

# Gender Disparity and Differential Skill Sets

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**Abstract:** *This paper examines the gender-based differential skill sets of both males and females, particularly in interpersonal and lateral thinking skills. It argues that a woman's identity is the sum total of the three components namely, her sex as a natural endowment, beauty as a social construct, and physical/social insulation that she has culturally absorbed. Her physical body is the asset she has complete sovereignty as well as a proud possession. Interpersonal relations are influenced by the power of communication skills through which women have built a world of their own. Remarkable lateral thinking gives manoeuvrability to ponder in many areas at a time but falls low in-depth. Nurturing skills are typically feminine involving typically different skill sets than her male counterpart. The paper attempts an analysis of the three prime skill sets that characterize disparities between both genders*

**Keywords:** Gender disparity, Skill sets, Lateral thinking, Social identity

## 1. Introduction

The biological difference between both sexes namely male and female is further exemplified by psychological as well as socio-cultural differences to distinguish into two separate categories by terming gender. Born with biological differences, the rest of the differences are acquired during growth and upbringing. Socialization agencies such as family, school, peer groups, and institutions such as religion influence the process of gender transformation. A girl learns to behave like a girl and a boy behaves like a boy depending on societal expectations. These forces that transform their behaviour also influence the psyche that ignites the already hidden feminine and masculine qualities to emerge prominently. A girl is born to be a mother at a later point in time and hence she has many innate qualities of caring and nurturing when compared to a boy. The physical strength that a boy acquires during life in contrast to a girl makes him more dominating and assertive than girls at a later time in life. Many skills are learned during the course of growth.

## 2. Interpersonal Skills

The most vital part of interpersonal skills is communication skills. A girl masters a different line of communication, both verbal and nonverbal, that marks her entry into a so-called "Women's World". It is exclusively a social construct created out of communication style, similarities in physical and mental traits, and sexual characteristics. This is to say that women have a "world" of their own irrespective

of familiarity or boundaries which are kept opaque for men. Despite the fact that females want to keep most of their physical, psychological, and biological, matter private and intimate, they feel no reluctance to share it with those of their same gender. The "hidden world" of women is created out of their characteristic communication style, similarities in physical and mental traits, and sexual characteristics. Although in intellectual capability both are equal, the thinking process of men and women vary. Men look for facts while women look for detail. The skill sets that both genders acquire are distinguishable and different. Females are superior to males in the acquisition, possession, and dispensation of a variety of communication and conversational skills.

The conversation is the best means of interpersonal communication. There are three realms of interpersonal communication namely specificity, cordiality, and vividity. In all interpersonal communications most often we situate within the specificity realm. This is marked by brevity and simplicity. Brevity means being focused. Convey only essentials, just enough to render the relationship sustaining. When it moves into the next realm of cordiality, the best is to ask does the relationship serve any purpose to both parties. In order to get a relationship growing it is essential to move into cordiality where you reveal yourself gently and others reciprocate the same way.

