

The Photo-Elicitation Interview

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The Photo-Elicitation Interview

One does not require formal academic study to know that, as human beings, we communicate consistently and constantly every day. However, it sometimes takes reading a study to understand the depth and breadth of such a statement truly.

According to a 2009 article in the International Journal of Listening, the average person could spend as much as sixteen hours each day actively engaging in communication, whether in a face-to-face or mediated context (Janusik & Wolvin, 2009). The study suggests that out of those total sixteen hours, approximately 7.3 hours (or 45%) were spent engaging in direct interpersonal communication via a combination of speaking/listening, utilizing e-mail, or talking on the phone (Janusik & Wolvin, 2009).

The Worst and the Best: Face-work at play

While it is easy to understand how much we communicate daily, recognizing and understanding the techniques we employ may sometimes be challenging. In academia, there are many communication theories, with many frameworks, by which the subject may be studied. This assignment aimed to examine "what communication strategies and techniques [...] people use to maintain their most important relationships." After conducting a series of interviews with four individual subjects, our team determined that the best way to analyze the data we uncovered was through Erving Goffman's theory of Face-work.

The APA (American Psychological Association) Dictionary of Psychology defines face-work as "[occurring] in social interactions, a set of strategic behaviors by which people attempt to maintain both their own dignity ("face") and that of the people with whom they are dealing. Face-work strategies include politeness, deference, tact, avoidance of difficult subjects, and the use of half-truths and "white lies." The conventions governing face-work differ widely between

cultures" (American Psychological Association, n.d.). This definition, while perhaps a tad dry, is helpful in understanding face-work. Perhaps, though, Goffman explains it best when he writes, "We are all just actors trying to control and manage our public image, we act based on how others might see us" (Goffman, *The presentation of everyday life*, 1959, p. 22).

Methodology

The agreed-upon theme of the interviews was a comparison of the individual worst and individual best days with a singular person of our subject's choosing. Each participant would be allotted ten minutes to discuss each day.

In preparation for this assignment, the team agreed to utilize a blended structured/unstructured format during our interviews. Each group member agreed to ask a minimum of 2 of the pre-determined questions per 'day,' with the option to allow unstructured conversation coming afterwards.

Interview Questions

The following eight questions were agreed upon for the group to choose from:

- (Worst) Tell me about the worst day you've ever experienced with your subject
- (Worst) What made this particular day so wrong?
- (Worst) What did you do to reconcile with your bad day?
- (Worst) In one of your worst days with one individual, why did you have the conflict with that individual and if that individual did something inappropriate, why did you think that way?
- (Best) How did your individual (subject) help make this day so memorable?
- (Best) What could have made this day go more enjoyable?

- (Best) Considering you still have a strong relationship with them, why do you think you were able to move past your worst day?
- (Best) Which took the most important role in one of your best days, your attitude and personality or the physical environment you were in?

Butland Interview Analysis

This interview analysis discusses the Interpretive Framework of Relationship Maintenance Theories outlined in the lectures and readings, specifically rhetoric and face-work mentioned in Goffman's article. The conclusions determined that there was tension in the subjects' face-work and how this person protected their important individual's image with their face-work. In this interview, the subjects' chosen individual displayed struggles initiating communication and caused tension between both participants, resulting in an ongoing stressful situation.

In the first half of this interview, the subject talks about their complicated relationship with the selected individual and how one-sided both participants' communication relationship is. When the subject is asked to talk about the worst day with their individual, she states, "I can't think of any specific, but I will say that it's ongoing. This person is my son. And he's very bright. But he talks incessantly. He said his brain is constantly moving. So he talks incessantly, and it's very stressful to be around him, in general. I can't think of any specific because it's all the time that he's around me". The subject is protecting their individual's image with their face-work. Goffman (1967) states, "He may want to save the others' face because of his emotional attachment to an image of them, or because he feels that his coparticipants have a moral right to this protection, or because he wants to avoid the hostility that may be directed toward him if they lose their face" (Goffman, *On Face-Work*, 2003, p. 8). When explicitly asked what happened on

this day with that individual, such as a conflict or lousy conversation, the subject answers, "Not necessarily? Not a conflict. It's just the way it is. Okay. But I don't know if you're going to ask me. Techniques. I used to deal with it later. But I could go into that".

In this instance, the subject is displaying corrective face-work and honesty but protecting the individual's inappropriate behaviour while maintaining a positive line of conversation. When asked about how this individual made the subject's day more memorable, she answers, "Well, he, he isn't known, this person isn't known for being loving, showing his affection. But one day he brought me flowers, that was a good day because it was out of the ordinary". Once again, we see corrective face-work and friendly and affirming commitment to the relationship. "Which took the most important role in one of your best days? Was it your attitude and personality? Or was it the physical environment you were in with this person?". The subject replied, "My initiative, your initiative? Yes. made it better because I, I was able to praise Him and thank him, and there wasn't much response from that". From this response, there is an element of wrong face or out of face; the subject expresses feeling for the reputation of their individual's emotional feelings and displays shamefaced. As Goffman points out, "When a person is in wrong face or out of face, expressive events are being contributed to the encounter which cannot be readily woven into the expressive fabric of the occasion" (Goffman, *On Face-Work*, 1967, p. 8).

The following interview question was how the subject's chosen individual took the initiative in the encounter and in what environment. "No, he was...you would identify with this. He was at work at the independent grocer's, and he was in the garden shop, and I was picking him up. And he came with a big bouquet of flowers for me. So it was in the car, I suppose, outside". From this reaction, the person who delivered the flowers presented tension between himself and the subject; this encounter showed communication problems, yet the subject protects

that person's image while alleviating the strain of an otherwise out-of-place situation. The last question of the interview was, how do you think you're able to move past your worst days with this person? Are you able to move past it? The subject replied, "I don't hold grudges. You just move on. And now I started out by telling you that the main problem was that he talks incessantly. But I have found out a technique that helped when we text each other on the phone. It's so much better. So, we do a lot of texting". Families will usually work together to defend each other's image; people are often considerate of others' face as well. In the case of the subject under analysis, both individuals have a one-sided communicative relationship. Both participants in the assessment show how face-work is part of rhetoric; there is a social exchange theory of cost/benefits analysis between these two participants in the interview.

