EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION IN GROUP DISCUSSIONS:
A STUDY OF SELECTED PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SEMANTIC
PRINCIPLES AS INVOLVED IN COMMON DISCUSSION PATTERNS

by

Charles Peter Bartl
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Approved:

Baxter M. Geeting, Chair
Emmett C. Thompson
Carl A. Thomas

Advisory Committee

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In a world that depends so much on the cooperation of its citizens, it is quite evident that effective communication is of the essence. Time and again, however, one observes the inability of our citizens to communicate adequately with one another. In recent years representatives from several disciplines, e.g., psychology, speech, social psychology, semantics, and general semantics, have become greatly concerned with this problem of communication in its many forms; this concern has subsequently brought forth a wealth of valuable information which, if properly synthesized and utilized, could do much to eliminate communication failures. To date there have been several attempts to apply this information to specific communication situations; it is felt, however, with particular reference to small group situations, that efforts thus far are too general in nature and are, therefore, inadequate.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. It was the purpose of this project (1) to analyze and show the relationship between adult psychological maturity and effective communication; (2) to analyze and show the relationship between certain language-
usage tendencies and effective communication; and (3) to apply this information in the form of guidelines to specific group discussion patterns.

Justification of the problem. Teachers, of both secondary and collegiate levels, were consulted as to the possible value of this study. It was subsequently brought out that there is a noticeable shortage of available books and pamphlets that deal in a practical, specific manner with this problem of inadequate group communication. This being the case, and to paraphrase Irving Lee,¹ one of the acknowledged authorities in the field of communications, any attempt to clarify communication problems is highly justified and sorely needed. Previous studies of this type have been of limited value as a result of a lack of specificity in the application of existing material to specific group discussion patterns. In this project an attempt was made to devise specific guidelines applicable to specific discussion patterns, thereby satisfying the above criticism.

II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED²

Abstracting. Confronted with an event, we can be


aware of only a few of its characteristics. We can translate into symbols for purposes of transmission an even fewer number of such characteristics. Thus in evaluation, in representation, and in communication, abstracting, i.e., a selecting of characteristics, always takes place: interpreting an event as an "object"; giving a description of an "object"; making an inference about a class of "objects."

Adjustment. Behavior conditional upon factors in the environment and having survival value.

Blockage. A semantic disturbance in which adequate response is inhibited.

Event. A point in space-time, or more generally, a configuration of such points.

General Semantics. The study of human responses to linguistic (and other) symbols; the study of human behavior with and under the stimulus of symbols.

Identification. Automatically and compulsively reacting to a novel situation as if it were identical with one or more previously experienced situations which it somehow resembles. Also failure to distinguish between different orders of abstraction.

Map. A configuration of symbols assumed to possess
structure similar to that of the events they stand for: verbal descriptions, geographical maps, statistical charts, etc.

Maturity. As used in this project, this term refers to satisfactory adult, psychological adjustment.

Semantic Disturbance. Behavior resulting from unexpected discrepancy between map and territory. Semantic disturbance continues if map is not adjusted.

Space-time. Four-dimensional continuum in which the events of relativity physics are embedded.

Symbol. Anything which stands for or represents any territory.

Territory. Anything which can be symbolized.

III. ORGANIZATION OF THE PROJECT

In attempting to develop guidelines to be used with specific group discussion patterns, it was first necessary to survey that literature which contained principles the author felt could be readily transposed into practical guidelines. The information gleaned from this survey tends to fall naturally into two main groups: (1) information pertaining to maturity, and (2) information pertaining to language-usage tendencies. These two main groups of ideas, then, provided
the necessary information from which the guidelines were derived. Hence, the remaining chapters of this project are organized as follows:

Chapter II, Maturity and Communication, (1) reviews the literature concerned with the concept of psychological maturity; (2) offers suggestions as to how one's level of maturity may be increased; and (3) relates the concept of maturity to effective communication.

Chapter III, Language-usage Tendencies and Effective Communication, (1) shows the relationship between adult psychological maturity and language-usage tendencies; (2) shows the relationship between language-usage tendencies and effective communication; and (3) discusses at some length nine language-usage tendencies which the author holds to be the most prevalent and important.

Chapter IV, Guidelines, takes the information offered in Chapters II and III and transposes same into specific guidelines applicable to specific group discussion patterns.

IV. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Volumes of material have been written concerning the problem of effective communication. Relatively few authors have, however, attempted to apply this wealth of knowledge to specific group situations. Of these few the more current and important will now be briefly reviewed.
Homans's *The Human Group*, while essentially a sociological study of human nature in group situations, offers much valuable information to those interested in communication problems. He meticulously analyzes five small groups in terms of their psychological and sociological substance. The result of his analysis provides the communicator, indirectly, with many useful ideas as to how group communication might be improved.

A more direct attack on ineffective group communication is Lee's *How To Talk With People*. He initially makes the point that talking "to" or "at" people is not the same as talking "with" people. He emphasizes that when individuals in a group situation talk "at" one another there is a strong possibility that they will miss each other in psychological space. Talking "with" others, on the other hand, infers mutual interest and concern between speaker and listener. Lee goes on to develop this theme of talking "with" people by utilizing some of the best psychological and semantic knowledge available. He applies his information to discussion groups in general, isolating for discussion problem situations which occur in most group discussions.

In 1951 Strauss and Strauss published *New Ways To*
Better Meetings. Although it stresses the role and responsibilities of the discussion leader, it nonetheless offers valuable general information on how to conduct more effective group discussions. The Strausses appear to be more interested in getting a group to work together than they are in increasing effective communication as such; they do, however, deal indirectly with problems resulting from faulty communication. Throughout the book they emphasize the need to get away from strict discussion rules, taking particular issue with Robert's Rules of Order. The Strausses feel that mutual participation in group situations yields infinitely more results and satisfied group members.

No study of the present type would be complete without consulting Group Dynamics, edited by Cartwright and Zander. This valuable anthology is dedicated to the democratic tradition that groups working cooperatively can achieve more than individuals. Of particular pertinence here are sections four and five, entitled "Group Goals and Group Locomotion" and "The Structural Properties of Groups" respectively. In these sections the problem of effective communication is

5 Bert and Frances Strauss, New Ways To Better Meetings (New York: The Viking Press, 1951).
7 Ibid., p. 305ff.
8 Ibid., p. 415ff.
treated, however slightly; the emphasis appears to be on the structure of communication, e.g., in the military one may not communicate directly with the commanding officer without first talking with one's immediate superior. In brief, emphasis is placed upon how and under what conditions something is said, not upon the language itself.

The aforementioned publications all deal in some major or minor way with the problem of inadequate communication in group situations. The emphasis in these works, and others of their kind, has been placed on effective communication in general, not as applied to specific group situations. The assumption here is that unless group members have specific guidelines to follow in and during the process of group discussions, results will not be as satisfactory as they could and should be. The present work, then, is an attempt to correct this inadequacy by compiling specific guidelines applicable to specific group discussion patterns.

V. SOURCES OF DATA AND METHOD OF PROCEDURE

Sources of data. Since this project was concerned with the compilation of guidelines based upon research already completed in the field of communications, the sources of data were all secondary ones.

Method of procedure. The procedure used in the preparation of this project was to review pertinent literature
related to this problem of ineffective communication in group situations and to extract from this literature those principles which would provide the basis for, and the substance of, the developed guidelines. Chapters II and III present and discuss the principles which are found in Chapter IV in the form of specific group discussion guidelines.
CHAPTER II

MATURITY AND COMMUNICATION

In approaching the problem of effective group communication, it is first necessary to analyze a concept which, as will readily be recognized, lies at the very bottom of all effective communication; it is a concept that is, as Dr. Overstreet, professor of psychology at the College of the City of New York, puts it, of "... central import to our whole enterprise of living"—the concept of psychological maturity. Social scientists have known vaguely about psychological maturity for some time; yet not till quite recently, as a result of a new psychological accuracy, have these scientists been able to isolate, even to a degree, those factors or elements which comprise this concept. Over the past fifteen years numerous social scientists have treated and experimented with aspects of this concept. Their conclusions have, in some respects, not been the same. In some cases the discrepancy is the result of using different words to represent a similar idea; in others stress is placed on different factors; and in still other cases the basic conclusions are essentially different. It is the purpose of this chapter, then, to review the more important contributions and

experiments concerned with this concept of maturity; to discuss to some extent how individuals can go about achieving a higher degree of maturity; and, finally, to apply and relate this information to the problem of effective group communication.

Let us initially realize that the concept of maturity is a relative one; that is, maturity is thought of as possessing somewhat different qualities and characteristics by different cultures, and at various age levels within any given culture. Further, the word "maturity," as it will be used in this chapter, refers more to a process than to an end result. By treating the concept of maturity as a process, we are acknowledging the "fact" that no one can ever reach that point of psychological development where no further growth is necessary. We might say, with James L. Hymes, Jr., that "... there is the mature infant, the mature youth, and the mature adult." Hence, maturity, in this respect, might be thought of as an appropriateness at a given level of development. (For purposes of this paper, however, we shall restrict ourselves to the "appropriateness" of adult maturity.) Further, since external reality, including the "self," is usually conceded to be dynamic in nature, maturity (or "appropriate" inner psychological reality) must

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2James L. Hymes, Jr., "Maturity: What is it?", *Childhood Education*, XXVII (September, 1950), 2.
also be dynamic. Maturity, therefore, is an ever-changing, continuously developing process which finds its impetus and justification in external reality. This somewhat complex definition will be clarified, expanded, and, to some degree, modified in the discussion that follows on what some of the best thinkers in the sciences have to say about this matter.

Carl Rogers, who is generally acknowledged to be one of America's foremost psychologists and psychotherapists, having aided several hundred people to achieve a higher, more satisfactory level of adjustment, thinks of psychological maturity as a process of self-realization. Further, and in his own words, "... each person is asking, 'Who am I, really? How can I get in touch with this real self that underlies all my surface behavior? How can I become myself?'" Rogers contends, in short, that when a person is able to eliminate the defensive masks or false fronts which we all to some degree create to protect ourselves from real and/or imagined social threats, the emerging self would be one that truly reflects the inner feelings and attitudes of the individual. Furthermore, this "new" self would be free of the inner conflicts which tend to promote or prolong an inadequate psychological adjustment with external reality; the individual, in brief, would be free to progress toward self-

knowledge, and, hence, toward a higher, more adequate level of psychological maturity. Having thus reached this more effective level of maturity, Rogers maintains that the following personality changes emerge: the person becomes more open to all elements of his experiences; he begins to assume the responsibility of being a unique personality; and, perhaps of most importance, the person begins to sense that living is a process of discovering new aspects of one's self as these hidden insights reveal themselves in and during the passing flow of experiences.\(^4\)

One of the leading students, and therefore authorities, on this subject of maturity is Dr. Harry A. Overstreet, who has been previously quoted in this project. He believes that the current concept of maturity is the outgrowth of a new trend toward integration and synthesis.\(^5\) Of primary import here is the synthesizing of what Overstreet considers to be the five fundamental insights into human nature and behavior which have thus far been contributed by the psychological and psychiatric sciences. These insights, when combined or blended, form what many scientists now think of as the concept of maturity. These five insights are as follows:

1. The idea of psychological age;
2. The idea of arrested development or fixation;
3. The idea of

\(^4\text{Ibid.}, \ p. \ 154.\)

\(^5\text{Overstreet, op. cit.}, \ p. \ 39.\)
conditioned response; (4) the idea of aptitude uniqueness; and (5) the idea of adult capacity to learn. A brief explanation of each follows.

Alfred Benet, a French psychologist, was in all probability the first man to recognize that psychological age need by no means correspond to chronological age. A boy of ten years, for example, may well have the psychological development of fifteen years, of five years, or whatever. This insight immediately made many educators aware that chronological grouping in the school room, where the same material was taught by the same technique to each child, was unjustified in many respects. A child chronologically ten years of age but with a psychological age of four can hardly be expected to keep pace with a class of his chronological age-mates. This insight, initially, then, gave the educators an effective means of classifying children for their school work. Of far more importance, however, says Overstreet, is that this insight of psychological age has revealed to us the incredible complexity of human nature. Benet was concerned with the mental age of children; psychologists later took his ideas and expanded them into the emotional and social areas of the individual. Here, too, with adults, vast differences were discovered between psychological and chronological ages. A man of thirty may have the egocentric outlook of a typical five-year-old; or, conversely, a child of five may be far

6Ibid., p. 16.
beyond his playmates of his own age in his power of give and
take, his sense of justice, and his willingness to help
others. Hence, Overstreet contends, the essential thing
about an individual is not so much the number of years he
has lived as the psychological competence or maturity those
years have netted him.

The second insight to contribute to the concept of
maturity is the idea of arrested development or fixation.
Freud discovered this idea in his attempts to cure certain
diseases that had baffled medical science for centuries.
These diseases presented physical symptoms, yet they stub­
bornly refused to yield to physical treatment: blindnesses
not marked by tissue deterioration, vomitings, tremors, am­
nesias, deliriums, obsessions, compulsions, and many others.
Freud later abandoned the usual physical remedies and began
to concentrate his efforts on the personalities of his
patients. It was in this area that he found the key solution
he had been seeking—these baffling diseases of adulthood
originated in unresolved emotional conflicts of childhood.
By this it is meant that whenever during the formative years
of life an intense emotional conflict is left unresolved, it
does not disappear but remains as a festering element that
later may take the form of a severe emotional disturbance or
a pervasive uneasiness in the handling of life. (Psychia­
trists call this uneasiness a form of "free-floating anxiety"—
an anxiety, the source of which is unknown to the individual concerned.) Instead of growing beyond such an unresolved problem, the individual becomes fixated at that point of emotional development where he encountered the experience that he was unable to understand and, therefore, unable to resolve. Adult immaturity, then, is a sign that at some certain point in the formative years of life emotional development was thus arrested and further growth prevented; it is a sign that further growth will not, in all probability, take place until the person has come to terms with the problem—until he understands it, until he is able to "see" the problem in the light of adult perspective. Until such a time as understanding is gained, the immature person will continue to seek solutions to adult problems by employing the infantile methods peculiar to that level at which his emotional growth was arrested.

