Interpersonal Communication Lecture Notes

D.B. O'Shaughnessy

Los Angeles Harbor College Bookstore
$14.40
Non-Returnable
Communication "Bag" Presentation

Purpose: This assignment will take the form of personal sharing about oneself. The exercise is intended to be a way in which students will be able to introduce themselves in more depth to some of the other members of the class. The students will be required to do their presentation in front of the class.

Directions: A standard size grocery bag (or its equivalent) will need to be obtained for this assignment. The outside of the bag will need to be decorated/labeled with the external you. Ideally, it would be great if family members, friends, fellow employees, etc., could help create the outside of the bag for you, but it is realized that this might in all likelihood be difficult to arrange. Ensure that the bag is done reasonably no matter who takes part in its creation.

The external you involves the "roles" you may live, such as mother, father, sister, brother, son, daughter, aunt, uncle, employee, employer, student, best friend, club member, church member, handy person, financier, reader, Irish, coupon user, bargain hunter, bad driver, speeder, peacemaker, disciplinarian, family comedian, gardener, cleaner, professional, Republican, Muslim, vegetarian, diabetic, etc. It may also involve personality or physical characteristics or perceptions such as quiet, hot-headed, horse lover, organized, fun-loving, short, visionary, committed, drifter, dreamer, depressive, runner, couch potato, emotional, female, loving, intelligent, shopper, giving, stubborn, diet coke drinker, natural red head, poker player, talkative, codependent, paranoid, compulsive, mechanical, romantic, Tolstoy lover, etc.

The outside of the bag can have representative pictures cut out from magazines, drawings, or words simply written on it. The outside of the bag needs to have a minimum of ten labeling items.

On the inside of the bag you should place items that represent the internal you. You are requested to self-disclose about things that your classmates probably wouldn't know from simple observation. You should personally create and/or assemble the contents of the inside of your bag. Items in the bag might include important memorabilia from your childhood, symbolic objects from adult life, things you value, family photos, or items expressing as of yet unfulfilled dreams or hopes. Certain items might also symbolize or communicate your personal hurts, fears, weaknesses, strengths, etc. Please include both some positive and negative characteristics. The items can be objects or simply pieces of paper with words describing what you know and feel about yourself. A minimum of ten items should be placed inside your bag.

Don't sweat great drops of blood over the internal/external distinction; this assignment is simply a vehicle for facilitating talking about you. Not all items on or in your bag must necessarily be talked about, and those talked about don't necessarily need to receive the exact same amount of time.

On the day of the bag assignments, you will divide (or be divided) into groups of three or four people and will proceed to take turns sharing. You are to share for roughly five minutes. You will need to time your presentation before the actual day you share in class so that you will be sure to be within the time limits.
Bag Presentation Evaluation

General Grade Guidelines (Somewhat hyperbolized!)
"A" range bag presentations will in all likelihood involve bags of such a quality that I implore you to create additional bags to be sold at boutiques, swap meets, and roadside stands. Oral presentation of such bags will probably be at a level considered excellent (if not superior!) for a lower division college speaker.

"B" range bag presentations will in all likelihood involve bags of such a quality that they would be suitable for bringing out during the slower moments of family gatherings. Oral presentation of such bags will probably be at a level considered above average (if not excellent!) for a lower division college speaker.

"C" range bag presentations will involve bags of such a quality that their owners will in all likelihood struggle after their presentations are over as to whether they should keep them or not, storing them in the farthest back regions of their cars until they deteriorate to the point that other family members throw them out. Oral presentations of such bags will probably be at a level considered average (if not above average!) for a lower division college speaker.

"D" range bag presentations will involve bags that give the appearance of having been done in the car on the way to class. Such bags are in clear need of being beefed up. Oral presentations of such bags will probably be at a level considered below average for a lower division college speaker.

"F" range bag presentations will involve bags created with socks, sandwich baggies, and small purses. Oral presentations will probably be at a level considered non-speech for a human being.

Name_________________________________________Section_____________________

BAG APPRAISAL
From a quick look, it struck me as stunning from the outside, and full --if not overflowing-- from the inside _____
From a quick look, it struck me as very good, medium to semi-high praise _____
From a quick look, it struck me as certainly adequate_____ 
From a quick look, it struck me as being on the thin side from one side or the other, or both. 
From an extended look, it struck me as not really meeting all of the minimums ____
See me _____

POINTS: __________
EMPATHY ASSIGNMENT

Definition: To empathize is to participate in (as much as is possible, or at least in a somewhat parallel sense) the feelings or ideas of another individual. It involves trying to view and feel things from another person's perspective as opposed to simply your own.

Purpose: This class assignment is intended to (hopefully) increase the capacity of students to have empathy toward others.

Directions: Choose one of the following options listed below. Aberrations from the listed options must be approved in writing prior to the day of sharing. Choose an option that you know will challenge you. All options may be done with other people. Exercise caution so as to insure your safety (not necessarily comfort) in completing the options. Remember that not all options are for everyone; pick the one that fits you.

Follow the specific directions explained under each option description. You will be required to submit a brief, typed response to the assignment. The response should be typed on an additional sheet which you have attached (with a staple) to this one.

Option One: Attend a worship service of a non-Christian religious service. You must attach a bulletin or like material from the church to this sheet.

