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To: IELTS Prep Group

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Lesson Objective

The student shall be able to use "power words" as part of their oral vocabulary, read and comprehend both social and business language and demonstrate effective oral communication skills

Section One

Vocabulary

Match the correct word in column A with the definition in column B, then use in a sample sentence

Evaluation Criteria: Ability to understand definitions of English vocabulary

Column A	Column B
VOCABULARY	DEFINITION
1. STEREOTYPE (noun)	A. To render powerless or useless; thwart.
2. HAMSTRUNG (verb)	B. A generalization, usually exaggerated or oversimplified and often offensive, that is used to describe or distinguish a group.
3. VARIANT (adjective)	C. Not clearly or explicitly stated or expressed.
4. RAUCOUS (adjective)	D. To act in accord with the prevailing standards, attitudes, practices, etc., of society or a group.
5. VAGUE (adjective)	E. The wooing of one person by another.
6. CONFORM (verb)	F. A close, familiar, and usually affectionate or loving personal relationship with another person or group.
7. COURTSHIP (noun)	G. An earnest desire for some type of achievement or distinction, as power, honor, fame, or wealth, and the willingness to strive for its attainment.
8. INTIMACY (noun)	H. Rowdy; disorderly.
9. AMBITION (noun)	I. Tending to change or alter; exhibiting variety or diversity; varying.

Section Two

Reading Comprehension and Pronunciation skills.

Evaluation Criteria: Ability to effectively read and comprehend written English in a social or business environment.

ARTICLE A

How Gender Role Stereotypes Are Crippling Our Love Lives

Gender-role rigidity and the paralysis of modern love

Source

1. Sadly, countless people's dating lives and relationships are being hamstrung by a modern brand of stealth-sexism. The result? A generation trapped in the quicksand of crazy-making advice: "Women, be strong and independent, but for God's sake, don't scare men away! Men, be sensitive, but if you're not an alpha male, you'll always be the second choice."

And LGBT folks—better come back tomorrow. We're confused enough as it is.





In love as in all areas of our lives, we're faced with endless variants of the same existential choice: Authenticity versus a pre-packaged, safe persona. Tragically, strong women and gentlemen--and just about everyone else--are still being taught to forsake their authenticity again and again in the arenas of dating, romance and love.

A classic example is the successful woman leaving her high-powered job to go on a date. Successful women are told to "leave their fake balls at the office" or risk a failed connection with "real men." This sounds very nineteen-fifties, but I can't tell you how many successful women I know who are still haunted by that fear--and how often it's validated for them by friends, family and popular dating advice.

2. Susan is a very successful executive, and she's headed to her second date with Jim, a guy she's feeling excited about. She's just closed the biggest deal of her career and she's walking on air, bursting with excitement. She can't wait to share her success with Jim, but then she remembers the dating advice she's heard again and again. "If you're not in touch with your femininity, you won't be able to attract guys. If you're too powerful, you'll turn them off. So, soften up or run the risk of failure in love."

Susan is torn between two worlds. What does she really want? A fist-pumping, raucous celebration of her coup. She's feeling fierce and powerful, but "fierce" and "powerful" don't feel feminine. And she likes Jim a lot.

So Susan tells Jim about her success, but downplays it, substituting "fierce and powerful" with "fun, charming and unintimidating." Not surprisingly, the date falls flat. Awkwardness, the clay-footed compromise between impulse and inhibition takes over, and neither Jim nor Susan can find the easy connection they felt in the past. Susan leaves, feeling vaguely hollow and disappointed.

3. Let's look at what went wrong.

First, Susan was bursting with authentic joy, ambition and power. She had to own that sense of empowerment, or risk disappearing. Yet that ran contrary to a slew of dating advice she'd read. In order to be authentic, she had to cross a line of gender taboo, and it just felt too risky.

Second, there's wisdom in the advice to get out of work-mode before a date, but isn't that everyone's job, not just the woman's? Is emotional availability, receptivity and vulnerability just the woman's responsibility? Women are still being told to hold themselves back for fear of injuring a man's ego. Stripped down, it's the same disheartening message women have been taught for millennia.

Third, there's a toxic message here: "It's fine to step out of your traditional gender-role for a period of time, but if you don't return to it, you won't find love. This gender-conformity pressure has shaped our lives in numerous toxic ways, yet we rarely see it for what it is. Hiding our authentic self is an act of quiet violence. It holds us back from our ability to love authentically. If we're single, it keeps us choosing the wrong partners.

