

Generational Inspirations: Aging, Strength & Diversity



Marilyn R. Gugliucci, Ph.D., FAGHE, FGSA
Director, Geriatric Education and Research
University of New England
College of Osteopathic Medicine
April 19, 2007

Objectives



- Differentiate generational values and how these may impact how one cares for or communicates with older persons
- Identify strategies that decrease generational differences to enhance interactions with older persons

Gerontology

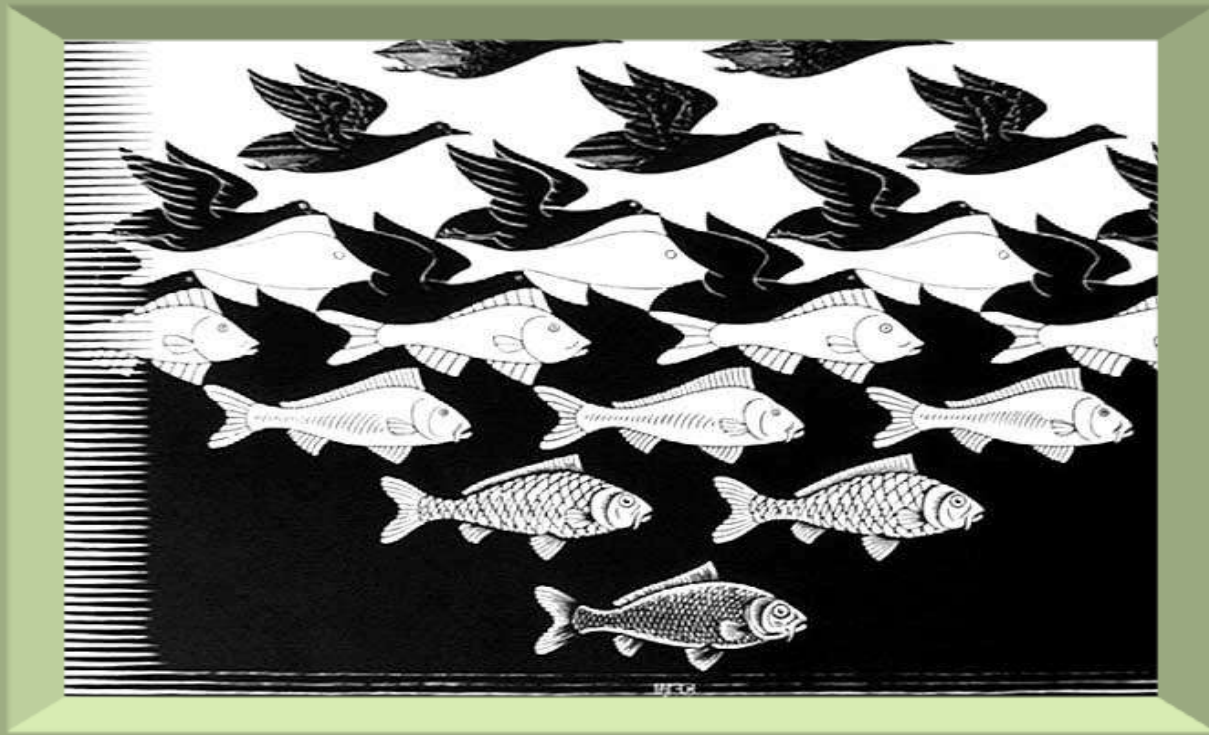
- Study of aging process and individuals as they grow from midlife through later life
 - ◆ The study of physical, mental and social changes
 - ◆ The investigation of the changes in society resulting from our aging population
 - ◆ The application of this knowledge to policies and programs

Geriatrics

- The study of health and disease in later life
- The comprehensive health care of older persons
- The well-being of their informal caregivers

So what *IS* a Generation, anyway??

- A group of people who can be:
 - ◆ Demographically identified by biological trends; and
 - ◆ Have shared experiences...



Only Kidding...

Generational Identity

- Events and Conditions we experience during our formative years defines what influences
 - ◆ *Who We Are*
 - ◆ *How We View the World*

Point to Remember

- The generation we grow up in is just one of the influences on adult behavior.

