

That is where the critics are right- mere psychologising to help people collude with their oppression - like pills for housewives, who really need to stop being housewives, or go out to work (only they can't because the capitalists can't raise enough capital to create jobs, and *naturally* men get first consideration, and women can go back where they *really* belong).

Go to an ITA group, sister, and learn how to play the games the money-makers need you to play. After all, that's realistic, isn't it? You

can't really *expect* people to listen to your needs.

No you can't. So you learn to fight.

And then it's about power, not about being understanding anymore. Good God, we actually aren't *obliged* to understand and therefore accept their oppressive attitudes! In struggle,

Jean Roberts

Rochdale

Hans Lobstein

Unemployment - Who gets the jobs ?

I have become very interested in this problem of who gets the job, and why. When unemployment is high and competition fierce amongst trained people, how is it that some people can put themselves across and others can't? I have started to use group interviews as well as individual interviews for job vacancies, and it is a real lesson to see people on the one hand scoring off each other in a group, or putting themselves down in their own potential for the job saying quite directly that another member of the group would be better for the job than they themselves, assuming rejection. I like the person who is lively, has good, constructive ideas, a fairly strong personality even if that may spell trouble in future, is friendly and encourages others to talk, become involved and is fairly forthright. All this comes out in a group interview.

So what skills are there that can be learned for this purpose? If I were to be an interviewee and take part in such a group, can I learn to become more aware of the factors that may influence my selection for the job, how I come across, what expectations my future employer may have, if I can meet them, or how I can learn to meet them? I talked to careers officers and one of them, Liz Wilson, has kindly agreed to put her views on paper. As I expected from our discussion, she puts personality traits high on her list of requirements that help with job interviews. What are these hidden traits that either trip or propel the interviewee? Can anything be done to change them, enhance the good ones, increase the choice an interviewee may have in his relationship? How do I find out how other people see me and can I do anything about it, that is, do I want to do anything about it?

Obviously, an awareness of group dynamics, how people in groups relate, may be helpful. I can then sit back and wait to let the group unfold in the way I am aware may well happen, and I can anticipate and take advantage of any situation. I have a choice in my intervention. I can also become more aware of what the interviewer may want from me, I may learn to listen and elicit useful information. Can I become aware of the problems my new boss may have and how I can help him solve them?

Practice in these techniques is available and these skills can be learned by people coming together and practicing them. Role-change exercise is one of these techniques, and bio-energetics could be another, or co-counselling. I'd like to hear from people who do this sort of work or who know about such self-help groups or willing to start them, or want to find out how to get them going.

This is what Liz Wilson has to say:

SELF-HELP GROUPS FOR UNEMPLOYED GRADUATES

It is perhaps a fairly logical deduction that in a highly competitive employment market, such as now, it is the weakest who go to the wall. What constitutes weakness amongst unemployed graduates is an interesting problem since graduates are amongst the most intelligent and well qualified members of the employment population. The explanation for their lack of success seems to lie partly in certain personality factors.

To be successful in their job-hunting graduates (as others) need to be able to present themselves positively and attractively. This presupposes a confidence in what they have to offer, intellectually and personally, and a certain skill in putting this over, verbally. Those who fail are often deficient in both these areas.

The selection interview, in particular, discriminates against those who cannot communicate effectively. Those who are defensive, hesitant, mute or evasive get weeded out fairly quickly. In counselling interviews it often transpires that they find it difficult to relate to people, whether it be parents, friends, colleagues or the interviewer. This is sometimes betrayed by an inability to be self-revealing even at a fairly superficial level, and perhaps partly because of this intimacy is difficult to achieve. Transactions tend to be factual and clinical, lacking in warmth or spontaneity. In the selection interview situation rapport needs to be established quickly because time is short and this necessitates a reasonably high level of social skill. Clearly this is something that cannot be changed quickly. However self-help groups would enable graduates or students to share their apprehensions and learn to be more relaxed and more self-revealing in a situation which does not threaten them. With less to lose there is less risk. The knowledge that their problem is shared by others would hopefully give them confidence in presenting themselves more positively.

Self-help groups can be most easily set up while students at risk are still at college. Those in difficulty can sometimes be identified during their final year when careers advisers are helping undergraduates focus on self-presentation skills. During this time students are more accessible to those who might be thinking of running self-help groups before they are demoralised by repeated failure.

Those who have already graduated can be contacted through vacancy mailing lists or through replies to the First Destination Survey conducted by careers service.