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AN INVESTIGATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
SELF-CONCEPT AND SELF-EXPRESSION

by

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VITA.</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENT</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE OF CONTENTS</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT.</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PURPOSE OF THE PAPER.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QUESTION TO BE CONSIDERED</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROCEDURE</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIMITATIONS</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEFINITION OF TERMS</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUMMARY</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II THE SELF-CONCEPT AND INTERACTION</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORIGINS OF SELF-CONCEPT</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORGANIZATIONAL PROCESS OF THE SELF-CONCEPT</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INFLUENCES OF SELF-CONCEPT ON BEHAVIOR.</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-CONCEPT AND CHANGE</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUMMARY</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td>Title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>THE SELF CONCEPT AND COMMUNICATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-CONCEPT AND COMMUNICATIONS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PARENTAL INFLUENCES ON A DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>INTERPERSONAL BEHAVIOR AND THE SELF-CONCEPT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWNS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SUMMARY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SUMMARY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CONCLUSIONS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RECOMMENDATIONS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The purpose of this investigation was to explore the relationship between self-concept and an individual's system of communication. The paper attempted to explore how self-concept and an individual's method of expression might be related.

The investigation of the relationship between self-concept and self-expression was conducted by a review of literature of those pertinent materials at Montana State University's library. The investigation of the effects of self-concept and self-expression on each other was organized in the following manner: The development of the self-concept was presented and such influential factors as environmental and interpersonal conditions were discussed. The self-concept as both a structure of feelings and as a process of organization was explored. An individual's system of expression was investigated as it related to and affected the self-concept.

As a result of the investigation of the reciprocal relationship between self-concept and self-expression, recommendations were made for further research in this area. Also, it was suggested that workshops for parents, teachers and others who may be interested in this area be established at Universities and at local schools. The purpose of these workshops would be to help those who work with children in understanding that the way they express themselves to children not only reveals their self-concept, but also directs and influences the self-concept of others. Lastly, it was recommended that in a therapeutic relationship counselors need to be aware of the relationship between self-concept and self-expression. Also, it therefore follows that an effective counseling approach would take this relationship into account.
Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

It has been postulated by such noted authorities as Rogers, Sullivan, Ruesch and Satir that a person's picture of himself, his self-concept, represents both a process and a structure which enables a person to form a system of integrated feelings and ideas that describe how the person feels about himself and others. Kenneth J. Gergen in The Concept of Self has defined the self in both terms of its being a structure of feelings and an organizational process. Gergen defined the self as a process by stating that the self is, "that process by which the person conceptualizes (categorizes) his behavior---both his external conduct and his internal states" (Gergen, 1971:23). As a structure, Gergen defined the self as "the system of concepts available to the person in attempting to define himself" (Gergen, 1971:23). The self may then be viewed as representing those descriptive feelings which a person holds about himself as well as an organizational process which influences how a person will perceive reality.

The self-concept as a system of descriptive feelings and as an organizational process is closely related to the way in which a person expresses himself. Rogers'
in Client-Centered Therapy (Rogers, 1951) stated that all behavior is consistent with a person's self-concept, and the way a person expresses himself, his system of communications, may be considered as verbal behavior. Virginia Satir in Conjoint Family Therapy (Satir, 1968) also felt that self-concept and the way an individual communicates were closely linked together. It might be seen that the two are so closely related as a process that at times it is difficult to separate them.

It is important for those people in counseling and education to be aware of the relationship between self-concept and self-expression. Equally important is the manner in which both self-concept and a person's manner of communicating affect and relate to each other. Joseph Luft in Group Processes has expressed the relationship in the following manner:

If it is true that survival depends on adequate communication, it is equally true that the development of uniquely human qualities requires patterns of communication in which the individual's conception of self is accepted and confirmed (Luft, 1970:59).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study investigated the relationship between how a person sees himself and how a person expresses
himself to others. Particular emphasis was placed on the relationship between self-concept and a person's system of communication in an attempt to determine how both self-concept and communications affect each other.

PURPOSE OF PAPER

A major responsibility of the counselor's role entails his helping people who are unable to communicate with themselves or others. According to Rogers, "The whole task of psychotherapy is the task of dealing with a failure in communication" (Rogers, 1961:330). In order to help a person who is unable to describe his feelings and thoughts to himself and to others a counselor should be aware of the reciprocal effects that self-concept and communications have on each other. The counselor needs to be aware of how a person's view of himself affects the way he expresses himself and relates to others.

QUESTIONS TO BE CONSIDERED

The following questions are concerned with self-concept, an individual's system of communication and the relationship between the two. These questions will be considered in Chapters II and III of the review of literature.
1. How does self-concept develop?

2. How does the self-concept influence a person's behavior?

3. How does the self-concept organize a person's view of reality?

4. How does change effect the self-concept?

5. What is the relationship between a person's self-concept and the way he communicates?

6. Why is communication a necessary prerequisite for self-concept development?

7. In what ways is an individual's self-concept revealed in communications?

8. What specific problems are revealed in the communication process?

PROCEDURE

The investigation of the relationship between self-concept and the manner in which a person communicates will be presented in the following manner:

1. A review of literature concerning the nature of self-concept will be presented.

2. The review of literature concerning the self-concept will specifically deal with the development of the
self-concept, the ways in which self-concept influences a person's behavior and the organizational process of the self as it influences a person's view of reality.

3. A review of literature concerning self-concept and communications will be presented.

4. The review of literature concerning communications will specifically investigate the relationship between self-concept and communications, factors which influence a person's method of expressing himself will be presented and the relationship between self-concept, behavior, and communications will also be examined.

LIMITATIONS

The investigation was limited to a review of literature concerning the nature of self-concept and the relationship that exists between self-concept and communications. An abundance of material exists in both the area of self-concept and communications, and articles and books were selected as to their relevance and significance to the study.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

The following general terms are defined as they
will be used in this paper. Additional terms will be defined in the context of the paper by citing specific quotes from noted authors.

**Communications**

Communications is:

that human function which enables people to relate to each other. By means of signals and signs, human beings exchange their views, express inner thoughts and feelings, make agreements and state disagreements (Ruesch, 1957:173).

**Self-Concept**

A person's self is the sum total of all he can call his. The self includes, among other things, a system of ideas, attitudes, values and commitments. The self is a person's total subjective environment; it is the distinctive center of experience and significance (Hamachek, 1971:8).

**SUMMARY**

The relationship between an individual's self-concept and his system of self-expression is of integral importance for the understanding of the individual. It is the purpose of this investigation to explore the different relationships that may exist between a person's self-concept and the way he communicates. With a better understanding of the effects of how self-concept and self-expression are interrelated, counselors and educators may be able to use such information in a helping relationship.
Chapter II

THE SELF-CONCEPT AND INTERACTION

The topic of self and self-concept has provoked much thought in scientists, psychologists, philosophers, learning specialists and others concerned with man's problems in relating to himself and to others. In order to understand these problems, the writer feels that a descriptive understanding of self-concept and its development is essential to understanding the problems man encounters in relating and reacting to himself and with others. The material in this chapter will be organized under these subtopics: the origins of self-concept; the organizational process of the self-concept; and the relationship between self-concept and change.

ORIGINS OF SELF-CONCEPT

The self-concept has been viewed by certain selected authorities, such as Sullivan, Rogers and Horney, as developing out of the infant's interaction with his environment. Development begins with the infant's differentiating between external and internal stimuli. At first the young infant is unable to make any distinction between sensations of his own body and those external sensations that effect him. The infant's interest in his
hands initially appears to be no different from his interest in other objects. He views both his own hand and the rattle with the same interest; unable to perceive that the hand is a part of himself while the rattle is not (Wright, 1960:129). Physical maturation of the baby's nervous system is a prerequisite for this discriminatory awareness to occur (Cratty, 1970:105). The first stage in self-concept development occurs when the child is able to make this distinction.