Another insight that provides us with a clue as to the composition of psychological maturity is the idea of the conditioned response. Ivan Pavlov, a Russian physiologist, performed an experiment on a dog in the early years of this century. Out of this experiment came a new comprehension of what makes us become the creatures we are, and, of more significance, what can make us become very different human beings. Pavlov's experiment with the dog, the meat, and the bell is familiar to all; the implications of this experiment
for mankind, however, are perhaps not so well realized. When Pavlov conditioned his dog to salivate when he rang a bell, he showed us that man's nature—like the dog's nature—is not something fixed and unalterable. Amazing things can be done to make a person react to given stimuli in ways far removed from that which is considered "normal." A man, for example, can be made to kill his fellow man and be proud of it when the act of killing is associated or accompanied with the winning of approval in the form of medals, increased prestige, or cheers from the populace. A child can be made to like boiled carrots if accompanied with flattery and approving smiles. In each such case an artificial stimulus is so closely tied up with the satisfaction of a basic need—food, approval, a sense of belonging, etc.—that response to the stimulus is felt as quite "normal." In brief, man can be made into almost anything, given the proper stimuli. This insight, particularly, places an incredible amount of responsibility on the shoulders of all parents and educators, since a child will become only that which he is taught or conditioned to become. A better world is now within sight, for with effective stimuli it is possible to build far more enlightened, capable, and truly mature human beings.

Individual uniqueness is the next on Overstreet's list of insights which contribute to the maturity concept. As far back as the 1880's psychologists were conducting experiments
in attempts to isolate, measure, and understand the various elements which seem to account for individual uniqueness. To date several such elements, or aptitudes, have been treated experimentally and are now understood to some degree: musical talent, mechanical aptitude, clerical ability, artistic ability, and others. The information thus far accumulated in this area of research seems to point up two important ideas. The first of these is that every human being appears to have more ability in one area than he has in others. Since we all have a stronger ability, it follows, therefore, that we would be more content and satisfied if our life's work were patterned along the same line. Hence, the second and more important idea--an individual's maturing will best be accomplished if his activities and work are in accordance with his best abilities. The full essence of this insight is that in order to reach a reasonably satisfactory level of maturity, we all, with the help of modern science, should endeavor to realize our best powers and continue to utilize and improve on them throughout the course of our life.

It was not too long ago that the vast majority of people placidly accepted what might well be called the immaturity of non-learning--the belief that learning was confined to the early years. Fortunately, in 1928, a psychologist by the name of Edward L. Thorndike succeeded in establishing once and for all that adults can, and must,
continue to learn new things, even into the declining years. In his own words, Thorndike says:

In general, no one under forty-five should restrain himself from trying to learn anything because of a belief or fear that he is too old to be able to learn. Nor should he use that fear as an excuse for not learning that which he ought to learn. If he fails in learning, inability due directly to age will very rarely, if ever, be the reason.7

Thorndike goes on to say, in essence, that adults do not see themselves as learners because of factors either within themselves or within their culture. Some of the factors within themselves that may prevent learning are: ignorance of how to set about learning, a lack of aptitude for learning the particular subject undertaken, a desire too weak to establish proper attention habits where the habits are absent, and others. Obstacles within the culture seem to arise from the still "unusualness" of adult study—adults may be open to ridicule as a result of their going to school; some adults feel inferior or stupid at having to study at an age when study is presumed to have been accomplished. In brief, it is the cultural and personal factors which prevent adult learning. It is not adulthood itself.

These five insights, then, are what Overstreet believes to be the most important contributing ideas to the concept of maturity. He summarizes his discussion of this subject by

saying:

• • • psychologists and psychiatrists have collectively declared that it is the business of man to mature: to mature psychologically as well as physically, to mature along the line of what is unique in him and what he healthily shares with all his fellows, and to continue the maturing process throughout his life.8

This, to Overstreet, is the maturity concept.

Another prominent psychologist, Erik Erikson, in his book, Childhood in Society, says that maturity entails the achievement of four tasks: identity, intimacy, emotional expansion, and integrity.9 He defines these tasks as follows: Identity, which usually takes place during adolescence, is the result of having satisfactorily answered for one's self the questions (1) Who am I? (2) What are my goals in life? and (3) What kind of person will I be in the future? Intimacy, a task associated with early adulthood, is the successful merging of one's life with another's, usually in the form of marriage. Middle age is the typical setting for emotional expansion. This task is achieved by becoming genuinely interested in, and able to take care of things, and other people— the rearing of children, the carrying on of worth while hobbies, active participation in community activities, etc. Old age is that time when Erikson's task of integrity should take place. The achievement of integrity means accepting

8 Overstreet, op. cit., p. 41.

one's life cycle as worth while, accepting the belief that one has done his reasonable best, accepting what has been his and desiring no more. Maturity, then, to Erikson and his advocates,\(^{10}\) seems to be the end result of having achieved each one of these tasks; it is the final expression of the growth potential of all psychological factors; it is the fruit of old age.

Freudian psychoanalysts, somewhat on the other hand, maintain that mature personalities are those in which there is a balance between the Id, or unconscious self, the Ego, or self, and the Super Ego, the person's conscience.\(^{11}\) In other words, when the many facets of the human personality are harmoniously integrated—when there are no conflicting forces present which tend to divide and disintegrate the personality structure—then we have a person who acts as a balanced whole—a mature personality. Since our thoughts, feelings, and desires—the composite of which constitutes the concept "personality"—are by their very nature dynamic, it follows that the balance between these factors must also be dynamic. Hence, psychological maturity to the psychoanalysts would be a continuous, ever changing process.


Another interesting explanation of psychological maturity is given by Mikesell and Hanson. These psychologists suggest that the maturity concept can best be understood if separated into three distinct sub-concepts: "(1) maturity as demanded by society; (2) maturity from the standpoint of mental equilibrium; and (3) maturity from the standpoint of wish-fulfillment."\(^{12}\)

Social maturity is understood, in this case, to be the result of a person having satisfied all of society's demands—standards, or accepted ways of doing things, are set up by all cultures and the citizens are expected to comply; if a person is unable to behave in socially approved ways, he is said to be socially immature. Our society demands, for example, that a child release hold of his mother's apron strings and establish self-reliance; our society demands promptness and condemns habits of postponement and procrastination; our society demands growth beyond the childish love of body—ability to love and respect others; our society also demands that its members accept responsibility when necessary, and so on.

Mental equilibrium, as used by these writers, refers to that state of the individual in which all of his various habits, perceptions, motives, and emotions are fully

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coordinated and balanced, with the result that the individual is said to be well adjusted, or to have mental equilibrium.

The third concept of maturity offered by Mikesell and Hanson refers to the completion of human development by fulfillment of basic urges. Assuming that the individual has certain basic desires, maturity, according to this concept, occurs when these desires are completely fulfilled. When one has obtained that which he basically desires from life without being mentally blocked or hampered, one is said to have reached psychological maturity. Anything that arrests one's growth at a point short of this maturity, therefore, may be considered to be the cause of immaturity. Here we see a resemblance to Freud's concept of "fixation," where personality development becomes arrested or fixated because of some unresolved emotional conflict of childhood.

Along a somewhat more practical vein, Lindemann and Greer speak of maturity as the result of having mastered four abilities: ability to reasonably content with one's lot, ability to perform appropriate tasks when necessary, ability to live through ordinary stress without disintegrating, and the ability to maintain a reasonably high degree of independence so as not to impair the happiness and/or productivity of others as a result of one's dependence upon them.13

They go on to say that our society demands competitive success at the expense of well-rounded, healthy human relationships. Psychological maturity, consequently, is achieved only after a succession of highly difficult stages, the successful result of which is the possession of the above abilities.

Lucile Allen, recent guest editor for the *National Association of Deans of Women Journal*, provides us with a somewhat different approach to the maturity concept when she says, in effect, that maturity means knowledge and understanding of self and others. Immaturity, on the other hand, is typified by self-centeredness and/or inexperience. Maturity, she continues, connotes the ability to love with complete understanding and insight; it connotes appreciation of others' maturities or strengths with acceptance of their immaturities or weaknesses; it connotes one's ability to identify one's self as being both separate from others, yet always in relation to others--one must fully sense his individuality with the realization that this individuality exists within the confines of a given society, thus forcing on the mature person the knowledge that one is responsible not only for one's own being, but for others as well. To be mature requires the "will" or desire, together with the knowledge

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that one has not achieved it yet. This recognition, to Dr. Allen, is the beginning of wisdom. She sums up her thoughts by saying, "... the mature are alive and vital, open-minded and considerate ... they can trust and be trusted ... and they can move with ease and understanding from one emotional climate to another ... ."\textsuperscript{15}

In concluding our discussion on what maturity is, it seems appropriate to leave this subject with a final, summarizing thought. Hymes provides such a thought when he says:

"Maturity" probably is not something conforming so much as it is a balancing thing. "Maturity" probably is not something final so much as it is a developmental thing. Finally, "maturity" probably is not something singular so much as it is a plural thing, with "maturity" evolving out of "maturity."\textsuperscript{16}

The foregoing pages of this chapter have been concerned with the task of providing some fundamental information about maturity upon which to base a further discussion on how adult maturity is related to the problem of effective group communication. Before so doing, there remains one further task--providing further insights or clues which will be helpful to the individual in the attaining of maturity. Many such insights have already been mentioned in the course of this discussion; it is felt, however, that there is a need for further specificity and clarification of these clues. It

\textsuperscript{15}Ibid., p. 145.

\textsuperscript{16}Hymes, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 3.
is believed that the next few pages will satisfy this need.

Lee begins this phase of our discussion with a rather basic idea. She says, "To develop maturity, an individual must first have the opportunity to feel the full impact of reality, with no protective barriers."17 This statement is, of course, directed primarily at parents. She goes on to say, in effect, that many of us have been overly protected by our parents, and that we, in turn, are providing the same injurious protection for our children, who in turn, no doubt, will react in like manner to their children. It must be realized, Lee continues, that it is the dire responsibility of all parents to allow their children to share in and accept the experiences of life; it is only through first-hand experiences with the harshness of reality that we can begin to build up the emotional strength so necessary to the achieving of adult maturity. The incredible number of psychiatric cases now filling our hospitals--many because of overly protected childhoods--are ample proof, she says, that far too many individuals reach physical maturity long before they are able to handle the pressures and responsibilities of adulthood. Axline18 further clarifies and expands this point by saying, in effect, that children should be allowed


and encouraged to express, recognize, and then to accept their feelings of hate, love, envy, etc. When a child is made to feel guilty because of his feeling of hate toward a sibling, for example, the feeling is usually suppressed, causing the personality to become fixated or arrested at that particular level of emotional development, with adult maladjustment and immaturity as the possible resultant.

_Lieben und arbeiten_, love and work, is the formula Freud offers for attaining psychological maturity.¹⁹ Love, in this case, is the ability to form and to maintain satisfying intimate relationships; it is the ability to trust and value other people. Work, as used here, means to contribute to the limits of one's capacity to the maintenance of the general life and to its enrichment through the arts, science, and so on. If a person satisfies these two requirements, Freud contends that all other problems become secondary in nature, with the result that the person is psychologically adjusted and mature. Shoben²⁰ agrees with this love and work concept and emphasizes that divorce is caused by men and women competing against one another, thus destroying one or the other, and perhaps both, of the love-work combination. Shoben further offers the following suggestions for attaining

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¹⁹Erikson, _op. cit._, p. 229.

maturity: (1) Recognize that we all are people before we are men and women--stress being placed upon mutual similarities; (2) recognize that the search for perfect happiness is inevitably futile. We should learn to accept the inadequacies of our self and of others, and not demand from life that which is non-existent; and (3) give attention and consideration to such values as understanding, cooperation, the worthwhileness of intimate relationships, and the idea of mutual satisfactions--satisfactions gained through cooperative efforts with others.

In her article on emotional maturity, Ross offers several bases for judging one's maturity; these bases, indirectly, give us many clues for the furthering of our own psychological growth:

1. **Attitude Toward Self:** To develop a wholesome attitude toward one's self it is necessary that two things be achieved. First, the individual must become well identified with the same sex. Far too often in families where there is a particularly dominant parent, the children of both sexes will identify themselves with--take on characteristics of--the stronger parent. In cases where the children are of the opposite sex this false identification with a member of the other sex can prevent the individual from ever seeing and

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knowing himself as he exists in reality, thus making adult maladjustment inevitable. Secondly, the individual needs to develop an identity of his own. He must realize that he is a unique personality, and, further, that this unique personality exists within the confines of a given society. Hence, the person is responsible to both himself and to society.

2. Attitude Toward Family: In order to reach any satisfactory level of adult maturity it is important that one be able to live away from his home and family without experiencing excessive stress. This is to say that a person should take pleasure in and be concerned about his family, but not to the degree that he becomes dependent upon them. A certain amount of dependency upon others is both necessary and desirable in our society; when this dependency is such that the individual is unable to make everyday decisions without consulting someone else, however, then we have a seriously maladjusted individual.