From this analysis, we can conclude that the struggles in communication between both participants resulted in a tension of face-work and ultimately created an ongoing stressful situation. There were elements of protective face-work and rhetoric as well; the subject expresses feeling for the reputation of their individual's emotional feelings and displays shamefaced. The subject being interviewed protected their individual's image while alleviating an out-of-place everyday situation; this person attempted to maintain their dignity ("face") and the person they were dealing with. This interview was a qualitative study based on a semi-structured approach; the interviewer applied the relationship maintenance theory of social exchange through Erving Goffman's face-work. The themes of these theories throughout this interview revealed tension, corrective face-work, and the subject's affirming commitment to their relationship with their chosen individual. In both cases, each individual has a one-sided communication relationship. This analysis presented challenges in qualitative research methods because of the close-ended questions during the interview and lacked theoretical precision. As a result, the study's results

and the role of altruism in the subject's relationship with their chosen individual were generalized. However, this analysis enabled a deeper understanding of social phenomena and frameworks.

Massalski Interview Analysis

When involved in a close relationship, disagreements can cause issues significant enough to devastate trust, intimacy, and even complete severance. But other times, disputes are minor, with seemingly no real root cause. A person will become uncertain as to why something a close individual did bothers them so much, with the only certainty being that they need to see their way through. The other will be confused as to why their seemingly minor action was so offensive, despite them acting out of good intent. Because of the perceived insignificance of the issue, such disagreements can often go unchecked until they cannot be tolerated, creating an outburst that can damage the relationship even further than if the issue was addressed earlier. Other times, the issue's insignificance might evoke embarrassment - "Why would anybody care about this?" or "I don't want to be seen as weak and insecure." Yet, the problem persists. Of course, given the two individuals are in a close relationship, clear, honest communication would resolve these kinds of issues - but Goffman's ideas on Face-work often play a role in conflict resolution - some beneficial, and others disruptive.

For example, an interview subject faced with the question, "What was your worst day with your individual?" answered with a story regarding his cologne, his partner, and her obsession with his cologne:

Subject: "Basically, she's my girlfriend, right, and she likes the smell of my cologne. She likes it on, like, all of her stuff. She likes having this smell. But to me, it's my smell. So I

- I like having it be my smell on, like, me alone. Anyway, she found the cologne in like a pack of three, with two other scents. She bought it, and I was... really emotionally confused because she was really happy about it, and I was like... 'no, that's mine!' [...] I was like... really concerned she would spray it on a bunch of things, and it would lose the significance of being my smell."

Interviewer: [...] Do you have a reason why this cologne is so special to you?

Subject: "Honestly, [I don't know]. It was a hand-me-down from either my brother or my dad. It was free, and that's what I use. Maybe it's because I used it on my first date? Maybe I just grow attachment to random things. [laughs]"

After some contemplating, the subject decided to consult his friends before proceeding:

Subject: "Well, after she bought it, I texted a couple other friends and was like, "Hey, you guys are in a relationship. What are your guys' thoughts on this?" And I got varying opinions on both sides, and basically, the gist of it was like, "Hey, I need to bring this up, talk about it, be understanding," and so shortly after, I was like, "Hey, okay, I gotta talk about this." So I sat down and talked about it."

First, when analyzing this exchange between the subject and their partner, one can see that his discomfort arises from being forced to deviate from his line - that is, to reciprocate and celebrate their romantic relationship as partners. The subject wanted to maintain the uniqueness of their cologne, yet also wanted to appeal to their partners' desires:

Subject: "[...] we talked about it, sorted it out, like... you know, I wanted it to be used predominantly on me and within my control since it is my smell, but...She also brought up good points, like "What if you're away? And I wanted to be reminded of your smell?" and I'm like, "Ah shit! That's a really good point!"

Second, in trying to solve this pet peeve, the subject turned to advice from friends who were also in a relationship before discussing it with his partner. (Goffman) defines this act as part of the "avoidance process," stating:

The surest way for a person to prevent threats to his face is to avoid contacts in which these threats are likely to occur. In all societies, one can observe this in the avoidance relationship and in the tendency for certain delicate transactions to be concluded by go-betweens (Goffman, On Face-Work, 1967, p. 15).

While the issue was ultimately resolved between the subject and his significant other, consulting an outside group before confronting his partner demonstrates the use of "go-betweens" to optimize his face when confronting his partner.

Overall, this exchange is an example of what Goffman defines as "wrong face," which is when "information is brought forth in some way about his social worth which cannot be integrated, even with effort, into the line that is being sustained for him" (Goffman, On Face-Work, 1967, p. 8). Goffman further elaborates on wrong face, stating:

Should he sense that he is in wrong face or out of face, he is likely to feel ashamed and inferior because of what has happened to the activity on his account and because of what may happen to his reputation as a participant (Goffman, On Face-Work, 1967, p. 8).

When faced with a new challenge in his relationship, the subject initially demonstrated the "avoidance principle" by consulting "go-betweens" for how he should present himself and his arguments in order to mitigate the extent to which he would be in wrong face. Ultimately, the problem was resolved, and the two have hardly any issues since - perhaps due to the subjects' efforts in optimizing his message or his face in Goffman's terms.

McAlaster Interview Analysis

Out of the four interviews conducted, this interview was perhaps the most difficult and the most fruitful in terms of providing examples of face-work. The difficulty in the interview stemmed from the sensitive content of the respondent's answers while simultaneously providing excellent opportunities for analysis utilizing Goffman's face-work theories. The subject (now referred to as RB1) provided answers to the questions, which were impactful due to their raw and deeply personal nature.

The context of the interview revolved around two important dates in RB1's life with their chosen subject. The first date—referred to as the 'worst day'—involved a family vacation to Disney World in Florida. The second date—defined as the 'best day'—centred around a less emotionally charged but equally powerful interaction some years later.