Theodore R. Sabin in "A Preface To A Psychological Analysis Of The Self," (Sabin, 1968) has described this beginning development of self in definitional terms. Sabin described the self as being the primitive construed self when the infant was mature enough to differentiate between objects and persons. The primitive construed self developed from the somatic and receptor-effector selves. The somatic self referred to the first perceptual organization of the infant which acts to restore homeostatic balance at the physiological level. The term receptor-effector self refers to the infant's awareness of tension-reduction instruments. At this stage the infant is unable to differentiate between objects which are instrumental in tension-
reduction and persons who are instrumental in tension-reduction (Sabin, 1968:181).

While the emergence of the self is initially fostered by the infant being able to make the distinction between himself, (to define the limits of his own body), the concept of self is also formed by how the child perceives himself and his perception of how others view him (Wright, 1960). Sabin has called the perceptions which constitute how the child feels about himself and others "the social self" (Sabin, 1968:183).

Kaoru Yamamotto in "The Concept of Self," discussed three possibilities of how the self-concept may develop (Yamamotto, 1972:26).

Self-concept may develop out of the following processes:

1. the self-concept may be learned from direct experience or perception of the physical world without any social mediation;

2. the self-concept may be socially mediated without language;

3. the self-concept may be mediated and mediation is through language.

The remainder of this section of the review of literature will be concerned with the self-concept or social self as it develops out of interaction with other persons.
Another theory which reflects this idea has been postulated by Harry Stack Sullivan. In the opinion of Sullivan, interpersonal relationships have been viewed as primarily directing and influencing the self-concept. Sullivan used the terms "good-me, bad-me and not-me" (Sullivan, 1968:171) to refer to different ways a person may feel about himself. The different feeling states of good-me, bad-me, and not-me are produced, according to Sullivan, by different learning conditions that the small child experiences. The three learning conditions are reward, grades of anxiety and severe anxiety. These conditions in turn act as stimuli for the three ways a person may feel about himself. In the environment of reward the child experiences "tender behavior on the part of the acculturating or socializing mothering one" (Sullivan, 1968:171). The love and acknowledgment the child receives are integrated into the good-me which "organizes experience in which satisfactions have been enhanced by rewarding increments of tenderness" (Sullivan, 1968:173). The child's world is not just permeated by love. As the child becomes more able to explore his world, he finds that some of his behavior elicits a withdrawal of love, or punishment. Sullivan has said that certain types of behavior provoke
anxiety which is referred to as categories of anxiety (Sullivan, 1968:171). Experiences of anxiety are integrated by the child to form the bad-me. The bad-me "organizes experience in which increasing degrees of anxiety are associated with mother in prehended interpersonal experiences" (Sullivan, 1968:173). If the anxiety is severe and of an unpredictable nature, Sullivan said that the learning process is momentarily arrested and that the child or adult has only gradual recall of the circumstances which preceded the noxious situation (Sullivan, 1968:172). The influence of severe anxiety on a person's behavior may be exhibited when "... people do and say things which they do not and could not have knowledge, things which may be quite meaningful to other people, but are unknown to them" (Sullivan, 1968:173).

In summarizing Sullivan's view, it might be said that the self-structure, as composed of the good-me, bad-me, and not-me, is directly related to a person's interactional experience and that a function of the self-structure is to minimize anxiety (Sullivan, 1968:174).

In *Games People Play*, Eric Berne defines position as a "simple predicative statement which influences all of the individual's transactions; in the long run it determines
his destiny and often that of his descendants as well" (Berne, 1964:45). The four life positions are:

1. I'm Not OK — You're OK
2. I'm Not OK — You're Not OK
3. I'm OK — You're Not OK
4. I'm OK — You're OK

(Harris, 1969:43)

Thomas A. Harris, author of *I'm OK — You're OK*, said that these four life positions may be viewed as being synonymous to a person's self-concept. The self-concept in the first position, I'm Not OK — You're OK, is that which Harris called the universal position of early childhood. Harris felt that all men as small children felt inferior and weak in comparison to adults who appear as large in size. The child, by the virtue of his size and physical maturation, is dependent upon adults for support and survival. This dependency produced feelings of inferiority and inadequacy in the child. While all children start out in this position or with this concept of self (Harris, 1969:45), it is possible for a person to change his feelings about himself and others and thus the person may assume one of the other life positions.

Sidney M. Jourard has also dealt extensively with formulating a theory of self. According to Jourard, the self-structure "refers to beliefs, perceptions, ideals,
expectations, and demands which a person has come to formulate with respect to his own behavior and experience" (Jourard, 1963:156). Following Jourard's idea, the self-structure is formed by the organization of experience in relation to a person's feelings about himself and toward the experience. As Berne used a person's life position to predict his behavior, Jourard also used the self-structure in the same manner. Jourard stated that: "If we know a person's self-structure, we should be able to predict and understand his behavior and experience" (Jourard, 1963:157). The five ways in which self-structure was categorized by Jourard were:

1. Pride and Conscience - Direction
2. Authority-Direction
3. Other-Direction
4. Impulse-Direction
5. Real-Self-Being

These five categorizations will be discussed in the following paragraph.

A person's self-structure may be formed along the lines of how he thinks he should act, how he thinks others want him to act, or how he really feels. A person who is directed by pride and conscience acts upon how he thinks he should act. Jourard used Horney's term of "tyranny of the should" (Jourard, 1963:159) to describe the type of person
who feels that his real self is unreliable and who then 
acts upon an inflexible moral code given to him by others 
(Jourard, 1963:159). Another direction that a person with 
low self-reliability may take is to become authority 
directed. Authority direction occurs when a person allows 
the rules or dictates of another to serve as a guide for 
his own behavior. Other-directed, as used by Jourard, 
refers to a person who is easily influenced by his peers. 
On an opposite pole, there is the impulse-directed person 
who ignores his own conscience, his own welfare, and the 
welfare of others' to immediately gratify his needs. 
Finally, Jourard described the person who exhibits real-
self as

a person who lets others know what he genuinely 
thinks and feels, and when he answers their questions 
about him truthfully and without reserve, he is said 
to be engaged in real-self being (Jourard, 1963:160-
161).

ORGANIZATIONAL PROCESS OF THE SELF-CONCEPT

The above ideas that have been discussed in the 
preceding part of this paper, have shown how the self-
concept develops out of a child's interaction with the 
environment and with others. The self-concept is both an 
organizational process and a subjective feeling state of
how a person views himself. Jourard in the article, "Growing Awareness and the Awareness of Growth," has defined the self-concept to include both these views. Jourard has said:

I have a certain concept of my being, of myself. This is my self-concept. It is my belief about my own being. My being discloses itself to me in the form of my intentional experience of myself. I experience my own action from the inside. I form a concept of myself --- what I am like, how I react, what I am capable of and what I can do, on the basis of this self-experience . . . Once I have formed this concept of who and what I am, I proceed to behave in the world as if this is all and everything I am or ever can be. My behavior, my self-disclosure, endlessly confirms my self-concept. It is as if I have taken a pledge to show this and only this as my being (Jourard, 1971:7).