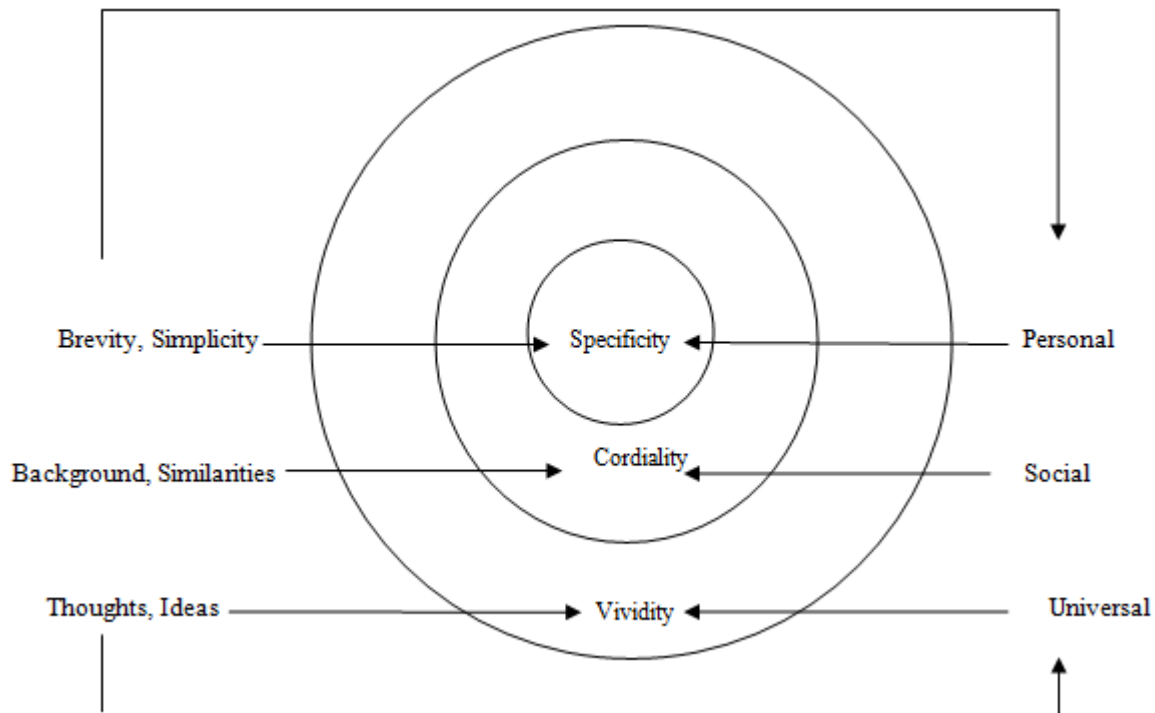


Figure 1: Realm of Communication

Compatibility of interests emerges in this context to foster communication. Vividness is still further exemplified when you enter into broader areas of thoughts, ideas, and reflection, and travel delimiting borders. In the context of a specific relationship, it is counterproductive to slip into vividness. Vividness is mostly absent in feminine one-to-one conversations. However, it is commonly used as a brainstormer to understand the male who is on the other end, in case needed. A diagrammatic presentation of the realms of conversations is represented below. (Figure-1).

### 3. Nurturing Skills

Women are born with the inherent capability to conceive, deliver and bring up the child. A variety of skills that come into interplay in the process is called nurturing skills. The young one has to be carefully carried through all the odds she faces and the moment it is given birth, a lot of caring is demanded. Therefore she is inclined to learn these skills far earlier through family and peer-group as well as literature on parenting. Boys at the same time focus on mastering adventures and physical fitness. Nurturing skills constitute caring for the young baby, responding to its needs and requirements at its own wishes. As the child advances in age, the role of the mother also transforms from one to the other. A young baby demands a lot of attention from its mother in feeding, sleeping, attending to toilet needs, and bathing. The entire range of these activities involves routine management skills to be better able to attend to the needs of the child. As time continues a set of parenting skills are called for such as listening, persuading, protecting, and timing of growth changes. Further, as it grows socialization skills are necessary. These pertain to language learning, object identifying, stimuli responding, and grooming behaviour. Further at a much later stage, yet another set of integration skills is employed. These for example are retaining cohesion as a family, support providing, balancing change, and redefining perceptions.

Table 1: Skill Sets required for Nurturing

S. No	Essential Skill Sets	Performing Activity
1	Routine management	Feeding Sleeping Bathing Excreting
2	Parenting	Protecting Persuading Listening Timing
3	Socializing	Language learning Object identification Stimuli responding Behaviour grooming
4	Integrating	Providing support Balancing change Retaining cohesion Redefining perceptions

Unlike men, the woman as a mother maintains herself nonjudgmental about the child's actions if the child has grown older. This enables her to keep an open channel of the transaction between herself and the son or daughter. Integration skills refer to the skills that are a set of skills that maintain the family intact. The children often anchor on the mother to ease the pressures of ambiguous and complex situations that generate stress. They find her supportive in times of difficulties and trauma. Integrating involves how the family as a system connects with the outer world of the larger social system. The nurturing skills and context of requirement are provided in table-1.

### 4. Lateral Thinking Skills

Intellectually there is no difference between men and women, but unlike men women normally think and talk about very mundane matters in day-to-day conversations. Depending on age, the conversations also vary in subjects from food to fashion, from kids to relatives, or matters of

rites and domestic affairs. Lateral thinking is the ability to think horizontally. It enables a person to establish a presence in different locus at a time instead of going vertically in-depth in any one situation. The eye for detail in the thinking process of women is closely associated with the skills of lateral thinking. They develop multiple inferences for a given response by applying it laterally. The capacity for lateral thinking makes it possible to see things unusually and create meanings that are not obvious to others, often limited to their gender. It increases their connectivity and generates we feeling. Women cut conversation on the approach of a man, not to trace what they were talking about for it can reveal their self and consequently the "hidden world" of gender. This sharpens the distance between both genders. Women like to maintain a cloud of mystery about them.