3. Feeling About Authority: By this it is meant that the individual, to be considered mature, must develop a fine understanding of what is considered right and good within his society. This developed understanding, some refer to it as a person's conscience, Ross says, is the composite result of all the "authorities" that have had an effect upon the individual. It is essential, then, that a person learn, preferably from parental instruction and example, that which is
right and good without developing a hostility toward authority. A hostile attitude toward authority means, in effect, hostility toward all for which the authority stands.

4. **Concern With Future:** This means simply that one should have some organized plan for his future. This plan should be tentative in that it should be open to change or modification when deemed necessary.

5. **Attitude Toward Events:** The mature person should be able to accept unpleasant situations which are beyond his power to change or modify. In short, it is necessary to make many compromises with a many times unpleasant reality.

6. **Interest In Sex:** Mature interest in sex will be identified and associated with love and respect, with family and marriage. Ability to postpone immediate pleasure for future good is one evidence of such maturity.

7. **Capacity To See Beyond Self:** The mature adult is cognizant of the needs and feelings of others and is concerned with them whenever possible and practicable.

Dr. Cunningham, a psychiatrist, thinks that psychological maturity can be achieved only through an intimate knowledge of one's self. She says:

> The mark of the mature person is that he knows and understands himself. He has learned to live happily with himself, recognizing his shortcomings, but liking himself in spite of them, realizing his strengths and respecting them.\(^\text{22}\)

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\(^\text{22}\)Ruth Cunningham, "Toward Maturity--We Grow in Self-Understanding," *Childhood Education*, XXVII (November, 1950), 103.
She goes on to say that a person who does not understand himself in all probability does not understand much of anything else, for all of one's ideas, concepts, desires, and so on, are colored by one's feelings or emotions. Therefore, she says, it behooves us, if we wish to attain a satisfactory level of adult maturity, to develop an intimate and vivid understanding of our own being.

Finally, and a little more on the practical side, Overstreet tells us that "... adulthood is a stage of life that has a significance no other stage can possess; it is the time for putting into effect a wisdom about life that childhood and youth are unable as yet even to possess." He goes on to cite three keys for the attaining of the "significance" and "wisdom" of which he speaks.

The first key is that one should realize that every situation in life offers its opportunity for mature or immature responses. It is our reaction to the little things in life that hardly seem worthy of notice that determines what the end product shall be—maturity or immaturity. One member of a family, for example, makes a mistake. This can well be an occasion for angry scolding; for merciless making of fun; or perhaps for an abrupt dismissal of the person and a doing of the thing one's self. Conversely, and ideally, it can be an occasion for recognizing the human capacity to make

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mistakes and just dropping the whole matter. The number of possible examples from all walks of life which would illuminate this principle is, of course, limitless. It is but to be remembered that our personalities are the sum total of all our experiences, however insignificant they may seem, and our reactions to them.

The second key offered by Overstreet as a guide in realizing maturity is the principle that we should associate with groups that promote and encourage maturing. For the sake of illustration let us say that there are generally two kinds of groups: those that promote self-indulgence, exclusive snobbishness, partisan loyalties, and intolerance; and those that promote such maturities as racial equality, critical thinking, active work for community betterment, drives to eliminate conditions that hold people back—poverty, ignorance, slums, and so on. If we desire the fullness and satisfaction of a wholesome adulthood, says Dr. Overstreet, we must become active members in such mature groups. These groups provide opportunities for the individual to lend himself heart and soul to something beyond his own ego-satisfaction; it is from such dedication that we achieve the maturity we seek.

The third and final suggestion offered by Overstreet is that we need to contrive a plan for the growth of the mind that has breadth, depth, and continuity. This is to
say that psychological growth should take place continually throughout the course of our lives; this is to say that growth should be consciously directed and purposeful. It is far too often assumed that learning and growth are restricted to the early years, and that adulthood is the apathetic assuming of responsibilities until one's death. Adulthood, quite the contrary, says Overstreet, is the most potentially significant and satisfying state of life-experience; this potentiality can be realized if we but continue to keep our mind forever open to the new "truths" found in all experiences.

Having examined the concept of maturity, with some suggestions on how to go about increasing one's level of it, a foundation has thus been established upon which to base a further discussion on the importance of maturity to effective group communication.

It is the contention here that before any effective communication can take place, the participants must possess a certain degree of psychological maturity. The importance and validity of this contention will now be established. First of all, the author chooses to think that Emerson had some form of immaturity in mind when he said, "How can I hear what you say when what you are keeps thundering in my ears." Oliver Wendell Holmes, too, in The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table, captures this idea beautifully when he says:
The reason for the incredible misunderstandings that develop when John and James get into an argument is that there are not two persons involved but six. On the one side there is the real James, an honest but rather dull, obstinate chap with no great talent for clear expression. But there is also the personage James thinks he is, a clever fellow of penetrating judgment whose store of wisdom is quite remarkable. Finally on that team is the James that John considers him to be, an evasive, tricky, pigheaded rascal. On the other side of the argument is a triplicate set of dissimilar Johns. In such an aggregation of opponents it is little wonder that arguments are misdirected, misunderstood, and productive only of belligerent futility.

Aside from the support provided by these literary gentlemen, there have been several experiments conducted which show fairly conclusively that without mature participants group discussions are invariably futile. Some of the more important results of a few such experiments will now be reviewed.

Lichtenberg, following an experiment with several groups at the psychological clinic at Harvard University, concluded that:

... the actions of mature people tend to facilitate mutual gratifications in a social interaction, whereas the behavior of the immature favors exclusive satisfaction—either in the form of self aggrandizement, which is obviously to the detriment of the group, or in the form of self sacrifice, which is equally detrimental in that the group is deprived of an active, critical member.24

Here we see the inability of the immature to divorce himself from his own feelings; hence, his inability to be a cooperative, productive member of a group—he must either dominate

the group or be obsequious to the members.

Other psychologists, Spriestersback and Buck, conclude from their research that the way an individual uses language is intimately personal; hence, we can usually judge from someone's speech the person's level of psychological maturity. They go on to say, "The immature person does not use his language in a problem-solving fashion. His remarks tend to cloud issues and magnify difficulties."²⁵ Again we see how the immature, many times frightened and insecure, are unable to see discussion issues with any satisfactory degree of objectivity--issues are interpreted in light of individual feelings of which the person is quite often oblivious.

Thomas, too, confirms these findings when he says, "True communication can take place only when both parties strive to share the other's point of view."²⁶ This ability to empathize with others--allow one's self to see the issue at hand through the other's eyes--is a highly mature trait, for, as Carl Rogers has commented, "... it requires great courage to enter another's private world and see life as it appears to him without any attempt to make evaluative judgments."²⁷ It is easily recognized, then, that unless group


participants genuinely strive to understand the others' viewpoint discussions will fail. The severely immature person, consequently, is doomed to failure in communication situations because his feelings of insecurity prevent him from seeing beyond his own personal, emotionalized frame of reference.

It must be remembered that there are numerous levels or degrees of maturity. For the immature person who has the sincere desire to grow, group discussions provide excellent situations for such growth. In the words of Lindall, "... open forums and group dynamics will lead to greater and greater maturity, for the open mind is a growing mind."28 Also, within each group there is a variety of ways in which the member can participate: he may listen, speak, lead, follow, etc. It has been shown by Miel29 that the more the individual strives to participate in various ways in group activities, the more the person will grow towards responsible maturity.

We find, then, in reviewing the foregoing literature, that to be considered mature the individual must first have the opportunity to face reality unaided; he must have a developed understanding of his own being; he must be able to


29Alice Miel, "We Grow as Responsible Group Members," Childhood Education, XXVII (April, 1951), p. 351.
accept and respect the weaknesses as well as the strengths of others; he must have established a reasonable amount of independence; he must have resolved any major personality conflicts; he must have some organized plan for the future; and he must realize that to achieve and maintain any satisfactory level of maturity requires constant learning and re-evaluation. Finally, in relating this information to group communication, it is concluded that some degree of maturity is essential to effective intra-group communication.
CHAPTER III

LANGUAGE-USAGE TENDENCIES AND EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

In the preceding chapter it was learned, and in the words of Lindgren, that:

Emotionally mature persons are those persons whose psychological development has more or less kept pace with their physiological development and who are continuing to develop more satisfying and more satisfactory methods of dealing with life.¹

It was learned, furthermore, that there is an intimate relationship between maturity and effective communication. Regarding this latter idea, Lindgren goes on to say in effect that there is a close connection between the need for effective communication and the need for understanding ourselves and others. Communication, or language, he says, gives meaning to life; it makes possible the establishment of interrelationships between ourselves and others, and it serves as a way of solving problems, thereby making it possible for the maturing process to continue.² Wendell Johnson, regarding the importance of language to maturity, expands Lindgren's thought by saying:

... to a significant degree our language does our thinking for us. In a sense a language has a life of its own, a kind of organic unity which it maintains in

²Ibid., p. 232.
spite of us, and which, in fact, it tends to impose upon our personalities. There is a limit fixed by the symbol system we employ, to what we can talk about and to what we can say about it.\(^3\)

Further, he continues, "Individuals differ significantly in the degree to which they are free to exercise control over their own symbolic—language—processes."\(^4\) It is this inability to exercise control over one's language processes that prompts Paul, Sorensen, and Murray to conclude from their observations that "... communication behavior shows that everyone probably has his points of language blockage which interfere with his efficiency or at least keep him from achieving his potentialities."\(^5\) Further, and along the same line, Spriestersback has concluded:

The maladjusted person is usually totally unaware of the symbolic nature of language. He does not appreciate the fact that words are abstractions of the real thing, object, or experience. Nor does he realize that when we talk about an object, an experience, or a feeling we leave out some of the details, thus making it impossible for us to tell "all" about the object, experience, or feeling. Further, he usually does not recognize that there are many different levels of abstraction; he may either include such a myriad of details that he is unable to observe any relationships between the various facts, or he may talk almost entirely in generalizations excluding the relevant details. In the latter case he will be prone to rely upon theories, beliefs, customs, rather


\(^4\)Ibid., p. 31.

than to resort to relevant experiences and observations of his own. In such instances there is good possibility that the verbal mass which he is using will have little resemblance to any existing "real territory."  

It follows, therefore, that before an individual can achieve the level of maturity necessary for effective communication, he must first realize and understand intimately the symbolic nature of language. Failure to do so usually shows itself in the form of language-usage tendencies which themselves, either directly or indirectly, cause communication failure and prolonged immaturity. Since effective group communication is the ultimate concern of this thesis, it is of importance that these language-usage tendencies be considered at this time.

There are, of course, an infinite number of human tendencies related to the use of language that tend to prevent effective communication; for the purpose of this chapter, however, the author has isolated for discussion only those tendencies—language immaturities—which he considers to be the most prevalent and therefore the most important. The tendencies to be considered are as follows: (1) Tendency to confuse words with things; (2) tendency to confuse levels of abstractions; (3) tendency to confuse facts with inferences; (4) tendency to have faith in absolutes; (5) tendency to disregard contexts; (6) tendency to make two-valued judgments;

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(7) tendency to believe in the power of words as such—word magic; (8) tendency to listen inadequately; and (9) tendency to make false evaluations. It must be realized that these tendencies have been isolated solely for the purpose of critical examination; in actuality, however, they are but inseparable aspects of an inadequate thought and language pattern. In the discussion that follows, therefore, it will be evident in some cases that information applicable to one tendency will also be applicable to others; for the sake of clarity it is felt this is both necessary and desirable.

**Tendency to Confuse Words With Things**

As Johnson has suggested, let us initially realize that inside each of us lies a picture of the world—a reflection of outside reality. This picture stands for the whole external realm of material objects, happenings, and relationships. It is our map of reality which includes everything we know or think we know. We are well adjusted, then, in proportion to its correctness and in proportion as we remember its limitations. It is with these limitations that this thesis is now concerned.

In the process of thinking and talking there usually occurs, as Paul, Sorensen, and Murray have indicated, a

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tendency to make words the chief focus of effort and concentration and to identify the word with the thing it represents, thus automatically frustrating communication at many points. This frustration occurs because when we talk we endow words with life and meaning of their own apart from those aspects of reality which they allegedly represent. To illustrate the point an excerpt from Miller's *Focus* is provided:

"I'll tell you if you want me to," he said, "there's a lot of reasons why people don't like Jews. They have no principles for one thing."

"No principles?"

"Yes. In business you'll find them cheating and taking advantage, for instance. That's something that people . . ."

"Let me understand. You're talking about me now?"

"Well no, not you, but . . ."

"I ain't interested in other people, Mr. Newman. I live on this block and there ain't another Jew on this block but me and my family. Did I ever cheat you in my business?"

"That's not the point. You . . ."

"I beg your pardon, sir. You don't have to explain to me that certain Jews cheat in business. There is no argument with that. Personally I know for a fact that the telephone company is charging five cents a local call when they could make a good profit charging a penny. This is a fact from the utilities investigation. The phone company is run and owned by gentiles. But just because you are a gentile I ain't mad at you when I put a nickel in to make a phone call. And still gentiles are cheating me. I am asking you why you want me to get off this block, Mr. Newman?"

"You don't understand," Newman said shortly, pressing his trembling hand against his stomach. "It's not what YOU'VE done, it's what others of your people have done."

Mr. Finkelstein stared at him a long time. "In other words when you look at me you don't see me."

"What do you mean?"

