

Feeling the Gender Gap in Communicating Leadership

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Expedition Behavior entails:

- Serve the mission and goals of the group
- Be as concerned for others as you are for yourself
- Treat everyone with dignity and respect
- Support leadership and growth in everyone.
- Respect people you encounter- not just the other students on the course
- Be kind and open-hearted.
- Do your share and stay organized.
- Help others, but don't routinely do their work.
- Model integrity by being honest and accountable.
- Say yes and deliver, or say no clearly if you cannot or will not do something.
- Resolve conflict in a productive manner.

Building the team through Communitas

- *Communitas*, a feeling that develops when individuals come together during a transitional period in social membership, a liminal period, is a feeling that was defined by Victor Turner (1920-83) as an “intense comradeship with one another” (Lavenda and Schultz 2010: 75).
- Involves speaking the same language, understanding what others are experiencing.

Gender and Communitas: tendencies

- “For most women, the language of conversations is primarily a language of rapport: a way of establishing connections and negotiating relationships. Emphasis is placed on displaying similarities and matching experiences...” (Tannen 1990: 77).



My goal:

to consolidate rapport, especially as I looked out at the unfamiliar expanse of the canyons.

- At every corner, I would announce what I saw, what I was thinking and feeling, much of the latter being concern, hoping subconsciously for affirmation from team members that they were thinking and feeling the same.
- What I forgot at that moment was one of my primary lectures I give each semester: on how to adjust to others in unfamiliar contexts for effective communication.

Gender tendencies.... Cont.

Men, according to research in sociolinguistics, tend to communicate not to establish rapport by empathizing, but, especially in stressful situations, through shared activities (Tannen, p. 85). How could I have forgotten that?



Leadership and NOLS take-away:

- The concept of leadership varies cross culturally.
- Upon entering a new community or social context, it is important to keep in mind that the people present each have an understanding personally, and possibly as a group, of what an effective leader should look like, how power relations are negotiated, and how decisions should be made.
- My assumption had been to build relationships and thus positive leadership by relaying feelings.
- My motivational techniques did not match what was acceptable or helpful to my team.
- Empathy and emotion can be seen as weakness in some communities but strength in others