Option Two: If you have never used public transportation to get to and from work or school, leave the car keys at home one day and take to the public bus systems (no trains allowed for this). You must attach a bus receipt, stub, or voucher from your adventure to this sheet.

Option Three: Visit a convalescent home (no elite retirement communities) and spend at least sixty minutes interacting with the elderly. Consult your local telephone book for rest homes in your area. Some homes require making appointments, or have specific visiting hours, so it is a good idea to call ahead. You must attach a business card or literature from the home you visited to this sheet.

Option Four: Visit (or volunteer at) a (1) rescue mission, (2) soup kitchen, (3) hospice, (4) AIDS house/ward, (5) prison or juvenile corrections facility, (6) facility that works with the handicapped, (7) mental institution. Spend a minimum of sixty minutes observing and interacting with those involved at the specific facility you choose to visit. As with the convalescent homes, it would be best to call ahead of time to the facility you are interested in visiting. You must attach a business card or a signed note on letterhead verifying your experience.

Option Five: Spend at least an hour trying to obtain work by standing on a busy street trying to obtain work with a sign that says, "Will work for food: I will not accept donations." Observe the reactions of those who pass you by on foot or by car. You must attach a snapshot (or bring video tape) of you in action.

Option Six: Go to Mexico, a Native American reservation (Casinos don't count!), or an area that is obviously poverty stricken on a day trip, being sure that you expose yourself to some of the poorer parts of your destination. With discretion obtain, and then attach a couple of snapshots (or bring video tape) of the poverty that you see.
Option Seven: Blindfold yourself, or limit yourself to a wheelchair (sometimes available through campus or work handicapped centers, etc.) for a decent portion of your day in which you are at work, school, or otherwise in public (as opposed to the safety and seclusion of your home). You will probably have to explain yourself so as to not offend, and some have even used a small sign saying "college empathy exercise" to clarify what they are doing. Attach a snapshot (or bring video tape) of you attempting to feel briefly the challenges that others feel all the time.

Option Eight: If you work in a white collar (especially management type) job, assume for at least a portion of a day the responsibilities of what are typically called blue collar positions. Do the work of a janitor, cook, parking attendant, delivery person, or other position that is clearly "subordinate" to yours. Bring a snapshot (or video tape) of you in action serving others.

Option Nine: If you never have before, go to the welfare office and wait in line. You must attach the pertinent applications from the respective offices.

Option Ten: Get up early in the morning and go to where day laborers congregate with hopes of being picked up for work, and stand among them for at least an hour. With discretion obtain, and bring snapshots or video tape of the laborers gathering at the place you waited with them.

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After You Do Your Option
Typed response - About one sentence each (like a talking point) will be sufficient.

(1) An explanation of why you chose the particular option that you did.
(2) A brief telling of what happened as you executed your option.
(3) How you felt during the activity.
(4) Others' reactions to you.
(5) Reflections about the experience after it was over and you were able to think about it.
(6) Attach/bring requested form of verification (No typing, no verification = no credit).

************************************************

Evaluation
Name_________________________________________ Option Number__________

Adherence to instructions -
Superior___Excellent___Good___Adequate___Thin___Wanting___
Challenge of the experience -
Superior___Excellent___Good___Adequate___Thin___Wanting___
Quality of involvement-
Superior___Excellent___Good___Adequate___Thin___Wanting___

Late_________

Score_______ Instructor' signature________________________
Communication Definitions

Communication simply defined is, for our purposes, "The transfer of meaning."

"Communication is the transactional process of creating meaning." Verderber

"Communication is a continuous, irreversible, transactive process involving communicators who occupy different but overlapping environments and are simultaneously senders and receivers of messages, many of which are distorted by physical and psychological noise." Adler, Rosenfeld, and Towne

"Communication is the process of human beings responding to the face-to-face symbolic behavior of other persons." R. Adler, G. Rodman

"Communication is the stimulation of meaning." Verderber

"Communication is the transfer of meaning." Fabun

"Communication is that which happens whenever one person responds to the behavior, or the residue of behavior of another person." Samovar and Porter

"Communication is the process of symbolic transformation." Burke

Salient Quotations Concerning Communication

"Some people have a way with words, and others not have way." Steve Martin

"There is more than a verbal tie between the words common, community, and communication. Men live in a community in virtue of the things they have in common; and communication is the way in which they come to possess things in common. To be a recipient of a communication is to have an enlarged and changed experience. One shares in what another has thought and felt and in so far, meagerly or amply, has his own attitude modified. Nor is the one who communicates unaffected. The experience has to be formulated in order to be communicated... All communication is like art." John Dewey

"Both the individual and society derive their basic meaning from the relations that exist between persons. It is through dialogue that humans accomplish the miracle of personhood and community. If humans really are social beings, then communication is where humanness happens. It is the process that defines who we are. If we experience mainly impersonal communicating, we're liable to miss developing interpersonally, and if we experience mainly interpersonal communicating, we're likely to develop more of our human potential." John Stewart and Carole Logan

"The unique thing about the human world is that something is continually happening between one person and another... Humans are made human by that happening. That special event begins by one human turning to another seeing him or her as a particular other being, and offering to communicate with the other in a mutual way...." Martin Buber
It is claimed that...

COMMUNICATION

Is significantly about...

COMING TOGETHER

And...

