

A STUDY OF MARITAL COMMUNICATION
AND MARITAL ADJUSTMENT

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Introductory Rationale

Could it be that the quality of communication that takes place between a husband and wife is the most significant factor in their relationship? There are those writing in the field of marriage and communication who seem to support that idea. Satir (1972) observes in Peoplemaking that communication is the largest single factor determining what kind of relationships one makes with others, and what happens to that person in the world.

In a statistical report conducted by the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, Lewis Wingo (1978) found that Baptist pastors ranked poor communication as the chief problem among families attending church. Out of a possible ranking of fifteen family problems, the number one problem was couple communication, number two was parent-child communication, and number three was the inability of youth to communicate with others. Members of the church, however, ranked parent-child communication as the number two problem, and couple communication as the number three problem. Both

from the viewpoint of religious leaders and members of the church, the biggest problem faced in the family is poor communication.

From two divergent viewpoints, religious and secular, there is agreement on the fundamental need for good communication. People need to communicate in rewarding and constructive ways.

The founder of Effectiveness Training, Incorporated, Thomas Gordon, has developed several programs designed to teach people new skills to enhance interpersonal relationships. Four of these skills are related to forms of communication in these various relationships. All of Gordon's programs are built around the same model, consisting of listening, I-messages, problem solving, and influencing. It appears that all of these skills are transferable from one interpersonal relationship to another, or from one situation to another. Persons who learn communication skills designed for use in a particular relationship often discover that these skills are used in other relationships. Gordon believes that communication skills can be learned in the present to replace poor skills learned in the past. The main thrust of all the Effectiveness Training courses is thus skill training. The experiential model is the primary tool for teaching the new skills.

Even though poor communication is a primary problem in the family today, there is hope that family members can be taught new skills to take the place of some of the ineffective skills learned from the families of origin.

Statement of the Problem

This study will address itself to the problem of improving communication skills between husband and wife. When communication improves, marital adjustment should improve. Whereas this is a common concept held by Satir (1972), Miller (1976) and Mace (1976), very little has been done to measure this variable of communication as it relates to the quality of the marital adjustment.

Statement of the Hypotheses

There is a need to examine the effect of communication skill training on marital communication and marital adjustment. The following hypotheses will examine these relationships.

1. There is no significant gain in marital communication skill following a treatment of Parent Effectiveness Training (P.E.T.) and measured immediately by the Marital Communication Inventory (MCI) and tested with a t-test for dependent observation.

2. There is no significant gain in marital adjustment following a treatment of P.E.T. and measured immediately

by the Short Marital Adjustment Test (SMAT) and tested with a t-test for dependent observation.

3. There is no significant increase in the correlation of marital communication and marital adjustment following a treatment of P.E.T. and measured immediately with the MCI and the SMAT and tested with the Spearman rank correlation.

4. There is no significant gain in marital communication as measured by the MCI one year following a treatment of P.E.T. and tested with a t-test for dependent observation.

5. There is no significant gain in marital adjustment as measured by the SMAT one year following the treatment of P.E.T. and tested with a t-test for dependent observation.

6. There is no significant increase in the correlation of marital communication and marital adjustment following a treatment of P.E.T., measured with the SMAT and the MCI and tested with the Spearman rank correlation.

Definition of Terms

The term Parent Effectiveness Training refers to a model of skill training which has as its goal the improvement of interpersonal relationships. The skills are as follows:

1. ACTIVE LISTENING is a Rogerian technique of reflecting back to the person experiencing a problem one's interpretation of the feelings the other is experiencing, or the content of the other's message. The purpose is to give that individual insight into the problem so that changes in behavior can be made to resolve the problem.

2. I-MESSAGE is a communication skill used to change another's behavior which causes one stress. In the P.E.T. course of study, I-messages are classified as confrontive, preventive, positive, and declarative.

3. PROBLEM SOLVING is a cognitive approach to conflict resolution between two or more persons whose needs conflict. John Dewey originated this six step method of finding a solution to conflict of needs so that the needs of all parties are met. The six steps are: define the problem, seek solutions, evaluate the solutions, choose those that mutually meet the needs, implement the solutions, and evaluate the results after a period of time.

4. INFLUENCING is a skill that deals with passing one's value system on to another person. It involves modeling the value and consulting with the other person concerning the value one wishes to pass along.

LIMITATIONS

The following limitations are placed upon the findings of this study:

1. The results of this study will be limited to the sample selected and should not be generalized to the population.
2. Communication improvement is limited to the improvement as measured by A Marital Communication Inventory (MCI) developed by Millard J. Bienvenu, Sr. (Bienvenu, 1978)
3. Marital adjustment is limited to the adjustment as measured by the Short Marital Adjustment Test (SMAT) developed by Harvey Locke and Karl Wallace. (Locke, 1959)

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The review of the literature shall be concerned with three related topics. The first will be a definition of communication. The second will be communication and its impact on marriage and self esteem. The last will be the principal means of communication used in the Parent Effectiveness Training model: Active Listening, Problem Solving and Influencing.