Four Generations At Work

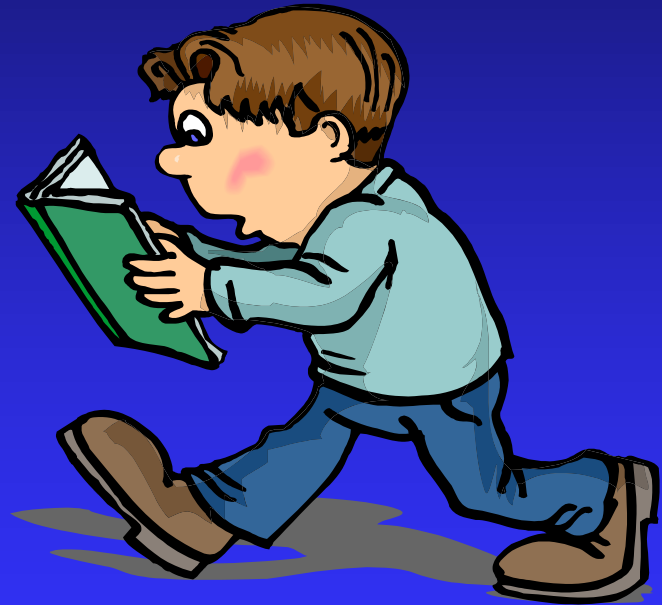
Lost Generation (born 1883-1900)

G.I. Generation (born 1901-1924)

- Silent Generation (born 1925-1942)
 - Baby Boomers (born 1943-1960)
 - Generation X (born 1961-1981)
 - Generation Y/Millennials (born 1982-2001)
- Futuristic Generation (born 2002 -)

Silent Generation

Born 1925 - 1942



Aka - Traditionalists

Silent Generation

- 50 million born as Silents
- “Generation without a cause“
- Desired job security
- Early marrying ages: Male avg 23/Female avg 20
- Started divorce epidemic
- Cold war generation
- Conformity encouraged: "children should be seen and not heard"
- Brought the US civil rights and unparalleled economic and artistic wealth

Silent Generation

- Marching orders: Do as you're asked. Show up on time. Never question authority.
 - ◆ Their mothers taught them well.
- Silents are panicking as they hit their 60's and 70's They wonder, "Have we really lived?"
 - ◆ They didn't save the world like the previous generation. Their war was Korea. *Who's heard of that?*
- They didn't squeeze life for all its satisfactions the way Boomers have.

Silent Generation

- Today, many Silents retire early (95% so far), choosing to divorce their former selves, finally following their bliss.
- They have been waiting. Deferring what they really want to do, postponing the person they really want to be.
 - ◆ *“It's as if we were working, getting along, conforming and doing that which was expected, and BAM! Like lightening, the realization hit us that we only go around once and it's time to start living it on our own terms.”*

Baby Boomers



Born 1943-1960

Boomer Generation

- 76 million Boomers
- “Boom” in birthrates after WWII
- Had stay-at-home mom’s
- TV became popular
- The 1960’s defined the Boomers
- Developed personalities that mixed high self-esteem with self indulgence

Boomer's Sayings

- Groovy... Hot...Funky, Neat or Super Neat
- They were "beatniks, hooligans, no counts, hoods, whippersnappers, cry-babies, spoiled-rotten, The Kids Who Did Not Walk Three Miles To School-ers."
- *“Each generation looks older, slower and dopier to the next one, until that generation ages enough to realize they aren't the center of the universe, either. Gee.”*