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"I mean what I said. You look at me and you don't see me. You see something else. What do you see? That's what I don't understand. Against me you got nothing, you say. Then why are you trying to get rid of me? What do you see that makes you so mad when you look at me?"9

Now, doubtless, everyone would agree that the word "Jew" is not the same as Mr. Finkelstein, to whom the label "Jew" is applied. Nevertheless, many people, obviously including Mr. Newman, in judging Mr. Finkelstein, react to the label rather than to the person concerned. To take another example, and to paraphrase Rapoport, a man may react to some situation, say a failure in an examination, by labeling the situation, "I am a failure." He may then react to the label in ways that are far removed from an effective remedy of the actual situation.10

To say that the word is not the thing it signifies is not an attempt at profundity. It is to draw attention to the human tendency to identify words with that which they represent. To identify does not mean to equate verbally, i.e., to consider the word to be the "same as" the thing. It means to react to the person, place, or thing through the label applied to it. Johnson provides the following example:

For years people have acted toward the word syphilis very much as they did toward what it represented. They


sought not only to avoid syphilis but the word itself as well. Identification of this sort constitutes one of the most serious aspects of our social and personal adjustment, growth, and survival.\(^{11}\)

An experiment conducted in 1936 by social psychologist Stagner illustrates the staggering omnipresence of this tendency. He found that 70 per cent of the subjects investigated were agreed in their disapproval of "Nazi Germany" and its policies. Yet, at the same time, in response to a questionnaire which excluded the words "Nazi" and "Germany," it was found that the majority of these same people approved of specific aspects of the program for which the Fascists stood.\(^{12}\) Cantril, too, found that people confuse words with things. In his experiment literary selections were weighted by the standing of the author. If Edgar Guest was said to be the author of a passage of Shakespeare, it was considered "poor"; but when authorship of the same passage was attributed to Browning, it was considered "excellent." If a political notion was said to come from Marx, it was "false," if from Coolidge, "true," etc.\(^{13}\) We see, therefore, the necessity for looking beyond the word to that which it symbolizes in reality; to realize that words are merely symbols

\(^{11}\)Johnson, *People In Quandaries*, p. 173.


\(^{13}\)H. Cantril, "Experimental Studies of Prestige Suggestion," *Psychological Bulletin*, XXXIV (October, 1937), 528.
that we carry around in our head which represent aspects of the world around us; and, finally, to realize that the events of the world, whatever they may be, are not the same as our verbal formulations about them.

Tendency to Confuse Levels of Abstraction

As previously mentioned, there is in each of us a picture of the world—a reflection of outside reality. This inner reflection of reality is the combined result of the various interpretations (meanings) which our nervous system has given to all the impulses we have received through our senses. In other words, what we think of as reality is, in actuality, merely our reactional interpretation to the impressions we have received from the outside world. This inner interpretation, it will be realized, is an abstraction of the external world. This is to say that when confronted with an object or event it is possible to be aware of only a few of its characteristics. Further, and to paraphrase Hayakawa and Rapoport, one can translate into words an even lesser number of such characteristics for the purpose of communication.14 Thus, in evaluation, in representation, and in communication in general, abstracting, i.e., a selecting of characteristics, always takes place.

Having realized that our thoughts and our language

14Hayakawa and Rapoport, op. cit., p. 280.
are abstractions of the external world, it must be realized further that there are an infinite number of levels of abstractions. Briefly, and for illustrative purposes, let us consider an orange. To science an orange consists ultimately of atoms, electrons, protons, etc. At this level the orange has an infinite number of characteristics, i.e., the atoms, protons, etc., are in a constant state of change and rearrangement. This is considered the process or basic level. At a higher level abstracting begins. When one observes the non-verbal "orange," for example, his nervous system abstracts (selects) from the totality of the process-orange only a finite number of characteristics. When one applies the word "orange" to the object in question, one is abstracting on a still higher level, thereby leaving out even more characteristics of the original process-orange. To speak of the orange as a fruit is abstracting on a still higher level of abstraction. Higher still would be to refer to an orange as a farm-asset, or, simply, as wealth. These last two examples are considered to be extremely high level abstractions in that fewer original characteristics of the process-orange are identified by the symbol. To put it in other words, the higher the abstraction, the more the original characteristics of the process-orange are omitted. (The foregoing discussion was patterned after Korzybski's
"Structural Differential."\(^{15}\) Thus it is clear that the symbol, i.e., orange, fruit, farm asset, etc., does not represent "all" of the characteristics of the thing symbolized.

Returning now to the tendency to confuse levels of abstraction, let us note that this confusion occurs when someone reacts to a higher level abstraction, i.e., the symbol, as though it were a lower level abstraction, i.e., the observable object. To illustrate the point Inge offers the following comment:

In matters which are really important, we must eschew labels as a snare of the devil. For example, in judging of a man's character, it is not fair to sum him up as a gambler, or a miser, or a winebibber. He may be what we call him; but he is many other things besides; the label is not descriptive of the man, but only of one corner of him.\(^{16}\)

Thus it can be seen that when one calls a young lady a "bad girl" (high level abstraction--few characteristics) one is saying in effect that she is all bad. The tendency, therefore, is to react to the girl (low level abstraction--many characteristics) through the applied label. By so doing one is reacting to only one part of the girl, thereby remaining oblivious to the many other characteristics she possesses.

Hayakawa further clarifies this point by the following example:

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Let us say that here is a man, John Doe, who is introduced as one "who has just been released after three years in the penitentiary." This is already on a fairly high level of abstraction, but it is nevertheless a report. From this point, however, many people immediately and unconsciously climb to still higher levels of abstraction: "John Doe is an ex-convict . . . he's a criminal!" But the word "criminal" is not only on a much higher level of abstraction than "the man who spent three years in the penitentiary," but it is also a judgment, with the implied prediction, "He has committed a crime in the past and will probably commit more crimes in the future." The result is that when John Doe applies for a job and is forced to state that he has spent three years in the penitentiary, prospective employers, automatically confusing levels of abstraction, may say to him, "You can't expect me to give jobs to criminals!"17

To cite a somewhat different kind of abstraction confusion, and to paraphrase an experiment from Korzybski's *Science and Sanity*, let us consider the man who suffered from hay fever whenever there were roses in the room. In this experiment a bunch of roses was produced unexpectedly in front of him, and he immediately had a violent attack of hay fever, despite the fact that the "roses" in this case were made of paper.18 In other words, this man confused the abstracted symbol "roses," which is inside his head, with the external roses, thereby reacting to the abstraction as if it were the object in the outside world. It has no doubt become apparent through the last example that when one confuses a word with that which it symbolizes one is also confusing levels of abstraction.


abstraction.

To summarize, and as Johnson says in effect, one level of abstraction is not the same as another. The lower the level of abstraction, the more detailed and dynamic, the more process-like does reality appear to be.\(^{19}\) Hence, the lower the level of abstraction the more possible it is to gain a more nearly complete picture of that which is observed. The higher levels of abstraction, on the other hand, are typified by generalities and to some degree by vagueness. It is important, then, that we all have what Korzybski calls "consciousness of abstracting"\(^{20}\)-an awareness that in the process of abstracting many characteristics are left out. To be aware of the process of abstracting is to recognize that the word or inner picture of reality is not the same as the external territory, and that the verbal and non-verbal levels are to be kept distinct and coordinated.

**Tendency to Confuse Facts with Inferences**

Lee, in his experiments with group discussions, discovered that a predominant source of misunderstanding and confusion in group situations was the tendency on the part of the participants to confuse facts with inferences. He says, essentially, that few group members ever sufficiently realize

\(^{19}\)Johnson, *People In Quandaries*, p. 110.

that a statement of fact can be made only after someone observes some thing or relation. This observation, to be considered a statement of fact, must be merely a descriptive verbalization of that which was observed. Any statement, therefore, made prior to observation or when observation is not possible must be considered inferential.

Hayakawa tells us, by way of further illumination, that any statement about the unknown made on the basis of the known is an inference or guess. He goes on to explain that:

Many people regard statements like the following as statements of "fact": "Jack lied to us," "Jerry is a thief," "Tommy is clever." As ordinarily employed, however, the word "lied" involves first an inference (that Jack knew otherwise and deliberately misstated the facts), and, secondly, a judgment (that the speaker disapproves of what he has inferred that Jack did.)

In other words, to say that someone has lied to us is to say, in effect, that we knew why the facts were misrepresented, a many times unjustified inference, since the person doing the "lying," to take but one exception, may well be feebleminded and not know any better. Thus, when one says, "He is a thief," or "She is a good girl," or "He is a very bright young man," one is merely inferring from the observable fact that, "He took something which was not his," "She does chores

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22 Hayakawa, op. cit., p. 41.
23 Ibid., p. 43.
for her mother," and "He received a score of 140 on an intelligence test." In each of these observable instances the justifiable inference might well be far from the obvious, as for example the young man who got a score of 140 on an intelligence test as a result of seeing the answer sheet before the examination. Knowing he had access to the answer sheet, one would hardly infer that he was a "bright young man"; yet, time and again, people accept one observable fact as the basis for a whole battery of inferences which, in turn, they believe to be more facts. Hayakawa offers the following dialogue from a court of law as an example of the confusion and misunderstanding which may result from the tendency to mistake inferences for facts:

Witness: That dirty double-crosser Jacobs ratted on me.
Defense Attorney: Your honor, I object.
Judge: Objection sustained. (Witness's remark is stricken from the record.) Now, try to tell the court exactly what happened.
Witness: He double-crossed me, the dirty, lying rat!
Defense Attorney: Your honor, I object!
Judge: Objection sustained. (Witness's remark is again stricken from the record.) Will the witness try to stick to the facts.
Witness: But I am telling you the facts, your honor. He did double-cross me.24

It is evident, then, that the inability to distinguish between facts and inferences will inevitably cause misunderstandings between individuals and, as a consequence, faulty communication.

24 Ibid.
Lewis reminds us that every observable fact involves some judging or inferring. When this judging or inferring is of so simple a kind as to become wholly unconscious, however, and the interpretation of the appearances is a matter of general agreement, the object of sensation may, he says, be considered a fact. An inference or opinion, on the other hand, he goes on to say, can be explained as a statement of which there exist reasonable doubts. To Lewis, therefore, it is a matter of opinion whether or not the War of Troy was ever fought, or whether or not William Shakespeare wrote all the literature generally attributed to him, etc., since of these statements a reasonable doubt exists as to their veracity.25

Ogden and Richards explain this matter of facts and inferences in a somewhat different way. A statement, to them, may be considered to be factual when words in the statement can be replaced by appropriate, observable references from the external world. Consider, for example, the statement, "Edward hit the ball." Edward can readily be ascertained by pointing to the individual called "Edward," the same being true for the process "hitting" and for the object "ball." A statement which has no readily observable referents in reality, then, must be considered to be inferential in nature, since its truthfulness or falseness cannot under any

circumstances be determined. It can readily be seen, therefore, that such questions as, "Is there life on Mars?", "Would Plato approve of the United Nations Assembly?", "Could Joe Louis have defeated James Braddock when they both were in their prime?", etc., are futile to discuss in that it is impossible to observe external referents which could establish their truth or falsity.

It can be said, then, that a statement of fact is one that refers to details, aspects, or characteristics which human beings can be aware of directly. Such statements represent that which can be studied or known by the physical senses; they are camera-like exposes of that which is observed. An inference statement, to compare, is one made about that which is as yet unknown. Cannon provides an example which demonstrates far better than any explanation the limitations of an inference:

President Eliot of Harvard enjoyed telling the story of an experience he once had, illustrating proper caution in drawing a conclusion. When he entered a crowded New York restaurant, he handed his hat to the doorman. As he came out he was astonished to see the doorman promptly pick his hat out of the hundreds there and hand it to him. In his surprise he asked, "How did you know that was my hat?" "I didn't know it was your hat, sir," was the answer. "Why, then," asked Mr. Eliot, "did you hand it to me?" Very courteously the doorman replied, "Because you handed it to me, sir." This precise limitation of inference pleased the president.

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In applying this discussion to effective group communications, it will be noted that in any situation wherein inferential utterances are mistaken for and assumed to be statements of fact, communication, i.e., communication utilized in the achieving of a justifiable solution, must surely fail. In the words of Irving Lee, "If conclusions and suppositions are presented as if they were factual and thus necessarily certain rather than tentative and probable, then an identification is at work which must affect the decisions being reached." 28

Tendency to Have Faith in Absolutes

Before discussing the tendency to have faith in absolutes, it is of importance that a few basic insights into the external world be first understood. Science, initially, tells us that the world of reality is to be regarded as a process. 29 Process implies change, in us and in the world around us. This change is ever continuous, although often spasmodic and incredibly slow; it is sometimes so slow that we can hardly notice it, and at other times it is remarkably sudden and extensive. Rarely can one observe directly this ever changing process; rather it is usually inferred from our observation, i.e., when one observes that his lawn needs cutting, it is


29 Johnson, People In Quandaries, p. 36.
assumed that it has been growing since last he cut it, since a change has obviously occurred. Secondly, it must be understood that since external reality, including ourselves, is in a constant state of change, it is impossible, and to paraphrase Meyers, for any "eternals," "absolutes," or "invariants" to exist. This is to say that it is impossible for anything to retain its exact sameness from one moment to the next, since the very composition of our world is ever changing. To put this another way, and to quote from a lecture by Chrisholm:

An absolute meaning for "up" and "down," you see, implies that you have absolute directions on the surface of the earth. But, if you happen to have a round earth, and if you happen to live at say A, it is obvious that twelve hours later at B "up" has another direction as the earth rotates. There isn't any absolute meaning for terms like "up," "down," etc. They are relative to where you happen to be.