### 5. Women and Social Identity

A woman's identity is masked by her biological sex, the social construct of beauty, and the physical/social insulation that she maintains. Women are deprived of a prominent external sex organ contrary, to men. Psychologically this casts an impression of deep-seated inferiority in their minds. For a woman, her body is her sole asset and she has complete sovereignty over it. Hence maintaining distance from physical contact is practiced as a norm. Unlike those of males, exposure of her body per se or any act of sex on her, other than in a defined marriage relationship puts her at risk of losing her "possessions" to her. Those vulnerabilities of the woman increase her social cohesion with those of others of the same sex and consequently impacts her psyche to develop an identity unique to her. The relatively weak physical build of her body as opposed to the muscular masculine physique of men drives her to seek shelter in her identity as fair sex. The term beauty has become culturally synonymous in society with female appearance. Attire and cosmetics have obtained a female orientation in everyone's mind. Cosmetics and ornaments are embodiments of female passion to enhance "Beauty". Beauty is a culturally defined

construct rather than a concept of objective reasoning. Beauty is identifiable by sensual and sexual passion.

A woman usually hesitates to talk to anyone except with whom she is very familiar, and will not accept help or even appear to be looking at any man's face. She is very careful to avoid eye contact. Although aimed as a safeguard against encroachment or deception, all this has been part of cultural fencing reinforced through fear and taboo. She is unduly careful that eye contact would be taken to mean an invitational look. Violations of such behavioural expectations are cautioned by socialization agents of her own sex around her. This conditioning in a vicious circle results in cultural stereotyping of women. The resulting social insulation contributes to her identity along with the two other components namely Beauty and Sex. A woman's identity is a much-debated topic today. As a consequence of education, and liberation from traditional values, women are entering the workforce in a big way. Their contribution to economic earnings has become significant in the family. Consequently, in the present times, women seek a unique identity that enables her equality and presence in all walks of life with men while maintaining a foothold in her long cherished domains.

### 6. Gender and Morality

Morality, in a distinctive social plane, is perceived as rightful sexual conduct although sociability concerns between sexes as well as possession of vices are also included in it. It is interesting to note that there is a double standard of morality for men and women, men being leniently considered in judging, as compared to women, especially in matters related to sexual conduct and sociability. The adherence to expected norms of behaviour for the female gender comes from forms of oppression, social stigma, and socialization. The forces of oppression include the use of authority and reprimand while social stigma is the ridicule and blame attributed.

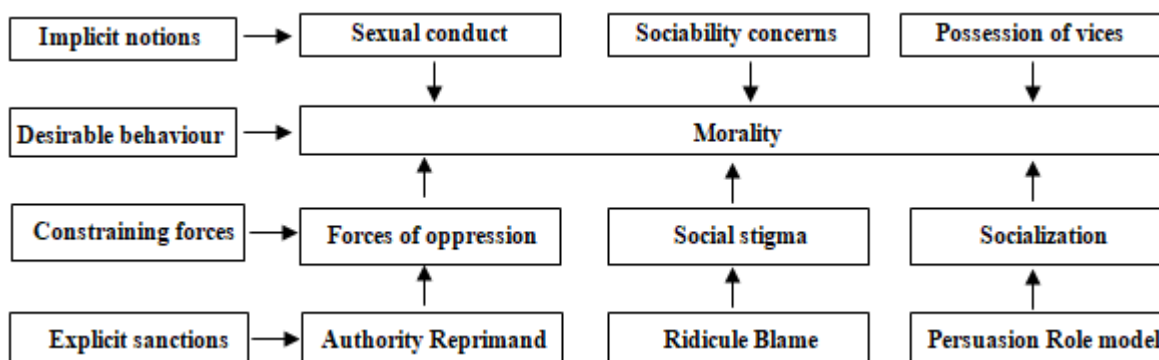


Figure 2: Dimensions of Morality

Socialization involves advice, persuasion, and the imitation of role models. Inappropriate sexual conduct, sociability concerns, and possession of vices govern the implicit notions of undesirable behaviour (see figure 2).

### 7. Conclusion

Gender-based skill sets of both males and females markedly differ to distinguish. The females are superior to males in

acquisition, possession, and dispensation of a variety of communication skills-- both verbal and nonverbal. This enables them to remain cohesive and stand unique from men. Biologically prepared to assume motherhood, women accomplish a unique set of nurturing skills. Nurturing, skills evolve over time whereas interpersonal skills are developed through conditioning and socialization. The inclination for lateral thinking makes them versatile. These differences in skill sets could be attributed to gender differences and are

related to the role they perform, their mental abilities, and sexual predisposition.

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