4. Fourth, there is an assumption that strength, empowerment, passion and drive are predominantly male attributes, and that receptivity, expressiveness, kindness and gentleness are the domain of the female. Which is why researchers who study gender roles use terms that are not based on biology: "Instrumental" traits include assertiveness, decisiveness, independence, dominance, and ambition. "Expressive" traits include sensitivity to the needs of others, altruism, warmth and cooperativeness (Spence 1991) (link is external). Both are rich aspects of everyone's experience. There are countless women with predominantly instrumental natures, and countless men with predominantly expressive natures. And successful, healthy, wonderful people of all genders are attracted to each of these types. Truly, in the matter of personality and romantic love, there is someone for everyone.

With all this in mind, let's re-imagine Susan's date with Jim--through two different scenarios.

Scenario 1: Susan lets herself share her full excitement with Jim. "This is who I am, and who I want to be," she decides, "and if that makes him uncomfortable, then I'm dating the wrong guy." Jim is awkward. Though he congratulates her, she can tell he feels intimidated, or perhaps disinterested. She leaves the date feeling disappointed, but clear on who she is, and what she's looking for.

5. Scenario 2: Susan lets herself share her full excitement with Jim. And he's thrilled. They celebrate together--loudly--and she feels seen and appreciated while in her power. They both feel closer, and best of all, she feels as though Jim gets her.

Susan has learned one of the greatest lessons of modern dating and healthy love: When faced with the choice between gender-conformity and authentic expression, strive for authenticity. Even when it's scary.



When it comes to gender roles, we've been taught terribly wrong. For example, we're taught that opposites attract--and they do. But so do similarities. Two predominantly "expressive" people of any gender can fall deeply in love, as can two predominantly instrumental people. In fact, research shows that spouses with similarity in gender roles are more happily married. (Gaunt, 2006) (link is external)

Masculine qualities and feminine qualities exist in each of us. There is no one size that fits all! We cannot assume that women are all essentially feminine or that all men are essentially masculine. Or that all men are attracted to women, and women to men. The choice of personal expression is limitless and fluid. The goal is freedom from our hard-wired fear of expressing all aspects of ourselves, both masculine and feminine. Again, research backs this up. For example, very masculine husbands and very feminine wives feel less understanding, less love and less contentment in their marriages (Helms et al., 2006) (link is external) And couples with nontraditional gender roles are shown to have more satisfying sex lives.

6. Again and again, I've watched clients cross the electrified trip wires of gender taboo and discover that those very parts they were frightened to embrace held the key to finding happiness in love.

In your relationships, in your creative pursuits, and in your sex life, for that matter—have you ever felt timid to express something because it crossed some subtle or not-so-subtle gender taboo? Try breaking the gender rules, and watch what power emerges, what depths of self. And when you meet the person who loves what they see, no matter how many traditional gender lines it crosses, then you've found someone who can love you for who you are.

Thankfully, there are more and more psychotherapists, teachers, experts, and coaches who value authenticity over traditional gender roles, who embrace and welcome the LGBT community, and who encourage their readers, patients, clients, and students to cross the lines of gender taboo in their own journeys of discovery.

In future posts, I'll discuss how women and men can experience breakthroughs in their intimacy lives by breaking free from outdated gender roles, and what psychotherapists, coaches and dating experts can do to help their clients do so.

ARTICLE B

Just Asking for It! Part I

Can just asking for a date be persuasive?

[Source](#)



1. Today I'm going to share with you a little secret. Just asking for what you want from a potential partner can be influential. In fact, asking is where influence starts (and sometimes ends). Apart from the clever conversation, attractive body language, and SPICE-y persuasive flair, you still have to make an actual request. You need to ask for that date, phone number, short-term relationship, or even a sexual encounter.

Actually asking, however, is where most people fall short. They assume that the odds are stacked against them. They predict that rejection is almost certain before they even make the attempt. But, according to the research, they are probably wrong.

Research on Requests for Dates and Sex

Researchers Hald and Høgh-Olesen (2010) investigated individuals' acceptance of various dating and sexual requests. Research assistants of average attractiveness were asked to introduce themselves to strangers of the opposite sex in public by saying, "Hi, my name is [NAME]. I am sorry to disturb you like this, but I have been noticing you around and find you very attractive".

The research assistants were then asked to randomly make one of the following requests:

- "Would you go on a date with me tonight or during the week/weekend?"
- "Would you come over to my place tonight or during the week/weekend?"
- "Would you go to bed with me tonight or during the week/weekend?"



