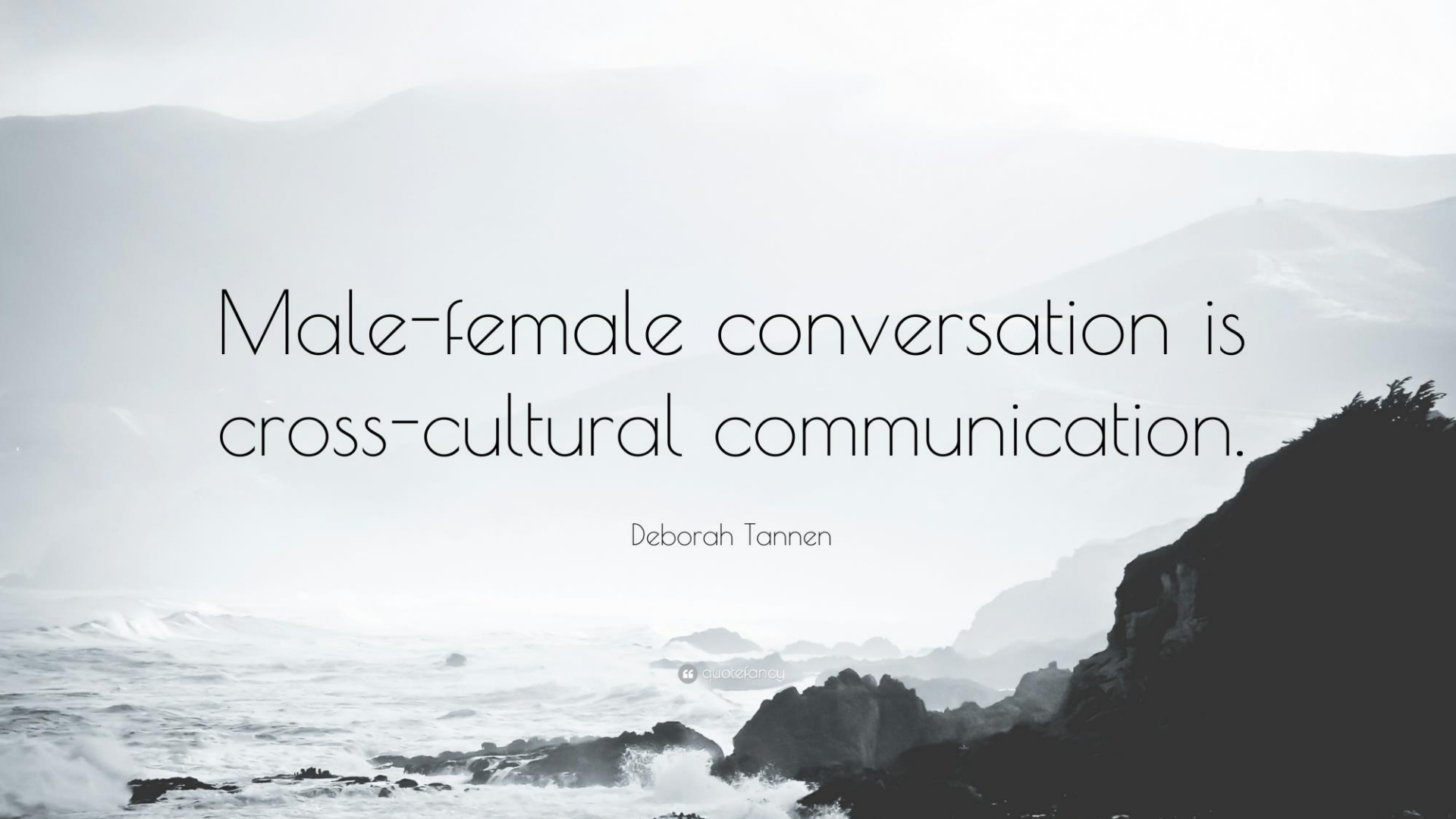


# Don't Let Unspoken Gender Rules Get In Your Way

Advancing Women in Agriculture Conference

**mindshift**



Male-female conversation is  
cross-cultural communication.