CONNECTING

In significant ways...
Internalize that...

**COMMUNICATION IS NOT JUST SPEAKING!**

The transfer of meaning takes place in many forms and through many mediums (context is tremendously important in this arena).

A few key ways communication takes place include:

**I. Verbal Communication**

**II. Nonverbal Communication**

**III. Less Linguistic -- Symbolic/Heuristic Communication** (images, clothing, physical appearance, status, behavioral choices, etc.)

**IV. Geographic Communication** - (participation or lack of participation, space, territoriality, etc.)

**V. Technologically Mediated Communication**
Communication as an Academic Discipline

Communication (the transfer of meaning) is a broad activity; it involves both theory and art. It has been systematically studied and written about since at least the time of Aristotle 2500 years ago. As an academic discipline, communication is typically studied in college and university divisions named departments of communication, speech, or rhetoric.

The major subdivisions of the departments above would typically include:

- Public speaking (or public address)
- Persuasion
- Argumentation and debate

Above the line are probably the largest, most traditional sub-fields

- Interpersonal communication
- Mass Communication
- Oral interpretation of literature
- Nonverbal communication
- Relational communication
- Gender communication
- Political communication
- Intercultural communication
- Communication analysis
- History of communication
- Communication ethics
- Propaganda
- Small group communication
- Forensics (competitive speech)

Our class -- Interpersonal Communication -- typically covers a wide range of sub-topics including:

- Language
- Perception
- Emotions
- Self-disclosure
- Nonverbal communicating
- Friendship
- The concept of the self
- Philosophies of groups, societies...
- Community

- Listening
- Conflict
- Character
- Personality
- Relationships
- The concept of love
- Philosophy of persons
- Roles
- Intimacy
We Become Connected To Others By Our Closeness And Our Commitments
"The essential state of human existence is one of togetherness."

Marion F. Solomon
"In the beginning was the relation."
People are like porcupines in ways. -- Thus the needs for society, which springs from our emptiness and monotony of our lives, drives them together, but their many unpleasant and repulsive qualities (metaphoric quills) once more drive them apart.

Humans are "Between" – neither wholly dependent or independent, but some manner of INTERDEPENDENT.
We see in much of contemporary popular culture human contact that which is more immediate, but less personal and direct than in former times and other places.

Raymond F. Betts
A History of Popular Culture: Everything, Faster and Brighter
A New Myth?

"...a new myth - that each person must be a whole unto him or herself, autonomous and fulfilled without needing anything from others, before being able to be in a relationship. A healthy person, though, cannot be separate from others. Autonomy is a relative state requiring another person with whom we establish boundaries. Without others, there is no autonomy, only isolation."

Marion F. Solomon
Think of Relationships
More Broadly

You are in a relationship with someone whenever you are in significant connection (closeness or commitment) with that person.
What's Your Relationship

"Record?"

Are you (and relevant others) completely satisfied?

You cannot attain a new sophisticated way of being in a relationship using old unsophisticated methods. If you want a radically different, fulfilling relationship, you must know how to shape it. Behaving skillfully means behaving in ways that work.
Emotional Health

"Good relationships are the backbone of emotional health."

Marion F. Solomon
RELATIONSHIPS...

(of all kinds) are conducted (in whatever ways) for reasons, and thus can be connected to choices (both of omission and commission).

Thus, how we relate to others can largely be seen as a manifestation of a person's values, morals, ideals, and character.

Relationships (of any depth) seldom "just happen."
We Often "Mine The Meaning"
By Metacommunicating

Metacommunication is communication about communication. Metacommunication consists of an attempt to step outside of the relational cycle that is being enacted by treating it as the focus of collaborative exploration: that is, communicating about the transaction that is taking place. This can be thought of as a kind of "mindfulness in action." It is an attempt to bring ongoing awareness to bear on the interactive process as it unfolds.
We don't see things as they are; we see things as we are...
Interpersonal Communication

Communication is interpersonal when the people involved are contacting each other as persons.

Communication could be placed on a continuum that runs from impersonal on one end to interpersonal on the other end. The continuum ends would be characterized by different attitudes and actions.

Impersonal ---------------------------------------------- Interpersonal

*Interchangeable                                     *Unique
*Measurable                                          *Unmeasurable
*React only                                          *Able to choose
*Unreflective                                        *Reflective
*Not addressable                                      *Addressable

Meeting another person as a person involves attempting to respond to the other...
Not as an object
Not as an abstraction
Not as something that you try to own
Not as something you feel superior to
Not as something that is primarily a means to your ends
The theorist Martin Buber talked about the ideas of "interpersonal communication" long before the term had ever been popularized. Buber talked about humans responding in either an "I-It" manner or an "I-You (Thou)" manner.

The "I-It" interaction has no attunement to the other's subjective reality, and is one where empathy is typically absent. The range of relations in an I-It interaction runs from being merely detached to utterly exploitative. The other is treated more like a "thing."

In the "I-You" relation, we respond not just to the surfaces of the other, but attempt to understand deeply, respond seriously to, and connect to the fuller personhood of the other.

The boundary between the "It" and the "You" is porous and fluid, and no one could always respond to every other human fully as a "You," but mindfulness, attunement, listening, empathy, respect, and love are among the keys that open the door to the "I-You" relation.
"Pathological interactions are characterized by repeated failure to recognize the feelings and needs of an intimate other or by an inability to experience another as anything more than a provider of gratification."