In order to understand how the self-concept, which developed out of a person's interaction, assumes the powers of a directional agent, the self-concept as an organizational process will be considered. When once a self-ideal has been formulated "(it is continuously in a process of formulation and reformulation), it provides a standard in terms of which the individual appraises his own conduct (and personality)" (Jourard, 1963:169). In agreement with this view, Rogers has stated "that under proper conditions the self is a basic factor in the formation of personality and in the determination of behavior" (Rogers, 1969:88).
A person's view of himself will be a decisive factor in the way he perceives events. According to Rogers, a person may handle the reality of experiences in three ways:

1. the experience may be acknowledged, symbolized and integrated into the self-structure

2. the experience may be ignored as it is not significant to the individual

3. the experience may be denied or distorted because it is inconsistent with the person's self-concept (Rogers, 1951:503).

Beatrice Wright, in *Physical Disability -- A Psychological Approach*, also felt that the self-concept plays a major role of organizing the perceptual field of an individual. She stated that:

.. because of the particular relevancy of the self-concept in social interaction and of the ambiguity of the environmental stimuli (i.e., the behavior of the other person), the self-concept acquires an importance that surpasses its actual effectiveness in gauging correctly the attitudes of others. The person comes to expect certain attitudes and feelings toward himself, expectations rooted in his self-concept (Wright, 1960:169).

The expectations that a person has are a motivating force in his life and they affect the way in which a person perceives reality.

The expectations with which a person enters a situation, therefore, not only put the spotlight on what he will see but also, as a function of their strength, delimit the degree of incompatibility with objective facts that can be tolerated (Wright:173).
The expectations that a person has will determine whether he acknowledges, ignores, or distorts certain experiences. The expectations that a person has about himself are many times multi-dimensional and thus, confusing. The person may feel that he is both a good and bad person or that he is likeable and yet, people don't like him. Certain environmental conditions are responsible for determining whether an expectation will be strong or weak. The more frequently an individual's expectation has been confirmed in the past experiences, the greater will be its strength.

It will be more readily arousable, require less environmental information to confirm it, and, conversely, require more contradictory evidence to negate than would be required for a less frequently confirmed expectation (Wright, 1960:170).

Another condition affecting expectancy strength is the number of alternative expectations a person has concerning himself. An example of this might be a person who feels that his teeth are ugly because he has buck teeth, versus a person who feels that his teeth are ugly, but he has a nice nose. A third factor concerning the strength of expectations for a person is whether he has built a large number of hypotheses to support his expectation. Expectations also satisfy the needs a person has and
the more relevant the confirmation of an expectation may be to the satisfaction of needs, the stronger the expectation will be: it will be more readily aroused, more easily confirmed, less readily repudiated (Wright, 1960:173).

The last factor which determines the potency of an expectation is whether it is shared and verified by others. The expectation that is stronger will have a greater force on a person's behavior than the weaker one will (Wright, 1960:170). Three concepts explaining expectancy strength have been stated as, the stronger an expectation:

1. The greater its likelihood of arousal in a given situation
2. the less amount of appropriate information necessary to confirm it
3. the more the amount of inappropriate or contradictory information necessary to refute it (Wright, 1960:170).

INFLUENCES OF SELF-CONCEPT ON BEHAVIOR

As it has been shown, expectations have a strong influence on the behavior of an individual and their influence is in direct relationship to their strength. It is pertinent to investigate the reasons why expectations exert perceptual discrimination and motivational influence over the individual. Jourard has stated that:
the self-structure imposes certain limits on a person's overt behavior and his inner experience. In general, a person will strive to behave in ways that are consistent with his self-structure, and he will delimit his feelings, and wishes to its boundaries (Jourard, 1963:150).

In a similar manner, Rogers has also commented on the perceptual and organizational influence of the self-concept. Rogers described the behavioral influence of the self-concept by stating that "the ways of behaving which are adopted by the organism are those which are consistent with the concept of self" (Rogers, 1951:507). It might be said then that a person will behave in ways which protect and enhance his view of his self.

A person's need for protection and enhancement of the self is correlated with a person's needs to maintain self-esteem, a sense of identity and a feeling of being acceptable to other people (Jourard, 1963:171-172). In order to maintain self-esteem, to avoid guilt and shame, "a person strives to be consistent; to behave in ways which will continually verify or justify the beliefs he holds with respect to his personality" (Jourard, 1963:171). According to Jourard, a person's consistent behavior also reinforces his sense of who he is or his identity. By behaving in ways which are consistent with his self-concept, a person is able
to establish a frame of reference for his feelings and behavior. Consistent behavior also provides a person with feelings of security, and in order for a person to feel that he is acceptable, he must also feel secure. Jourard has summed up this idea in this statement, "any individual's sense of security is dependent upon the belief that other people like him" (Jourard, 1963:172).

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-CONCEPT AND CHANGE

Once these expectations of how a person feels about himself, how the person feels about others and how the person thinks others feel about him have been established and integrated, the person's behavior, as mentioned in the preceding section, is consistent with these views and any change in the self-concept might be viewed as a threat by the individual. Rogers felt that a person experienced anxiety when the person encountered experiences which carried the threat of the destruction to the self-concept. The anxiety served as a signal to indicate tension to the organism who felt threatened by an attack on his self-concept (Rogers, 1951:506). Wright also spoke of the resistance of the self-concept to change:
The integrative process is one reason why the self-concept is difficult to change. The very thing that is to be changed has considerable power in molding the experiences impinging on the person to fit its own image so that they are interpreted as not conflicting with the self-concept. It takes a lot of convincing before a drastic remodeling of the self-concept can take place in either a negative or a positive direction (Wright, 1960:148).

Like Wright, Ralph H. Turner in "The Self-Concept in Social Interaction," spoke of the threat both positive and negative changes have to the self-image. It was Turner's opinion that the threat of a negative self-image to the self-concept is that the self-concept would have to be revised downward to satisfy integrated input of a negative value. Likewise, the threat of positive images to the self-concept is that the self-concept would have to be revised upward and the new self-image would have to gain validation from others in order to be maintained (Turner, 1968:105). Rogers maintained the same view in stating:

It seems nearly as difficult to accept a perception which would alter the self-concept in an expanding or socially acceptable direction as to accept an experience which would alter it in a constricting or socially disapproved direction (Rogers, 1951:506).

According to Rogers, for change to take place in the self-concept, it is necessary for a person to come to the realization that he is the controlling agent over his feelings
and environment (Rogers, 1969:88), and not a puppet that can be pliably molded by the environment and by others. If the person is unable to feel that he is in control, then the anxiety and tension that Rogers spoke of will occur. Jourard spoke of this anxiety and tension as being manifested in a person's use of defense mechanisms. If is Jourard's opinion that

defense mechanisms are automatic, involuntary ways in which a person reacts to threatening perceptions so that his self-structure will remain unchallenged and unchanged (Jourard, 1963:195).

The self-concept not only influences a person's behavior and perceptions, but it also influences the ways a person will react to others. Kenneth J. Gergen in The Concept of Self, stated that:

feelings toward self may not only influence our generalized feelings towards others, but may also predispose us to react in specific ways to their behavior and evaluations of us (Gergen, 1971:67).

This view is consistent with the idea that a person's perceptions and behavior are in accordance with his self-concept. Turner has stated that a person's actions may be task-directed or identity-directed (Turner, 1968:101). In identity-directed behavior

interaction is primarily directed by each member's concern about how others feel toward him. Ego's chief goal is to control the attitudes of alter toward ego. . . . Validation of a particular self-concept becomes the guiding consideration (Turner, 1968:101).
Wright felt that the self-concept plays an interpretive role in social relationships, for a person sees that the other person is reacting to him and the person must view himself as an object that elicits reactions from others. The view that a person takes of himself is dependent on his self-concept (Wright, 1960:167&168).

