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w Warszawie

## The feeling of being loved and the language of communication of young adults

### Poczucie, że jest się osobą kochaną a język komunikacji u młodych dorosłych

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*"What you say can change the world."*

*Rosenberg, 2016<sup>3</sup>*

**Abstract:** People communicate with others in a variety of predetermined ways – with kindness, empathy, readiness to forgive – or, contrarily – with violence, unkindness, aggression, mendacity, inability to forgive and readiness for retaliation.

Feeling that you are loved is an essential component of your self-worth. A child's self-worth is shaped by the appreciation and attitude of his parents towards him. The parents' demonstration of love plays a critical role in the development of a child's self-worth.

The basic aim of the research presented in the article is to answer the question whether there is a relationship between the feeling of being loved and the resultant inter-human communication of either a forbearing or deprecatory type. The working hypothesis predicts that there is a relationship between the feeling of being loved and the language of communication of young adults.

The research was conducted on a sample of 111 people. The group consisted of 55 women and 56 young adult men, aged 18-35 years. The study was based on the Forms of Communication method developed by M. Ryś and P. Kwas and the Sense of Self-Worth in Interpersonal Relations (SSWIR) method developed by M. Ryś.

The research results confirm the following correlation: a lack of belief in being loved translates into the behaviour of forbearance and depreciating others in interpersonal communication. A vicious circle forms. People who do not believe that they are loved are also unable to appreciate others. Individuals who depreciate and judge others are shunned, which deepens the feeling of not being loved. This vicious circle can be overcome by either changing the way of communication into the language of kindness, understanding and appreciation or by raising the sense of self-worth and shaping proper love for oneself.

**Key words:** languages of communication by Rosenberg, young adults, feeling of being loved, self-worth

**Abstrakt:** Jest wiele uwarunkowań wyboru form komunikacji, a więc tego, czy człowiek odnosi się do innych z życzliwością, czy jest empatyczny, czy potrafi przebaczać, czy też jego komunikacja z innymi nacechowana jest przemocą, brakiem życzliwości, agresją, mijaniem się z prawdą, trudnościami z przebaczeniem i podejmowaniem działań odwetowych.

Poczucie, że się jest osobą kochaną jest istotnym składnikiem poczucia własnej wartości. Głównym czynnikiem kształtującym poczucie własnej wartości dziecka są oceny rodziców, ich postawy wobec

niego. Okazywanie miłości przez rodziców odgrywa krytyczną rolę w kształtowaniu się poczucia własnej wartości w procesie rozwoju dziecka.

Podstawowym celem badań, przedstawionych w artykule, była odpowiedź na pytanie, czy istnieje zależność pomiędzy poczuciem, że się jest osobą kochaną a komunikacją rozumiejącą innych i komunikacją, będącą deprecjacją drugiego człowieka. Postawiono hipotezę, że istnieje zależność między poczuciem, że jest się osobą kochaną a językiem komunikacji u młodych dorosłych.

Badania zostały przeprowadzone na próbie 111 osób. W skład tej grupy weszło 55 kobiet i 56 mężczyzn młodych dorosłych, w wieku 18-35 lat. W badaniu wykorzystano następujące metody badawcze: Formy Komunikacji, autorstwa M. Ryś, P. Kwasa oraz PWWRI – Poczucie Własnej Wartości w Relacjach Interpersonalnych, autorstwa M. Ryś

Wyniki badań wskazują, że istnieją korelacje pomiędzy brakiem wiary w to, że jest się osobą kochaną i deprecjonowaniem innych w komunikacji interpersonalnej oraz brakiem rozumienia człowieka. Powstaje błędne koło. Osoby nie wierzące w to, że są kimś kochanym, nie potrafią także doceniać innych. Otoczenie osób, stosujących formy komunikacji deprecjonującej innych, osądzające drugiego człowieka, odsuwa się od niego, powodując coraz większy brak poczucia bycia kochanym. Przerwaniem tego błędnego koła może stać się albo zmiana sposobu komunikacji na język życzliwości, rozumienia drugiego człowieka, doceniania jego osoby albo praca nad podniesieniem poczucia własnej wartości i ukształtowania prawidłowej miłości do samego siebie.