Marion F. Solomon

"...for as soon as anyone becomes an object of another's appetite, all motives of moral relationship fall away, that person is in fact a thing whereby the other's appetite is sated..."
To Own Or Not To Own?

In our attitudes and actions, most of us divide the people in the world into two categories:

I. Those we attempt to own (typically our spouses, our children, our students, our employees, and selected others).

II. Those whom we do not attempt to own (typically our friends, our acquaintances, people who have significant power over us, those we want something significant from, strangers, and selected others).

William Glasser
Choice Theory
Everyone's Interpersonal Behavior Can Generally Be Explained

"The brain, the mind, the body, the family, and society all contribute to development of a personal world view, which in turn effects interpersonal relatedness."

Marion F. Solomon
RELATIONAL MATURITY

When looking at prospective others for relationships, and always when looking at oneself, consider the levels of "relational maturity" that exist currently (and or more riskily consider the signs indicating the capability and likelihood for potential relational maturity).

Maturity comes in many forms, but relational maturity (and its many facets) are among the greatest indicators of relational success and general increased quality of life. Unfortunately, society has socialized physical appearance and money to be the dominant exchange goods on the relationship market, and this despite their very questionable (and often dismal) performance records in countless numbers of modern relationship experiments.

Relationship maturity would include many things, but most pointedly the ability and willingness to:

- Empathize with others
- Empower oneself and others
- Share with others
- Demonstrate responsibility for oneself and others
- Experience and express emotions appropriately
- Experience and learn from vulnerability
- Participate in the development of another
- Set and honor articulated boundaries for self and others
- Adapt successfully to a diversity of situations
- Negotiate successfully concerning differences
- Prioritize working on chosen relationships

Look for relational maturity (or its potential) in prospective partners, and cultivate it yourself; its hard to see how you can go wrong with this approach to relationships.
Have It All?

"We have been raised to expect our lives to be busy, exciting, fulfilling, and materially successful. We believe marriage should be part of that. It is assumed that members of both sexes can "have it all" -- a successful career and a happy family life. In the fantasy, everyone gets what he or she wants. But that is not what most men and women experience. Both men and women have lost the clear knowledge of what is expected of them, individually and in relationships. We are bombarded with a series of cultural myths that tell us we can have it all, that we must be responsible to ourselves first, that a successful life depends more on material success than on ethical or moral values.

Marion F. Solomon
"People have come to believe that they are entitled; they have a right to live life and have relationships totally on their own terms. But no relationship is free. On the contrary, constraints and responsibilities are integral to human interaction."

Marion F. Solomon
Fritz Perl's Gestalt Prayer On Trial

I do my thing, and you do your thing,

I am not in this world to live up to your expectations

And you are not in this world to live up to mine,

You are you and I am I,

And if by chance, we find each other, it's beautiful.

If not, it can't be helped.
Close relationships ask for a mindset of WE verses ME

A close relationship thrives not on “me verses you,” but on “us against the problem.”

If you insist on having everything your way most of the time, do others a favor and stay single, and or, work alone!

A small compromise in a close relationship usually sends a powerful message that deciding for the relationship has prevailed over deciding for individuals in the relationship.

If neither party in a relationship is willing to “give up any ground” in a conflict, the parties should admit that what matters most to them as individuals has been chosen over what probably matters most to the relationship.
Relationships

Regularly

“Rupture”

And, Thus, Are In Need Of
Constant Repair

Effective “Preventative Relationship Care” Lessens The Need for Relationship Repair, But “Crisis Care Skills” Will Still Always Be Needed
It is claimed that good relationships almost always take...

**WORK!**

You usually have to...

**WATER**

them, or they typically...

**WOBBLE**

**WAR**

**WANDER**

Or...

**WITHER**

away...
The "Starter Kit" For Human Relationships And Human Communication Is Fairly Simple

Psychologist John Gottman Starts with three primary responses people choose at each opportunity for encounter:

Turning Toward
Turning Away
Turning Against
# Behaviors That Tend To Bring Us Together

Or -- Push Us Apart

Some problem areas clearly could benefit from more sophisticated inquiry, thinking, and dialogue. Yet in other areas, it is not the thinking that is the likely suspect as being the major cause of the problem, but the failure to actualize the simpler wisdoms we already know (of course keeping context and degree always in mind).

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Three Common Relationship Tension Areas

I. Power and control

II. Independence and dependence

III. Closeness and distance
Six Bid-Busters

John Gottman

I. Being mindless rather than mindful

II. Starting on a sour note

III. Using harmful criticism instead of helpful complaints

IV. Flooding

V. Practicing a crabby habit of mind

VI. Avoiding the conversation you need to have
Gottman's "Four Horsemen Of The Apocalypse" For Relationships

I. Criticism

II. Contempt

III. Defensiveness

IV. Stonewalling
When Faced With An Interpersonal Conflict, Psychologist Dan Wile Claims That There Are Three Main Categories of Possible Responses...

I. Attack and Defend

II. Avoid and Deny

III. Self-Disclose and Connect
Expectations and Relationship Contracts

"Expectations" are always potentially very dangerous to relationships, but they are also inescapable parts of any relationship, and not by any means always something negative.