Throughout the interview, RB1 delivered a wide variety of lines, which Goffman defines as "a pattern of verbal and nonverbal acts by which [the subject] expresses [their]" views of a situation "and through this [their] evaluation of the participants, especially [themselves]" (Goffman, *On Face-Work*, 2003, p. 7). One example of a line delivered by RB1 occurred when the interviewer asked them to elaborate on how they felt during and after the 'Disney World altercation.'

It made it feel like all the work that I had done to set up the vacation was pretty much a wash, like it wasn't...it wasn't being appreciated. And the worst part is that it made everybody in the family feel super uncomfortable. So, what started off as being "normal" family bickering on a vacation—which you expect—it became an all-out war between different parties. You know, my-my one person wasn't happy because they weren't with

the people they wanted to be with, and other people were unhappy because they felt like their vacation was being hijacked by this person's internal wants.

The "line" in question (marked in italics) demonstrates RB1 attempting to gain face by highlighting the work they had put into the vacation. The result of this line may be considered two-fold. Firstly, with this line, RB1 essentially gains face, adding to their "positive social value" (Goffman, *On Face-Work*, 2003, p. 7) by communicating that they are a devoted partner and parent who deserved—and continue to deserve—recognition for the contributions they made in the vacation planning and execution. Secondly, the line results in the loss of face by RB1's subject by painting them in a negative light (at the time), as someone who "hijacked" the vacation due to their selfish wants. Arguably, the former result could be considered the truly desired result of the statement, while the latter was unintentional.

This first line delivered by RB1 is fascinating because while it adheres to Goffman's proposed "rule of self-respect," it defies his "rule of considerateness" (Goffman, *On Face-Work*, 2003, p. 7). RB1 makes little attempt to "give face" to their subject, instead allowing that person's perceived actions to speak for themselves.

However, while the sentiment RB1 expresses towards their subject and their actions that day does not necessarily change throughout the interview, RB1 later "gives face" to their subject. When asked by the interviewer if they had "talked to this individual about that day," RB1 responded, in part, saying, "Yeah, we've had discussions in the past about it, and, you know, the individual feels that they were right, that they were allowed to those feelings. And I don't disagree." With this quote, RB1 is offering their understanding of how their subject felt, validating that their daughter was entitled to her feelings of frustration and anger during the vacation. Again, the result is two-fold. RB1 "gains face" by being a mature adult who

understands the trials of young 'love,' while concurrently excusing the other party's actions as being minimally justifiable, thusly giving them face. This line may be the best example yet of "face-work," which Goffman clarifies "serves to counteract "incidents"—that is, events whose effective symbolic implications threaten face" (Goffman, *On Face-Work*, 2003, p. 8). Because of the nature of the relationship between RB1 and their subject—that of stepparent and child—one could argue that any negative face earned by the child may be reflected in the parent's image. Of course, this is but one interpretation which is vastly more subjective than objective.

Although the first line delivered by RB1 is an example of a "defensive orientation," the second line demonstrates what Goffman would identify as a mix of both "defensive" and "protective" orientations. Goffman suggests this is normal when he writes, "Some practices will be primarily defensive and others primarily protective, although in general one may expect these two perspectives to be taken at the same time" (Goffman, *On Face-Work*, 2003, p. 9).

The duality between the defensive and protective orientations may be witnessed in the latter half of the interview when RB1 recounts being asked to adopt their stepdaughter.

She came home one day and made the comment that she wanted me to adopt her. And it does, kind of, circle back and bring back the idea of however wrong or bad I think I'm doing in parenting or helping; this individual still wants to be part of...the group...still wants to be part of what I'm trying to build with my family and wants to be integrated into that.

Within this quote, RB1 "gives face" to their stepdaughter when she highlights the thoughtfulness and vulnerability of their stepdaughter's request. At the same time, RB1 "gains face" for themselves by demonstrating how their stepdaughter felt comfortable enough with them

to request something so deep and meaningful, a request which would not have occurred if RB1 were parenting poorly.

Throughout the interview, RB1 was—consciously or otherwise—engaging in Ethos maintenance. Each line presented, however ineloquent at the time, is meant to illustrate that the strong quality of their character warrants an image of someone who is credible and may be trusted. The attempt, this interviewer argues, is by and large successful.

Yang Interview Analysis

After being notified it was an interview assignment, obviously, the first question of our group was about the choice of interviewees. We initially thought that we could interview campus professors. However, professors were difficult to reach out to, and they may not share their stories about their close ones with us. So our group took a different approach, and we decided to interview our friends. Friends were easy to reach out to, and friend relationships also helped build a relaxed interview environment. It would engage our friends to share their stories about their close ones. During the preparation of interview questions, we used Cribb's methods to draft an interview outline. We carefully chose words to make interview questions. We put down time stamps beside the questions to control the flow of the interview. The purpose of those was to get the information we wanted from the interviewees successfully. We did not consider Rubin's interview idea much because we assumed that our group members and our friends were studying on the same campus and we would not have many cultural differences.

We finished our interviews and transcripts and discovered that Goffman's theory of Face-work was represented in these transcripts. I am going to use my transcript as an example. My subject talked about his worst with his cousin,

That day was bad, but it was not all his fault. Like you know, things were not going my way at that day. And then he was pushed all my emotions what you call this... he did not really deserve. The thing made it so bad just guilt afterwards. Saying that this is the person I grew with, and I would hit him like that. It was bad. Also, what happened afterwards we did not talk to each other for a while before having an apology. I think that time changed how we would interact for a long while.

My subject and his cousin both did something inappropriate. Goffman stated that everybody had a social role to play and would lose face if they were out of their characters (Goffman, *On Face-Work*, 1967, p. 5). In that case, my subject and his cousin grew up together and were relatives. By common sense, they should respect each other and get along because they are family. But eventually, they ended up in conflict, and their relationship was damaged,

It was, eh, he was the one more outgoing, extroverted, fun-loving people. And I am the one more like quiet people. I rather just sometimes being alone type of things. The conflict was me trying to have my alone time, and how my cousin normally interacts with people was making fun of them in a good way or bad way, just got you to react.