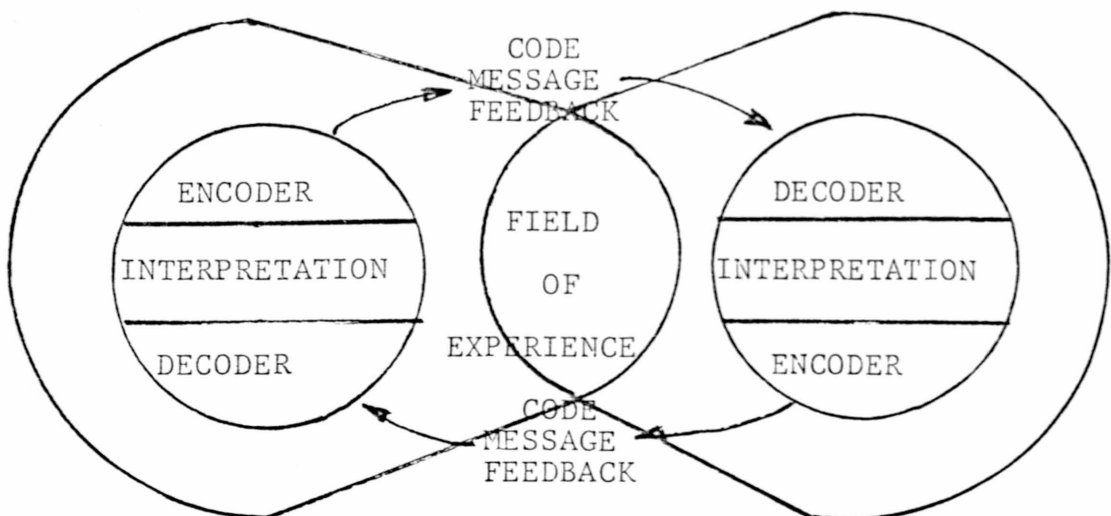
Raush (1973) defines communication as a relationship between events in one system and events in another system. These events in one system are not only colored by the present, but are strongly influenced by the past. Satir (1972) must have this same idea in mind when she describes the family of origin as the most influential factor determining the communication skills used by adults. She indicates that in most cases the ability or inability to communicate is a reflection of what was learned from the family of creation.

In Peoplemaking Satir (1972) defines communication as talking and listening. She says it is the largest single factor determining the kind of relationships one makes with

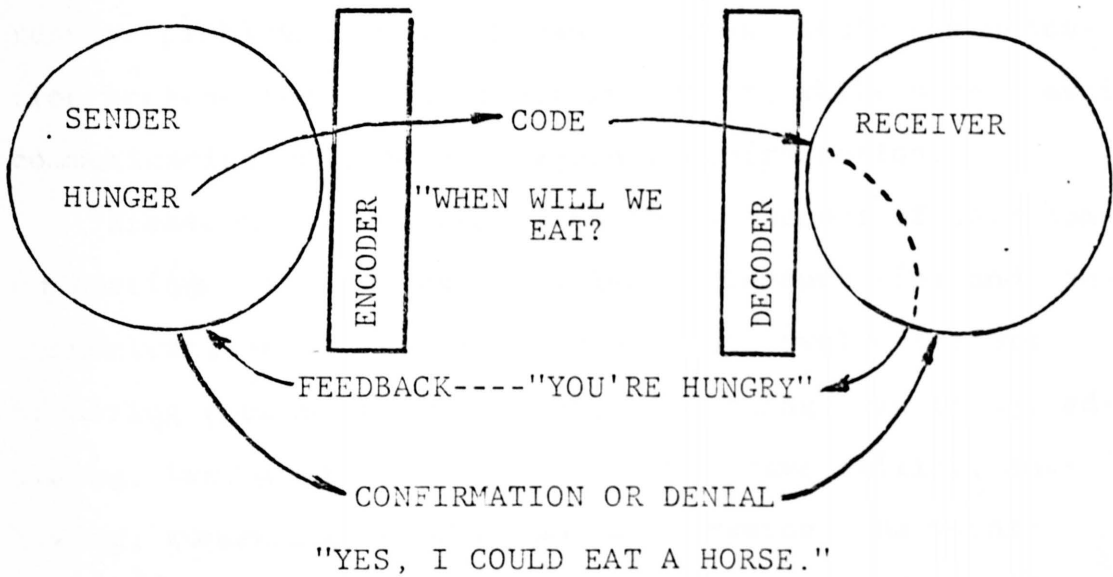
others and what happens to one in the world. It is further observed that communication includes the ways people pass information to others, the information, and the use which is made of the information. Communication is a learned process.

The quality of communication is improved by what Satir (1972) calls feedback. She observes that if feedback does not take place, communication becomes a collection of facts and information that may lead to trouble in the relationship if not rightly interpreted.

Applebaum (1973) describes the humanistic concepts of interpersonal communication. He lists five factors influencing communication: frame of reference, empathy, authenticity, interpersonal trust and feeling content. In Fundamental Concepts in Human Communication he describes the Schramm model of interpersonal communication.