What successful relationships often are characterized by are clear times of negotiating and renegotiating (since people always change over time) of implicit and explicit relationship contracts.
CONFLICT

Conflict occurs when at least two things come into competition for expression or actualization in a way that seems to necessitate one competitor in the competition being compromised or frustrated at the expense of the other.

Ronald Adler and Neil Towne define conflict as, "... an expressed struggle between at least two independent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce rewards, and interference from the other party in achieving their goals."

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BASIC METHODS FOR DEALING WITH CONFLICTS

I. Verifying That There Is An Actual Conflict

It could be that there is just an apparent conflict. It may also be that upon closer examination, the conflict is only a result of miscommunication or misunderstanding about the ways in which the competing goals might both be basically realized under the current circumstances.

II. Changing What You Want

It could be that upon closer examination, at least one party realizes that this isn’t what she or he wants, or wants in this way or at this cost, and reasonably lets the desire go (without resentment), hence dissipating the conflict.

III. One Party Losing

By sheer power or tactic, one party might take the losing side. It would be better if the losing on this issue could be done by agreement, and with minimal resentment (ways of doing this include agreeing to time limitations, or future turn-taking, etc. between the involved parties so that the party losing this time is not always the one losing).

IV. Compromising

Compromising is where both parties give up ground and get less than their ideals on the current situation inspiring the conflict. Compromising often works well when it is a 50-50 compromising deal, but it certainly doesn’t have to work that way. In compromising, break the issue into parts, and have the parties prioritize the parts, and then negotiate.

V. Coming Up With Something Better

You figure out a way in which both parties get what they basically want, or get something new that they are even more pleased with.

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If the involved parties want or need to continue in relationship with those with whom they are in conflict, then keep asking those in conflict what they really want more -- to win on this or to have the relationship win. When someone in a relationship loses something significant, the relationship also usually loses something significant.
It Doesn't Have To Be All Or Nothing. There Is A Range of Responses

In response to another's values and actions, it's doesn't have to always be "all or nothing." You can choose to respond across a spectrum of support or opposition that might include the following possible range of responses:

- Embracing in partnership (possibly even unto showing leadership in advancing the values and actions)
- Being highly supportive
- Being fairly supportive
- Being mildly supportive

- Being basically neutral

- Being mildly unsupportive
- Being fairly unsupportive
- Being highly unsupportive
- Being active in opposition (possibly even unto sabotaging or separating)

These degrees of response can vary (as conveyed in attitudes or acts of commission and omission) over time as to frequency and intensity.

It also is possible, but probably not very common, for someone to hold (or even state once) a position of doubt, concern, or opposition, but choose to manifest subsequent actions that are supportive (at some level) despite their own differing thoughts, positions, or ideals on the subject or issue at hand.
"How to Argue Like a Veteran Married Couple"
By Dave Barry

Most young couples begin married life knowing very little about how to argue with each other, and are forced to learn through trial and error. Sadly, some of them never do learn, a good example being that couple on "The Waltons" who never fought about anything, and consequently wound up with three or four hundred children.

There is no need for this kind of tragedy. We veteran married couples have, over the years, especially on long car trips, developed certain time-tested techniques that even an un-experienced person can use to turn any issue, no matter how minor, into the kind of vicious, drawn-out argument where you both spend a lot of time deliberately going through doors you don't really need to go through just so you can slam them viciously.

If you really do it right, you should reach the point where neither of you has the vaguest recollection what the original disagreement was, but both of you are willing to get divorced over it. This is the kind of veteran marital relationship you can develop, if you follow these proven techniques.

The most important technique is: Always be on the lookout for conversational openings that can lead to arguments! To illustrate this, let's look at a typical marital conversation:

MARY: Honey, could you please try not to leave your socks on the coffee table?

JOHN: Why of course, dear. I'm sorry.

Pretty pathetic, right married couples? Mary has created the perfect opening for a good argument, and John has totally dropped the ball, by admitting he was wrong. Never admit you're wrong, young married persons!

Now you're saying, "But what if John's socks are right there, on the coffee table? How can he argue about that?"

The answer is: He can't. So what he has to do is, he has to somehow get the argument, or at least his end of it, focused on a completely different topic, ideally a strident accusation that he has dredged up out of his memory that is totally unrelated to the issue at hand. This is very important, young married persons: You must always maintain a supply of retaliative, irrelevant accusations in your mind, so that you can dredge them up when you need them.
Let's say, in this case, that John once thought Mary was flirting with her old flame Bill at a party. This is a good thing to accuse her of in the current argument, as it is totally unrelated to the coffee table. However, John must be careful how he brings it up; if he does it too abruptly, Mary could become confused, and the argument could end right there:

MARY: Honey, could you please try not to leave your socks on the coffee table?
JOHN: Oh Yeah? Well what about your old flame, Bill?
MARY: (confused): Huh?

So what John needs to do - this is the essential skill of marital arguing - is to come up with a smooth way to get from Mary’s topic to his topic. This technique is called a “segue,” and if you do it right, it will usually lead to a whole new series of mutant topics you can argue about. Let’s see how it works.