Later on, my subject confirmed that he tried to fix his relationship with his cousin.

The first thing was apology. Apology was the biggest thing to be brave enough to say sorry even though it was on him like he had choice to not forgive me and said that we are not friends anymore. It was brave for me to ask for forgiveness and it was kindness he would forgive me like that. The biggest thing was you took a lot of goodness from both parties in order to fix something like that. Of course afterwards, we were more open to each other. That whole thing could be avoided if I spoke my mind louder and informed

what I feel uncomfortable with what I am upset with. And for him to listen more people's opinions and what I want to say to him.

It was exactly the process of retaking face Goffman discusses (Goffman, *On Face-Work*, 1967, p. 22). The most important part of the apology method was the message receiver accepting the apology. In this case, my subject's cousin took the apology. In addition, my subject's cousin also tried to fix their relationship. "Yes, he did it as well. It took both of us being good in order to reconcile." In fact, the amount of face-work was doubled, and the result was cheerful. My subject said, "Yeah, I still do [have a good relationship with my cousin]. I am looking forward to see him when I go home. Sometimes he considers us more like brothers, not cousins."

My subject's best day with his cousin has less connection with Goffman's face theory because they did not really have a conflict for face-work to apply. My subject and his cousin just did what they enjoyed the most.

The best day was his birthday. If I remember correctly, it was his 15th birthday. It was the best for both of us because it was a mix of what we enjoyed doing. For him, it was playing basketball going outside meeting people. For me, it was playing video games, hanging out talking. We both got a lot of good memories.

The difficulties of interview methods were recording data and organizing them into a transcript. My friend would allow me to interview him, but we had a schedule conflict. Although we were using voice call communication, I was missing some information during the interview. For example, I could not see the subject's facial expression and body language. I could misinterpret the subject's feelings and emotions behind a certain event. Also, doing the transcript took some time because I had to filter out unnecessary information. In conclusion, interview as a

research method can provide a real-life experience for theories to verify themselves and a thick description of a social phenomenon.

Conclusion

Throughout the interviews conducted, one theme, more than any other, stood out the most. When our interviewees were asked about their subjects, they were open and honest. The worst days were often very bad. However, as dismal as those worst days may have been and as harsh as some of our interviewees' comments appeared, a dramatic shift occurred when discussing the best days with those same subjects. For almost every negative aspect they discussed regarding their worst day, the team identified an effort to make up for any loss of face (for themselves and their subjects) by utilizing both defensive and protective face-work tactics. While our interviewees appeared to be more than sufficiently comfortable venting about their worst days, allowing their subjects to lose some measure of face, they sought to make up for lost ground, performing face maintenance during the positive recounting of stories.

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Appendix A- Butland Interview Transcript

Interview Transcript: Relationship Maintenance Theories - Paul

Paul

Hi, my name is Paul Butland. And I'm here today to understand better how people use communication strategies and techniques to maintain their most important relationships. This interview will take about 10 to 15 minutes. And I'll ask you some questions. Throughout, I'd like you to think about someone in your life who was important to you and requires special efforts at communication. A couple of things before we start. The first is that everything about this interview will be confidential. So even if we publish information from this interview, it will not be linked to your name more than anything personally identifiable. If we quote you in any research documents, they would also not include your name. If there's anything you don't want, on the record, even despite that confidentiality, please let me know. And I'll make sure that it's not in any of my reports. And, also this interview will be entirely voluntary on your part. I don't expect there will be any uncomfortable questions. But if there are any, you can let me know. And I will either exclude them, or at any point you feel uncomfortable and want to exit the interview, please let me know. And we'll cancel the entire process. Do you have any questions for me before we start? No? Okay, that sounds great. Okay, let's proceed. So first off. This is a worst, worst day scenario, worst day in your life. Tell me about the worst day you've ever experienced with this individual.

Subject

As far as communication goes,

Paul

Yeah, as far as communication goes, oh, a bad day of like conversation or on the phone or on?

Subject

I can't think of any specific, but I will say that its ongoing. This person is my son. And he's very bright. But he talks incessantly. He talked his brain is constantly moving. So, he talks incessantly, and it's very stressful to be around him. In general. I can't think of any specific, because it's all the time that he's around me. Okay, I don't know if that answers your question.

Paul

So, can you think about what made this particular trait in him? That makes it so difficult?

Subject

Yes, it's biological, yes. he is. In his makeup, yeah. Okay. He, I don't know how much detail you want me to go into, but he can't help it. He can't help it. If he goes on medication, he's like a zombie, okay, so we just I just put up with with the inability to, you know, communicate, it's very difficult. It's one sided.

Paul

So, say, for instance, in one of your worst days with this individual, you either had a conflict or that person did something inappropriate. So why didn't you? Why did you think in that way, the way you did when you had that conversation, or he did something inappropriate?

Paul

So, was it more than just his behavior? Or did he do something inappropriate, or it's conversation or did you have a conflict?

Subject

Not necessarily? Not a conflict. It's just the way it is. Okay. But I don't know if you're going to ask me. Techniques. I used to deal with it later. But I could go into that.

Paul

Okay, so did you think and did you think and the way that you did think the way that you did or do because his behavior is somehow inappropriate or a bit of a difficult question, isn't it?

Subject

Well, yeah. I mean, you can delete some of this stuff, too. Yeah. I don't know if I have chosen the proper person. I can't think of anything specific. Okay. Then he's done to make his behavior like that.

Paul

it's, it's the way he is, his condition or whatever. Yeah. Okay. Hey, now what did you do to reconcile with this reconciled with this type of questions are Yeah, like how did you know?

Yeah, how did you?

Subject

I don't think the questions that are appropriate for me for this person.

Paul

Okay, let's go to the next question. Now we're talking about your best day with this individual. A good day. How did this person help make this day so memorable that you can remember a day that you can remember? A memorable or a good day, a memorable day?

Subject

Well, he, he isn't known, this person isn't known for being loving, showing his affection. But one day he brought me flowers, that was a good day because it was out of the ordinary.

Paul

And can you think what, what may or may have not? What could have made this day more go
more enjoyable?