The P.E.T. concept of communication is similar to the Schramm model, omitting only the Field of Experience. Gordon (1970) diagrams it as follows:



The literature examined reveals two styles of communication. One is negative and destructive to a relationship and the other is positive and enhancing to a relationship (Satir, 1972).

Satir (1972) points out four different patterns of communication that are harmful: blaming, placating, computing and distracting. Placating is over-assuming responsibility for the feelings of others. Blaming is assuming little or no responsibility for the feelings of others. Computing is being ultra-reasonable. Distracting is ignoring the content.

Rejecting is a negative technique of communication described by Raush (1974). He points out that avoidance of communication is a poor way to cope with conflict and resolve problems. Some, Raush observes, avoid communication because the issue is not important, while others avoid communication as a defense against confrontation.

Bienvenu (1970) sets forth three factors of poor communication: nagging, conversational discourtesies and non-communicativeness. Gordon (1970) lists twelve factors hindering communication: ordering, warning, exhorting, advising, lecturing, judging, praising, name-calling, analyzing, consoling, probing and withdrawing. He points out that these factors are acceptable in a good relationship, but unacceptable when there is a problem between the persons. Sutton (1975) states that negative communication is more acceptable when there is a verbal acceptance of the other person.

According to Satir (1972), the ideal pattern of communication is leveling. The voice matches the verbal expression and the relationship seems free and easy. The communication is honest and real as presented. It is a moment of truth. It is whole, and not partial. It stands in stark contrast, according to Satir, to communication that is destructive. Raush (1974) names some elements in positive

constructive communication: humor, playfulness and spontaneity. Factors noted by Bienvenu (1970) as facilitating communication are: handling anger and differences, tone of voice, understanding, and good listening habits.

Disclosing is another element of positive facilitative communication. Gilbert (1976) defines disclosing as the act of revealing personal information to others. According to Coutts (1973) this is a vital part of being intimate. Jouard (1958) finds that women are higher disclosers than men. They disclose on the basis of liking each other, while men disclose on the basis of trusting each other.

The relationship between disclosure and satisfaction in marriage, according to Cozby (1973), is a curvilinear one. Some disclosing is satisfying and helpful in building a relationship, while too much is considered to be threatening. The relationship between these two variables in marriage is strongly influenced by the need for security and safety (Gilbert, 1976).

The literature seems to indicate that there is a strong relationship between communication, self-esteem, and marital satisfaction. Raush (1974) believes that communication plays a major role in enriching and redefining intimacy. This view is shared by Feldman (1961) and Satir (1972). Feldman contends that good communication is the

key to family interaction and is the life blood of the marriage relationship. Satir says that a positive relationship exists between a couple's ability to communicate and marital adjustment. Navran (1967) observes that the right and the ability to express displeasure is a prerequisite for adjustment in marriage. However, Simmel (1964) suggests that open communication in itself does not necessarily lead to adjustment.

The concept that self-esteem and communication are related is supported by several writers. Satir (1973) observes that communication is a measuring tool by which two people are able to gauge each other's feelings of self-esteem. It is also the tool by which the estimation of self-esteem may be changed. Satir says that she is convinced that the crucial factor in what happens between two people is the result of the self-esteem at work.

Shapiro (1968) states that the ability to self-disclose is related to self-esteem. The literature indicates that as one takes the risk to self-disclose through communication, self-esteem is enhanced. Self-disclosure is a symptom, according to Jourard (1959), of a healthy personality and good positive self-esteem. How one feels is dependent upon directness and intimacy in one's communication. Bach (1969) says that whatever kind of communication

is used, it has its influence upon the self-esteem and should be considered of paramount importance.

Another interesting relationship between marriage and communication surfaces in the literature and should be mentioned here. Rather than the effect of the communication on the marriage, it is the influence of the marriage on communication. The quality of marriage determines to a degree the quality of communication that takes place. Satir (1972) describes the troubled family as having difficulty in communicating in healthy ways. The troubled family is indirect and vague: members send messages with double meanings. Gilbert (1976) concludes in her study on self-disclosure and marriage, that couples who are satisfied tend to disclose more than those who are unhappy. Rutledge (1966) observes that as marriages mature with time, disclosures tend to become indiscriminate. Restraints tend to be released, truth emerges, frankness overrides tact, and hostility is more common. The result is the relationship becomes intolerable and the individuals place limits on self expression.

In a dissertation on "Marital Communication and Its Relationship to Self-Esteem" Dillon (1976) states that couples who received training in new communication techniques grew in self-esteem. Gordon (1970) holds that

simple communication skills learned experientially will have a positive effect on the relationship.

Much has been written concerning the use of reflective listening and I-messages. More than forty theses and dissertations since 1970 have measured the relationship of these two skills of communication in various interpersonal relationships and settings. A few have been chosen for this review of the literature.