SUMMARY

In the present chapter the self-concept has been viewed as both a feeling state and as an organizational process. The development of the self-concept in the child is a complicated process that began with the infant learning to separate himself from the environment. The child then learned to evaluate his own sense of worth through direct experiences with the environment and by the evaluation of others. As an organizational instrument, the self-concept has been explored as a process that influences a person's view of reality and his behavior. It was brought out that how a person feels about himself and others is largely determined by the self-concept. The influence that the self-concept exerts in interpersonal relationships and in a person's method of communication will be explored in the following chapter.
Chapter III

THE SELF-CONCEPT AND COMMUNICATION

Man, by his very nature and innate abilities, cannot help but communicate with his fellow man. A life devoid of any type of communication between men is impossible and further, is unhealthy. Research has shown that: "Man has to communicate with others for the sake of his own awareness of self," and "man is unable to maintain his emotional stability for prolonged periods in communication with himself only" (Watsalawick, 1967:85). In this chapter the relationship between self-concept and interpersonal communications will be explored. The material will be presented in the following manner: the relationship between a person's feelings about himself and his manner of expression will be explored, parental influences on the child's system of communication will then follow. The relationship between self-concept and interpersonal behavior will be presented as it is effected by the way a person feels about himself and expresses himself and lastly, specific types of communication breakdowns and their consequences on self-concept development will be presented.
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-CONCEPT AND COMMUNICATIONS

Don E. Hamachek in *Encounters With the Self*, stated that: "It is through the doors of the self that one's personality is expressed" (Hamachek, 1971:8), and the doors that allow a person to know himself and be known by others is through communication. Joseph Luft, in *Group Processes*, also felt that it would be impossible for man to know himself, to have awareness of his self, if it weren't for man's ability to communicate. Man's need to communicate stems from two greater needs which are his need to know himself and be known by others (Luft, 1970:60).

As discussed in the preceding chapter, the self-concept developed out of man's interaction with his environment and with others. Without this interaction or communication, man's sense of who he is, his identity, would not develop.

Yamamoto commented on the importance of communication in developing a person's self-concept. Yamamoto said that:

Very early in life, the child becomes aware of the other people in his environment. It is at this point that a child's perception of what is self and what is not self may be socially mediated, communication being a primary factor in this process (Yamamoto, 1972:27).
Luft also commented on the confirming qualities involved in communication and said that:

If it is true that survival depends on adequate communication, it is equally true that the development of uniquely human qualities requires patterns of communication in which the individual's conception of self is accepted and confirmed (Luft, 1970:59).

While communication is necessary for self-concept development, it is also through communications that a person's self-concept is revealed. Turner has stated that: "The self-image may be rather directly communicated or inferred in a situation" (Turner, 1968:102). The way in which a person sends and receives messages is related to how he feels about himself. Jorgen Ruesch in Disturbed Communications, discussed how a person's feelings of identity are conveyed in a message:

This, awareness of identity and role is a prerequisite for successful communications. In all expressions of the individual, the awareness is transmitted to the receiver, it primes him with regard to the interpretation of messages and in a subtle way defines form, timing and content of the statement. Pathology of communication may arise when an individual's self-concept is ill-defined or when a person feels that he does not possess an identity at all (Ruesch, 1957:94).

In summarizing Ruesch's idea, it might be stated that the way a person feels about himself, his self-concept, is reflected in communications. If a person is confused
over who he is, this confusion may manifest itself in confused communications.

Rogers, in the article "A Tentative Formulation of a General Law of Interpersonal Relationships," agreed with Ruesch's view that the way a person feels about himself will be revealed in a person's communications. In speaking on congruency in communications, Rogers said that:

"Ambiguity or contradictoriness of communications is always present when a person who is at that moment incongruent endeavors to communicate (Rogers, 1961: 340)."

Not only does self-concept effect the way a person sends messages, but a person's feelings about himself also effects the way he receives messages. According to Don Jackson and William Lederer, authors of The Mirages of Marriage,

... an individual reacts to a communicated message according to his own perceptions of the nature of the message, and the appropriateness of his reaction is directly related to the clarity and explicitness of the message (Jackson & Lederer, 1968:101).

In restating the relationship between the self and communications, a reciprocal relationship between self-concept and communications has been brought out. In order for the self-concept to satisfactorily develop, communication is necessary for the awareness of self and others. Communication then is a prerequisite for self-concept
development, for it is through communicating with others that a person learns about himself and others. The self-concept, once it has developed out of communications, in turn reveals itself in communications, and influences and guides those communications. The process is a two-way street, so to speak.

Henry Winthrop, in "Blocked Communication and Modern Alienation," discussed ways in which the self-concept reveals itself in communication, and how a person's feelings about himself also guides communication. Winthrop theorized that a major cause of unsatisfying relationships between people was caused by people avoiding communication. Winthrop used the term "block communication" to describe this avoidance (Winthrop 1963:98). Winthrop described blocked communication as existing at two levels: the personal level and the institutional level. At the institutional level, communication might be organized along

those institutional procedures which demand that messages shall flow in only one direction in an organizational hierarchy -- from top to bottom via the chain of command (Winthrop, 1963:99).

Winthrop felt that while this one-way communication might be instigated under the guise of order and efficiency, its covert purpose was frequently to comfort and hide the insecurity of the higher-ranking official of the organization.
In discussing blocked communication at the personal level, Winthrop listed a number of avoidance techniques a person could use successfully to divert or avoid conversation. The first of these techniques is the direct cut-off, which Winthrop called the "frontal technique of avoiding communication" (Winthrop, 1963:99). An example of the cut-off could occur when A and B are talking, and B asks A a significant question; A becomes dead silent and maintains this silence (Winthrop, 1963:99). The underlying concern of this technique is to avoid openness and candor (Winthrop, 1963:99). The person using this technique may also be expressing his fears of being rejected. Jourard discussed the person who is afraid to disclose himself:

There are some unhealthy personalities which are so repressed that the individual will communicate only impersonal messages to other people, and he will block or 'clam up' if any question is directed at him concerning his personal feelings, wishes, opinions, and so on (Jourard, 1963:353).

According to Jourard, the reason for this type of communicative behavior is the fear of rejection and/or punishment. Jourard stated that:

The major factor responsible for habitually contributed interpersonal behavior is the belief, conscious or implicit, that to be one's real self is dangerous, that exposure of real feelings and motives will result in rejection, punishment or ridicule (Jourard, 1963:288).
Virginia Satir in *Conjoint Family Therapy*, also discussed the non-personal type of communication pattern. Satir's ideas will be discussed in a later part of this paper under interpersonal relationships and communication.

Another device which Winthrop spoke of as being used for avoidance purposes occurs when a person changes the subject in a conversation. Winthrop said that:

> Evasiveness may be a defense mechanism which assists the need to continue to repress material or considerations which would be painful if brought to the surface (Winthrop, 1963:100).

Closely related to evasiveness is another device called irrelevancy. A person may bring up an irrelevant statement or question if he felt that the subject matter at hand was threatening or painful. The last avoidance device Winthrop discussed was that of good form. A person may insist "upon politeness and role-playing in order to escape discussion of a matter which is pressing to at least one of the parties involved" (Winthrop, 1963:100). By insisting upon good form, Winthrop felt that a person was able to protect his self-esteem by only facing half-truths. The benefits derived from using blocked communications are that a person protects himself from possible confrontations and rejections. However, as Jourard has stated, blocked communication is essentially unhealthy in that:
any factor which curbs the full and honest communication of feelings, thoughts, and demands is a factor which interferes with attainment of a healthy relationship and encourages the development of an unhealthy one (Jourard, 1963:344).