MARY: Honey, could you please try not to leave your socks on the coffee table?
JOHN: Why do you always do that?
MARY: Always do what?
JOHN: Always look for things to criticize?
MARY: I don’t always look for things to criticize. I just don’t like finding your damn...
JOHN: Fine. Great. Curse at me. I didn’t see you cursing at Bill, at the Johnson’s party.
MARY: What is that suppose to mean?
JOHN: Oh, come on. You were flirting with him.
MARY: I was flirting? And I suppose you weren’t all over Jennifer?
JOHN: I don’t see how you could have known what I was doing after all you had to drink.

See how effectively this veteran married couple handled the situation? In just a few quick sentences, they have gone from a seemingly unpromising topic, socks, to a whole treasure trove of issues that they can debate and dredge up again for years to come. I’m not saying you young couples will get these kind of results your first time out of the gate, but
with a little practice, you'll get the hang of it, and it can lead to the discovery of a whole new facet of your relationship.

Note: What Dave Barry is talking about in popular language involves what is called in (technical language) things identified as "tangential shifts" and complementary schizmogenesis. The suggested response to such situations is "one issue at a time."
Typically...

“I” Statements

are more effective than

“You” Statements.

Own your response! Focus on your feelings! Focus on behavior when others are involved.

I felt angry when...

Generally avoid

“Global” Statements

You always, we never, I always...
(Instead qualify, quantify, date...)
Negotiating

The Method (Fisher and Ury)

I. Separate the people from the problem

II. Focus on interests, not positions

III. Invent options for mutual gain

IV. Insist on using objective criteria

TIP: Know your BATNA (Best alternative to a negotiated agreement)
EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION CAN BE VIEWED AS A FORM OF COMMUNICATION

Emotions are essentially information about a person's current state and processes. Emotions integrate affective, cognitive, physiological and behavioral information. Affective behavior is not best viewed as a release, but as a form of communication.

Instrumental or functional emotions are emotions that serve a primarily interpersonal function. To feel is to want to act in relation to the world. Emotions become destructive when:
I. They cause significant harm to self or others.
II. They are experienced and or expressed in the extremes - too little or too much for the circumstance.

"Emotional intelligence" is said to consist of...

I. Social Awareness
II. Self-Monitoring
III. Motivation
IV. Empathy
V. Social Skill

A Simple Emotions Agenda Might Be...
I. Recognize your experience of them
II. Identify them
III. Respond to them appropriately
   A. acknowledge
   B. manage (restrain, self-talk, exit, etc.)
   C. express (verbally to someone, in writing, etc.)
   D. strategize for future (mentally prepare, work with circumstances, triggers, etc.)
LOVE, SEX, ROMANCE, AND INFATUATION

"Suddenly he and Juliet were making love -- or was it merely sex? He knew there was a difference between sex and love, but felt that either act was wonderful unless one of the partners happened to be wearing a lobster bib."  
"The Condemned" by Woody Allen

"Mere sexual impulse should never be called love; to do so is a vulgar abuse of language."  
Fichte

"There are so many sorts of love that one does not know where to seek a definition of it."  
Voltaire

"Yes, but how is one to understand what is meant by "true love"?" said the gentleman.
"Why? It's very simple," she said, but stopped to consider. "Love? Love is an exclusive preference for one above everybody else," said the lady.
"Preference for how long? A month, two days, or half an hour?" Said the grey-haired man and began to laugh.
"Excuse me, we are evidently not speaking of the same thing..."
"Yes, I know... you are talking about what is supposed to be, but I am speaking of what is. Every man experiences what you call love for every pretty woman."
"Oh what you say is awful! But the feeling that is called love does exist among people, and it is given not for months or years, but for a lifetime!"
"No, it is not!..."  
Tolstoy's Kreutzer Sonata

It is a near truism that our language and thinking about the most important subjects of life has typically been far too crude and simple in proportion to the importance of these subjects, and that the result of our crudeness and simplicity has too often been damage and destruction.

Definitions are, of course, meant to define. The symbols we use are supposed to communicate some meaning about the referents to which they refer. Many things complicate the defining process, not the least being that language is limited. One cannot capture a word and hammer down its exact meaning with perfect precision and accuracy for all times, places, and peoples. Language is alive and changing; it evolves through usage and social consensus. As this process occurs, we try to quantify human communication so that we can universalize the symbol system among those using it -- so that meanings can be transferred more accurately and completely.

Although we cannot define a term perfectly and permanently, that does not mean that we cannot define it meaningfully -- within limits. Definitions have ranges of meanings. Go too far from the range, and you are excluded from the scope of that which is being defined. So when people say things like, "Love can't be defined" -- I say -- "Of course it can't be defined perfectly, but it certainly can be defined within an acceptable range of meaning." If we couldn't do that, it would be hard even to talk about the word or concept of love in any meaningful way. If you can't define a word, how do you even know to what the word is supposed to refer?

People also say things like, "Love means something different to everyone." Well, yes, it is undisputed that a tremendously wide variety of things go through human brains as they think about the word or concept of love, but that does not mean that there is no commonality as to what people think about as regards love, or that people might not profit greatly from saying more precisely, more often, what it is they do mean when they use the word "love."

It should be admitted that some terms are easier and or less controversial than others to define. The more abstract a term, the more difficulty there typically is in defining it. In defining a word like love, for instance, part of the difficulty lies in the fact that love is not a unitary, one dimensional thing, but rather is a complex, multifaceted phenomenon experienced in a broad variety of relationships.
VARYING PHILOSOPHICAL DEFINITIONS FOR LOVE FROM THE CLASSICAL GREEKS

Eros - Sexual love
Storge - Affection
Pragma - Practical, contented love
Agape - Charity, altruistic love, compassion
deepest type of love, purest motives...

