Talking to the opposite sex can be difficult for some people.

GENDER DISCOURSE

February 26, 2015

José Cruz: Um, tell me about your current research. What are you up to these days?

Robert Long: OK, so the current research uh that I'm realizing that's uh, very very important, is um, looking at gender discourse. Now gender discourse is conversations between men and women. And to find out how this conversations- **how these** are uh disflluent and who has the most hesitation phenomena, uh, who has the most problems, and also to look at stress levels. So there's also a stress anxiety uh survey that I would give to see who is more stressed in talking to the uh the opposite sex. Um I- I have had, as you have had more um, more conversations with women, "what do you think about talking to men?" and they'll say, "Oh it's very troublesome." furrowed brows, and this is one of the population- this is one of the reasons the population's dropping because uh, no one's dating you can't date (Ahhh) unless you have conversations, and if you don't date you're not **going to** have a relationship, and if you don't have a relationship you can't get married.

José: That's- might not be so bad considering that- uh that's how the way most Japanese marriages are. There there are very few conversations in them (Mm) and they seem to be relatively healthy in that everybody knows their roles anyway.

Robert: Well, I mean it's all a role play. You have to look at some of the marriages. But I'm trying to get into a situation where um, people can learn to talk to each other more easily and less- with less stress and find that there's actually joy in talking to the opposite sex.

José: So is that the point of your research? You're trying to find a way to uh, provide data and a scientific assessment of what it is that is needed in the Japanese socio-cultural uh environment to get people to talk more easily to each other?

Robert: Yes. And- and also to see uh in particular how to get uh- what is needed to get men to talk to women and to enjoy the conversations and to uh, actually initiate conversations as well, (Hmm) so. (So you're looking) Too many too many people are passive nowadays (Oh gosh) and so they they keep expecting- The women keep expecting the men to come to them and the men co- it's like panda bears you know um (Haha. I'm sorry) And uh someone's got to take the lead here and and initiate and um, and unfortunately as you know a lot of these alpha males you- these sports people and the ones that are…

José: You're talking about Japanese society.

Robert: In society, in Japanese society, Or in any society, are the ones that are often taking the lead and reproducing. And we

would need some of the beta males to go out and learn how to initiate and be just as assertive and also to be uh, not only just to- conversationally competent but also to be charismatic. (Hm) So to learn how to initiate and to- leaders **if you will** in terms of this conversational mastery. Now why is this important? (Yes) And so um, for example I do- I send- I will interview again in April- yeah this coming April- uh candidates for our Space University program. So Space University is this huge two month conference that is located in different countries throughout the world for uh space engineers. And so my job is to select them and to- to then train them over a period of six weeks to um get them prepared to initiate in these incredible discussions and not to sit there like wa- wallflowers and, so basically you know students are able to listen and comprehend but they're not able to- I mean these students will aggressively- and argue about technology and…

José: Oh yeah, oh wow, like the kids that you are teaching now probably will get a shock like a lot of Japanese students. You can you can get them up for it and you can tell them, you know when you're dealing with Westerners they're much more aggressive (Yeah yeah) vocally and (Right) and socially and they they know it and they're taking their notes but when they actually get in front of of westerners (Mm) who you know don't bar any of their holds um they're just shocked because they're completely, as we say in English, in their faces.

Robert: Well I mean I've studied- I've done, I've studied kind of passively, I guess **to use a word** the- the idea of opinions and opinion formation and um, there's the attitude in Japanese society that opinions are troublesome and they hate having to get- engage in a conversation with opinions much less controversial opinions **because** they don't know how to react to them (Yeah) and they often (Lack of training) don't have (Lack of training) opinions. Yeah and so um, part of this is to help them to be able to survive to be more globally competent (Mm hm) And to instead of um, just be a- the passive uh afterthought of conferences and uh organizations uh, to ha- to let the Japanese start having more of a dominant stand. So not only- it's not only just a technical but it could also be a social and a political si- situation.

Word count	Time	Words/Min.
895	5:03	177.23

Pointers:

how these: Robert realized that it was better to say "these" instead of "this" and corrected himself (0:18)

going to: pronounced, "**GUHNA**" (1:00)

to use a word: using this idiom, Robert indicates that he is unsure if "passive" was the best word to use (4:16)

because: pronounced, "**KUHZ**" (4:31)

Discussion:

Are you more nervous talking to the opposite sex?

Do you like exchanging opinions with others, even ones with which you disagree?

What do you think it would be like for you to participate in an international conference?

BUSINESS INSIDER ARTICLE: "11 SIMPLE SOCIAL SKILLS"
https://www.businessinsider.com/social-skills-that-will-make-you-more-likable-2017-6

IMAGE COURTESY MARLEY COOK
https://www.flickr.com/photos/39528050@N07/3725789003/