Carucci (1975) observes that in a classroom situation commands increased disruptive behavior, while I-messages had the opposite effect. Their use appears to have a positive influence on limiting group disruptions as well as individual disruptions in a classroom. This appears to be a viable technique, since their use can be taught effectively over a four hour training period. Cline (1971) on "The Effects of You-Messages and I-Messages on the Helping Relationship" noted that "the degree to which the subject experienced the relationship as 'helpful' was significantly greater under 'I' conditions than 'You' conditions."

The effects of "Active Listening have also been measured with significant results. Blume (1977) tested the "Effects of Active Listening Training on Verbal Responses of University of Florida Preservice Childhood Education Teachers." It was determined that those who

received just four hours of training in "Active Listening" scored significantly higher ($p > .05$) on the empathy posttest versus the pretest. It was also observed that the empathy level continued to be higher six weeks after the posttest.

Mosier (1978) researched "The Effects of Active Listening for Child Care Providers." After four one hour weekly sessions on Active Listening the experimental group was tested using Carkhuff's Empathetic Understanding in Interpersonal Processes Scale. The results revealed that the experimental group scored higher than the control group. However, it was suggested that for competence in the use of the skill, more training would be required. Fagnan (1977) tested a group of 167 junior high school students whose teachers had been instructed in the use of Active Listening. The findings suggest that the junior high school students favor teachers' use of Active Listening as a way of responding to student-owned problems. It was found that female teachers scored significantly higher than male teachers in the ability to be empathetic.

Extensive study on the influence of Active Listening and I-Messages used jointly has been done between 1970 and 1979. The findings are summarized in the following paragraphs.

Dillard (1974) found that these skills can be taught over a relatively short period of time, and that those who learn the skills can function at a higher level in helping relationships and in teaching. Fine (1975) discovered that student teachers who were equipped with Active Listening and I-Messages improved: (1) core condition skills (congruence, empathy, respect) necessary to establish rapport between teachers and pupils, (2) affective initiating skills (3) facilitative communication skills, and (4) ability to employ democratic problem solving procedures. Garcia (1971) reports that parents who took a Parent Effectiveness Training course showed significant gains in confidence as parents, greater mutual understanding between parent and child, and greater mutual trust. Participants stated that they were less afraid to express their feelings, more honest about themselves, and felt less guilt when they failed to measure up to their previous expectations as parents. Hanley (1973) used Active Listening and I-Messages in a family enrichment program and discovered that parents increased their ability to accept and understand their children. The parents developed a greater degree of trust in the children, and the children experienced more autonomy.

Kilburn and Gerard (1971) taught Parent Effectiveness Training to staff members at a mental hospital. They found

a reduction of roadblocks to communication, increased listening skills, decreased negative confrontational behavior, and increased comfort in dealing with patients' problems resulted. Participants felt that it aided them in their personal relationships off the job as well. Knowles (1974) in an evaluation of Parent Effectiveness Training, observed that these skills were most useful when taught to parents who volunteered to take the course. Larson (1972), in an article for "The School Counselor" observed that children designated as underachievers whose parents took the Parent Effectiveness Training course gained a full grade point from the first to the third quarter of school. Parents gained insight into the behavior of the child and improved their own self-concepts. Lillibridge (1971) in his study of Parent Effectiveness Training and its influence on the child, observed that child viewed the parent as more accepting. Evidence suggests that the Parent Effectiveness Training model fosters healthier parent-child relationships and results in more emotionally well adjusted children. Piercy (1971) did a study on "The Effects of P.E.T. on Empathy and Self-Disclosure." Piercy found that after taking P.E.T. subjects showed greater empathetic understanding of another person's problem, creating a non-threatening environment in which the child feels better

understood and is less likely to respond with resistance. Subjects also showed greater facilitative self-disclosure when faced with problems of their own.

Stearn (1970) dealt with "The Relationship of P.E.T. to Parent Attitudes, Parent Behavior and Child Self-Esteem." He observed that P.E.T. graduates were found to be significantly more democratic in their attitudes toward family as compared with two control groups which received no training. He found evidence that children of P.E.T. graduates increased significantly in self-esteem. Steck (1975) in a dissertation on "A Study to Determine the Effects of In-Service Education on Teachers' Beliefs, Attitudes and Values" discovered that Teacher Effectiveness Training had no significant influence on the experimental group's beliefs, attitudes, or values. He observed that all participants felt it was desirable to be more flexible and open and less authoritarian. He believed that this attitude was assimilated from the influence of an authoritarian source, such as principals.

While one paper mentioned the effect of transference of communication skills from one dyad to another, there is no research in this specific area (Kilburn, Gerard, and Ray, 1971). Therefore, it seems appropriate to examine

the influence of a Parent Effectiveness Training course of study on the marital adjustment of parents who take the course for the purpose of improving their ability in parenting.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Subjects

The sample which was used in the study was a group of Caucasian parents from middle to upper socio-economic level. Fifty-one parents were involved in the study, twenty-four fathers and twenty-seven mothers. Participation in the study was voluntary. No one knew upon entering the course that growth in communication skills and marital adjustment would be measured. Several persons who took the Parent Effectiveness Training course did not volunteer to be a part of the study. Most agreed to participate without hesitation. The average number of years married was 8.5 and the average number of children per family was two.

