessages

- ◎ Interpreting messages of status and connection must depend on how things are done and said
 - How things are worded
 - Tone of voice
 - Facial expressions and gestures

Metamessages

- ◎ All send messages about how the intention of the communication
 - A soothing pat
 - Condescending or comforting
 - Offhand smile
 - Smirk because I'm superior or
 - we're equals enjoying a conversation

Metamessages

- ◎ Protective gestures
 - From a man reinforces the traditional scenario
 - Men protect women
 - From a woman suggests a different traditional scenario
 - Women protect children
 - Act of protecting
 - Protector = dominant
 - Protected = subordinate

Metamessages

- ⦿ Our reactions to what others say or do are often sparked by how we are being framed
- ⦿ Sometimes communication can be intended to be symmetrical, but is interpreted through an asymmetrical filter

Meaning in conversation does not come from the words spoken at all. Meaning is filled in by the person listening.

Nature and Nurture – *It starts at the beginning*

- Initially communication is instinctual!
- Becomes a learned behavior as we grow
- Behavior is usually reinforced based upon gender

Nature – Our Wiring?

◎ Little boys

- Don't have that much to say – just get to the facts?
- Love to wrestle and make car noises?

Nature – Our Wiring?

- ◎ Little girls
 - Talk all the time?
 - Like to give lots of details?
 - Constantly want to connect?

Nature and Nurture – *It starts at the beginning*

- ⦿ Gender communication is partially defined by interaction with others
- ⦿ Girls watch and emulate the attitudes and behaviors of other little girls
- ⦿ Boys do the same
- ⦿ Little girls mimic their mothers, little boys their fathers
- ⦿ As adolescents movies, TV, magazines reaffirm gender behavior

Nature and Nurture – *It starts at the beginning*

- ◎ Girls are told
 - Don't be selfish – share and get along
 - Be careful and don't hurt yourself
 - Climbing trees is not very “lady-like”
 - Stay out of the mud and don't get dirty
- ◎ Girls are praised for
 - Being caring and pretty
 - Demonstrating lady-like behavior

Nature and Nurture – *It starts at the beginning*

- ◎ Boys are told
 - Don't be a sissy
 - Don't cry
 - Stand up for yourself
 - Go after what you want
 - Dolls are for girls
- ◎ Boys are praised for
 - Competing to win
 - Being tough and strong

Nature and Nurture – the games we play!

- ◎ Boys and girls spend most of their time playing in same-sex groups
- ◎ Their favorite games are different
- ◎ Ways of using language in their games are different

Nature and Nurture – *the games we play*

Boys:

- ⦿ Tend to play outside in large groups
- ⦿ Leader tells others what to do and how to do it
 - By giving orders and making them stick high status is negotiated

“Gimme that!”

“Come on!”

“Bring it over here!”

Nature and Nurture – *the games we play*

Boys:

- ⦿ Also achieve status by taking center stage
 - Telling stories and/or jokes
 - Sidetracking or challenging the stories and jokes of others
- ⦿ Games have winners and losers
- ⦿ Elaborate rules that they may argue over
- ⦿ Frequently boast about their skill
- ⦿ Argue about who is the best at what

Nature and Nurture – *the games we play*

Girls:

- ⦿ Tend to play in small groups or in pairs
 - Often have a best friend
- ⦿ Relationship is key within the group
- ⦿ In games (example: jump rope) they take turns
- ⦿ Many of their activities (example: playing house) do not have winners or losers

Nature and Nurture – *the games we play*

Girls:

- ⦿ Are expected not to boast
- ⦿ Or show that they think they are better
- ⦿ Don't give orders... that would be “bossy”
 - Express preferences as suggestions

“How about doing that?”

“Let's do this.”

Nature and Nurture – *the games we play*

Girls:

- ⦿ Are expected not to boast
- ⦿ Or show that they think they are better
- ⦿ Don't give orders... that would be “bossy”
 - Express preferences as suggestions
- ⦿ Trust that preferences will be accepted
- ⦿ Don't challenge each other directly
- ⦿ Sit together and talk
- ⦿ Do not jockey for status in an obvious way
 - More concerned with being liked

Nature and Nurture – *the games we play*

◎ Boys like

- Wrestling
- Playing with cars
- Playing and watching sports

◎ Girls like

- Jump rope
- Playing house
- Tea parties

Nature and Nurture – *the games we play*

- ◎ Boys make slingshots for fighting while girls make rings
- ◎ Boys build forts for fighting while girls play house

Nature and Nurture –
the carry-over!