- When individuals in a relationship were excluded from the count, 68% of men and 43% of women agreed to the date. Also, 40% of men and 21% of women agreed to going to the assistant's place. Finally, 59% of men (but 0% of women) agreed to casual sex. These figures roughly correspond to an original study on the topic by Clark and Hatfield (1989), who found more of a 50/50 split in agreement to a date, and similar patterns of response to the other requests.

Don't count women out on agreement to sexual requests though! A follow-up study by Conley (2011) investigated the type of sexual requests above more thoroughly. The author found, when participants were asked about actual casual sexual offers in their real lives, women reported accepting 40% of the time.

Furthermore, an "experiment" conducted by an Austrian journalist found that 6.1% of women actually proceeded to have intercourse with a stranger making such a request (see Voracek, Hofhansl, & Fisher, 2005). Yes, he really had sex with them. In addition, if you include the women who responded with a date request or phone number back to him (but didn't have sex immediately) and subtract the women who said they were "in a relationship", the positive response rate would be closer to 21%.

3. What This Means for Your Love Life

A person of average attractiveness, using a pretty bland introduction and approach, has about a 50/50 chance of getting a "yes" response to a date request from a complete stranger (who is single). Let that sink in for a minute. Literally HALF of the date requests to single strangers could get a "yes" response. That is probably a lot better odds than you were originally thinking. If you're thinking about sex as well, don't forget that those requests are pretty successful too (up to 59% of men and 40% of women said yes, depending on the experiment).

Of course, the research data does need to be taken with a "grain of salt". Not everything generalizes to everyone or every situation. But, even as really rough ballpark odds, those numbers are not half-bad. Besides, if you're not as attractive as you'd like to be, we can fix that. If you're really bad at approaching, we can work on that too (see my past articles below). All things can be improved.

Overall then, the message is simple...ask, ask, ask! If you want a date, then ask for it!. If you want some company, ask for it! You have a pretty good chance of getting it.

Conclusion

Now we've seen that probability is your friend in dating. Ask for a date and you will receive. So, go out there and make a request. Ask for what you want! Also, click here for Part II, where I will go deeper into the above research and answer "why" and "when" strangers say YES!

ARTICLE C

The Rules Have Changed: Gender Roles in Modern Society

Source

- The fast food model of standardized one-size-fits all approach to relationships no longer works.

Conformity to gender specific roles is increasingly being rejected in favor of a more individual approach. Modern men and women don't want to be pigeon holed into one type of role. Instead, both sexes possess personal ambitions and aspirations for the future, seeking successful careers and personal fulfilment, freedom and satisfaction from life. However, this has led to a whole new set of challenges for contemporary couples.

At the heart of most relationship problems nowadays is unclear expectations and contradictory roles or goals between partners. Modern couples are plagued with a whole set of new problems - where to live if each partner's job is in a different location? Separate or joint bank accounts? Kids and family or pursue a full-time career? Who'll do the cooking, who'll do the cleaning? And even, where to holiday if partners have different interests and hobbies?





2. Our parents, and certainly our grandparents, didn't normally face these problems. Just a mere 50 or 60 years ago roles in relationships were much more clear-cut. Two people knew what to expect from a relationship when they came together. Men's chief duties dealt with issues outside the home, while women covered the responsibilities pertaining to the home. Therefore, no matter where you grew up or what your parents were like, across the board, marriage conveyed certain principles for both men and women. Your grandfather probably didn't marry your grandmother wondering where they would live because her career advancement might require relocating. Similarly, your grandmother probably expected your grandfather to be a provider and didn't give much thought to whether he knew how to cook or clean because she didn't want to do these things.

Conformity to roles may have been limiting, but they still provided some guidelines and shared expectations. Shared expectations and a mutual understanding of what each person's primary role is going to be in a relationship can save two people a great deal of misunderstanding and arguing. Could it be that the gender roles we've worked so hard to break out of for so many decades may have actually helped reduce marital conflict and disagreements? And what does this mean for the modern man or woman? Should women pick up their aprons and head to the kitchen, while men try to bring in the bacon in hopes of a more peaceful and conflict free marriage?

3. Well let's not be so hasty to give up decades of advancement in equality just yet.

The modern couple, if they can find a way to communicate their needs openly and clearly to each other, can establish a fulfilling relationship on a scale that's never been seen before. Our grandparents could only dream of the freedom and fulfillment today's adults can achieve in a successful partnership. While our grandparents may have required cooking, cleaning and provider skills to run a successful relationship, today's couples require communication skills. A willingness to talk about everything; understanding each other's values, beliefs and point of view is the key to today's happy couples. In the past people had to adjust themselves to fit into the ideals of a relationship set by society, while today we have the luxury of adjusting our relationship to fit us - a great advancement indeed.