In agreement with Jourard's view, Albert Mehrabian, in the article, "Attitudes Inferred from Neutral Verbal Communications," expressed the idea that a common assumption about psychologically maladjusted people was that they have trouble explicitly communicating their feelings to others (Mehrabian, 1967:414).

In discussing the ways in which the self-concept reveals itself in communication, it is also necessary to look at different personality types and to note the communicative patterns manifested in those types. Ruesch has discussed the following personality types in relation to communication patterns. The personality types are: the infantile person, the person of action, the demonstrative person, the logical person, the withdrawn, nonparticipating person, the anxious, fearful person and the depressed person (Ruesch, 1957). A discussion of these different personalities in relationship to communication will follow.

A brief presentation of Ruesch's idea of the different levels of language may be necessary in order to more fully comprehend his description of the different personality
types. According to Ruesch, during the course of maturation, three types of language are learned. The first of the three types of language is somatic language, which is manifested in the young infant by the contraction of the intestinal and cardiovascular smooth muscles. With the development of coordination and locomotion, the young child is able to use action as a means of communication. Ruesch called this action language. The third type of language acquisition is verbal language. The third type with the development of speech and reading ability. A person's use of language may be centered primarily at one of the different levels felt (Ruesch, 1957:80). The relationship between language use and personality will now be presented.

Ruesch's personality classification according to language fixation began with the infantile person. The infantile person's primary means of communicating is through the use of somatic language. The infantile person is primarily concerned with his body. Body concern may be manifested through obsessive concern over health or illness. In describing this type of person, Ruesch said that:

Infantile people use touch and action as a means of signifying; figuratively speaking, they think with their bodies, feel with their bodies, and talk with their bodies (Ruesch, 1957:118).
The person of action, rather than being overly concerned with his body uses his body and action to express himself. Ruesch felt that this type of person received no satisfaction from verbal exchange and, for example, this person might break a window instead of saying, "I dislike you" (Ruesch, 1957:119). As was pointed out by Ruesch, a cause of this type of behavior might be parents who rewarded a child's physical movements; i.e., crawling and walking, but ignored the child when he was silent, i.e. not moving.

The remaining personality types: the social, logical, withdrawn, anxious, and depressed persons all use verbal language to express themselves. However, their method of expression is indicative of their inner feeling state. The social or demonstrative type of person is unable to deal with real persons or events as they occur in the external world. Ruesch described the conditions responsible for a person being able to only manipulate symbols as:

The home atmosphere thus is characterized by particular conditions which, on the one hand, prevent the growing child from being aware of the real world, and on the other hand, promote the playful symbolic management of events which cannot be faced in actuality (Ruesch, 1957:126). The logical person was characterized by Ruesch as being an overly conscientious, orderly individual who handled
experiences by categorization. In handling interpersonal relationships, the logical person tends to neglect the emotional aspects of a relationship.

He does not care to acknowledge the intent of the other person, nor does he care to observe whether the other person received his message in the way it was intended (Ruesch, 1957:128).

The logical person developed in a home that made premature demands on him when he was a child. The child came to associate feelings of gratification with doing things in the proper way; "action, regardless of the results achieved, became gratifying and guaranteed freedom from anxiety" (Ruesch, 1957:129). Another type of personality; the withdrawn, nonparticipating person, resulted from a home environment in which parental messages to the child did not coincide with the parental action concerning the messages. The child in this type of environment learned by attentively watching the actions of others and by ignoring verbal words (Ruesch, 1957:134). The verbal pattern used by the withdrawn person reflects his learned mistrust of words. Ruesch has said that this type of person is a nonparticipator who feels at ease when he is alone and who carries on conversations with himself. Conversely, when the withdrawn person is in a group, he feels anxious and has difficulty in acknowledging another person's communication.
According to Ruesch, the withdrawn person might also use words in ways which are not agreed upon by society (Ruesch, 1957:131). For example, the withdrawn person might have his own unique meaning for certain words which differs from the meanings society ascribes to those words.

The remaining two personality types are the anxious and depressed personalities. The anxious personality is manifested in a person who feels continuous anxiety and fear. He is continually on the alert for anxiety provoking situations and he frequently feels trapped. The home environment of such a child, as described by Ruesch, consisted of one where the parents were unable to deal with the child whenever he experienced anxiety. The parents responded to the child's anxiety by being themselves anxious. As a consequence, the child never learned how to handle his feelings of anxiety. The anxious type of person's communication system reflects his inner state of fear. This type of person frequently misinterprets the messages of others and is always on guard for hidden meanings which may or may not exist in the other communicant's message.
Ruesch's final personality type is the depressed personality. The person who exhibits the depressed personality is the person who can not stabilize his input or output, his communications from the outside world. The depressed person vacillates between too much or too little contact with the world. This depressed behavior is characterized by self-flagellation over real or imaginary failures (Ruesch, 1957:138).

In summarizing Ruesch's theory of personality, the main element of his system is the relationship between personality, language use, and behavior. As viewed by Ruesch, these three elements are interrelated. To state this in another manner, Ruesch felt that a person's behavior as characterized by actions and language was consistent with the learning environment that helped the person form his ideas of how he saw himself. Ruesch felt that the manner in which a child learned to communicate would influence the person's entire system of communication throughout the person's life. The complex system of how the child learns his method of communicating will now be presented.
PARENTAL INFLUENCES ON A DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE

A person's home environment is primarily responsible for shaping the method of communication he used throughout his life. Ruesch said that:

... The way the infant's early expressions are acknowledged will to a great extent determine his future ways of communicating. The genetic principle is generally accepted. It means that if children adopt certain reactions in emotionally important, usually familial, situations, they are later on likely to adopt similar reactions in structurally analogous situations (Ruesch, 1957:77).

Jourard also viewed a child's learned communication pattern as becoming the adult's learned pattern. This idea was expressed in the following manner by Jourard:

In a sense, we can regard many of the personality traits of an individual, his recurrent modes of relating to other people especially, as a record of his past interpersonal relationships with others. These interpersonal habits represent his solutions to past problems, problems which involve his learning effective ways to getting what he needed from the other person (Jourard, 1963:299).

The interpersonal habits that a person might have were categorized by Jourard into two areas: reward habits and avoidance habits. The former are those behaviors which secure affection and approval for the individual, while the latter represents those behavior patterns which the individual has used successfully to protect himself from
punishment and criticism. Ruesch has discussed in great detail the factors which may lead to these interpersonal habits.

The young child's communication system, according to Ruesch, is very much controlled and directed by his parents and by other important adults.

Parents and teachers exercise their prerogative in selecting the value systems to which they wish to expose children. But selectivity means control (Ruesch, 1957:41 & 42).

As Ruesch pointed out though, all parents use some type of selectivity in replying to the child and this selective reinforcement is damaging only under certain conditions. Parental use of the selective reply is damaging to the child when:

1. it is either too discriminating, or not discriminating enough for the child's development

2. the response overstimulates one function and neglects another

3. what the child learns at home is not transferrable to the outside world

4. the selective reinforcement directs the child in a direction that does not coincide with his innate abilities

5. the selective reinforcement gives the child a distorted view of the world that is not readily corrected (Ruesch, 1957:79).
The parent's behavior toward the child is damaging when the parents use selective reinforcement in a destructive, rather than a constructive manner.

The selective reply is only one factor that might influence a person's system of communication. Other factors are also responsible for influencing the way a person expresses himself. The following factors, as presented by Ruesch, contribute to a disturbed system of communications. The child who is exposed to a continual barrage of parental demands and expectations before he is biologically or psychologically able to handle such demands "may react by responding with superficial gestures or words, or by withdrawal as a way of reducing the disruptive influence of his parents" (Ruesch, 1957:47).