Subject

In the manner in which he presented the flowers, okay. You know, it was just sort of here
you go, but it meant a lot to me.

Paul

Yeah. Okay. So that made you so that.

Paul

Made you feel absolutely, yeah. Great. Yeah. Good. Good. Yeah.

Paul

So, which took the most important role in one of your best days? Was it your attitude and
personality? Or was it the physical environment you were in with this person?

Subject

My initiative, your initiative? Yes. made it better because I, I was able to praise Him and thank
him and there wasn't much response from that.

Paul

So, you're being forward and you're taking the initiative. When that during that conversation,
what type environment were you when this was happening? Was this at home? Or

Subject

No, he was, you would identify with this. He was at work at independent and he was in the
garden shop, and I was picking him up. And he came, he came with a big, bouquet of flowers
for me. So it was in the car, I suppose, outside.

Paul

That was kind of a nice gesture, sort of coming from the heart. So last question, considering you still have a strong relationship with this person? How do you think you're, when you have a bad day with this person? How do you think you're able to move past your worst days with this person? Are you able to move past it?

Subject

I don't hold grudges. You just move on. And now I started out by telling you that the main problem was that he talks incessantly. But I have found out a technique that helped when we text each other on the phone. It's so much better. So, we do a lot of texting.

Paul

Less disconcerting or whatever.

Subject

It's to the point. Yeah. So sweet.

Paul

So, you just you just chalk it up to experience and just move on, move on. And try not to think about it because, it's not his fault. That's the way the person is right? They can't help it. Okay.

So, okay, terrific. Anything else that might be relevant you can think of?

Subject

I can't think of anything?

Paul

Okay, well, thank you so much. These are all the questions I have for you. What I will do after this is I'll get together with some of the other people in my group. We're conducting

interviews, and we'll take all this information and put it together. Then we'll compile report for our purposes. If you're interested, we can also send a copy of the report to you. But otherwise, if you don't have anything else you'd like to add, don't hesitate to get in touch with me. You already have my e-mail and that would be great. Are there any questions?

Subject

No, that report you're talking about?

Paul

It's a comprehensive analysis report or every interview and an analysis on all the people we've interviewed for members of my group, and we're doing a collaborative analysis based on the theories we've learned in class which are communication theories. Mostly about maintenance theories, maintenance, behavior, relationship maintenance. These are all issues of communication.

Subject

Okay, I wouldn't mind seeing that. I did this. Even though this is not my forte. I did it because I wanted to help.

Paul

I can e-mail it to you if you want?

Subject

Of course, I'm interested in what you're doing.

Paul

Good. Okay, so that's it. Thank you very much for meeting with me today.

Subject

You're welcome.

Appendix B- Massalski Interview Transcript

Kei Transcript

Kei

So we're gonna start off with the worst day with this person that is very close to you. So, question one: Tell me about it. What was your worst day with this individual?

Subject

What was my worst day... Umm, you see this is really hard, because there haven't been that many bad days. Umm... I'm gonna go with a semi-recent one, which wasn't super bad the whole day, but there were some minor events that confused me emotionally.

Kei

Okay.

Subject

Basically, she's my girlfriend right, and she likes the smell of my cologne. She likes it on, like, all of her stuff. She likes having this smell. But to me, it's my smell. So I - I like having it be my smell on, like, me alone. Anyway, she found the cologne in like a pack of three, with two other scents. She bought it, and I was... really emotionally confused because she was really happy about it, and I was like... "no, that's mine!"

Kei

Can you elaborate on that "that's mine" part?

Subject

It's my... It's my smell, and I like it in my control, primarily on me, because in my mind otherwise it's not my smell, it's the smell of my girlfriend's things.

Kei

She's applying it to all her stuff now.

Subject

No, she isn't. We talked about it, and got that sorted out. But that was what I didn't want to happen, and like... it was primarily on me, she was excited she bought it, I didn't put up much of a fight, and then I was like... really concerned she would spray it on a bunch of things and it would lose the significance of being my smell.

Kei

I see... So when you say significance, do you mean you hold this smell to be significant, or do you want your girlfriend to associate the smell to only you and uphold its uniqueness and the specialty of it; a "scarcity equals value" kind of mentality?

Subject

A bit of both. Definitely more the second one, the "scarcity equals value" one, as well as a personal, "it's my smell".

Kei

[laughs] I see. I understand. So, question two: What was to you the biggest reason why it was the worst day?

Subject

Hmm. Probably the fear of losing the value of the scent. It was not having an individual scent that represents me; needing to go out and buy a new scent that's probably gonna be super expensive.

Kei

I see. You didn't want the change to happen, you wanted to stick with what worked.

Subject

Yeah.

Kei

Gotcha. And that was a threat to it.

Subject

Yeah.

Kei

So, if you could change something about this day, what could have made it better?

Subject

Hmm. Maybe the conversation we had afterwards about it, could have happened before. That would have made it better, and less concerning and less emotionally confusing.

Kei

Can you tell me what happened, after what, was there a chance to talk about it beforehand? What happened?

Subject

It had been... kind-of brought up, where she had like, sort-of in passing, in a sort-of joking tone, because we haven't been able to like... see the cologne online or anything from the "find a match", so she said that she wanted to buy one before, and afterwards I was like "Hey, I have some concerns about how this will be used now that you actually do have it". So we talked about it, sorted it out, like... you know, I wanted it to be used predominantly on me, and within my control, since it is my smell, but... She also brought up good points, like "What if you're away? And I wanted to be reminded of your smell?" and I'm like, "Ah shit! That's a really good point!" So we had a conversation surrounding uses that you agree are for a mutual benefit, and it has not

been an issue since. If that sort-of "in-depth" conversation had been had before, It would not have been as bad an event.

Kei

Hmm. Now, speaking about your actions specifically, not your girlfriend's: What did you yourself do to reconcile? What did you initiate to reconcile or deal with this issue?

Subject

Well, after she bought it, I texted a couple other friends, and was like "Hey, you guys are in a relationship. What are your guys' thoughts on this?" And I got varying opinions on both sides, and basically the gist of it was like "Hey, I need to bring this up, talk about it, be understanding", and so shortly after I was like "Hey, okay, I gotta talk about this." So I sat down, and talked about it.