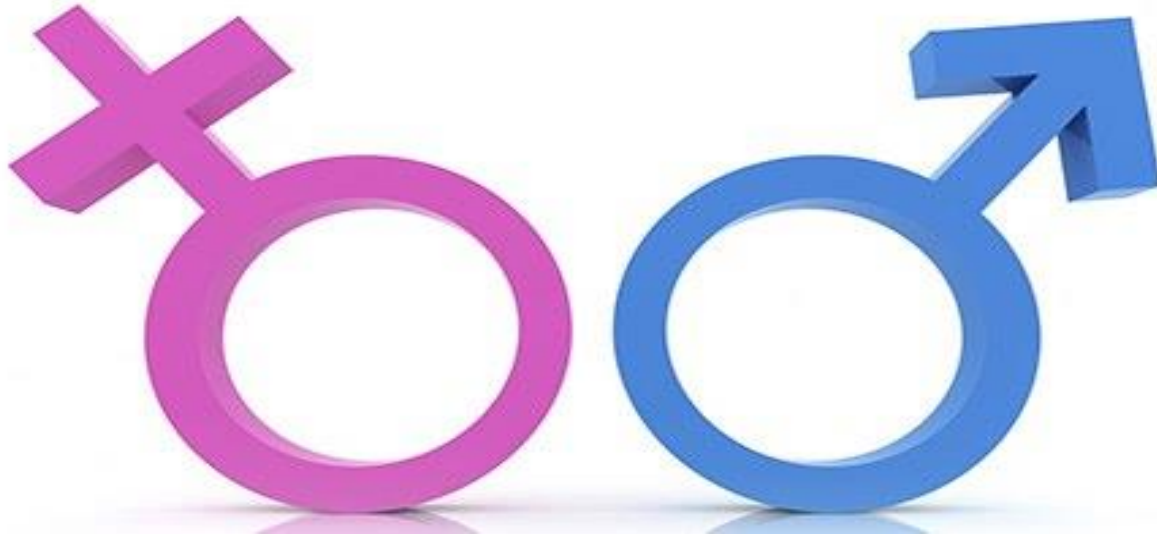
Deborah Tannen

“ quotzfancy

# About Gender Differences...

- Based on research and observed in the real world
- There are always exceptions
- Most people can adapt their behaviour if they desire

# The Rules Are Different



# Watch How Children Play

♂ Boys grow up in a hierarchy

♀ Girls grow up in a flat structure and share  
power equally

In a Hierarchy the goal is “Status”



In a Flat World the goal is  
“Connection”



# Hierarchy vs. Flat

- Hierarchy is command and control
  - Appropriate when time bound or emergency situations
- Flat is involvement from others
  - Effective when we need creativity and psychological involvement

Choose the most appropriate style for the moment



# Being A Team Player

♂ Loyalty, follow orders, do what needs to be done and support unquestioningly

♀ Share ideas, listen to each other even when we disagree and work collaboratively

# Being Friendly

♂ Friendliness comes and goes as needed

♀ Friendliness is friendship and friends are friends, period

# Women in Meetings

- Speak briefly and unconsciously share their time equally
  - Result: men see them as not caring enough about their ideas
- Use phrases and pose questions
- Smile a lot in meetings – silent applause

# Men in Meetings

- Speak at length to show passion in their idea
- Use a declamatory voice to bring up ideas
- Will interrupt in meetings and verbally talk on top of each other

# “The Meeting”

- ♂ Men will resist being influenced particularly in public and presell their ideas before the meeting
- ♀ Women think the discussion happens in the meeting and introduce their ideas then
  
- ♂ Men assign malicious intent to this behaviour
- ♀ Women see men as being underhanded

# Speaking Differently

♂ Men say “I will”

♀ Women say “I hope to” or “I’ll try”

♀ To women it’s a matter of honesty

♂ To men it’s a matter of risk

*Which one are you more likely to buy?*

# Women Linguistically

- Disclaimers: “This doesn’t make a lot of sense but...” or “I’m not sure about this”
- Hedges: maybe, kind of, perhaps
- Tag questions: I think we should do it this way “don’t you?” or we need to do it this way “ok”?

*Challenge? - In a flat structure this is very functional but men see it women don't know what they're doing*

# Men Linguistically

- Verbal bantering
  - “you look like a bug” means I really like you
- Women don’t banter
  - if men banter with women it can cause offence



# Nonverbal Communication

- Researchers put men and women in a scanner and showed them faces with different emotions
  - ♀ Women, a small part of their brain turns red and they get the answers right
  - ♂ Men, blood floods to the region of the brain known for making judgments about emotions and they struggle to get the right answers

# Nonverbal Communication

- ♂ Men don't make as many facial expressions as women
- ♀ When women nod it's to say they are listening, you have the floor, I am listening
- ♂ Men nod in agreement
  - Men see women nodding as saying I agree with you

# Success and Failure

- ♂ Men do well, attribute it to themselves
  - If they do poorly, the cause was external
- ♀ Women do well, it is due to task ease, they tried hard or got lucky
  - If they do poorly, attribute it to themselves

# Power

- It is difficult to be feminine and powerful at the same time
- Women are judged by a different set of rules than men when it comes to being assertive/aggressive
- The trick is, where are the boundaries?

# So Where To From Here...

- Whatever you grew up with seems like the right way
- Arm yourself with knowledge and understanding
- Always assume the most respectful interpretation and...

Follow the “New” Golden Rule...

*Treat others as they would want to  
be treated!*

*Thank You*

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