Instruments

Two tests were used to measure growth in communication skills and marital adjustment. A Marital Communication Inventory (MCI) developed by Millard J. Bienvenu, Sr. was used to measure communication between husband and wife. A Short Marital Adjustment Test (SMAT) developed by Harvey J. Locke and Karl M. Wallace was given to measure the

marital adjustment of the individuals. Both tests were administered before and after the treatment.

The MCI was designed to help the counselor assess the communication relationship for the purpose of individual counseling (Bienvenu, 1978). It can be used as a teaching and research tool in the area of marriage and family life education. Clinically, the MCI can be used for assessment and diagnosis of marital communication. It has been widely used to provide clues to marital communication difficulties. It has also been widely used as a tool for marriage enrichment programs to help couples enhance intimacy in their relationship through better communication. The MCI is appropriate for group as well as individual use in evaluating marital communication. Bienvenu suggests that for enrichment programs the test may be administered at the first session to assess the communication levels of the couples, and then administered at the last session to measure progress (Bienvenu, 1978).

Using 764 couples in four different studies, the mean score was established at 104.65 and the standard deviation at 17.86. One reliability study completed by the author using the Spearman-Brown formula, a split-half correlation coefficient, revealed a coefficient of .93 after correction (Bienvenu, 1978).

A Short Marital Adjustment Test was designed to measure the accommodation of husband and wife to each other at a given time. The reliability coefficient of the SMAT, computed by the split-half technique and corrected by the Spearman-Brown formula, was .90. This test, therefore, has a high degree of reliability (Locke and Wallace, 1959).

In a study of 236 subjects it was found that the mean score for the test was 135.9 for the well adjusted married person. For the maladjusted married person the mean was set at 71.7. These scores indicate that the SMAT clearly differentiates between persons who are well adjusted in their marriages and those who are not. It is evident that the test has validity, since it seems to measure what it purports to measure, namely marital adjustment (Locke, 1959).

Treatment

The treatment is Parent Effectiveness Training (P.E.T.) by Thomas Gordon. It is a twenty-four hour course of study divided into eight three hour weekly sessions. As shown in the literature, its principle emphasis is skill training in the areas of listening, communicating, problem solving and influencing. Its popularity and acceptance has been established through the participation of more than 600,000 parents. More than 2,000,000 copies of P.E.T. have been published. Approximately forty theses and dissertations have been written.

written treating some aspect of the P.E.T. model. Its popularity in use with the family and the interest it has drawn from academia would seem to recommend P.E.T. for teaching new skills in interpersonal relationships to this sample population.

Design

The design of this study was a one group pretest, treatment, posttest. The treatment group was divided for posttesting at two different time intervals. Both were treated in the same manner except for the interval between the posttesting periods.

Group A, the smaller of the two, was pretested with both MCI and SMAT, treated with the eight week P.E.T. course, and posttested immediately following the treatment. The time interval between the pretest and posttest was eight weeks.

Group B, the larger of the two, was pretested with both MCI and SMAT. They were treated with P.E.T., and were posttested one year later to see whether there was any residual effect of the treatment on marital communication and marital adjustment. This group received the pretest and treatment at different times than Group A.

Both groups were measured to determine growth in communication skills and marital adjustment. Individual

members of both groups were tested to determine the correlation between growth in marital communication and marital adjustment.

Neither group had a control group to measure the influence of the pretest on the posttest.

Analysis of Data

An analysis of the data was done to measure the following:

1. Growth in communication skills: The t-test with dependent observations was used to measure the difference in the mean of the pretest and posttest of the MCI and the SMAT.

2. Correlation between communication and marriage adjustment: To determine the correlation of these two variables the Spearman rank correlation was used.

Chapter IV

FINDINGS

The findings shall be divided into three parts. The first will examine the total sample and compare it with the population. The second part will look at the sample that was pretested, treated and immediately posttested. The third part will examine the group that was pretested, treated and posttested one year following the treatment.

The findings of the pretest for all fifty-one participants is seen in table 4.01.

A COMPARISON OF THE SAMPLE WITH THE POPULATION FOR MARITAL COMMUNICATION INVENTORY (MCI) AND A SHORT MARITAL ADJUSTMENT TEST (SMAT)

Sample						
Test	Total N=51		Men N=24		Women N=27	
	\bar{X}	S	\bar{X}	S	\bar{X}	S
MCI	88.75	20.37	84.17	28.25	90.89	17.77
SMAT	99.16	27.5	96.79	23.5	101.15	30.95
Population						
MCI	101.67	17.86	99.52	18.14	103.82	17.38
SMAT	100.	00.00	00.00	00.00	00.00	00.00

TABLE 4.01

In marital communication the sample was below the mean of the population. The total sample of 51 scored 73% below the mean of the population. The men (N=24) scored 85% below the mean for men, and the women (N=27) scored 75% below the mean for the women of the population.

In marital adjustment the sample only varied from one point above the mean for the population to four points below. The population mean was established at 100.

Table 4.02 shows the correlation between marital communication and marital adjustment for the sample.