Kei

Right. You said that you texted friends and got various opinions. Can you share with me the opposing sides from this, just from what you remember. It doesn't have to be complex.

Subject

One of the people agreed that there is some personal value to having your own scent that you have control over, he also saw reasons why she would want the thing, but he said that if it bothers me, it's something that I should concern talking to her, and if I do plan on buying a new cologne, I definitely should talk about it with her, because that means it really bothers me.

Kei

Do you have a reason why this cologne is so special to you?

Subject

Honestly, no. It was a hand-me-down from either my brother or my dad. It was free, and that's what I use. Maybe it's because I used it on my first date? Maybe I just grow attachment to random things. [laughs]

Kei

How long have you been using it?

Subject

About a year.

Kei

And your first date was the first time you used it?

Subject

Probably. Yeah.

Kei

Interesting. And considering you're still so close with this person, why do you think you were able to move past your worst day?

Subject

It was probably really open and clear communication. That was how the issue got resolved, it's super cliché, but that is what happened.

Kei

It works.

Subject

Yeah. [laughs]

Kei

It's simple, but it works. And final question, looking back, did this individual close to you do anything inappropriate in your eyes, and why do you think so?

Subject

Hmm... I would say no. It's sort of like a... she did the best with the information she had, but it would have been nice if we had talked about it more beforehand, but she didn't necessarily know that I wanted that.

Kei

Can I ask about how long was it when she bought this cologne and when this bubbled and bursted? How long of a timespan was this?

Subject

Within 24 hours.

Kei

It was the day of.

Subject

Yeah, it was the day of.

Kei

Okay. And how long would you say it took for those feelings to subside? Quickly? Did it take a while? What do you remember?

Subject

I was probably over it within 24 hours of talking about it, it may have been within 6 hours of talking about it, but I don't actually remember if it was that day or the next day.

Kei

Did your girlfriend take a shorter, or longer time to reconcile with this? Does it still come up?

Subject

It does not come up, no. I would think that we're both sort of over it, and have dealt with it, but since its never come up it's hard to judge.

Kei

Can I ask how long ago this was?

Subject

Maybe a couple weeks?

Kei

Okay. Well, that was all the questions I had about your worst day - we're going to move on to your best day. And again, just like the worst day, tell me about your best day with this person.

Subject

The best day with this person, hmm... I have a really shitty memory.

Kei

No worries, take your time.

Subject

I'm going to say a recent date. So, this was during the summer, we went to... this was like a few days long, but we did a Henna tent, I helped her and her sister with a Henna tent at a fair, fall fair in... I don't want to say heffley, but past heffley, I don't remember where. But we set up a tent and did Henna, and it was a super good time.

Kei

And to elaborate on that, it was a great day of course, but how did your individual specifically herself do to make this day so memorable?

Subject

Well she herself was super happy and energetic, and that itself lifted the mood, but we also took breaks from the table and went to see rodeo type shows, and she would excitedly drag me along which got me excited for the show, and sitting together watching it with her being all excited and she's like, "That's what that means!" because I'm sitting there like "I've never seen this before!". It was just a good time to have someone who is excited about it sitting there and hyping me up for it, and having a good time.

Kei

That's awesome. And what played a bigger role: The person or the circumstances, and the environment, or the event you were at? How big of a role did each of those play?

Subject

I think the event itself... the environment was pretty important but I don't think it played a bigger role. I think it helped with the role, helped make it better, but it itself wasn't all that important - it could have been any event; a hockey game, baseball, or as it was, the fair. The people there... It wasn't just my girlfriend who made it great, her sister also had really good energy, but it was just a really good combination that was mostly fueled by my girlfriend and her sister's energy.

Kei

And what sort of energy was that?

Subject

It was just a good time making money. [laughs]

Kei

[laughs] So money is involved now!

Subject

It was, yes. Not a lot of money. I made like \$100-\$200 from a weekend, but that's not realistically that much... It was mostly a good time. At the end I got to actually do Henna on people, for most of the time I was collecting people's money for them, making sure they were watered and fed.

Kei

If you were told this event would have no money, but you were just doing the stuff you did at the event, would it have changed the day?

Subject

I don't think it would have, no. I think it would have been just as fun.

Kei

Alright, I think I'm all out of questions now.

Subject

You're all out of questions now?

Kei

Yeah. Alright. Well, thank you for your time.

Subject

Of course.

Appendix C- McAlaster Interview Transcript

Robert

Can you tell me about the worst day you've ever experienced with this particular person, please?

Subject

We had a really bad day when we went to Disneyland...actually, it was Disneyworld. Disneyland wasn't as bad. This person found ways to make what was a simple, supposedly enjoyable family vacation into a day full of pain and agony. Every time you turned around, it had something to do with this person's boyfriend and how it made them feel. And it was all about what they wanted to do, and it took a lot of energy out of the family. You couldn't turn anywhere without feeling like you were hijacked by this person and their emotions.

Robert

How did that make you feel?

Subject

It made it feel like all the work that I had done to set up the vacation was pretty much a wash, like it wasn't...it wasn't being appreciated. And the worst part is that it made everybody in the family feel super uncomfortable. So, what started off as being "normal" family bickering on a vacation—which you expect—it became an all-out war between different parties. You know, my-my one person wasn't happy because they weren't with the people they wanted to be with, and other people were unhappy because they felt like their vacation was being hijacked by this person's internal wants.

Robert

Can you give us a [specific] example of what made it the worst?