Other factors which influence the child's communication are manipulation, overprotection, and excessive prohibition. According to Ruesch, these devices as used by parents are attempts to influence and control the child's behavior. In using manipulation to control a child's behavior, a parent may be subtly trying to influence or direct a child to behave according to what the parents have established as acceptable or good behavior. The child in such a situation learns to mistrust any message as a sincere
expression. Ruesch stated that the consequences of manipulation on the child's method of communicating are:

The disregard of the overt content and the search for the implied control brings about difficulties in expression and ability to share emotions (Ruesch, 1957: 102).

Parental overprotection is another factor which has consequences on the child's behavior and expression. A parent that screens all of the child's communicative input and output seriously inhibits the child's ability to react properly to input that is not screened (Ruesch, 1957:103). Finally, Ruesch discussed how excessive prohibition might also lead to disturbed communications in the child. Excessive prohibitions and restrictions are responsible for a child's developing an overconscious conscience. As a consequence of an exacting and inhibiting conscience, the child may experience feelings of guilt whenever he acts in a spontaneous manner. The expression of guilt not only inhibits a person's behavior, but also inhibits his verbal expression.

Such guilt extends to the communication process. The pleasure experienced in fluid interchange makes the child feel guilty. Such a individual is condemned to partial communication because were he to be successful his overbearing conscience would clamp down and induce him to interfere with or break off the successful interchange (Ruesch, 1957:103).
Many factors are responsible for producing a disturbed communication pattern in a person. According to Ruesch, those factors which are primarily responsible are the use of the selective reply in a destructive manner, manipulation, overprotectiveness, and excessive prohibition.

The parents' method of verbally responding to the child may also contribute to the child's disturbed communication pattern. The three factors which effect whether a response will be disturbed are: whether a message is able to be received by the receiver, the appropriacy of the reply, and the efficiency of the communication (Ruesch, 1957:93). These three factors will now be presented as they relate to and effect disturbed communications.

Parental reinforcement of the child's behavior has been shown to be a determining factor in the development of the child's personal system of communication. The child learns how to reply by observing and imitating the verbal behavior of his parents. Interference with the exchange of messages, meaning that messages do not get through, is detrimental to the child's learning of the way in which to send and receive replies. Ruesch has said that when messages cannot get through "appropriate replies cannot be obtained and correction through feedback does not
function" (Ruesch, 1957:43). The child who has not learned how to accurately respond to replies might be compared to the hiker lost in the woods without a compass.

Reply inappropriateness is also another factor which may influence whether a person's communications will or will not be disturbed. The term, "inappropriacy of reply," according to Ruesch, referred to whether a reply to a statement was appropriate and relevant to the initial statement (Ruesch, 1957:43). Ruesch labeled one form of an inappropriate reply a tangential reply. The tangential reply occurs when the receiver does not respond in an exact way to the sender's message, but replies to an incidental aspect and not to the intent of the message (Ruesch, 1957:54). An example of this type of reply might be when a child goes running to his mother right after he has completed a finger painting and says, "Look at my neat picture." If the mother's reply was "What a mess you are," she would be responding to the child by using a tangential reply. In describing the tangential reply in a more explicit manner, Ruesch said:

In executing a tangential reply, the receiver takes cognizance of the sender's intent to communicate but disregards the content of the statement. By countering with a side remark, he confuses the sender who does not understand the connection between statement and reply (Ruesch, 1957:55).
The tangential reply then acts to produce confusion in the sender, and as a person becomes more confused, his method of expressing himself also becomes equally confused.

The third and final factor which influences whether a reply will be effective or detrimental to communication is the efficiency of the communication itself. The intricacy of language and words is not only complicated by the way a person uses them but also by the nature of words themselves (Hayakawa, 1949). A word is a symbol that man has designated to mean something, and while that meaning is arbitrary, much confusion and strife between people may occur over "the word is the thing" mix-up. Another way in which words complicate man's accessibility in using them is due to the multi-dimensional nature of words (Satir, 1968:64). Words do not generally have one static meaning, but many connotations, depending on whether they are used in a concrete or an abstract manner, and also depending on what meaning the user is assigning to the symbol. Virginia Satir in *Conjoint Family Therapy*, described the confusion that may exist between people due to their confusion in understanding each other's system of communication. Satir stated that:
As words become more abstract, their meanings can become increasingly obscure... (and) This elementary "meaning of words" aspect of communication is very important because people so often get into tangles with each other simply because A was using a word in one way, and B received that word as if it meant something entirely different (Satir, 1968:65).

A third complexity involved with words may occur because a message has many facets other than the fact that it is made up of symbols. In addition to the report aspect, that is the actual meaning of the words, two other aspects are also involved. These are the command and context aspects.

The information may be straight forward and factual, conveyed by words or it may indicate, by tone of voice and by gestures, the nature of the relationship between the parties involved (Jackson, et al., 1968:98).

Watzalawick, author of Pragmatics of Human Communication (1967), stated that on the relationship level people do not communicate about facts outside their relationship, but offer each other definitions of that relationship and, by implication, of themselves (Watzalawick, 1967:84).

The final aspect involved in language complexity is the context which refers to the cultural setting in which the communication is taking place, the environment, and the cultural differences that may exist between the people involved. The difficulty that exists in words effects the
way a message is sent and received. The correct use of words to express ideas represents a complicated transmitting and receiving system. If parents express themselves in a clumsy, incoherent way, the child does not develop a clear channel of communication and the child's feedback system, the way he receives and handles messages or replies, will also be faulty.

As it has been brought out, many factors are responsible for a person's system of communication. Disturbed communication may result from parental controls which interfered with the child's acquisition of a healthy system of communication. Also, specific ways in which the parents respond to the child may also encourage the development of a disturbed mode of expression. The parents use of words and their own difficulty in expression also effects the child's manner of expression. Finally, the complex nature of words and word usage is another factor which may interfere with the attainment of a healthy system of communications. However, while these difficulties in communication are important, the difficulties that exist in the communicants themselves are also of great importance.
The following section will attempt to show the relationship that exists between the self-concept, communications and interpersonal relationships. The way a person feels about himself, his self-concept, is reflected in the way a person communicates, and the way a person communicates also influences his relationship with others. The respondent's behavior, while being a reaction to the sender, is also an indication to the sender of how he effects others, of how coherent he may be, of how others see him, and of how he sees himself in relation to others. Feelings such as the above are integrated into the sender's self-concept, which in turn influences how the sender communicates.

Much of the difficulty involved in effective communication stems from the fact that people are separate from each other. For some people, the differentness that exists between them may be especially frightening and threatening. "Differentness" may be viewed by a person who has a feeling of low self-worth as being rejecting and an indication that the person is unloved (Satir, 1968:11-12). According to Virginia Satir, a person who is low in self-esteem, what
Satir called dysfunctional, may feel that he has little worth as a human being. As a consequence of this feeling the person may see "differentness" in terms of alienation and loneliness. An example of the dysfunctional person's feelings was presented in Conjoint Family Therapy. The person of low self-esteem may communicate his fear of differentness and of the resulting consequences of rejection by feeling:

Be like me; be one with me. You are bad if you disagree with me. Reality and your differentness are unimportant (Satir, 1968:13),

This feeling is contrasted with the autonomous person who may feel:

I think what I think, I feel what I feel, know what I know. I am being me, but I do not blame you for being you (Satir, 1968:13).