Generation X

Born 1961-1981



Aka – Thirteeners (13th Generation); Slackers

Gen X

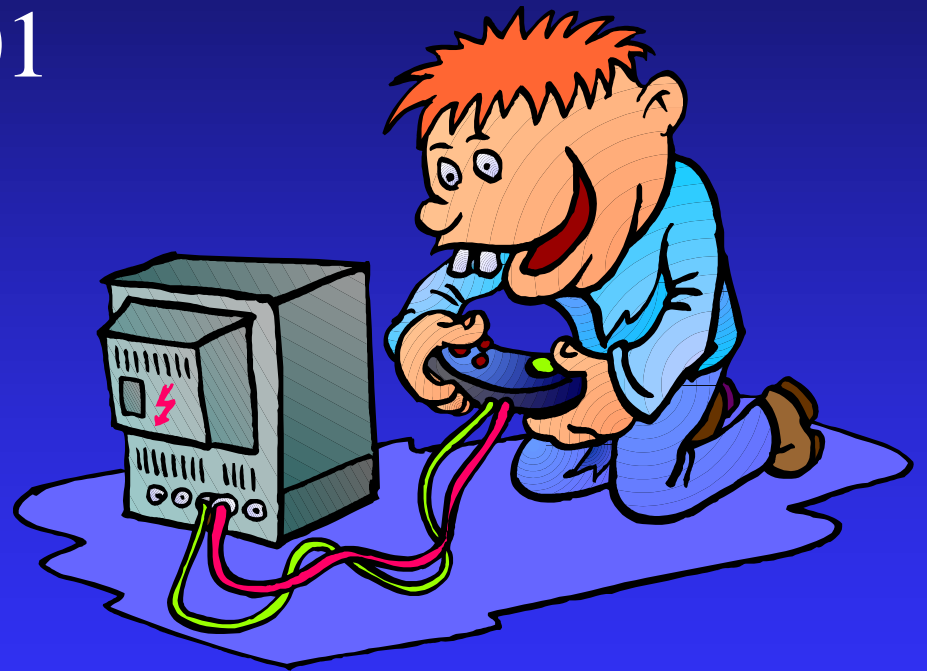
- 60 million of them
- Described as tough to motivate, too expectant, lazy, skeptics, and loners
- Grew up with highest divorce rates ever, computers, and AIDS "latch-key kids"
- Roe v. Wade (1981) legalized abortion
- Dotcom jobs leaving many without job security
- Cold war ends/Challenger explodes
- Strong individualism

GENERATION X

- Drawn to opportunities that offer them opportunities to learn, enjoy, and be recognized
- Describe *themselves* as caring, committed and seeking opportunities for learning and leadership
- Value frequent feedback on their performance, recognition, increased responsibility and exposure to decision-makers
- Attracting and retaining them in the workplace will depend upon an organization's ability to be flexible, adaptive and responsive to their needs.

Generation Y

Born 1982-2001



Aka – Millennium Generation; i.generation
Echo Boomers

Gen Y

- 57 million strong
- More racially diverse (1 out of 3 consider themselves non-Caucasian).
- 1 out of every 4 lives in a single-parent environment
- 3 in every 4 have working mothers.
- Largest consumer group in the history of the U.S.
- Most valued traits are individuality and uniqueness
- Have a global and diverse perspective that other generations did not have

GENERATION Y

- Can be cynical and driven by a need for instant gratification – *spends \$172 billion a year; saves \$39 billion*
- Their strengths are adaptability, innovativeness, efficiency, resiliency, tolerance and commitment
 - ◆ Challenge is motivating to them and can help in retaining them for a sustained period
- To engage this group, organizations need to tell the truth, explain the why, tune in to their frequency, make them a star, and look for rewarding opportunities

Events and Experiences

Silents:

- Great Depression
- New Deal 1933-38
- World War II
- Korean War

Xers:

- Fall of Berlin Wall
- Watergate
- Women's Liberation
- Desert Storm
- Energy Crisis

Boomers:

- Civil Rights
- Sexual Revolution
- Cold War
- Space travel
- Assassinations

Gen Y/Millennials:

- School shootings
- Oklahoma City
- Technology
- Child focused world
- Clinton / Lewinsky

Values

Silents:

- Hard work
- Dedication & sacrifice
- Respect for rules
- Duty before pleasure
- Honor

Xers:

- Diversity
- Techno literacy
- Fun and informality
- Self-reliance
- Pragmatism

Boomers:

- Optimism
- Team orientation
- Personal gratification
- Involvement
- Personal growth

Millennials:

- Optimistic
- Feel civic duty
- Confident
- Achievement oriented
- Respect for diversity

To sum it up...

Each Generation Has Its Themes			
Silent Generation	Baby Boomers	Generation X	Generation Y
Hard Work	Personal Fulfillment	Uncertainty	"What's Next?"
Duty	Optimism	Personal Focus	On My Terms
Sacrifice	Crusading Causes	Live for Today	Just Show Up
Thriftiness	Buy Now/ Pay Later	Save, Save, Save	Earn to Spend
Work Fast	Work Efficiently	Eliminate the Task	Do Exactly What's Asked

Source: Center for Generational Studies

Generational Interaction: An Example

- Traditionalists and Boomers may have a tendency not to question or challenge authority or the status quo.
- This may cause confusion and resentment among the Xers and Millenials who have been taught to speak up.