Thus it is seen, with reference to the foregoing discussion, that any word or statement that implies a static or absolute situation or relationship is, by virtue of the facts, untrue. To elucidate the point, Chase offers the following example:

Here is a man suddenly plunged into a personal crisis, moral, emotional, or financial. Perhaps he has been

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implicated in a public scandal. Or his young lady has thrown him down. Or he cannot meet the mortgage due next Friday. Things look black; he is profoundly depressed. No road of escape appears. He begins to generalize with a free use of absolute terms like "all," "never," "always," "I can never succeed. I've always been a failure. I can never surmount this difficulty. All my life I've made a mess of things. I'll never pay off that debt. No girl will ever have me. I'll never get over this disgrace. What's the use? Better end it all." 32

It is evident from this example that when a person is blinded by the use of absolutes, he fails to realize that reality, including one's self, is in a constant state of change, thereby automatically invalidating such statements as, "I can never succeed." In the first place the word "never" implies knowledge of the future, a scientific impossibility. Secondly, what has happened before cannot exactly repeat itself since no two happenings are ever identical with one another. Lastly, when one deals in absolutes he is generalizing about many things on the basis of a limited number of observable instances, a highly unjustified practice. Consider the poor soul who says, "I'm always a failure." In essence he is saying he always has been a failure, he is now a failure, and he always will be a failure. Actually, of course, he is judging himself on the basis of a very limited number of experiences, thereby attempting to predict the future. In short, he believes his present failure is identical with all past and future instances in his life; and he

permanently identifies himself with his present failure such that he, in his mind, is forever categorized as a "failure," thereby remaining oblivious to his many acceptable traits.

Johnson attributes this problem of absolutes to the very structure of our language. He says that our language has a subject-predicate structure.\(^3\) This is to say that the structure of our language is designed to classify objects or actions according to their supposedly intrinsic and absolute qualities. (Such qualities, scientifically speaking, being non-existent.) Johnson further clarifies the point by saying:

> We talk about people as though they possessed attributes, or traits, in an absolute sense, and as though they were to be classified according to these traits which they have somehow inside of them. The assumption, usually unspoken, is that a trait, such as meanness, for example, is, always has been, and always will be a quality of the person who possesses it. Not only is this assumption scientifically defective and unnecessary, but also, and what is more important, it renders the problem of individual development quite hopeless. It focuses attention on something which is, by definition, essentially unalterable.\(^4\)

It is readily discernible, then, that such absolute statements as "Democrats are against big business," automatically imply (1) that "all" Democrats are against big business, and (2) that "all" Democrats will always be against big business, both statements being highly unjustified generalizations.

In relating this tendency to group discussions, it will be noted that absolute statements tend to prevent

\(^3\) Johnson, People In Quandaries, p. 193f.

\(^4\) Ibid, p. 209.
further inquiry into any problem—since such statements as "Republicans make poor presidents" leave little room for intelligent discussion—thereby relegating any further discussion to the "futile" category. Group communication to be considered effective, therefore, must be free from statements which tend to imply that "This is completely so, now and forever." 35

Tendency to Disregard Contexts

When psychologists and psychiatrists refer to contexts, they usually mean the totality of conditions that affect an individual at a given time. 36 This includes such conditions as the verbal, psychological, and physical. Henceforth in this thesis these conditions shall be referred to as verbal contexts, psychological contexts, and physical contexts. These different contexts, it will be remembered, are all interrelated with and dependent upon each other. In the words of Walpole:

One cannot know a word without having thought about it; thus, all of our symbols are parts of psychological contexts. In the physical world every referent known to us or anyone else has contributed to a psychological context—in most cases, to thousands of psychological contexts. So psychological contexts link up too with physical contexts; or, to put it another way, psychological and physical contexts combine to form wider contexts.

35Chase, op. cit., p. 166.

Thus it is understood that the totality of the physical, psychological, and verbal contexts together constitutes the meaning in any communication. In other words, no single aspect of communication, a word or phrase, for example, has meaning apart from the other aspects which comprise the full context. Consider the drowning person who cries, "Help!"

While there are no other words in the verbal context to add meaning, there is the physical context, i.e., the water, the struggling person, etc., which gives the word "help" meaning. When the word "help" is isolated, however, it has such divergent implications—ranging from "the new help," i.e., the servants, to "help," i.e., acute distress—as to be meaningless. It is clear, then, that before we can understand someone's verbalization, as it was intended by the speaker, the complete constellation of verbal, psychological, and physical phenomena which exist concurrently must be recognized and understood. Miller explains this idea as follows:

What a man says cannot be predicted entirely from the verbal context. A talker must have an audience to support his behavior, and his knowledge of that audience governs his choice of verbal units. His needs may lead him to choose certain verbal units to request or to demand cooperation. His choice of verbal units is correlated with his perceptions, for he may comment upon

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the unusual or echo the words of another person. The talker's entire history contributes to the stockpile of verbal units he knows and the way he uses them.\textsuperscript{38}

When listening to someone's speech, in other words, an individual, in order to receive the communication as intended by the speaker, must take into consideration the speaker's background, his feelings, his desires, his entire verbal context, the physical setting of his speech, etc.

With reference to the foregoing discussion, the tendency to disregard contexts is evidently very foolish and, at times, highly dangerous. To illustrate the point, Hayakawa offers the following example:

There is the incident of an Armistice Day speaker, a university teacher, who declared before a high-school assembly that the Gettysburg Address was "a powerful piece of propaganda." The context clearly revealed that "propaganda" was being used according to its dictionary meanings rather than according to its popular meanings; it also revealed that the speaker was a very great admirer of Lincoln's. However, the local newspaper, completely ignoring the context, presented the account in such a way as to convey the impression that the speaker had called Lincoln a liar. On this basis, the newspaper began a campaign against the instructor. The speaker remonstrated with the editor of the newspaper, who replied, in effect, "I don't care what else you said. You said the Gettysburg Address was propaganda, didn't you?"\textsuperscript{39}

This last represents the common tendency to extract a few words from a speech, article, lecture, or the like, disregarding the full verbal context, and to use them as the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{38}George A. Miller, \textit{loc. cit.}
\item \textsuperscript{39}Hayakawa, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 62f.
\end{itemize}
basis for a completely misleading account.

Perhaps not so common, though equally tragic when it does occur, is the tendency to disregard physical and psychological contexts. If we wish to understand the Constitution of the United States, for example, and to paraphrase Hayakawa, it is not enough merely to look up all the words in the dictionary and to read the interpretations written by Supreme Court justices. The Constitution, to be accurately interpreted, must be understood in terms of its historical context: the current ideas and prejudices, the conditions of life, the local customs, etc.\textsuperscript{40}

It follows, then, that group communication, by way of summary, can not be entirely satisfactory until the participants fully realize (1) that no word ever has the same meaning twice; (2) that no word has meaning apart from its verbal, psychological, and physical context; and (3) that each word carries with it the personal associations of the speaker, thus behooving the listener(s) continually to seek the speaker's own personal frame of reference.

Tendency to Make Two-Valued Judgments

Johnson has pointed out that one of the causes for social and personal maladjustment in our society is the tendency to perceive the external world through what he calls

\textsuperscript{40}Ibid., p. 64.
the "either-or" pattern of thought.\textsuperscript{41} This pattern of thought, according to Johnson,\textsuperscript{42} and as corroborated by Korzybski,\textsuperscript{43} is to be attributed to Aristotle, who lived and wrote twenty-three centuries ago. At that time, Aristotle formulated what we now think of as the Aristotelian "Laws of Thought." These "laws" have subsequently and unfortunately become the basic pattern of thinking upon which our traditional culture has been based.\textsuperscript{44} Of concern here is the Aristotelian law referred to as the "law of the excluded middle," or, as mentioned earlier, the "either-or" tendency. This law states that anything is either A or non-A. That is, anything is true or it is not true, anything is good or it is not good, anything is desirable or it is not desirable, etc. It can be readily seen, therefore, that any thinking based upon this either-or tendency (Law of Excluded Middle) will lead to a two-valued orientation to reality, i.e., if something is not good it must be bad, if something is not tall it must be short, if something is not alive it must be dead, etc. In other words, a two-valued orientation completely excludes the possibility that something may not be either good or bad, tall or short, beautiful or ugly, etc., since all such terms

\textsuperscript{41}Johnson, \textit{People In Quandaries}, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{42}Ibid., p. 6f.
\textsuperscript{43}Korzybski, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 92f.
\textsuperscript{44}Johnson, \textit{loc. cit.}
in actuality are highly relative. A two-valued orientation, in short, fails to take into consideration the degree to which something possesses a given quality, e.g., not bad, not quite bad, bad, very bad, extremely bad, etc.

Regarding the foregoing discussion, it can be concluded that a judgment based upon a two-valued orientation will so distort reality—since reality, in actuality, is multi-valued—as to be untenable. To quote Hayakawa:

The two-valued orientation produces the combative spirit, and nothing else. When guided by it for any purpose other than fighting, we practically always achieve results opposite from those intended.\(^4^5\)

With regard to group discussions, then, it is evident that any two-valued judgment, i.e., a judgment that comes about as the result of an either-or interpretation, will tend to block and render ineffectual group communication, since effective communication is dependent upon an accurate appraisal of reality. This being the case, it is of great import that group members strive to develop a multi-valued orientation to external reality. That is, an orientation that takes into consideration the infinite variability of any quality or characteristic. The language of science, for example, is perhaps the most multi-valued of any language in existence. Science, one might say, has an infinite-valued orientation in that the scientific procedure is one which attempts to

\(^4^5\)Hayakawa, op. cit., p. 231.
identify every discernible difference. Prospective group participants, then, and in conclusion, would do well to emulate the excellent example of multi-valued orientation epitomized by the language of science.

**Tendency to Have Faith in the Power of Words as Such—Word Magic**

The tendency to identify words with things, which has already been discussed at some length, gives rise to another closely related tendency which shall be referred to here as the tendency to endow words with magical powers. Because of the extreme usefulness of language, Walpole reminds us, men have always tended to exaggerate its powers. He says further that, "Words do so much with our help that we unconsciously expect them to do more than they can. And the consequence is that words act upon us like a magic spell. We are word-bedeviled." To say this another way, and in the words of Chase:

The world outside has a natural pattern, order, structure. Language has not been reared to correspond to this structure, but has grown on a more devious pattern. We try to impose upon the natural order the tortuous structure of our verbal forms, forcing the world outside to behave as our words behave. Unfortunately it is not that kind of a world.

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46Walpole, *op. cit.*, p. 83.
47Ibid., p. 84.
48Chase, *op. cit.*, p. 64.
Word magic may be defined, then, and to summarize thus far, as the endowing of words unconsciously with meaning and importance far beyond the point justified by reality.

Word magic may be observed everywhere, since wherever man lives he commits the fallacy of looking upon words as independent things, with power and life of their own. This fallacy allows words to create filtering screens between us and reality in countless different ways, thus preventing man from achieving a more realistic orientation. This endowing of words with mystical powers, according to Hayakawa, comes about as the result of a close association between a word and that which it represents. This is to say that when a symbol is applied to some object in reality, the symbol, in time, takes on the characteristics of that which is symbolized. Hence, over a period of time, the very symbol elicits in us the same emotional and intellectual responses as does the represented object. As a result of this close association, or, as Hayakawa calls it, "mystic connection," cultures come to have words which are considered "forbidden," "unspeakable," "filthy," "shameful," "beautiful," etc. In other words, the verbal noise has taken on the characteristics and value of that which is represented.

49 Ogden and Richards, op. cit., p. 45.
50 Hayakawa, op. cit., p. 189.
51 Ibid.
As implicitly mentioned in the preceding paragraph, word magic exists everywhere and in many forms. Consider the following example from Chase's The Tyranny of Words:

State Senator John McNaboe of New York bitterly opposed a bill for the control of syphilis in May, 1937, because "... the innocence of children might be corrupted by a widespread use of the term ... This particular word creates a shudder in every decent woman and decent man." 52

Another illustrative example of the power of words as such was the campaign in the early 1930's to bring back prosperity through frequent reiteration of the phrase, "Prosperity is just around the corner!" 53. Still another example is cited by Walpole:

Until a few years ago, the names of beheaded Chinese were collected once every year, written on pieces of paper, and ceremoniously burned in a temple in Peiping; the deceased were not looked upon as quite dead until their names had been formally destroyed. 54

On a somewhat more subtle level is the word magic indulged in by the politician. He attacks his listeners with beautiful, emotional oratory, emphasizing all the while such meaningless abstractions as "Americanism," "Democracy," "Freedom," "Justice," "Equal Rights," etc. How presumptuous, indeed, is the listener who assumes he understands what has been said. Further, and worse still, is the individual who

52 Chase, op. cit., p. 63.
53 Hayakawa, loc. cit.
54 Walpole, op. cit., p. 85.
thinks that because there is a word there must be some entity in reality to which it refers; hence the world is full of such non-existent entities as goblins, gremlins, werewolves, fairies, elves, and the like. In the words of Hayakawa:

It should be pointed out again that fine-sounding speeches, long words, and the general air of saying something important are affective in result, regardless of what is being said. Often when we are hearing or reading impressively worded sermons, speeches, political addresses, essays, or "fine writing," we stop being critical altogether, and simply allow ourselves to feel as excited, sad, joyous, or angry as the author wishes us to feel. Like snakes under the influence of a snake charmer's flute, we are swayed by the musical phrases of the verbal hypnotist.55

It is quite clear by this time that the more power and meaning one bestows on words as such, the more removed one becomes from reality. It is evident, therefore, that word magic, because of its hypnotic effect, will tend to block the communication process in discussion situations. Group participants, in view of this, should always strive to be oriented to the external world, to that which words refer. This external orientation, in itself, will prevent group members from becoming victims to the magic power of words.