Communication in a family that is composed of dysfunctional people reflects how the members feel about themselves and each other. Satir has said that "difficulty in communicating is closely linked to an individual's self-concept, that is, his self-immage and self-esteem" (Satir, 1968:94). A person who felt that he has little worth, a negative self-concept, would be continually on guard against possible rejection and that this person's manner of communicating would mirror this fear. A dysfunctional member
of a family may feel that he cannot let other members of
the family know what he sees and hears and thinks and
feels because the members might drop dead, attack or desert
him (Satir, 1968:191). Satir's concept was consistent with
Jourard's view that a person who is afraid to disclose him¬
self by personal and intimate communication is afraid to
be his real self (Jourard, 1968:287). Satir stated that
people whose communication is effected by feelings of low
self-worth and the subsequent fear of rejection

... need to learn how to assert their thoughts,
wishes, feelings and knowledge without destroying,
invading or obliterating the other, and while still
coming out with a fitting joint outcome (Satir, 1968:13).

In a home or relationship that is composed of
dysfunctional members, communication may be on an indirect,
nonconcrete, abstract level rather than on a direct, personal
level. Feelings and thoughts may not be directed to spec¬
ific persons but may be transmitted as vague requests and
generalizations. Communication then rather than being
overt, may become covert. The extreme use of covert, non-
directed communication has been termed Schizophrenese, which
is

a language which leaves it up to the listener to
take his choice from among many possible meanings which
are not only different from but may even be incompat¬
ible with one another (Watzalawick, 1967:73).
Satir has described covert communication along a continuum from most to least functional. Satir said that as communication moves along this pole, wishes and accusations have fewer and fewer owners. "As communication becomes more evasive, it is as if messages are sent to no one and responses are also relayed as if to no one" (Satir, 1968: 15 & 16).

A child growing up in a home that is maintained by parents who have negative self-concepts is affected by the ways the parents may feel and communicate. In Satir's opinion, parents who are crippled by their self-concept may often view their child as not being separate from themselves. The child may be viewed by such parents as an extension of the parents and as an object for maintaining the parents' self-esteem. The child may not be seen and valued as a separate, unique individual (Satir, 1968:27-32). Parental communication to the child may covertly reflect the parents' feeling that the child is an extension of themselves and it follows then that parents would feel that the child thinks and feels as they. Parents who function in this manner are seldom able to recognize their feelings and manipulative behavior toward the child, for, "if either parent were aware of how much he influenced his child, he
would then have to be aware of the child as separate from himself" (Satir, 1968:32). The child developing in a home where the child is not valued for himself may frequently find himself in the situation where:

... the parent insists that the child does believe what he (the parent) feels the child 'should' believe. The child, in turn, fails to recognize this. He believes that his message has gotten through and (the child) acts accordingly (Watzalawick, 1967:92).

An environment such as the one described above may be instrumental in producing feelings of confusion and frustration in the family members.

COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWNS

In a dysfunctional home communication breakdowns are most likely to occur. While communication breakdowns occur in all families, in the dysfunctional home they become ever-present and they become a repetitive pattern for inter-personal behavior.

There are two major types of communication breakdowns. In describing a communication breakdown, certain characteristics are applicable to this phenomenon. First, the sender's message may not reach the receiver. Interference may occur to block the successful delivery of a
message. Interference may be, for example, a loud noise which prevents the receiver from hearing the message, or the interference may come from the receiver himself. The first type of communication breakdown occurs when interference in completing a message comes from the receiver. In order to successfully complete a transaction, it is necessary for both parties to listen to each other. If A is making a statement to B and B cannot respond because he has not been listening, then a completed interaction will not occur between the two participants. The second type of breakdown occurs when the message sent is not the message that is received. The many factors which are involved in this type of communication breakdown and the ways these factors effect interpersonal relationships will now be described.

The second type of communication breakdown, when the sender's intent is not the intent that is received by the receiver, may occur because people are separate from each other and their response to another may be effected by their self-concept (Jackson, et al., 1968). A person may respond to a message not on the denotative word meaning of the message but according to how the person interprets the message in relation to his feelings about himself
and his feelings toward the sender. According to Virginia Satir, much communication between people is a camouflage for feelings and requests that people are afraid to openly own. Satir said that:

Even though people are making requests of others when they communicate, there are some things that cannot be requested. Yet these are the very things people want. We cannot ask that others feel as we do or as we want them to (Satir, 1968:89).

When an interaction takes place between two people, many messages may be conveyed that go beyond the actual meaning of the words. Feelings and thoughts are conveyed through words and also through body language. Tone of voice, body positions, gesture and facial expression transmit as much meaning and sometimes more meaning than actual words. This type of signaling, whether verbal or physical, about one's attitude toward what he is saying is a metacommunication; "a message about a message" (Satir, 1968:76). When the different levels of a transaction are consistent and do not contradict one another then the communication is congruent. Congruency of a message implies that both sender and receiver are aware of the many different levels of communication; feelings and ideas have been acknowledged for both parties and a completion of intentions has been made.
Jourard has said that when the completion of an intention does not occur an impasse between the two people then develops. Jourard described an impasse in this manner:

an impasse between two people exists when one has a need, demand, or wish which, if fulfilled by the other, would promote satisfaction (Jourard, 1963:342).

Jourard felt that an impasse between two people need not have a stagnating effect on the relationship if the people were able to work toward a resolution of their difficulties. In Jourard's opinion, an impasse if successfully resolved could promote growth in the individuals involved (Jourard, 1963:343).

As may be seen from the above, not all incomplete camouflage transactions need be unsatisfying if they are worked out so that they do become complete. However, many transactions are not worked out and an incomplete transaction with the resulting unsatisfied needs may manifest itself in a relationship in the form of irritation, boredom, criticism and anger (Jourard, 1963:342). In addition to the incomplete, unsatisfied nature of an unresolved communication, if the many levels of a transaction are inconsistent a contradiction between messages may occur and an incongruent communication may then exist.
If a person's words and expressions are disparate, if he says one thing and seems to mean another by his voice or his gestures, he is presenting an incongruent manifestation, and the person to whom he is talking receives a double-level communication (Satir, 1968:35).

Marital patterns of interaction soon become family patterns of interaction. The child learns to communicate by observing how his parents interact. Parents act as a model for the child. In a home with dysfunctional parents, the child learns the incongruent patterns of communication that his parents use.

In a home where inconsistency of interaction is the rule and not the exception, a double-bind situation may exist. A double-bind in Watzalawick's definition, is a message which is so structured that (a) it asserts something, (b) it asserts something about its assertion and (c) these two assertions are mutually exclusive (Watzalawick, 1967:212).

Bateson, Jackson, Haley and Weakland in the article "Toward a Theory of Schizophrenia," have described the communicative elements that are instrumental in producing a double-bind. According to the authors, a double-bind begins with a primary negative injunction that carries the threat of punishment. A secondary injunction also goes along with the first injunction. But the second injunction is at a more abstract level. The message it conveys conflicts with the first
message (Bateson, et al., 1956:253). Even though the message is logically meaningless, since the message is a contradiction, for the child or adult receiving the conflicting, multi-level communication, the message represents reality. The receiver is caught in a bind since he cannot not react to the message or react to the message appropriately. Not only is the child unable to react to a double-bind in an appropriate manner, but a consequence of repeated double-binding on the child is that the child soon perceives the world in double-bind patterns (Bateson, et al., 1956:254).