Ludus - Love as Game
Mania - Obsessive attachment
Philia - Brotherly love/friendship

STIPULATED DEFINITIONS OF LOVE FROM INDIVIDUAL THINKERS

"Love is the willingness to extend one's self for the purpose of nurturing another's growth, primarily for their ends, and not primarily for your own."
M. Scott Peck

"Love is the active concern for the life and the growth of that which we love. Love is exclusively an act of will and commitment, and therefore it fundamentally does not matter who the persons involved are, or even what is felt about them."
Eric Fromm

"A commitment to love is a commitment to sustain an attitude of valuing the beloved as singularly important in one's life."
Mike W. Martin

"Love is the desire to be unified with the beloved. It is strongly concerned with the other's happiness; it is wishing of good for her own sake, in a way that goes far beyond general benevolence, for it includes a special feeling of responsibility for the other's fate as linked with your own. In loving, you care for the other person and effectively consider her (or his) point of view.

The capacity to love is one of the best of human qualities, and its fulfillment conduces powerfully to achieving the best that it is in one to become. As a giver of love, you enable yourself, for you focus on the good of a special other for whom you especially wish the goodness of life. In seeking to benefit that other you also benefit yourself. Love does not require the extreme altruism parallel to moral saints, but a more moderate form of altruism."
Alan Gewirth

"When the satisfaction or the security of another person becomes as significant to one as is one's own satisfaction or security, then the state of love exists."
Harry Stack Sullivan

"Love is the act of putting someone into your quality world."
William Glasser

"Love is an emotion."
Robert C. Solomon

"Love is a triad of passion, commitment, and intimacy."
Robert Sternberg
The Dominant Contemporary Popular Culture
Ways Of Thinking About Love Challenged...

Challenge One: Love should not be defined or approached as being a feeling. It is not to be denied that we have emotions, that emotions can play a noble part in the human experience, but more specific and accurate words than "love" should be used to represent the varying feelings involved when the word "love" is typically used in such a context. We may certainly feel warmth, passion, affection, zeal, tenderness, etc., and there are wholly proper times and ways to communicate such feelings. However, a linguistic reformation in this area might even move to eliminate the omnipresent "I love you" because it is primarily being used in this particular construction as a way to communicate feelings.

For Fromm (The Art of Loving), Peck (The Road Less Traveled), and others that share this approach to love, it is not even necessary to feel anything positive about that which is to be the recipient of love. One responds to the recipient of love lovingly, that is the lover seeks to advance the recipient of love's spiritual growth.

Challenge Two: Love is primarily other centered. Both Peck and Fromm believe that proper "self-love" (an attitude and actions advancing a lover's own growth) is necessary and proper within limits. We love from our being; that is the well from which we give. The process of loving others also always enlarges the lover.

It may be the case that some will have to "fill their own wells" more before they have much for others to drink, while others will pool the water up for themselves, even in some cases choosing to drown themselves for lack of draining the excess and giving it to others (this last metaphorical illusion refers to narcissism). Yet, the overall orientation of love is that it is other centered. Love, as we have stipulated it here, is most closely associated with the Greek agapic form of love.

Challenge Three: Love is primarily a combination of attitude and an action. Love, as we have stipulated it, involves an attitude of wanting and seeking to love. Fromm says we can properly be called loving because of our attitude toward loving, the wanting and seeking to be loving people -- people who want to advance growth. But clearly more important than our wanting and seeking is our acting. Love is expressed through action. Nearly everyone wants, in theory, to be loving, but there aren't many people who are truly loving -- those that love well, those that love frequently. Love is as love does.

Challenge Four: Loving involves making conscious choices to love; loving is not involuntary. Therefore there is no "falling in or out of love," and no "irresistible love." Love as stipulated is an act of the will. One therefore must choose to love. One can certainly avoid loving. Whenever we exert ourselves in the cause of spiritual growth, it is because we have chosen to do so.

"Falling in love" can be explained as a lowering of the ego boundaries. M. Scott Peck believes that, "Of all the misconceptions about love the most pervasive is the belief that 'falling in love' is love or at least one of the manifestations of love." Peck claims that falling in love is a sex-linked erotic experience. We do not normally "fall in love" with our children, friends, and family members, although we may certainly feel very deeply for them and act lovingly on their behalves. We do not "fall in love" with those we are not attracted to in some way. We "fall in love" only when we are consciously or unconsciously sexually motivated. Peck believes that what we call "falling in love" is really a biological trick played on humans to insure that the species continues to propagate.

"Falling in love" and what it represents might more properly be categorized as infatuation, and or as part of the courting process, both of which we shall say more about later.
Challenge Five: Loving as typically conceived overemphasizes the physical. It is possible to love someone without being physical with them, in fact Fromm claims that one can act lovingly towards those one does not even know or know of. Yet, the standard use of the word love overemphasizes the possible physical dimensions of love to the neglect of the spiritual and mental dimensions of love.

