

Experiments in Talking, in brief...

Date: Saturday, November 15th, 2014

Location: Library/Lounge of Ida Noyes Hall
at the University of Chicago

Schedule:

10:00am	Coffee and Pairings
10:30am	Experiment I
11:30am	Break
11:45am	Reconvene for Experiment II pairings
12:00pm	Experiment II
1:00pm	Lunch

So what is the day going to look like?

We'll start the day at 10:00am with coffee in the Library/Lounge of Ida Noyes Hall. Conference organizers will also be about during this time, and they can answer any questions you might have. At 10:30am, you'll be paired with another conference participant and assigned either the role of "talker" or "listener." With your partner, you'll then set off on a stroll or find a place to sit to talk. At 11:45am, we'll all reconvene at the Library/Lounge, and you'll be paired up with a different conference participant and given a different role. Thus, if you listened during the morning, you'll talk during the afternoon experiment, and vice versa. At 1pm, we'll then serve lunch for all participants.

How long does each experiment last?

The experiments should last *up to* an hour: thus, the 10:30am experiment should end around 11:30am, and the 12 noon experiment around 1pm. Both parties, however, can disengage from the experiment at any point.

Why are we getting together to talk like this?

Psychoanalysis's central, audacious, hypothesis is that much of what we think, feel, and experience is not immediately available to us, and that by listening attentively and talking freely, it is possible better to understand ourselves and to relate to others. Experiments in Talking seeks to raise the possibility that something new might occur through a very everyday practice: talking and listening to one another.

What are we going to talk about?

See reverse.



THE BASICS

Each experiment should begin with the listener asking the talker, "What would you like to talk about today?" The talker can then talk about anything he or she wants. As listener, you should actively contribute to the experiment, but you should refrain from speaking about yourself. As a corollary to this point: refraining from speaking about yourself also means refraining from offering your own opinions about and advice regarding what the talker has said. In general, you should, as listener, aim to create as open and judgement-free space for the talker as possible.

OTHER THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND DURING THESE EXPERIMENTS...

- As talker, you should try to say anything that comes to mind. If you feel uncomfortable sharing something, note to yourself when and what you are censoring.
- As listener, you should also try to be attentive to particular bodily affectations or words that the talker is using with any frequency and inquire about what those gestures/words mean to the talker. For instance, the listener could say something like, "I notice that you've used this word a few times," or "I notice that you touch your knees when you're thinking about a response. What does this mean to you?"
- Both talker and listener should allow pauses in speaking, and even long bouts of silence, to occur. Rather than attempting to fill the silence, both parties should try to think about why the experiment may or may not be boring, and how talking and listening in this intensive fashion might be difficult.
- Both talker and listener should also try to be aware of how the experiment is stirring certain feelings, and how those feelings are affecting what they are saying and the tenor of the experiment.
- **In no way should this conference be taken to be providing therapeutic services of any kind, as none of the participants are required to be licensed in any way.** In that vein, though we ask that both parties keep the content of their experiments to themselves, there can be no guarantees of confidentiality.