Tendency to Listen Inadequately

As has often been repeated, the ultimate concern of this project is effective group communication. This being the case, it seems altogether fitting that a section on

55Hayakawa, op. cit., p. 118.
listening be included in this discussion, particularly since listening occupies at least half of the communication cycle.56 As Chase has pointed out:

A message is 50 per cent sending, and 50 per cent receiving; if more than two people are present the ratio of listening increases. Thus when five people around a table are discussing a problem, and each does his share of talking, each will be listening 80 per cent of his time.57

With reference to discussion situations, then, it follows that if people stop listening or listen inadequately, the discussion process will become meaningless.

It is interesting to note that investigations to date indicate that Americans in general are very poor listeners. Lee, for example, finds as a result of repeated experiments with college students that only about 25 per cent of an audience understands clearly what a speaker has said.58 He says further, in regard to open-forum question periods, that, "Listeners went off on tangents. They picked up incidental items and drew from them conclusions that could be warranted only if the speaker had not given the rest of his speech."59

Carroll, too, in his investigations, found that listeners

58Irving J. Lee, How To Talk With People, p. x.
59Ibid.
showed wide individual differences in the ability to perceive speech.60 Investigations carried out by Murray also tend to establish the omnipresence of poor listening. He says, and to paraphrase, that individuals differ greatly in their ability to comprehend, and, further, that every listener has special deaf spots where messages are blocked or distorted, thereby causing the communication process to break down.61 An experiment by Baldyreff and Sorokin further demonstrates the prevalence of poor listening. In their experiment 1,484 people listened to two identical recordings of a piece of classical music. They were asked to cite which one they liked best. The results were as follows: 67 per cent of the listeners preferred one of the recordings; 20 per cent could not decide which was the best but agreed that the two were different; only 4 per cent recognized the recordings were the same.62

To summarize thus far, an individual usually employs the majority of his time in discussion situations in listening; investigations clearly indicate, however, that this time spent in listening is often so inadequate as to be useless.


Since this problem of listening has been recognized, many investigators have been seeking possible solutions to it. The more salient results of these studies will now be discussed.

It should be initially realized that listening, as the term is here used, refers to far more than the passive hearing peculiar to those individuals who are interested only in what might be called the "gentle inward massage" that the sound of words gives them. Professor Ralph Nichols, for example, found that the following factors all tend to influence one's ability to listen actively and comprehensively: intelligence, reading comprehension, recognition of correct English usage, size of listener's vocabulary, ability to make inferences, ability to structuralize a speech, listening for main ideas as opposed to specific facts, the use of special techniques to improve concentration, real interest in the subject discussed, emotional adjustment to the speaker's thesis, ability to see significance in the subject discussed, curiosity about the subject discussed, physical fatigue of the listener, audibility of the speaker, plus other less well substantiated factors. Effective listening, in short, is a process that brings into active participation every facet of

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63 Hayakawa, loc. cit.
our being plus every experience to which we have been ex-
posed. In the words of Bainbridge:

Our capacity for hearing what is said to us depends upon
our past experiences and the uses we are able to make of
them. Creative listening is a process of fitting what
we hear into what we ourselves have felt, believed, and
thought. In the final analysis we have nothing to listen
with but our experiences, and unless we employ them ef-
fectively our hearing will be superficial and shallow.65

In reviewing the conclusions reached by investigators
on this matter of effective listening, there appear to be
certain discrepancies as to the attributes of an effective
listener. These discrepancies, as will be shown, however,
result more from a matter of emphasis than of kind. Zelko,
to begin, lists the following as suggestions for the
listener:

1. Take an active rather than passive or indifferent
attitude toward the speaker.
2. Be physically alert; sit up; look at the speaker.
3. Don’t think about yourself. Be objective.
4. Tune in on the speaker from the beginning.
5. Follow the main ideas.
6. Construct the specific purpose (if the speaker does
not do this for you early in his speech).
7. Compare the ideas and purpose with your own feel-
ings, convictions, or knowledge.
8. Evaluate the speaker’s facts and material.
9. Evaluate the speaker’s effectiveness as a speaker.
10. Relate what you hear to your future thinking or
action.66

Dr. Walter Stromer of Cornell College summarizes his

65 Harry Bainbridge, Effective Speech (New York:

66 Harold P. Zelko, How To Become A Successful Speaker
conclusions on effective listening somewhat differently. He says:

I. Good listening implies a basic attitude of respect for others.
   A. The good listener does not ordinarily interrupt others while they are speaking.
   B. The good listener shows by his questions and comments that he is actually following what others are saying.
   C. The good listener does not change the subject abruptly before others have finished talking out an idea.
   D. The good listener makes it a point to listen to some people with whom he feels sure he will disagree. When he is listening to such a person, he makes a special effort to delay his reactions and to judge objectively what is being said.
   E. The good listener does not monopolize the conversation because he wants to allow time to listen to the ideas of others.

II. Good listening is active, not passive.
   A. The good listener makes mental associations as he listens. He relates what he hears to his past experience and his store of information. This may mean relating what he hears to what he has seen, heard, or felt.
   B. In making mental associations, the good listener will do some mental checking up on what he is listening to. When he gets a report on a fact or incident, he checks this against any other reports he may have got about the same fact or incident, and against his own previous knowledge or facts related to this report.
   C. The good listener tries to anticipate what is coming. In many cases, the good listener can guess the punch line of a joke before it is given. He may guess from the first part of a sentence what the last part will be about. He may guess from the first few minutes of a speech just what will be the general trend of the whole speech.
   D. The good listener makes use of contextual clues to get the meaning of words with which he is not familiar.
   E. The good listener evaluates what he hears. Since he cannot remember all of what he hears, he must evaluate as he goes along to decide
which ideas are worth remembering, and which ones he can safely forget. For example, in a newscast, he cannot possibly remember all of the details; so he selects the most important ones or he summarizes a number of details into a few ideas that he can remember.67

According to Fessender, the process of listening, to be considered effective, must proceed through five distinct phases or steps, whether the listening is done in formal or informal situations. These steps, he says, are contingent upon two factors: (1) Common ground must exist between speaker and listener, i.e., they must speak "the same language"; and (2) an individual must have a purpose for listening.68 With these two factors satisfied, then, the process of effective listening, to continue with Fessender, progresses through the following steps:

1. The presence of the ability and desire to listen to what is being said. In essence, the individual must have the physical ability as well as the will or desire to hear.

2. There must be an identification of the isolated words and phrases. This is to say, the hearing ability must extend to the ability to extract patterns of words and phrases from the barrage of sounds the speaker produces. In connected speech there are two factors: First, the series of individual vowel and consonant sounds must be broken at the proper places in order for words to be recognized; second, the thought phrases must be identified in order to listen to ideas and not to a series of sounds or words.


3. There must be an understanding of the isolated words and phrases. In essence, words and phrases must be understood before the individual can listen effectively, since vocabulary is a direct measure of one's listening comprehension.

4. Words and phrases must be understood not only as isolated units but also according to their meaning in the discourse as a whole. Words at best are unstable symbols. The meaning that a speaker may wish to express is as much dependent upon how the words are used as upon the words themselves. The phrase, "That's a fine looking hat," for example, may be highly complimentary when uttered one way, and highly derogatory when uttered another way.

5. Effective listening requires that the individual evaluate the comments of the speaker. To be an effective listener, one must go beyond the words themselves in an effort to understand the speaker, his purpose, the validity and implications of his message, and the effect of the message upon our own being. One must, for example, be able to differentiate between sincerity and emotionalized "word magic," or other such forms of speech that seek to influence our thought or action toward ends that are socially undesirable.

Hedde and Brigance contend there are several different kinds of listening. These include: Listening for entertainment, i.e., enjoying humorous stories, romance, adventure, etc.; listening for escape, i.e., escaping from the world of realities by identifying one's self with characters in soap operas, sport thrillers, detective stories, etc.; listening for inspiration, i.e., seeking an uplift of spirit or a renewal of faith; listening for information and ideas, i.e., seeking strength through knowledge; critical listening, i.e., weighing each point against one's own opinions, trying to

69 Ibid., pp. 28-31.
keep one's petty prejudices out of the way. For all of these types, the authors offer three suggestions for increasing the effectiveness of one's listening:

1. Listen carefully to get the central idea.
2. Listen thoughtfully to analyze the supporting points and repeat them to yourself as you go along.
3. Listen critically in order to decide on the trustworthiness of what you hear.

Dean, in approaching the problem of effective listening, reminds us that the spoken word is a fleeting thing; once spoken, it is gone, never to be reviewed again as is possible with printed matter. This being the case, he says, there are two requirements the effective listener must meet:

First, the listener must keep his attention focused continuously on what the speaker is saying, and that concentration of attention requires active effort. Second, the listener's mind must be actively busy weighing the words and statements he hears, tracing the development of ideas, and sometimes evaluating the speaker's evidence and reasoning.

As a final contribution, Oliver, Dickey, and Zelko contend that:

Good listening commences with an objective interest in other people and in the ideas, emotions, and attitudes of the speaker. It requires the ability to concentrate on the speaker's speech, to analyze the supporting points, and to critically evaluate the trustworthiness of what is being heard. By following these suggestions, one can enhance their listening skills and become a more effective communicator.

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71Ibid.
73Ibid.
that they may express. It is based upon an eagerness to expand one's own life by sharing the experiences and points of view of others.\textsuperscript{74}

They continue by saying:

To listen effectively requires a mind at once flexible and analytical. It must be willing to receive, able to evaluate, and determined to accept or reject on the basis of an honest set of values. Effective listening, then, requires: (a) a set of standards by which to evaluate what is heard; (b) a receptivity to the ideas and feelings of others; and (c) enough knowledge of the subject being discussed to make it possible to judge between what is pertinent or true and what is irrelevant or false. In sum, this requires a mind sufficiently matured and developed to have a pattern of its own, yet humble enough to seek continual supplementary development.\textsuperscript{75}

In summing up this section, it appears that the tendency to listen inadequately is extremely prevalent. Since listening occupies at least half of the communication cycle, it is evident, with particular reference to group discussions, that this tendency is one of the major contributing factors to ineffective communication. It must be realized by group participants, therefore, that effective listening is a highly active process that utilizes virtually every facet of our being, and that without attention to this phase of communication group discussions will invariably fail in their purpose.


\textsuperscript{75}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 148.
Tendency to Make False Evaluations

Psychologists and psychiatrists have long been aware that the tendency unconsciously to project one's own feelings and ideas into others, and subsequently to react to the projections as though they originated with and belonged to others, exists to some degree in everyone. In other words, and to paraphrase Johnson, what many people express as evaluations of the external world are, in actuality, merely evaluations of their own projected feelings, ideas, etc.76 Thus, the more one projects, the more distant or detached one's evaluations are from reality. Projection, in the majority of cases, then, is the cause of what shall be referred to here as the tendency to make false evaluations.

In terms of effective communication the tendency to make false evaluations is of twofold importance. First, when an individual allows himself to make false evaluations of reality as a result of his projections, communication within himself tends to break down. This is to say that an individual may delude himself into thinking he is observing the outside world when actually he is observing his own feelings, ideas, etc., which have been projected from the self to the external world. (This form of self-deceit, incidentally, if carried to extremes, normally results in some

76Johnson, People In Quandaries, p. 260.
form of mental illness.) Secondly, false evaluations tend to prevent an individual from communicating effectively with others. When, for example, members of a group discussion interpret each other's ideas solely in terms of their own unique frame of reference, a meeting of minds, upon which effective communication depends, can not possibly come to pass, since no one really understands what is in the other's mind. This is particularly true in situations where feelings and emotions are deeply involved, since the more emotional an individual becomes, the less likely he is to make realistic evaluations. 

To correct this tendency to make false evaluations is relatively difficult. Carl Rogers explains it this way:

Real communication occurs, and this evaluative tendency is avoided when we listen with understanding. What does this mean? It means to see the expressed idea and attitude from the other person's point of view, to sense how it feels to him, to achieve his frame of reference in regard to the thing he is talking about.

In other words, an individual must be able partially to divorce himself from his own personal feelings, prejudices, attitudes, etc., such that he can truly empathize with others. To achieve this ability to empathize with others requires, and to paraphrase Rogers, that an individual triumph over two difficulties. The first difficulty is that few people

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77 Rogers, "Communication: Its Blocking and Its Facilitation," p. 82.

78 Ibid., p. 84.
seem to have sufficient courage really to understand others. This is to say that when an individual truly wants to understand another person he must enter the other's private world and see life as it appears to him, thereby opening himself to possible change. To be able to change, as pointed out in Chapter II, requires considerable maturity, of which courage is characteristic. The second difficulty to be overcome is strong emotions. As mentioned earlier, emotionalized situations tend to prevent intelligent, realistic evaluations. Lee has made the point that emotional situations arise usually as a result of a sense of inferiority on the part of group participants. Lee continues by saying:

If a man has a sense of his own inferiority, and if someone questions a point he makes, he is driven to emphasize the soundness of what he said with more than customary vigor. He then stops his study of the problem. It takes a person in fine balance, in good adjustment to look at criticism objectively. Anybody with less balance tends to take criticism as a threat to his standing in the group.