In the Symposium, Plato claims that a human being's attraction to another, even on the lowest, or physical level, is at least a step in the right direction; it represents a preoccupation with something beyond the self. However physical contact can never be the highest possible good. Gratification of the senses has fleeting rewards, and may even divert our attention and energies away from greater goods. The sharing of minds is superior, for Plato, to the sharing of bodies. Plato says, "The beauties of the body are as nothing to the beauties of the soul, so that whenever one meets with spiritual loveliness, even in the husk of an unlovely body, one will be led to love, cherish, emulate...." This higher form of love (mental and spiritual in expression) is what is meant by "Platonic" love -- love that transcends the physical.

Challenge Six: Loving is difficult: One extends one's limits only by exceeding them, and exceeding them requires effort. That is why most people do not choose to love all that much. Loving is not easy; it always has costs. In contrast, letting ego boundaries drop requires little or no effort (Although resisting the lowering of ego boundaries requires great effort -- for as Sigmund Freud said, "Repression is the cost of civilization.").

Challenge Seven: Gerald Corey's Six Myths About Love - (A) The myth of eternal love, (B) The myth that love implies constant closeness, (C) The myth that we fall in and out of love, (D) The myth of the exclusiveness of love, (E) The myth that true love is selfless, (F) The myth that love and anger are incompatible.

"ROMANTIC LOVE"

As with the term love, the terms "romance" and "romantic love" bring up a wide array of (often fuzzy) ideas and images in the minds of the hearers and users of these words. Romantic love can be generally defined as, "An idealized relationship" (either vaguely physical or not physical at all) between two people. Romantic love is typically characterized by tenderness, devotion, kindness, creativity, spontaneity, intense passion, and the like. Romantic love involves the urge for a shared identity. Great attention is typically paid to "atmosphere" in romantic love. Two common themes often associated with modern conceptions of romantic love include a searching for or claiming the attainment of an almost supernatural sexual ecstacy, and ideas of there being only one "right" person out there for you.

Romantic love as defined above can be clearly differentiated from lust and from courting behavior, although the possibility and likelihood of overlap is great. Whereas lust and courting behavior are virtually universal to all species and predate our earliest recorded history, romantic love as defined didn't systematically break into history until the Middle Ages. Prior to this time, mating and marrying were primarily arranged for reasons primarily economic.

Romantic love would have been viewed as far too unstable a foundation for successful relationships. Romance would also have been viewed by most prior to this time as too escapist. Life is difficult but must be faced realistically if we are to respond to it maturely. There was little tolerance for idealized relationships prior to the Middle Ages. Also, the possibility of romance exists only when the possibility of choice exists.

Some theorists hypothesize that romantic love emerged to encourage fidelity and monogamy, especially among men.
Three main sources for the romantic ideal of love were (A) the cult of the Virgin Mary where women are first widely venerated in certain ways, (B) the beginnings of the literary genre called the romance, and (C) the emergence of the code of chivalry. All three of these sources share the assumptions that (1) Women are deserving of the highest possible honor, (2) Men must earn the devotion of women, (3) Physical love is a means at best, never an end.

Romantic love took a distinct turn in its development with the Renaissance when romantic love came to be characterized by love as game with the male wooing the female, the female making enormous demands on the wooer, the male going to extraordinary efforts to woo, with the woman deciding whether or not ever to descend to a physical level of love. As regards romance, the Twentieth Century has added to the development of romance a heavy emphasis with intense feelings and sexual satisfaction.

Peck believes that "romantic love" is not only a myth, but a dreadful lie. Millions of people waste vast amounts of energy desperately and futilely attempting to make the reality of their lives conform to the unreality of myth. "Romantic love" also tends to support the attitude that if "feelings or fire" leave a relationship (or were never really there), then nothing can be done except to live unhappily or break off the relationship.

INFATUATION

Peck believes that infatuation is a lowering of the ego boundaries. He believes that infatuation serves the purpose of bringing couples together and is biologically fueled. Infatuation served an evolutionary purpose, but needs to be "tuned down." Conscious self-discipline is needed by humans until human biology catches up with world circumstances.

Peck believes that infatuation cannot be love, and is best not called "falling in love." Peck calls to our attention that we can easily be infatuated with someone with whom it would be disastrous to have a relationship with, as well as have no infatuation for someone whom we could have a beautiful relationship with. Infatuation is also invariably temporary. No matter whom we "fall in love" with, we will sooner or later "fall out of love." Ego boundaries always snap back -- the feeling of oneness always characteristically is followed by differentiation of "the one" back into two (See Mark Knapp). This is not to say that we invariably cease loving the person we were infatuated with. But it is to say that the feeling of ecstatic loveliness that characterizes infatuation always passes. The honeymoon always ends. The bloom of romance always fades. What may bring us together (infatuation) will not keep us together. Where infatuation ends, the invitation to really love begins.

Infatuation is usually associated with eros. Eros is characterized by desire. The desire can be a powerful desire for the other person through sex, but it can be more than that. It also includes a much more general desire to "be with," such personal desires as "to be appreciated" and "to be happy together," such inspirational desires as "to be the best for you" and such altruistic desires as "to do anything I can for you."
A Model of Interaction Stages in Relationships

(From Mark Knapp)

Coming Together

Initiating

Experimenting

Intensifying

Integrating

Bonding

Coming Apart

Differentiating

Circumscribing

Stagnating

Avoiding

Terminating