

Building Dynamic Groups



"Let's Talk"

Objective: To break the ice in a group of strangers, or merely to illustrate one's use of gestures and how natural these gestures are to us in verbal communication. This exercise can also demonstrate that verbal communication may become awkward for us when nonverbal gestures or actions are prohibited.

Time: 10-15 minutes

Directions: Tell the group that the next few minutes will be devoted to a simple activity wherein they will turn to a person seated nearby and just talk for 2-3 minutes. The subject matter is unimportant; you'd merely like them to converse with someone else (2 in a group) for a few minutes.

After a 2-3 minute period, ask them to stop and tell their partners what they noticed about the other's nonverbal behavior; for example, the person kept fiddling with a pencil, or continually was tapping their fingers, etc. After these gestures have been identified, acknowledge that most of us do these movements almost unknowingly.

After each person has received a "critique" from their partner, tell the group to resume their conversations, but now they must make a conscious effort to use absolutely no nonverbal movements. Have them continue their conversations for 2-3 more minutes.

Discussion Questions:

1. Were most of us really aware or cognizant of our nonverbal movements in the first conversation?
2. Did you find any of your partner's gestures distracting or even annoying?
3. How did it "feel" when we were forced into a strictly verbal discussion? Was the communication as effective without our gestures?

Reference: Unknown