Subject

I guess one thing that comes to mind is going to dinner—and if you've ever been to Disneyworld, you know all these cool restaurants out there with different themes, and so, we had figured out, my husband and I had figured out a different restaurant that would please each one of our kids. So, we'd taken the time to figure out, okay, this restaurant, one of our kids would really like it, and this one, you know, would really like this one. And so, the one night, we picked the-the restaurant that our son was going to like the most, which my husband was really into, and it was supposed to be fantastic, like dinosaurs and animated elements all around the room, and we ended up not even seeing anything. My husband was completely frustrated because all my daughter wanted to do, or all she could do was sit there and worry about a boyfriend that, you know, she was 15...14...so I mean, like, really, this boyfriend thing wasn't going to be that big of a deal, but yet she made him the forefront of the vacation. And the anger was just horrible because nobody could figure out how to get out of that space. Now this dinner, that was supposed to be fantastic was horrible. Nobody wanted to sit together, no one wanted to be sitting by each other, and nobody could talk. So, basically, you're looking around thinking, "We're spending all this money to have fun, and it's not enjoyable. It's actually a big fight. And I want to be anywhere but Disney."

Robert

Have you talked to this individual about that day since?

Subject

Yeah, we've had discussions in the past about it, and, you know, the individual feels that they were right. That they were allowed to those feelings. And I don't disagree. They were allowed to miss their boyfriend or whatever. But it didn't need to be a hijack of the vacation. When we went back and forth on it, you know, the conversation on my end was, "Well, you hijacked the

vacation that was meant for everybody and made it all about you by forcing the adults to focus *only* on you." When really, these-these adults and other family members all wanted to have fun.

But their response was always the same like they didn't see what they had done wrong. And it was about them. It was very inwardly focused and very, you know, everything is owed to them,

kind of feeling.

Robert

Okay. How did you reconcile that day later on? How did you come to terms with it?

Subject

It took a long time to come to terms with it. I was angry for a lot of reasons. I don't think you can come to terms with it without just accepting that that's who that person is. You can try to change them, but the reality is that if they don't feel like changing, you're just wasting a bunch of time.

So, I had to accept that if I didn't want to do all the work to change this person, that I had to just accept it for what it was and, you know, figure out that next time things will be different because

I will know not to invite that person or deal with them differently.

Robert

How would you deal with them differently?

Subject

I think the most important part is not to feed into the drama that they create all the time. And they do, they're a big cloud of drama, so...to be able to stay away from that and to say, you know

what, "Go live your drama in the corner, and I'm just going to go over there," and I guess in this

case, be more thoughtful of what I want and not what everybody else wants around me.

Robert

All those people involved, could anybody besides you and the individual have done things differently, hindsight being 20/20?

Subject

I don't know that things could have been done differently, and I say that because...every one of these moments are at a point in time in our life where other things are happening. Other stresses are happening that bring about where we end up being that day. So, could things have been done differently? Sure. Someone's ex-wife could have dealt with things differently. Some of the other family members could have been more patient—some of the younger family members—could have been more patient about our needs, but at the end of the day, they were kids, and I don't know that they really think when they're little, about our needs, per se, as parents. Could things have been done differently? I think, in hindsight, we should have just left that person [home].

Robert

How do you think that person, right now—if we could focus just for a minute or two on that person—how do you think that that person, right now, many years out, feels about that situation?

Subject

I don't think that they personally care. I'm going to be honest. I don't think this person actually sees anything that they did as being...hurtful to anyone. So even when brought back up, it's still an idea of "I did it because..." and it's always a...a way to find a reason why their actions were okay at the time. Even years later, there's still that belief, that the actions were worthwhile and that they were...they were okay.

Robert

So, there's been no self reflection?

Subject

Not really. The person, you know, identifies that they were really into this [boyfriend] and probably over...got over infatuated by the whole process. But you'd think they would change as they got to different partners, and they haven't. So, nothing shows me that there's anything different about how they bring up relationships and how those relationships seem to be more important than familial relationships at any one point in time.

Robert

Let's change gears a little bit. Let's talk about, let's talk about the best day you've ever experienced with that person. How did the individual make this day so memorable for you?

Subject

It's something really small. This individual had been going to counselling for quite a while, and her father and I couldn't see a path forward. But she came home one day, and it was...I mean it was really trivial, but she came home one day and made the comment that she wanted me to adopt her. And it does, kind of, circle back and bring back the idea of however wrong or bad I think I'm doing in parenting or helping; this individual still wants to be part of...the group...still wants to be part of what I'm trying to build with my family, and wants to be integrated into that. Now, you could think about a million reasons why it was fake or not fake, but I took it that day as being just an honest response to an internal need to be taken care of.

Robert

What do you think their request for you to adopt them, what do you think that says about you?

Subject

Hopefully, it means that they feel that I'm very stable. That I bring forth stability, love, attention and that I put them first. Often, I do with them what my mom did me. And it's to show that whatever they want to do is possible and feasible and that they have the strength for it. So, trying

to be a big cheerleader in the background, and I think that helps, and that they-they see that as being the next, you know, the way to feel good about themselves.

Robert

Did this request [to adopt] come before or after the Disneyworld trip?

Subject

After. It came after, and I don't think it was in response to a bad trip. I don't think any of that was still in the individual's head. I think it was more of a coming to realization with other things happening in their life that they wanted this to happen. I mean, it's always kind of a feel-good kind of feeling, to think that somebody wants you to...make them part of your family, and it's not that I said no to the process, because adopted or not, she was still family.

Robert

Considering you still have a strong relationship with them, how were you both able to move past that one worst day to move forward and get to that one best day? What do you think are the factors that contributed to both of you strengthening your relationship?

Subject

So, I don't know that it was ever in that person's mind that it was ever my worst day with them. I don't think, even after talking with them, I think there was still an inability to understand that that made it a bad day for me. So, I don't think there's anything that person did to get over that process. I think it was more a challenge for me to understand that I cannot control all events the way they are. I had to kind of lower my expectations on some of my relationships, and think they're not going to be as giving, both ways, as they...as I want them to be. I mean, in some instances, this person takes more than gives. I reconcile that at the time right now, it's what's needed for this relationship to work. They need more from me than I need from them.

Robert

Okay, so, it's fair to say that they're getting more out of the relationship right now than you are.

Subject

I think so. I think right now, I still act as a support system. I still act as extra strength. I still am the person that supports that process in happening. And I fear that if, if I was to go away, things might break down.