It follows, therefore, that some device is needed to prevent group members from being threatened. Rogers fulfills such a need when he suggests that a neutral third party enter the picture as a mediator between the opposed factions. The mediator would explain to each side the opposing side's views as he sees them, thus preventing a direct emotional clash

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79 Irving J. Lee, How To Talk With People, p. 104f.
80 Ibid.
Properly to evaluate one's self and others, then, and to sum up this section, requires (1) a reasonably high degree of psychological maturity, (2) an objective, realistic awareness of the human propensity to project one's feelings, ideas, etc., and (3) the ability to override emotional conflicts in favor of mutual understanding. Fessender, Johnson, and Larson provide final clarification:

If you are to evaluate fully the performance of a colleague, you cannot stop on the level of knowing what he has said. You need to examine the ideas and facts presented, to draw inferences, to see implications, to relate the ideas to one's own experiences, to supply (in your mind) appropriate illustrations and applications, to consider the outline or organization of the presentation.

Numerous investigators, to sum up thus far, have attempted to identify each phase within the communication process. An excerpt from Integrative Speech by Murray, Barnard, and Garland serves to accentuate and bring into full perspective and focus this communication process to which the principles discussed in this chapter may be readily applied:

We shall take as an example the abstracting-evaluating-communicating sequence involved in an airplane spotter's observation and report...

In Stage 1 we see the beginning of a visual stimulus, and probably an auditory stimulus, to the observer. In Stage 2 the stimulus is received, with the observer's senses "abstracting" from the light waves and

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82 Fessender, Johnson, and Larson, op. cit., p. 72f.
sound waves which have impinged on them. Note that, excellent though the senses may be, they cannot possibly abstract "all" the energies that impinge, and so here at the very start is a limitation. Obviously it is also at this stage that such other limitations as color blindness, astigmatism, defective hearing, etc. impose their effect.

At Stage 3 the observer reacts with attitudes, feelings, etc., about the stimuli he has received—he evaluates silently, using the data his senses have given him. These are abstractions of second order—they may or may not be adequate and appropriate to the actualities of Stage 1.

At Stage 4 the observer abstracts further from his previous evaluations, making new abstractions in the form of words. And because words are inevitably a limited vehicle, they will be abstractions still farther removed from Stage 1. Regardless of how detailed his descriptions, regardless of his facility with words, the observer still cannot report "all."

In Stage 5 the observer supplements his words with other media. Yet these, too, are inevitably limited in what they can communicate.

Finally, in Stages 6, 7, 8, and 9, the abstractions are carried further by the various receivers and become liable to the peculiar evaluative biases and colorings of each individual.83

To summarize, finally, the author has attempted to bring out in this chapter the importance of language-usage tendencies to psychological maturity and to communication in general. It will be noted that psychological maturity and the way an individual uses language are highly interrelated in that one tends to facilitate the other. It was hoped, therefore, that an understanding of the more prevalent language-usage immaturities would tend to increase one's

control over his symbolic processes, thereby enhancing one's maturity which, in turn, would increase one's ability to communicate effectively with others.
CHAPTER IV

GUIDELINES

Chapters II and III were concerned with the analysis of certain selected psychological and semantic principles. Those principles were selected on the basis of their value to group communication. This chapter, then, deals with the application of these principles to specific discussion patterns; it is felt if these principles are properly utilized, communication will be improved in discussion situations. For the purpose of this project the author has chosen only those discussion patterns which he holds to be the most commonly used of the discussion patterns. They are as follows: (1) panel; (2) dialogue; (3) symposium; (4) forum-lecture; (5) debate; and (6) group dynamics. The guidelines which will be applied to these patterns are by no means peculiarly applicable to any one of these patterns. Generally, however, the guidelines will apply to some degree to each of the designated patterns.

Before proceeding with a brief description of each pattern, followed by the guidelines, one further point need be made. Let it be understood that the proposed guidelines are limited in scope in that they are intended to reflect only that subject matter offered in Chapters II and III. Rules or guidelines governing such considerations as physical setting, rules of order, problem-solving techniques, choice
of topics, techniques of leadership, discussion preparation, etc., are excellently covered in numerous texts.¹

I. THE PANEL²

A. Description and Uses

The panel discussion, which was originated as such by Professor Harry A. Overstreet, is a method of discussion in which a few persons (the panel) carry on a discussion in front of an audience, which usually participates later in a question-and-answer period. Its purpose is to reproduce as far as possible the features of a small discussion group for the benefit of a larger group.

A panel discussion includes three elements: the panel, the leader, and the audience. The panel consists of from four to eight persons who are seated facing the audience. During the first few minutes of the discussion the leader may present the subject for consideration and point out the relations of the panel and of the audience to it, at the same time briefly describing the general procedure of the discussion. The panel then discusses the problem, conversing, without set speeches, in the hearing of the audience. Then when the panel has developed the pattern of thought, the audience is permitted to ask questions of any one member or of the panel as a whole. The leader, or chairman, guides the panel in its discussion and also serves as an adapter of this discussion to the audience. He is also in charge of the question-and-answer period.

Two points need to be emphasized. First, the members of the panel should attempt to think and contribute in


²McBurney and Hance, op. cit., p. 297.
the spirit and method of reflective thinking--to develop among themselves the pattern of thought to which we have frequently referred. Except for the adaptations required by the presence of an audience, the deliberations should be essentially those of a face-to-face group. Second, the audience is permitted to direct questions at the panel and to make comments only after the panel has had the opportunity to develop its pattern of thought.

B. Duties of the Panel and the Leader

1. The Panel

The members of the panel have the duty of discussing intelligently the question before them. They must prepare themselves so that they have "something to offer." Furthermore, each member should assume full responsibility for the success of the discussion lest each one, believing that the other will do so, fail to make any preparation whatsoever. During the progress of the discussion each member has the additional duties of maintaining a spirit of friendly and cooperative discussion and of keeping things moving and "on point" so that they will be interesting and meaningful to the audience. The responsibility for the maintenance of a cooperative spirit arises from the nature of reflective thinking, in contrast to that of intentional reasoning. The responsibility for the creation of an interesting discussion arises from the presence of the audience. While it is true that the panel discussion is not designed to be primarily a source of entertainment, the audience must be considered. The members of the panel need to remember this fact in selecting the materials to develop the pattern of thought and in participating in the discussion. They need to speak so that they can be heard by the audience, and they need to phrase their contributions for reception by the audience as well as by the other members of the panel.

2. The Leader

The leader or chairman, generally speaking, should be responsible for stimulating the interest of the participants in the topic at hand, guiding the discussion once it has begun in terms of the proposed objectives, and for integrating the efforts of the participants. In addition he has the responsibility of informing the audience as to its part in the panel method, of adapting the discussion to the audience,
and of deciding the proper time for the question period to begin. Thus he has the duty of assisting the panel to deliberate most effectively and also of making this deliberation valuable to the audience.

C. Conducting a Panel Discussion

1. The Selection of the Panel

The personnel of the panel should depend upon the question to be discussed and the capabilities of the members themselves. The number of members may be determined by the number of points of view which it may seem wise to develop or by the number of representatives of important points of view that can be secured. Fansler believes that "in general the more gifted the panel members in thought and expression the smaller the number needed," although he says that "four is the minimum number and eight the maximum."³ The members should be well informed, should be able thinkers, and should be able to express themselves clearly and quickly. They need all the qualities of the participants in a discussion group plus the ability to converse well in front of an audience.

2. The Preparation by the Members and Leader

While a panel discussion is informal in nature, i.e., emphasizing spontaneous contributions from the participants, it none the less behooves both the leader and members to be well informed on the whole issue under discussion. With regard to rehearsals, authorities usually contend they are unnecessary and in some cases detrimental to the successful panel.⁴

3. Mechanical Arrangements

In arranging the panel, one needs to consider both the relations of the panel to the audience and the relations of the members of the panel to one another. The panel should be placed where it can be easily seen and heard. Also, the audience should be


seated as near as possible to the panel so that it will have no difficulty in hearing and also so that the informality of the panel will not be disturbed by excessive distances between it and the audience.

The seating of the panel should provide for the maximum of informality and the development of unity in the group. For this reason the members should preferably be seated in a semicircle with the chairman midway from each end. If possible, they should be seated at a table and be so arranged as to keep the panel from breaking up into groups of two and three persons.

4. Participation by the Audience

It is customary to provide a question-and-answer period following the development of the pattern of thought by the members of the panel. In preparation for this period the leader may, if necessary, briefly summarize the discussion, then invite participation by the audience. At the end of the question period he should close the meeting in the way that best fits the spirit of the occasion. It may be best to adjourn at once; on the other hand, a brief summary may be needed. Upon another occasion it may be desirable to resume the panel discussion for a few minutes in order to enable the members of the panel to adapt their earlier discussion to the questions and answers.

II. THE DIALOGUE

A. Description and Uses

The dialogue is a method of discussion in which two persons, using the question-and-answer method primarily, discuss a problem in front of an audience, which participates later in a period of questions directed at one or both of the speakers. Ordinarily one of the speakers serves as chairman and questioner, and the other as respondent. Frequently the chairman not only asks questions but also discusses briefly some of the replies of the respondent.

5McBurney and Hance, op. cit., p. 304.
The dialogue is used to some extent in public forums and in centers for adult education. Probably its greatest use is on the radio, where several well-known programs consist of a dialogue between a chairman and a subject-matter expert in some field. In fact, the radio is perhaps a better situation for the dialogue than is a meeting in an auditorium, where the participants must speak loudly enough to reach all members of the audience and thus lose some of the informality of a conversation.

B. Duties of the Questioner and the Respondent

The ideal chairman is well versed in the problem under consideration, knows the level of information and interest of the audience in the problem, and is an expert at asking questions both to develop the pattern of thinking and to follow up the replies of the respondent to his questions. A chairman like this can stimulate interest in the topic, can give pattern to the dialogue, and can draw from the respondent the information particularly needed to help the audience. The ideal respondent is an expert on the problem being discussed, is keen-minded enough to be able to reply quickly and yet fully, and is conscious enough of the audience to adapt his knowledge to it.

Audience participation is ordinarily limited, as in the panel discussion, to the period following the development of a pattern of thought by the speakers. In preparation for this period the chairman may, if necessary, summarize the dialogue, then invite questions. Like the chairman of the panel discussion, he should close the meeting in the manner most satisfying to the audience, using an additional summary or resuming the dialogue for a brief period only if needed.

III. THE SYMPOSIUM

A. Description and Uses

The symposium is a method of discussion in which two or more persons, under the direction of a chairman, present in separate speeches the various phases of a problem. The audience participates vocally only in the

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6Ibid., p. 305.
question-and-answer period which follows the speeches. The purpose of the symposium is to investigate a problem from several points of view, not to give a series of speeches of advocacy. . . . In its ideal form the symposium consists of from three to five experts, each of whom presents a ten- to fifteen-minute speech, and a chairman who introduces the question to the audience, provides a transition from one speech to another, briefly correlates the contributions, and takes charge of the question-and-answer period. In some instances the several speeches are presented during the same session, and in others one session is devoted to one speech, with additional speeches being given at later periods. In the latter case the continuity should be preserved by the chairman and so far as possible by the speakers themselves.

The subject of each speech may, in general, be determined by one of three methods. One is to ask each speaker to develop a phase of the pattern in reflective thinking--to consider, for example, Definition and perhaps the first phase of Analysis. Another speaker would develop the phase of Criteria; another, Hypotheses; another, Appraisal of Hypotheses; etc. A second method is to ask one speaker, for example, to consider Definition and Analysis, and the remaining speakers to consider, respectively, the various hypotheses or solutions. For example, in a symposium on the problem, "What Can Be Done to Curb Juvenile Delinquency?" the second and subsequent speakers would consider such possible solutions as stricter laws and law enforcement; improved recreational facilities; parent education; improved housing; etc. A third method is to ask each speaker to present his views upon the main problem--in other words, to take his listeners (ideally at least) through the steps in reflective thinking. In this method there is naturally a series of coordinate "lectures" differing, of course, as individual differences direct all steps from Definition to Verification.

B. Duties of Members

The speakers in the symposium have an important responsibility in addition to being well informed and able to speak creditably. They have the duty of contributing in such a way that the primary purpose of the symposium will be preserved and the session will not become a series of persuasive speeches arguing the merits of a case. The symposium speakers should use . . . a fair,
objective treatment of the problem. They should attempt
to explain what their points of view are and why they
feel as they do toward the problem.

The chairman has certain duties in addition to opening
and closing the meeting and serving as the leader of the
question-and-answer period. He should learn in advance
the points of view of the speakers and should arrange
the program to provide for the greatest possible sequence
and continuity. In addition, he should keep the symposium
as coherent as possible by providing if necessary a
brief transitional statement between the speeches and a
brief summary before the question period begins. Finally,
he should make every effort to preserve the investiga­tive
character of the symposium and to keep it from
becoming a debate. He can do this in a pre-session con­ference
with the speakers or if necessary in his remarks
between the speeches.

IV. THE FORUM-LECTURE

The forum-lecture is a method of discussion in which one
person presents a speech followed by a question-and-answer
period participated in by the audience. The purpose of the
lecture is to explore a subject and to inform the audience
concerning one or more phases of it. It is not intended to
be a persuasive speech nor should it be an example of inten­tional
reasoning. The speaker may present his own point of
view here, but the explanatory, denotative, or empirical
method of contributing should be employed.

The forum-lecture is probably the most widely used of the
discussion methods available to the regularly established
forums. Several reasons may be assigned for this fact,
among these being the comparative ease of securing one expert
and also the comparative inexperience of any large number of
persons with the panel, the dialogue, or the symposium...

The question-and-answer period may be conducted by the
lecturer himself or by the chairman of the meeting. Both
plans have obvious advantages, determined largely by the
lecturer's familiarity with the members of the audience and
his ability to lead a forum...