Generational Interaction: An Example

Xers and Y's who have had different life experiences and communicate with people differently, may fail to actively listen to Boomers and Silents thereby missing valuable information and guidance.



Generational Awareness...

Like the water the fish swim in...they don't even know it's there.





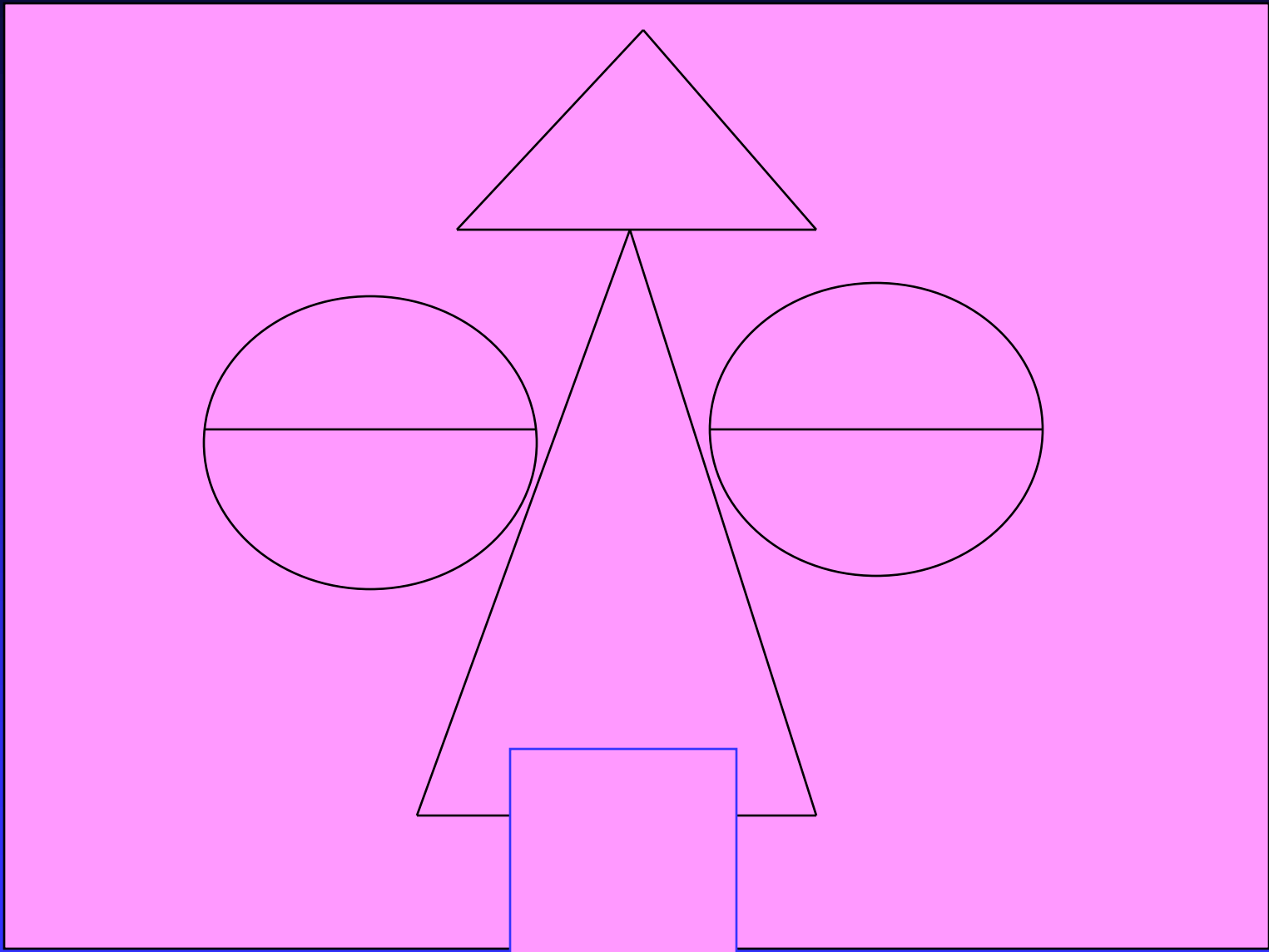
- The KEY is to take time to get to know a person as an individual rather than applying stereotypes.