Gender Influences on Conversational Misunderstandings

Men and Women Think Differently

- ◎ Equally intelligent, but
- ◎ Approach and view the world through differing frameworks
 - Men think compartmentally
 - Men separate things out and store it separately in their cognitive memory banks
 - Open and close the drawers, one drawer at a time
 - Women think globally
 - Women connect things together
 - See the interrelated details

Men and Women Think Differently

A man is preparing to go on a weekend fishing trip. His wife comes into the room and a conversation turns into an argument regarding their son's recent behavior. His ride comes before they finish their discussion and a resolution was not achieved. He closes his fathering folder, opens up his recreation folder and stays there all weekend long. What happens for her?

Men and Women Think Differently

- She stewes about it all weekend!
- When he comes home, she wants to resolve the issue
- She lets him know through body language and hint language that she is upset
- He says, “You still upset?”
- She says, “My emotions are not like a water spicket that I can just turn on and off!”

Men and Women Think Differently

- ◎ Brains are physically different – MRI of brains receiving message
 - Woman's brain processes message in up to 16 different areas
 - Men's brain will process in no more than 6 areas
 - Women multi-task easier than men – receive multiple messages better than men
 - Easier for men to focus on one or two things and follow-through to completion

Men and Women Think Differently

- ◎ Men's brains are 10% larger
 - Science suggests – men only use half their brains at a time
 - During task performance, brain activity is only registered on one side

Men and Women Think Differently

- ◎ Women have a larger Corpus Callosum
 - area at base of brain with nerve endings
 - connects both sides of the brain
- Brain activity occurs
 - on both sides simultaneously and
 - includes an emotion assessment with the stated facts

Men and Women Speak Differently

Troubles-Talk

- ◎ Troubles Talk
 - Example: Female has a scar from surgery
 - Male:
 - Offers solutions
 - I'll fix it for you!
 - Female:
 - Wants understanding
 - Assurance
 - Confirmation of feelings

Troubles-Talk

⊙ Troubles Talk

- Example: Male overwhelmed with too much work
- Female:
 - Identifies (we're the same)
 - "I know what you mean. I feel the same way."
- Male:
 - Feels she belittled his experience
 - Feels something has been taken away from him
 - Don't deny the uniqueness of my experience!

Troubles-Talk

- ⦿ Women resent men's tendency to "fix" their problems
- ⦿ Men complain about women's refusal to "fix" the problem they are talking about
- ⦿ Women appreciate men's help in "fixing" mechanical problems
- ⦿ Tend not to appreciate men's help in "fixing" emotional problems
- ⦿ Women feel distanced by the advice

"We're not the same. You have a problem and I have the solution."

Troubles-Talk

Women's trouble-talk

- ⦿ A bid for expression of understanding
- ⦿ Intended to reinforce connection
 - “We’re the same. You’re not alone.”
- ⦿ Mutual understanding is symmetrical
- ⦿ Giving advice is asymmetrical
 - Advice giver more knowledgeable
 - More in control
 - In one-up position

Troubles-Talk

- ◎ Girls talk at length about troubles
 - They pursue, explore, identify, elaborate
- ◎ Boys raise an issue
 - One comes up with a solution
 - They close the discussion

Troubles-Talk: What do we do?

☉ Women:

- Let them know that you don't necessarily blame them for the problem
- Realize that a man's attempt to solve a problem IS HIS WAY of showing support
- Let him know whether you are looking for support or a solution
 - *"I need to blow off a little steam."*
 - *"I'm upset and just need to talk to you and hear your voice."*
 - *"I need to get your thoughts on something."*

Troubles-Talk: What do we do?

◎ Women:

- When a man mentions a problem, evaluate the response he is looking for
- Don't respond with "*shoulda, woulda, coulda*" about *past actions*
- Offer options, not just empathy

Troubles-Talk: What do we do?

☉ Men:

- Make sure others know what type of response you are looking for... solutions or just support
 - End the problem statement with a request for a solution
- Recognize empathy as a sign of caring
 - Accept and appreciate it, then ask for solution suggestions

Troubles-Talk: What do we do?

☉ Men:

- When a woman mentions a problem
 - Understand she is not necessarily blaming you
 - Offer empathy, not just solutions
 - Don't respond with "coulda, shoulda, woulda" regarding past actions
 - Don't editorialize about how to solve all future problems
 - Squelch the urge: *"You should never have..... And if it happens again..."*

Male-Talk

- ◎ Communicate for information
 - Where are my black socks?
 - Did you take the package to the post office?
 - Do we have any milk?