7Ibid., p. 307.
A. Description and Procedure

The speeches of the two-sided debate are the constructive and the rebuttal speeches. The speeches are given in the following order: (1) the first affirmative constructive speech, (2) the first negative constructive speech, (3) the second affirmative constructive speech, (4) the second negative constructive speech, (5) the first negative rebuttal speech, (6) the first affirmative rebuttal speech, (7) the second negative rebuttal speech, and (8) the second affirmative rebuttal speech.

It should be observed that the affirmative opens the constructive speeches, but the negative opens the rebuttal series. Thus, the affirmative opens and closes the debate. It is argued by some that this procedure gives the affirmative an advantage, but the advantage is offset by the fact that it is always advocating a change from the status quo, regardless of the proposition being debated. It is generally agreed that the team proposing a change from the status quo has a more difficult task than the team defending the present conditions or defending some alternative plan. Thus, any advantage that the affirmative may have by opening and closing the debate is counterbalanced by the assumption of the burden of proof.

The time allotted to each speaker will vary with the circumstances under which the debate is being held. The usual time limit for each constructive speech is ten minutes and for each rebuttal speech five minutes. It is a frequent custom to allow five or ten minutes between constructive and rebuttal speeches to give each team time to prepare for the rebuttal.

B. Duties of the Affirmitive Team

Where two speakers present the case for the affirmative, there must be definite planning and thinking together if a unified and coherent case is to be presented. The speakers must agree upon the interpretation of the proposition, upon the issues that each will present, and upon areas of defense and attack in rebuttal.

The issues that the affirmative team presents will vary with the nature and the type of the proposition. When debating a proposition of policy, it is a common

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practice to have the first affirmative present the interpretation of the proposition and to prove that there is a need for the proposed change. The second affirmative usually proves that the proposal is beneficial and practicable. The duties outlined here are usually sufficient to establish a prima facie case.

The duty of the affirmative team in refutation is to defend the constructive case against attacks by the negative. The affirmative must have a plan of refutation. There are at least two plans that may be used. The first method may be called the "man to man" defense.9 This method consists of the first affirmative answering the charges of the first negative in his constructive and rebuttal speeches, and the second affirmative defending the affirmative case by answering charges of the second negative in his constructive and rebuttal speeches. Another method called the "zone" method is probably a more effective procedure. Here the members of the affirmative team agree to defend certain issues. Any negative arguments, whether constructive or rebuttal, that tend to destroy those issues are defended according to the prearranged affirmative plan. This plan has the advantage of making each speaker a specialist on specific issues.

C. Duties of the Negative

The negative must decide what type of negative case it chooses to present. It may defend the status quo, advocate repairs of the status quo, offer a counterplan, or offer a refutatory case. Whatever case is used, the members of the negative team must make a division of labors between them. That is, they must decide upon what issues they intend to support and who will support them.

The duties of the negative in refutation are similar to the duties of the affirmative. The negative must decide what plan it will use. It should always keep in mind that if it can raise a serious doubt about any one of the major issues presented by the affirmative, it prevents the affirmative from establishing a case.

VI. GROUP DYNAMICS

A. Description and Uses

Group dynamics, as a discussion pattern, is a relative­ly new innovation in the realm of forensics. The major characteristic of this form of discussion is that all participants have responsibility for the necessary functions of the group. There are, however, certain designated roles which members assume on a tentative basis. These roles are the leader, the observer, the recorder, and the resource person, plus any other role the group deems necessary for the success of the discussion. Each of these roles in actuality is a leadership roll; hence, this pattern has become known as the multiple-leadership pattern.

The group dynamics discussion pattern is of value primarily as a means for individuals to explore cooperatively, through discussion, the various phases of a given problem. The number of participants may range from five to twenty-five, depending upon the nature of the problem and the size of the group. Since the purpose of this pattern is for individuals to resolve a problem cooperatively, there is ordinarily no audience as such. Participants usually sit in a circle, since this facilitates the informal give and take among group members which is so necessary for this pattern's success.

B. Duties of the Members

The following is a suggested list of designated functions intended to refer to the assumption of chief responsibility by certain individuals and to insure that certain functions are performed continuously.

Each group member:

1. Helps decide on specific problems and ways of working as a group.

2. Contributes ideas and suggestions related to the problem.

3. Listens to what other members say and seeks helpful ideas and insights.

4. Requests clarification when needed.
5. Observes the group process and makes suggestions.
6. Assumes various roles as needed.

The leader:
1. Helps group get acquainted.
2. Helps group establish ground rules.
3. Reports results of pre-conference planning for work of group.
4. Helps group proceed with planning and deciding.
5. Calls on group to clarify, analyze, and summarize problem and suggested solutions.
6. Draws out the "Timid Soul" and keeps the dominant person from monopolizing.
7. Knows particular contributions which different persons can make.
8. Assists recorder and observer.

The recorder:
1. Keeps a record of the main problems, issues, ideas, facts, and decisions as they develop in the discussion.
2. Summarizes points and reports to group from time to time as needed.
3. Consults with group about kind of final reports they would like made.
4. Prepares resolutions and other final report with other designated members of the group.
5. Attends any scheduled clearing house or inter-group sharing committee sessions.
6. Prepares final group report and is responsible for getting it to proper clearing house.
The observer:

1. Gives special attention to group process in respect to:
   a. Formation and clarity of goals.
   b. Degree and kind of participation and interaction.
   c. Clarity of discussion.
   d. Effectiveness of leadership.
   e. Use of resources.
   f. Progress toward goals.

2. Helps group decide upon ways of evaluating group process.

3. Helps group observe and evaluate group process without losing sight of the content of the discussion.

4. Reports to the group, if asked, regarding observations.

The resource person:

1. Supplies information or material at request of group when such seems pertinent to the discussion.

2. Cites experiences at request of group or when such seems pertinent to the discussion.

3. Assists leader in moving toward achievement of goals.

VII. GUIDELINES

Effective communication, under any circumstances, is at best a particularly difficult thing to achieve. This difficulty is inevitable when one considers the great complexity of the communication process. Communication, aside from utilizing every facet of our being, is almost irremediably complicated by infinite, individual differences in physical and psychological composition; these differences account for the fact that each person perceives the external world a bit
differently. Since there are as many conceptions of a given object as there are individuals to perceive it, it is indeed remarkable that communication, i.e., a meeting of minds, can take place at all. In view of this, it would be the height of presumptuousness to offer a set of rules or guidelines which, if followed, would alleviate problems in communication. It is felt, however, that if a mature, thoughtful person sincerely tries to understand and utilize the following guidelines, his ability to communicate in general and, particularly, in the cited patterns will be decidedly improved.

1. The leader or chairman and every member should be thoroughly familiar with the topic under discussion before the actual discussion commences. This is particularly true in those groups which encourage multiple leadership.

2. Each participant must assume the responsibility for being a unique individual, thereby affording the group the benefit of each person's unique experiences.

3. Group participants must realize that chronological age, as such, is not a justifiable criterion upon which to base an evaluation of one's wisdom, veracity, etc.

4. Group participants must not be adverse to change, particularly in regard to one's own ideas, feelings, attitudes, etc. Mature psychological growth demands change and revision.

5. Each participant must be able to have mutual respect for both himself and others.

6. Group members must each have a purpose or goal in mind for the discussion and, through mutual coordination, strive to attain that end.

7. Each participant must be reasonably content with his
lot in life and be able to bear the ordinary stress of life with some composure.

8. Each participant must have a reasonably good understanding of what constitutes "good" and "right" within his society.

9. Each participant must be able to maintain equanimity in the face of those obstacles which he cannot change or modify.

10. Each participant must be able to empathize with others, i.e., put himself in the "other's shoes."

11. Each participant must realize that every situation in life offers numerous opportunities for mature growth and extended happiness; group members, therefore, should endeavor to be as tolerant and understanding of others' weaknesses as they are admiring of others' strengths.

12. Group participants should genuinely strive to understand the other's point of view. Be satisfied with nothing short of an intimate knowledge of the other's ideas, their implications, their overtones, and their subtle meanings.

13. To facilitate group understanding, restate what the other has said to his satisfaction. This prevents false assumptions from blocking the communication process.

14. Group members should be ever cautious that situations and problems are evaluated on the basis of facts, not on the basis of opinions or suppositions.

15. Group members should ever be on guard that situations be equated in terms of reality, not in terms of the verbal symbols which are applied to reality. Participants, in short, must look "behind" the word to that which it represents before evaluating a given situation.

16. Group members should encourage flexible, dynamic, and humble attitudes on the part of all members. No one knows "all" about anything.

17. Group participants need to remember constantly that any symbol does not symbolize or represent "all" the
characteristics of that which is symbolized. Furthermore, the higher the abstraction the more are characteristics left out of the thing symbolized.

18. Group participants should endeavor constantly to keep external referents in mind during the course of discussion. This prevents words from acting as a filter or screen between the members and the outside world.

19. Participants should be careful not to mistake facts for inferences or guesses. A fact is that which two or more people can observe and agree on the findings.

20. Participants should be careful not to waste panel time by pursuing unanswerable questions. Questions under discussion should be of such a nature as to be resolvable on the basis of known facts.

21. Group members must be ever on guard against stereotyped statements and opinions which tend to imply that something is so, now and forever. Within our present vision, everything changes; nothing remains the "same."

22. The group must guard against the common tendency to overgeneralize on subjects. No two things or events are identical in "all" respects; concession must be made to this fact.

23. Group members must strive to understand one another's statements in terms of their full physical, psychological, and verbal context.

24. Group members must realize that there are infinitely more than two sides to every question or statement. The two-valued orientation to reality must be discarded in favor of the multi-valued orientation.

25. Participants should be wary of highly emotionalized speech. Emotions and sound thinking do not go together.

26. Group participants should strive to remember that words are merely symbols for some territory, and that they have no meaning, nor power, nor importance of their own. Hence, there can be no single "right" definition for any word.
27. Group participants should not be deluded into thinking they understand another's words just because the words connote something in their minds. Members of a discussion should endeavor to understand the statement as intended by the speaker.

28. Group participants should continually strive to listen objectively. That is, an individual should attempt to listen without projecting his own feelings, ideas, attitudes, etc., into what is being said. Listen, in short, with a mind to really understanding what is being said as intended by the speaker.

29. When listening to another's discussion of a subject be physically and psychologically alert; pay the speaker the compliment of your undivided attention.

30. Do not monopolize the discussion; listen to the ideas of others.

31. Grant willingly to each speaker the right to have ideas of his own, whether you agree or disagree with him.

32. Critically evaluate the discussion of others and yourself in terms of known facts; never evaluate a situation on the basis of opinions or suppositions.

33. When judging another's ideas, be cautious not to judge on the basis of what you think the other person said—seek justification for your judgments.

34. Do not identify your prestige with your ideas. If your idea is under attack, do not regard it as an attack against your being. Learn to divorce yourself partially from your thoughts and be able to evaluate them objectively.

35. Group participants should realize that the purpose of discussions is not to reconcile differences, but to integrate them.

36. Group participants should realize that a statement uttered by an "authority" does not in itself mean that the statement is true or reasonable. Beware of accepting uncritically what an "authority" says.

37. Remember that, generally speaking, what one gives
out in tolerance, understanding, empathy, etc., the like shall he receive.

38. Group members should try to prevent the discussion from being diverted by an unimportant point.

39. Group participants should be aware of individual differences, and make allowances for them. Do not, for example, allow yourself to become angry or impatient with the slow learner.

40. Participants should endeavor to differentiate between what a speaker himself represents and what he says. Do not evaluate a speaker on the basis of his position, affiliations, etc.; concentrate on what is being said.

41. Refrain from "snap" judgments.

42. Do not be impatient with the democratic process; it is more rewarding in the long run.

43. Refrain from being trapped by emotional factors such as: face-saving defenses; egotistic display; reacting to personalities rather than considering only the problem to be solved; etc.

44. Participants should make short contributions to the discussion, not speeches.

45. Have faith in the ability of others. There is no one in the group who is not superior to the rest in at least one respect.

46. Refrain from becoming irritated at peculiarities of vocabulary, delivery, sound of voice, mannerisms, etc.

47. Participants should endeavor to evaluate their own contributions in light of their probable effect upon other members. Is the comment constructive, personal, or anger provoking?

48. Be group minded. Think in terms of "we" rather than "I."

49. Participants should endeavor to limit their contributions primarily to reporting the facts; refrain from expounding on pet theories and opinions.
50. Group members or lecturers should refrain from the use of loaded words, i.e., words which are too closely identified with highly emotionalized things or situations.

51. Group participants should feel that the creation of common understandings and the formulation of a solution to which all may agree is more satisfying than the exposition of one's own ideas. Refrain from selfishly encroaching on the group's time.

Since this project was concerned with the more practical aspects of effective communication, it seems altogether fitting that this work should end on a philosophical note. An excerpt from Reeve's "Toward A Philosophy of Communication" provides such a note:

Good communication is that which is meaningful, effective, socially acceptable, and socially responsible. Communication is meaningful when it results from an awareness, conscious or unconscious, of the signs of structural meaning (grammatical form and structure); it is meaningful when it is clear, accurate, unambiguous in word choice and arrangement, and when it is organized in terms of purpose and intention. Communication is effective when it is simple, forthright, and specific, and when it is appropriate to the user, the subject, and the situation in intention, tone, level of usage, and organization. Communication is socially acceptable when it is free from readily determinable illiteracies, and when it is characterized by observation of current linguistic conventions which are validated by the practice of educated writers and speakers. Communication is socially responsible when it is grounded in observable fact, in honestly contrived opinion, in an awareness of personal and social bias, and when it contributes to understanding and harmony among the greatest number in a democratic society.¹⁰

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