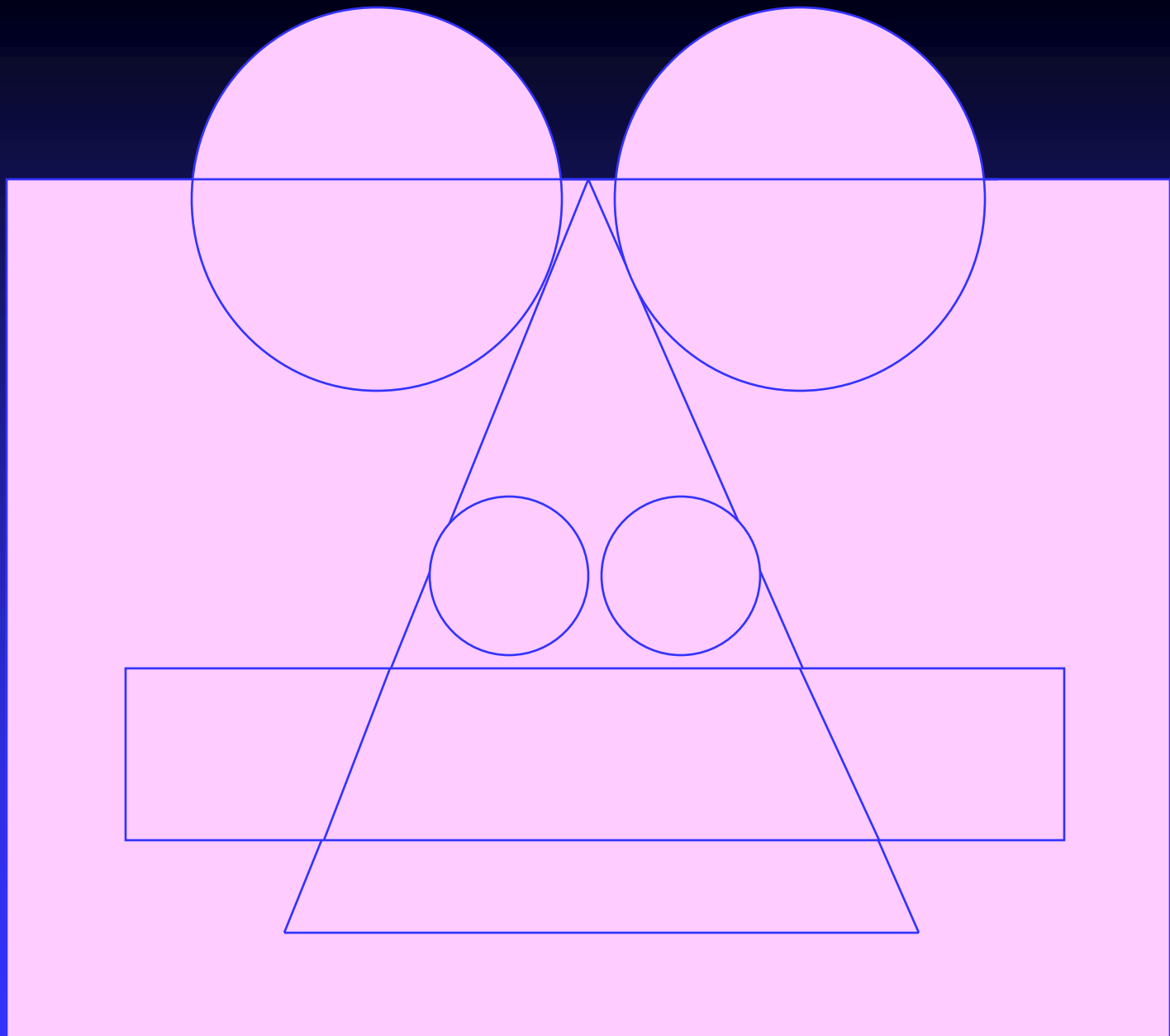


Generations-Back to Back

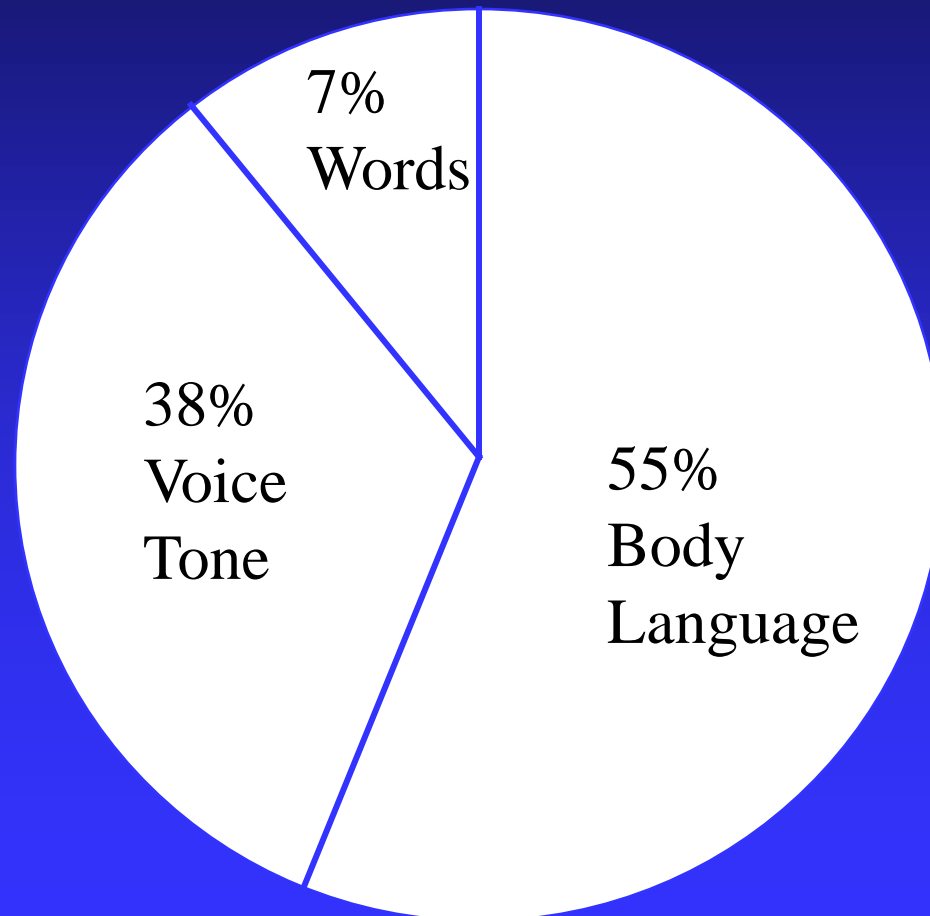
Back-to-Back Experience

- Pick a partner
- Set up so one person is facing the screen the other person is facing away from the screen
- The person facing away from the screen should have a piece of paper and pen/pencil
- A picture will be projected onto the screen, it will be a combination of geometric shapes (circles, squares, rectangles, triangles)
- **Part A** - the person with the paper can *only* ask yes and no questions and must try to recreate the image that is projected on the screen with the answers they receive from their partner - NO CONVERSATIONAL TALK





Communication



Communication

Non-verbal communication

Posture

Appearance

Body Movements

Hair style

Clothing

Eye contact

Standing position

Facial expressions

Type of touch

“Air” of Confidence

Body position while listening

Breathing

Voice tone

Proximity to others

The face, eyes, body, clothing, gestures, and touch speak volumes to others about your beliefs, attitudes, and values. This is also true of communication from your patients. Listen, look and observe to determine what they are “saying.”

Student Living as an Elder: Nursing Home Resident Project

- College/Medical Students are admitted into NH to live the life of an elder resident
- Ethnographic Research
- Experience lasts a minimum of 2 weeks



Outcomes from NH Project

- Living as elder precipitated 4 frustrations:
 - ◆ Time Disorientation
 - ◆ Lack of Independence
 - ◆ Lack of Touch
 - ◆ Waiting for what felt like endless periods
- These frustrations created:
 - ◆ Depression
 - ◆ Decreased appetite
 - ◆ Loneliness



Discussion



*Be sure to hug an older person or
someone with gray hair...*