Robert

Thinking objectively instead of subjectively, is the relationship worth it? If you were to do an equation of...a cost analysis of what you of what you're getting out versus what you're putting in, we can see that there's kind of a deficit—or at least that's what I'm hearing—is it worth it? Is that...how long can you continue to do that in your mind...before...that deficit becomes too great?

Subject

I would have said...four or five years ago, that there wasn't much time left in that relationship. That it was taking more effort than what I was getting as pleasure back from it. But lately, what's happened, and the biggest twist of it, was that I got a grandchild out of it. And that, that grandchild made the dynamic completely different, because he brings a lot of happiness and joy, no matter what he's doing. I don't want to lose him and I feel that to not lose him I need to keep her standing up. So, it's not something that she's done, but maintaining that relationship with her allows me to maintain that relationship deeper relationship with my grandson, and that's important to me. And I don't see how I would separate that.

Robert

If you were to really dig down deep and say, "This is the magic pill that will make things better for me," whether it's realistic or not, what would that be? What would that be? What would you like to change, ideally, to get back to even keel where you're both putting in as much as you're getting out?

Subject

I'd like to see some of the selfishness go away. I would need the individual to understand that their needs for a family is important. But right now, their need for a family impacts my family's happiness. And so, I'd love to have my grandson here...but...there are other elements in that family that prevent that from happening. And them not understanding that pretending things are happy-go-lucky just because Christmas is right around the corner, and thinking things all go away, is just not feasible. It just doesn't reconcile in my head that they can't understand that. Just saying, "Christmas is around the corner, so let's pretend that nothing has ever happened," that's what I wish could happen. I wish everybody could pause, and just for a day and a half completely clear their heads and pretend that they don't...are not angry, are not mad, are not judging of somebody else. That's not the reality, and I would never ask anybody to do that because it would go against their happiness that day. So, it's a huge juggle. That's the problem with living in a family. When you live alone, you can make those decisions and, you know, it's my choice. My happiness is not stand-alone. It ties into other members' happiness who live with me. Their happiness is just as important as my happiness. So, I can't just say, you know, "You stop being like this so that these people can be part of what I want to be," and because I know that those whom I would want to change or think... don't have to change. So, it's not on them. It is the individual who chooses not to see the bigger picture. And...that individual is not wanting to help themselves.

Robert

Why do you feel that is?

Subject

There's like this...really bad "white knight syndrome" where they want someone to save them out of the crap that they're in now, the-the-the low life, the low part of their life they're in. But the reality is that they attach themselves to people that are not set up to win, either. And then it becomes a huge war of who's right. Somebody's personal thoughts now become the law, and because we don't agree with the same thing, you know, I may not have the same definition of consent, I may not have the same definition of love, I may not have the same definition, but the reality is that I can see when somebody is getting manipulated from a distance. I can see when things don't seem right. And I don't understand why people want to put themselves through or harm or more hurt than they have to. But, at the end of the day, I can't control it all. And even though I know best, and God knows I know best, I can't...I just can't... it's a choice. Do you live to fix everybody else's lives so that they're happy and you're happy in that manner, or do you live your own life and make yourself happy first, and hope that other people can live off that happiness? The first one is hard and painful, and I don't know if I want to do that anymore.

Robert

So, last question. Looking at the picture of them, right now, what do you feel?

Subject

I feel happiness for them being part of my life. I feel hurt for the amount of pain that they give.

Appendix D- Yang Interview Transcript

Alex

Hello I am going to interview you about your worst day and best with same individual. Do you have anybody in your head?

Subject

Yes I do and make me confidential please.

Alex

No problem.

Subject

Okay so I think for this one, it would have to be with my cousin. I am going to talk about my worst and best with my cousin who has also been my classmate for my elementary and high school. Let's start with the worst day. The worst day was rough because he has always been teasing and bullying a type of person. There was one time that it was so bad I got mad and I fought back like punching him.

Alex

What did make that day the worst day?

Subject

That day was bad but it was not all of his fault. Like you know, things were not going my way at that day. And then he was pushed all my emotions what you call this... he did not really deserve.

The thing made it so bad just guilt afterwards. Saying that this is the person I grew with and I would hit him like that. It was bad. Also, what happened afterwards we did not talk to each other for a while before having an apology. I think that time changed how we would interact for a long while.

Alex

Could you provide more details what kind of conflict did you have with your cousin?

Subject

It was ehhe he was the one more outgoing extraverted fun loving people. And I am the one more like quiet people. I rather just sometimes being alone type of things. The conflict was me trying to have my alone time and how my cousin normally interact with people was making fun of them in a good way or bad way, just got you to react.

Alex

How did you improve your relationship with your cousin?

Subject

The first thing was apology. Apology was the biggest thing to be brave enough to say sorry even though it was on him like he had choice to not forgive me and said that we are not friends anymore. It was brave for me to ask for forgiveness and it was kindness he would forgive me like that. The biggest thing was you took a lot of goodness from both parties in order to fix something like that. Of course afterwards we were more open to each other. That whole thing could be avoided if I spoke my mind louder and informed what I feel uncomfortable with what I am upset with. And for him to listen more people's opinions and what I want to say to him.

Alex

How did you reconcile from that day?

Subject

I am being able to speak more and he is being able to listen more.

Alex

Did your cousin apologize to you?

Subject

Yes he did it as well. It took both of us being good in order to reconcile.

Alex

Let's jump to the next topic your best day with your cousin.

Subject

The best day was his birthday. If I remember correctly it was his 15th birthday. It was the best for both of us because it was a mix of what we enjoyed doing. For him it was playing basketball going outside meeting people. For me it was playing video games hanging out talking. We both got a lot of good memories.

Alex

What could have made this day go more enjoyable?

Subject

Maybe be able to go to the town doing things we never did before. Maybe go hiking or trying new foods. Staying with close friends would also make it better. Maybe the day was longer like we stayed until 11pm.

Alex

Do you still have a good relationship with your cousin?

Subject

Yeah I still do. I am looking forward to see him when I go home.

Alex

Did your cousin share thoughts before about the relationship?

Subject

Yeah sometimes he considers us more like brothers not cousins. Because we initially grow up together.