The child growing up in a double-binding environment faces several consequences that will affect his feelings about himself and his interaction pattern. First, the child caught in a double-bind environment faces rejection since he cannot obey the (parental) request on one level without disobeying on another. The child not only faces parental punishment, but also self-punishment because for the double-bind to be successful:

The child must be conditioned not to ask, 'Did you mean that or that?' but must accept his parents' conflicting messages in all their impossibility. He (the child) must be faced with hopeless task of translating them into a single way of behaving (Satir, 1968:36).
A second consequence of the double-bind then is that the child does not learn how to comment on messages he receives. The child's feedback system becomes faulty. The child is unable to discriminate between different orders of a message (Bateson, et al., 1956:254). Bateson has described how a consistent double-bind may effect a person's communication and behavior:

When anyone feels threatened or defensive he will respond to the literal level of the message. The schizophrenic feels so terribly on the spot at all times that he habitually responds with a defensive insistence on the level when it is quite inappropriate, e.g., when someone is joking (Bateson, et al., 1956:255).

In further describing the behavior that a double-bind may produce, Bateson stated:

It is not only safer for the victim of a double-bind to shift into a metaphorical order of message, but in an impossible situation it is better to shift and become somebody else, or shift and insist that he is somewhere else. The double-bind cannot work on the victim, because it isn't he and besides he's in a different place (Bateson, et al., 1956:255).

As described above, the child may take the blame for his inability to respond correctly to the double-bind as an indication of his self-worth. Self-punishment may be expressed by the child in guilt or self-depreciatory feelings. The child may feel that he is worthless or bad
because no matter what he does, his parents are always angry with him or disappointed in him. The effects of the double-bind may then be that the consistent exposure to a double-bind environment effects the child's self-concept and his subsequent ways of behaving and communicating with others, to others, and with himself.

SUMMARY

In chapter three the relationship between self-concept and communications was explored. The chapter was organized around the following salient subject areas:

The way a person felt about himself was seen to have a definite effect on the way a person expressed himself. Several factors were seen to influence both a person's concept of himself and a person's system of expression. Parental influences on a child were viewed as being very influential for the child's development of self and his subsequent ways of relating and expressing himself to others, with others, and with himself. The parents' method of communication and how the parents felt about themselves and the child were seen as being instrumental in determining the different means of expression the child would use in presenting his feelings and his picture of himself to others.
Chapter IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY

This study investigated the relationship between self-concept and "the individual's" system of communication. Its purpose was to emphasize the importance of a person's self-expression as being indicative of how the individual felt about himself and also how communication is a necessary prerequisite for the development of the self-concept. The method followed was to review the literature which dealt with self-concept; its development, components and organizational influences and also the literature concerning self-concept, behavior and a person's method of expression.

The beginnings of self-awareness in a person start with the development of a sense of self. This sense of self, exerts a powerful influence upon the way an individual perceives reality. Reality is for the individual a subjective experiencing of the individual's world (Rogers, 1951:484). How the individual reacts to events and feelings depends to a great extent on how the individual feels about himself. These feelings which the individual holds about
himself and others are integrated and incorporated into what may be called the self-concept.

The self-concept may be considered from two different, yet interrelated positions. First, the self-concept may be viewed as a structure which consists of feelings which descriptively denote how the individual feels about himself and his world. These feelings may be held by the individual as descriptions, judgments and/or values. An individual's set of feelings enables one to form a set of definitions about himself. It follows then, that definitions about self give a person a sense of identity and self-awareness. An individual does not look at himself as being neutral, but may look at himself for example, as being good, or bad, lovable or unlovable, handsome or not.

As a structure the self-concept is an organized system of feelings that describe how the individual feels about himself and his subjective world. Viewed as a process, the self-concept organizes and selects the way in which the individual will perceive himself and his world. According to Rogers, "most of the ways of behaving which are adopted by the organism are those which are consistent with the concept of self" (Rogers, 1951:507). The
self-concept in a sense acts as a master control that directs the way the individual feels and sees his reality.

If the process of communicating about one's self and one's world are viewed as being verbal behavior, it might be surmised then that the way a person expresses himself will be consistent with a person's self-concept. It follows then that communication may be viewed as being more than a process of sending and receiving messages, but as a verbal coding of how a person feels about himself and how a person feels about himself and others. The relationship between self-concept and self-expression will be dealt with in a more detailed manner in the following section.

CONCLUSIONS

The relationship between self-concept and self-expression as it has been investigated in this paper has been found to be a relationship that is interlocking and reciprocal in nature. The way an individual communicates has been seen to be closely related to the way the individual feels about himself. The feelings that an individual holds about himself, his self-concept, represent not only a descriptive picture of himself, but the self-concept
also organizes how the individual will perceive reality and the manner in which an individual perceives and interprets reality will be consistent with the way he sees himself, sees others, and interprets how others see him. Both an individual's experiencing and expression of self will be indicative of how he feels about himself.

The feelings that an individual holds about himself may be revealed in two ways; by what he says and how he expresses the information. Ruesch, Winthrop, Jourard, Rogers and Satir have all commented on the fact that how a person expresses himself is consistent with the individual's self-concept.

Several factors are involved in and influence the relationship between self-concept and communication. Not only are self-concept and expression closely related, but each effects the other. As investigated in this paper, it was found that communication is a necessary prerequisite for the self-concept to develop. A young child learns about himself by first communicating with his environment and second, by communicating with others. Self-awareness is formed by both environmental and interpersonal interaction. A necessary factor for self-concept development
then is communication, and through communication a child learns about himself and how to express himself.

Looking closer at self-concept formation, it has been seen how instrumental the home is in developing a person's feelings about himself and others and in how the person expresses his feelings. Satir, Jourard, and Ruesch have discussed in detail that a child's learned verbal behavior becomes the pattern for all subsequent verbal expression. The home environment acts as a world model for the child. It might be said that how the child communicates in his home will be indicative of how the child will communicate in the world outside the home.

A child's home environment has been shown to be an influential factor on both self-concept and communication development. How the parents feel about themselves is another factor which affects the child's feelings and expressions of himself. Parents who possess a negative self-image and feelings of low self-worth may view differentness between themselves and others as a threat of possible rejection. A child developing in such a home may be viewed by each parent as an extension of the parent. Not only does the child not learn about his real self in such a home, but his manner of expression may also reflect
the degree of self-awareness he possesses. For example, lack of identity may be expressed by confused, ambiguous and abstract verbalizations.

In summarizing, the factors which influence self-concept and self-expressive development, a child's communicative models and home environment have been seen to be most influential in determining how an individual will feel about himself and in how he will express himself.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The relationship between a person's self-concept and self-expression is so crucial to a healthy personality that the researcher feels that certain recommendations are necessary. The recommendations are as follows:

First, more research is needed to explain the relationship between how self-concept and self-expression affect each other. The researcher feels that it is only through further research and studies that the complex relationship between self-concept and one's system of communication may be understood.

Second, the researcher feels that more research needs to be done to determine in a more detailed manner the effects that a child's communication models have upon the
child. Also, the researcher would like to recommend that workshops for teachers, parents and others who are interested in this subject be established at Universities and at local schools in order to help those working with children be aware of how they express themselves and how their meaning of expression may influence the child.

Third, the researcher feels that it is of utmost importance for counselors to be aware of the relationship that exists between self-concept and self-expression. The need also exists for the counselor to be aware of the fact that in many cases he serves as a communicative model for the client. The counselor may only be as effective as he is aware of his own self and as he is congruent in his speech.

Fourth, the researcher feels that a therapy which would be most effective is one which deals with helping a person gain more self-knowledge, and more understanding in the way they express themselves. The researcher feels that a therapy which combined these two viewpoints would be recognizing the integral relationship between self-concept and self-expression. An approach, for example, that combines these two viewpoints, is perhaps the Rogerian approach plus a communicative system of psychotherapy.
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY


