

2.3 EGO BOOSTERS AND BUSTERS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Describe the relationship between self-concept, self-esteem, and communication.
- Demonstrate how the principles in Chapter 2 can be used to change the self-concept, and hence communication.
- Compare and contrast the perceived self and the presenting self as they relate to identity management.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. In the appropriate spaces below describe the actions of several "ego boosters": significant others who shaped your self-concept in a positive way. Also describe the behavior of "ego busters" who contributed to a more negative self-concept.
2. Next, recall several incidents in which you behaved as an ego booster or buster to others. Not all ego boosters and busters are obvious. Include in your description several incidents in which the messages were **subtle or nonverbal**.
3. Summarize the lessons you have learned from this experience by answering the questions at the end of this exercise.

EGO BOOSTER MESSAGES YOU HAVE RECEIVED

EXAMPLE

I perceive(d) my communication lab partner (significant other) as telling me I am/was attractive (self-concept element) when he or she kept *sneaking glances at me and smiling during our taping project*.

1. I perceived _____ (significant other) as telling me I am/was _____ (self-concept element) when he/she _____

2. I perceived _____ (significant other) as telling me I am/was _____ (self-concept element) when he/she _____
- _____
- _____

EGO BUSTER MESSAGES YOU HAVE RECEIVED

EXAMPLE

I perceive(d) my neighbor (significant other) as telling me I am/was not an important friend (self-concept element) when he/she had a big party last weekend and didn't invite me.

1. I perceived _____ (significant other) as telling me I am/was _____ (self-concept element) when he/she _____
- _____
- _____

2. I perceived _____ (significant other) as telling me I am/was _____ (self-concept element) when he/she _____
- _____
- _____

EGO BOOSTER MESSAGES YOU HAVE SENT

EXAMPLE

I was a booster to my instructor when I told her I enjoyed last Tuesday's lecture.

1. I was a booster to _____ when I _____
- _____
- _____

2. I was a booster to _____ when I _____

EGO BUSTER MESSAGES YOU HAVE SENT

EXAMPLE

I was a buster to my sister when I forgot to phone her or send even a card on her birthday.

1. I was a buster to _____ when I _____

2. I was a buster to _____ when I _____

CONCLUSIONS

Who are the people who have most influenced your self-concept in the past? What messages did each one send to influence you so strongly?

What people are the greatest influences on your self-concept now? Is each person a positive or a negative influence? What messages does each one send to influence your self-concept?

Who are the people whom *you* have influenced greatly? What messages have you sent to each one about his or her self-concept? How have you sent these messages?

What ego booster or buster messages do you want to send to the important people in your life? How (with what channels) can you send each one?

GROUP DISCUSSION

After completing the first part of this activity individually, share some of your answers with a small group of classmates. Then, as a group, answer the questions on the next page.

1. What channels are most important for you to receive ego boosters? or buster messages do you want to send to the important people in your life? How (with what channels) can you send each one?

2. What channels are most often used for ego busters that are unintentional? What advice would you have in order to avoid inadvertently sending ego busters?

3. After reviewing your experiences, what advice would you give to supervisors regarding ego boosters and ego busters?

4. After reviewing your experiences, what advice would you give to parents regarding ego boosters and ego busters?