A CORRELATION BETWEEN THE MCI SCORES AND THE SMAT SCORES FOR THE SAMPLE (NUMBER=51)

Group	Variables	r.
Sample N=51	Communication vs. Adjustment	.6818
Men N=24	Communication vs. Adjustment	.6767
Women N=27	Communication vs. Adjustment	.7042

TABLE 4.02

The correlation between communication and marital adjustment seems rather high at $r=.6818$, but this is statistically insignificant when considering that the sample size is only 51. To be significant, the sample size would have to be about four hundred or more.

Part two of the findings will treat the group that was pretested, treated and posttested immediately following the treatment. Table 4.03 shows the statistical findings of group two.

A COMPARISON OF THE STATISTICAL SCORES FOR THE GROUP WHICH WAS POSTTESTED IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE TREATMENT (P.E.T.)

Test or Correlation	Pretest (N=15)		Posttest (N=15)	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
MCI	84.2	16.29	91.34	16.58
SMAT	99.87	25.89	101.67	28.03
Correlation	r = .6399		r = .6478	

TABLE 4.03

The first hypothesis: There is no significant gain in marital communication following a treatment of Parent Effectiveness Training and measured immediately by the MCI and tested with a t-test with dependent observation. Comparing the means of the pre and posttests with a t-test, an obtained t was 2.5452. The critical $.975t_{14}$ was 2.14. Since obtained t was greater than critical t the null hypothesis was rejected.

The second hypothesis: There is no significant gain in marital adjustment following a treatment of Parent Effectiveness Training and measured immediately by the SMAT and tested with a t-test for dependent observations. Comparing the means of the pre and posttest of the SMAT with the t-test for dependent observation, an obtained t of .3542 was realized. Critical $.975t_{14}$ was 2.14. Since obtained t was less than critical t the null hypothesis is accepted.

The third hypothesis: There is no significant increase in the correlation of marital communication and marital adjustment following a treatment of Parent Effectiveness Training, measured with the MCI and SMAT and tested with the Spearman Rank Correlation. By the use of z -ratio to test the independent correlation coefficients it was determined that the obtained z -ratio was .0303 and critical z was 2.16. Since obtained z was smaller than critical z , the null hypothesis was accepted.

The third part of the findings looks at the group which was tested one year following the treatment of P.E.T. Table 4.04 shows the statistical results of the testing for group three.

A COMPARISON OF THE STATISTICAL SCORES FOR THE GROUP WHICH WAS POSTTESTED ONE YEAR FOLLOWING THE TREATMENT (P.E.T.)

Test of Correlation	Pretest (N=15)		Posttest (N=15)	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
MCI	90.6	23.66	96	26.48
SMAT	107.67	33.16	107.2	41.13
Correlation	.8433		.9343	

TABLE 4.04

The fourth hypothesis: There is no significant gain in marital communication as measured by the MCI one year following the treatment of P.E.T. and tested with a t-test with dependent observations. Comparing the means of the pretest and posttest, an obtained t of 2.18 was realized. Critical $.975^{t_{14}} = 2.14$. Since obtained t was greater than critical t the null hypothesis is rejected. ✓

The fifth hypothesis: There is no significant gain in marital adjustment as measured by the SMAT one year following the treatment of P.E.T. and tested with a t-test with dependent observations. Using the same statistical procedure, an obtained t of -.0712 was realized. Since that is smaller than critical $.975^{t_{17}}$ of 2.14 the null hypothesis is accepted. X

The last hypothesis: There is no significant increase in the correlation of marital communication and marital adjustment following a treatment of P.E.T. and measured one year later with the MCI and SMAT and tested with the Spearman Rank Correlation. When the group was pretested the correlation between communication and adjustment was $r = .8433$. One year later the correlation of these two variables was $r = .9376$. A z-test was calculated for these two correlations and found to be 1.1219. Critical z at $\alpha_2 = .05$ was 2.16. Since obtained z was smaller than critical z, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Chapter V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSION

Parent Effectiveness Training is effective in teaching communication skills that influence marital communication. With both groups, those who were pretested, treated and posttested immediately after the treatment and those who were pretested, treated and posttested one year following the treatment, there was significant gain in marital communication skills. There were no significant gains in marital adjustment for either group. Neither was there any significant deterioration of marital adjustment for either group.

There seems to be a significant correlation between marital communication and marital adjustment for all participants as found in both the pretest and the posttest. Even though both groups gained in the correlation of communication and adjustment, the increase was not statistically significant.

DISCUSSION

The sample came from an above average group economically, socially, and educationally. Pretesting with the MCI revealed marital communication of the sample to be about three-quarters of a standard deviation below the mean

of the population, even though marital adjustment, as measured with the SMAT, was very near the mean of the population. One would suppose that the educational, economic, and social advantages of the group would be reflected in a level of communication ability above the mean for the population, rather than below. One can only speculate as to why this did not prove to be true. It might be that the need to improve relationships with children which motivated some participants to take the P.E.T. course was symptomatic of some more profound problem or problems. Likewise, the poor marital communication skills could be indicative of some other problem, possibly even that which was reflected in the desire to improve parenting skills.

There is yet another interesting discovery which concerns some of the questions on the MCI. Question eleven reads, "Does it upset you to a great extent when your spouse is angry with you?" The ideal answer is, "Never." Of the fifty-one who took the pretest and thirty who took the posttests not one marked the ideal answer. Only 12% chose "Seldom," 27% selected "Sometimes," and 63% marked "Usually." This is only one example of many where negative feelings and tone of voice had a negative influence on communication. Could it be that poor self-esteem in one partner combined with negative feelings, tone of voice, and rejection of the other results in poor marital communication?

RECOMMENDATIONS

Three areas are suggested that might be subjects for further study. One study might deal with couples treated with a more intensely experiential course using I-messages, active listening, and problem solving. With all due respect to the P.E.T. course, another could be designed with even more emphasis on experiential techniques of instruction and less on didactic methods.

A second recommendation for study concerns the influence of negative feelings on communication. Two variables, one's feelings and one's cultural conditioning could be examined to measure their influence on self-esteem and communication.

A third recommendation for study concerns the influence of socio-economic group and education on marital communication. The relatively high socio-economic and educational group in this study scored significantly lower on marital communication than the population. It would be interesting to examine possible reasons for this lower level of marital communication.

APPENDIX A

MEASURING INSTRUMENTS

A MARITAL COMMUNICATION INVENTORY

Form M/F

Developed by Millard J. Bienvenu, Sr.

1. Do you and your spouse discuss the manner in which the family income should be spent?
2. Does your spouse discuss their work and interests with you?
3. Do you have a tendency to keep your feelings to yourself?
4. Is your spouse's tone of voice irritating?
5. Does your spouse have a tendency to say things which would be better left unsaid?
6. Are your mealtime conversations easy and pleasant?
7. Do you find it necessary to keep after your spouse about their faults?
8. Does your spouse seem to understand your feelings?
9. Does your spouse nag you?
10. Does your spouse listen to what you have to say?
11. Does it upset you to a great extent when your spouse is angry with you?
12. Does your spouse pay you compliments and say nice things to you?
13. Is it hard to understand your spouse's feelings and attitudes?
14. Is your spouse affectionate toward you?
15. Does your spouse let you finish talking before responding to what you are saying?
16. Do you and your spouse remain silent for long periods when you are angry with one another?

17. Does your spouse allow you to pursue your own interests and activities even if they are different from their own?
18. Does your spouse try to lift your spirits when you are depressed or discouraged?
19. Do you fail to express disagreement with your spouse because you are afraid they will get angry?
20. Does your spouse complain that you don't understand them?
21. Do you let your spouse know when you are displeased with them?
22. Do you feel your spouse says one thing but really means another?
23. Do you help your spouse understand you by saying how you think, feel, and believe?
24. Do you and your spouse find it hard to disagree with one another without losing your tempers?
25. Do the two of you argue a lot over money?
26. When a problem arises that needs to be solved are you and your spouse able to discuss it together (in a calm manner)?
27. Do you find it difficult to express your true feelings to your spouse?
28. Does your spouse offer you cooperation, encouragement and emotional support in your role (duties) as a husband or wife?
29. Does your spouse insult you when angry with you?
30. Do you and your spouse engage in outside interests and activities together?
31. Does your spouse accuse you of not listening to what they say?
32. Does your spouse let you know that you are important to them?
33. Is it easier to confide in a friend rather than your spouse?
34. Does your spouse confide in others rather than in you?
35. Do you feel that in most matters your spouse knows what you are trying to say?

36. Does your spouse monopolize the conversation very much?
37. Do you and your spouse talk about things which are of interest to both of you?
38. Does your spouse sulk or pout very much?
39. Do you discuss intimate matters with your spouse?
40. Do you and your spouse discuss your personal problems with each other?
41. Can your spouse tell what kind of day you have had without asking?
42. Does your spouse fail to express feelings of respect and admiration for you?
43. Do you and your spouse talk over pleasant things that happen during the day?
44. Do you hesitate to discuss certain things with your spouse because you are afraid he or she might hurt your feelings?
45. Do you pretend you are listening to your spouse when actually you are not really listening?
46. Do the two of you ever sit down just to talk things over?

A MARITAL COMMUNICATION INVENTORY

Response Sheet

	<u>Usually</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Seldom</u>	<u>Never</u>
1.	_____	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____
7.	_____	_____	_____	_____
8.	_____	_____	_____	_____
9.	_____	_____	_____	_____
10.	_____	_____	_____	_____
11.	_____	_____	_____	_____
12.	_____	_____	_____	_____
13.	_____	_____	_____	_____
14.	_____	_____	_____	_____
15.	_____	_____	_____	_____
16.	_____	_____	_____	_____
17.	_____	_____	_____	_____
18.	_____	_____	_____	_____
19.	_____	_____	_____	_____
20.	_____	_____	_____	_____
21.	_____	_____	_____	_____