Female-Talk

- ◎ Communicate for validation
 - Want assurance of their value to those they love
 - Need to know that spending time with them is more important than other things

Testosterone vs. Estrogen

⦿ Men are validated

- by what they do
- Accomplishments
 - Closing a deal
 - Fixing the leaky faucet

⦿ Women are validated

- By spending time together
- And just talking

Female Big-Talk vs Male Small-Talk

- ◎ Sequential, narrative fashion
- ◎ Lots of details
- ◎ Bottom-line comes at the end
- ◎ Reporting Statements
 - Shorter, clipped info
 - Without a lot of detail
 - Don't speak in paragraphs
 - Bottom-line comes at the beginning
 - Sometimes that's ALL you get!

Female Big-Talk vs Male Small-Talk

- Female:

What happened with the interview?

- Male:

*I got the job.
Start next Monday.*

- Male:

What happened with the interview?

- Female:

You won't believe what happened!...

Female Big-Talk

Gum
Surgery

Female Big-Talk vs Male Small-Talk

- ◎ Female thinks:

I never get any information from him. It's like pulling teeth. I tell him everything. He tells me nothing.

- ◎ Male thinks:

There's nothing to tell, nothing happened. When she talks, she goes on and on. Why doesn't she get to the point?

Female Big-Talk vs Male Small-Talk

◎ Gender Clash!

- Identifying what's important enough to talk about and what's not!

Female Big-Talk vs Male Small-Talk

- Male:

I missed the meeting. What happened?

- Female:

Well, first...

Then ...

But ...

So...

And, we postponed changing the commission structure

Female Big-Talk vs Male Small-Talk

- ◎ Female's Big-Talk agitates men
 - Eyes glaze over
 - Tune out

Female Big-Talk vs Male Small-Talk

- ◎ Female reads “communication error”
 - Male is not understanding her foreign language
 - So she speaks louder and slower
 - Increases the narrative explanation
- ◎ Male is frustrated
 - Interrupts or cuts her off
 - To get what he wants... bottom-line!

Male vs Female Language

Male Language

- ◎ Tends to be literal
 - What color is it? ...Blue

Male vs Female Language

Female Language

- ◎ Richer, more descriptive words
 - What color is it? ...a shade of blue

- Baby blue
- Azure
- Cobalt blue
- Cornflower blue
- Denim
- Electric blue
- Indigo blue
- Navy blue
- Midnight blue
- Periwinkle
- Powder blue
- Royal blue
- Sky blue
- Teal

Male vs Female Language

◎ Men

- Use technical language
- Talk about things you can see, measure, quantitative
 - 3/8" wrench
 - 2500 revolutions per minute
 - Batting average is 325

Male vs Female Language

◎ Women

- Use emotional language
- Use word pictures
- Words for emphasis... “really”
- Use superlatives
 - Never and always

What does this mean?

Female says...

◎ ***You never listen to me!***

• ***(male is thinking... I do too. What am I doing right now?)***

◎ ***Translation...***

• ***I don't feel you understand me.***

What does this mean?

Female says...

- ◎ ***We never go out!***
 - ***(male is thinking... Yes, we do. We went to dinner and a movie on your birthday 3 months ago!)***
- ◎ ***Translation:***
 - ***We don't go out often enough. It makes me feel special to go out with you.***

What does this mean?

Female says...

- ◎ *Don't get me anything for my birthday!*
- ◎ *Translation:*
 - *Money is tight, so just get me something small like a romantic card and a flower bouquet from the grocery store floral dept.*

Report-Talk vs Rapport-Talk

- ◎ Women's purpose in talking
 - Build relationships
 - To show concern
- ◎ Means they can talk about almost anything!
 - Shoes, pets, children
 - Things happen!
 - Trivial and unimportant

Report-Talk vs Rapport-Talk

- ⊙ Men's purpose in talking
 - Primarily for conveying information
 - For getting things accomplished
- ⊙ Don't want to waste conversation on unimportant topics
- ⊙ Report the big things
 - Like a newspaper
 - Current affairs, policies, accomplishments, events
 - The trivial -- no

Report-Talk vs Rapport-Talk

- ◎ Women's general conversation
 - People, feelings, and relationships
 - Concerned about how they're feeling
 - How they're getting along
- ◎ Women watch the non-verbals well
 - Take in the whole context

Report-Talk vs Rapport-Talk

- ⦿ Men package conversation with
 - Sports analogies
 - Money
 - Business
- ⦿ Don't read non-verbals as well
- ⦿ Intent: to preserve status and independence

Report-Talk vs Rapport-Talk

- Men give the Headline News 30-second clips
- Women give the Talk Show News Hour

Report-Talk vs Rapport-Talk

⦿ What do we do?