22.	_____	_____	_____	_____
23.	_____	_____	_____	_____
24.	_____	_____	_____	_____
25.	_____	_____	_____	_____
26.	_____	_____	_____	_____
27.	_____	_____	_____	_____
28.	_____	_____	_____	_____
29.	_____	_____	_____	_____
30.	_____	_____	_____	_____
31.	_____	_____	_____	_____
32.	_____	_____	_____	_____
33.	_____	_____	_____	_____
34.	_____	_____	_____	_____
35.	_____	_____	_____	_____
36.	_____	_____	_____	_____
37.	_____	_____	_____	_____
38.	_____	_____	_____	_____
39.	_____	_____	_____	_____
40.	_____	_____	_____	_____
41.	_____	_____	_____	_____
42.	_____	_____	_____	_____
43.	_____	_____	_____	_____
44.	_____	_____	_____	_____
45.	_____	_____	_____	_____
46.	_____	_____	_____	_____

SHORT MARITAL ADJUSTMENT TEST

Number _____; Husband _____; Wife _____; Number of years married _____;
 Number of children _____; Ages of Children _____.

1. Check the dot on the scale line below which best describes the degree of happiness, everything considered, of your present marriage. The middle point, "happy", represents the degree of happiness which most people get from marriage, and the scale gradually ranges on one side to those few who are very unhappy in marriage, and on the other, to those few who experience extreme joy or felicity in marriage.

0	2	7	15	20	25	35
Very Unhappy			Happy	Perfectly Happy		

State the approximate extent of agreement or disagreement between you and your mate on the following items. Please check each column.

A-Always Agree	B-Almost Always Agree	C-Occasionally Disagree	D-Frequently Disagree	E-Almost Always Disagree	F-Always Disagree
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	A	B	C	D	E	F
2. Handling family finances	5	4	3	2	1	0
3. Matters of recreation	5	4	3	2	1	0
4. Demonstrations of affection	8	6	4	2	1	0
5. Friends	5	4	3	2	1	0
6. Sex relations	15	12	9	4	1	0
7. Conventionality (right, proper conduct)	5	4	3	2	1	0
8. Philosophy of life	5	4	3	2	1	0
9. Ways of dealing with in-laws	5	4	3	2	1	0

10. When disagreements arise, they usually result in: husband giving in 0 , wife giving in 0 , agreement by mutual give and take 10.
11. Do you and your mate engage in outside interests together? All of them 10 , some of them 8 , a very few of them 3 , none of them 0.
12. In leisure time do you generally prefer: to be "on the go"_____, stay at home_____?
(Stay at home for both, 10 points; "on the go" for both, 3 points, disagreement, 2 points)
13. Do you ever wish you had not married? Frequently 0 , Occasionally 3 , Rarely 8 , Never 15.
14. If you had your life to live over, do you think you would: Marry the same person 15 , Marry a different person 0 , Not marry at all 1 ?
15. Do you confide in your mate: Almost never 0 , Rarely 2 , In most things 10 , In everything 10 ?

APPENDIX B

RAW SCORES

PRETEST SCORES OF GROUP I

N=51

No.	Men		Women	
	MCI	SMAT	MCI	SMAT
1.	77	90	106	146
2.	104	110	113	128
3.	106	115	87	46
4.	73	118	112	120
5.	79	75	92	115
6.	87	97	79	95
7.	87	82	105	139
8.	142	110	81	95
9.	105	108	112	98
10.	101	76	82	112
11.	120	130	75	48
12.	97	145	69	85
13.	83	89	113	150
14.	75	76	75	113
15.	69	81	63	80
16.	65	87	112	94
17.	74	83	100	108
18.	75	103	83	112
19.	80	115	60	33
20.	83	101	101	108
21.	100	98	88	88
22.	32	51	87	125
23.	59	51	85	101
24.	117	132	80	65
25.	-	-	114	145
26.	-	-	63	61
27.	-	-	117	121

PRETEST AND POSTTEST SCORES OF GROUP II

N=15

No Time Span Between Treatment and Posttest

No.	Pretest		Posttest	
	MCI	SMAT	MCI	SMAT
1.	113	150	104	148
2.	112	94	113	123
3.	101	108	104	115
4.	100	108	115	102
5.	88	88	103	116
6.	87	125	92	123
7.	83	112	84	92
8.	83	101	85	110
9.	80	115	97	79
10.	75	113	105	122
11.	75	103	85	121
12.	74	83	78	97
13.	69	85	58	60
14.	63	80	67	76
15.	60	33	80	41

PRETEST AND POSTTEST SCORES OF GROUP III

N=15

One Year Time Span Between Treatment and Posttest

No.	Pretest		Posttest	
	MCI	SMAT	MCI	SMAT
1.	105	139	106	141
2.	106	115	108	105
3.	87	125	97	128
4.	85	101	90	101
5.	80	65	91	105
6.	100	98	106	128
7.	32	51	41	12
8.	59	51	71	83
9.	114	145	117	145
10.	117	132	127	126
11.	85	96	63	61
12.	117	121	135	151
13.	69	85	63	44
14.	106	145	120	147
15.	97	145	105	131

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