- Women: start with your big-picture assessment
 - Offer necessary details germane to the point
 - Offer other details as an option (if details are solicited)
- Men: take advantage of a woman's attention to details
 - Use them to further analyze a problem to analyze and verify your thoughts best solutions for the problem

Questions or Objections?

- Men often interpret women's questions as objections
- Understandable because
 - Women don't always make direct statements
 - Especially when addressing something confrontational or negative

Questions or Objections?

Male:

I need to go back by the house before we go to dinner.

Female:

Why do you need to go back by the house?

Questions or Objections?

- ◎ Sometimes the question is just that!
 - No hidden agenda or hidden point
- ◎ Women seek approval
 - Taught not to make waves
 - So, sometimes women hint through a question
 - Intended to cause a man to rethink his opinion or action

Questions vs Direct Statements

- ⦿ Men and women differ in how they ask for things that they need.
- ⦿ Men use direct statements
 - *I want to go to the movie today to see Shoot 'Em Up Kid*
 - *We need this done by next Friday*

Questions vs Direct Statements

◎ *Women's "hint language"*

- *Expresses a need, wish, or desire in the form of a question*
 - *Are you hungry?*
 - *Wouldn't it be fun to play tennis today?*
 - *Do you think we can get that fixed by next Friday?*

Qualifiers vs Direct Language

- ◎ Women use more qualifiers
 - Would it be a problem if...
 - If it wouldn't be too much trouble...
 - If you don't mind, would you...
 - If you have time...

Questions/Qualifiers vs Direct Language

◎ What do we do?

- Women: State objections directly
 - *Not: “Do you really think we should...”*
 - *But: “I don’t think we should...”*
- Men: Decide (probe if necessary) whether questions are OBJECTIONS or questions for INFORMATION
 - Respond appropriately

***Effective methods of
prospecting, selling, marketing
for each gender***

Marketing

- ◎ Female purchases
 - 80% of apparel
 - 52% of new vehicles, and 85% are influenced by women
 - 40% of consumer electronics, and 61% are influenced by women
 - 20% of home purchases made by single women, and 91% influenced by women
 - 55% of all wine

Marketing

- ◎ Other decisions made by women
 - 70% of health care decisions
 - 90% of women participate regarding household retirement and investment accounts

Marketing Tips

- ◎ Women and men define achievement differently
 - Men strive for independence
 - Women strive to be indispensable
 - Men do not like to ask for help
 - Women love to ask for and get help
 - Men compete with others
 - Women compete with themselves

Marketing Tips

- ⦿ Women connect by talking about their feelings and revealing their vulnerabilities
- ⦿ Women like to give and receive compliments
- ⦿ Being a shrewd buyer is a form of status for a woman
- ⦿ Women focus on details and will talk to friends about the product

Marketing Tips

- ⦿ Men are more interested in how things work
- ⦿ Women are more interested in what something will do for them -- benefits
- ⦿ Women respond to stories more than they do to just product information
- ⦿ Men respond to factual product information -- features
- ⦿ Women avoid conflict situations
- ⦿ Men avoid emotional scenes

Negotiating & Selling Tips

- ◎ Avoid outdated stereotypical thinking
 - Assuming females are weak or unable to make a firm decision
 - Assuming males are going to be intimidating
- ◎ Be aware of general cultural patterns and examine each buyer more closely
 - Individual behavior type

Negotiating & Selling Tips

- ◎ Watch non-verbal messages
 - When men nod, it usually means agreement
 - Women are strong listeners and use body language to demonstrate listening
 - Smile
 - Give verbal feedback
 - Nod
 - Do not assume smiling and nodding means agreement

Negotiating & Selling Tips

- ◎ Women selling to men:
 - Work to minimize speech patterns that convey weakness
 - Use fewer qualifiers
 - Use more direct statements
- ◎ Men selling to women:
 - Use more narrative language
 - Rapport talk
 - Wait for the bottom-line, don't interrupt



Thanks for sharing your time with me!

Connect with me!

www.RhondaHamilton.com

www.facebook.com/RhondaHamiltonSpeaker