**Słowa kluczowe:** języki komunikacji według Rosenberga, młodzi dorośli, poczucie bycia kochanym, poczucie własnej wartości

### Introduction

Recent years have seen an increase in a harmful and dangerous phenomenon of the spread of the language of aggression and violence, which can be observed in the media, among politicians, in families, schools and even at universities. Meanwhile, according to many studies, communication, which is characterized by understanding of another human being, one that does not contain violence, but supports and appreciates every human being, i.e. the language of love and kindness has a positive impact on many areas of an individual's life.

It has been proven that friendly and cordial communication in a parent-child relationship provides support for the child, affects his self-worth and reduces the negative consequences of stress (Floyd, 2015, Denes, Bennett, Winkler, 2017). Adult studies have shown that people receiving friendly messages demonstrate better overall mental and physical health, lower stress levels, lower susceptibility to depression, higher happiness and self-worth than the peer group (including Floyd, 2006, Floyd, Pauley and Hesse, 2010, Light, Grewen, and Amico, 2005). Booth, Butterfield and Trotta (1994) have shown in adult studies that friendly communication is important for the development of close relationships because it contributes to a sense of being noticed and cared for. In turn, a low level of cordiality in relationships increases the feeling of loneliness, depression, mental stress and is also associated with other mental health problems (e.g. Floyd, Hess, Miczo, et al., 2005; Schwartz and Russek, 1998). Other studies have shown that sensitive behaviour is one of the basic

ways in which the acceptance of others is expressed (Rohner and Lansford, 2017), and a lack of sensitive behaviour can lead to a sense of rejection (cf. e.g. Denes, Bennett, Winkler 2017).

There are certainly many conditions for the choice of forms of communication, i.e. whether a person refers to others with kindness, whether he can analyse the situation from a perspective and keep a distance to emotionally difficult events, whether he is empathic, whether he can forgive, speak about his needs, or – contrarily – whether his communication with others is characterized by violence, unkindness, aggression, mendacity, unreadiness to forgive and readiness to retaliate. Among the conditions for accepting a certain form of communication, the attitude to oneself may prove to be particularly important.

The attitude towards oneself is a particularly important subject undertaken in psychology, both within the framework of theoretical analyses (cf. e.g. Bushman, Moeller, Crocker, 2011; Leary, MacDonald, 2003; Swann, Chang-Schneider, Larsen McClarty, 2007) and therapeutic practice (cf. e.g. Hempolińska-Nowik, 1996; Huflejt-Łukasik, 2010; Plummer, 2010).

The attitude towards yourself is not constant, set “once and for all.” Throughout life, every person may undergo changes in this respect, which depend on many factors, including the family environment in which the person grew up (e.g. Ryś, 1997), the level of personal development (Niebrzydowski, 1976; Koziński, 1986, p. 229), changes in the scope of self-knowledge, adaptation to the changing environment or the life situation of the individual (cf. e.g. Juul, 2011; Robins et al., 2002).

The basic aim of the research, the results of which will be presented in this article, is to seek an answer to the question whether there is a relationship between the feeling of being loved, a dimension so important in the sense of self-worth, and various forms of communication, a communication that shows understanding of others or depreciates them.

Both theoretical analyses and research have drawn on Rosenberg’s concept (2016<sup>3</sup>) of *Nonviolent Communication*.

## **I. Theoretical basis of research**

### **1. Feeling that you are loved as an essential component of self-worth**

#### **1.1. Defining self-worth concepts**

In psychological literature, several terms are used to describe attitudes towards oneself, such as self-worth, self-acceptance or self-worth. However, there is no clear definition of these terms, nor a scientific consensus on their interchangeability.

Sense or feeling of self-worth is used either as a synonym for *self-esteem* (e.g. Brzezińska, 1973, p. 94)<sup>1</sup> or *global self-evaluation* (e.g. Lawrence, 2008, p. 24; Schaffer, 2005, p. 182), or it is considered a different concept from global self-esteem (e.g. Oles, 2016).<sup>2</sup>

A. Zbonikowski (2010) defines self-worth has a broader conceptual scope, including both self-esteem and self-acceptance<sup>3</sup>. It is this approach that has been adopted within the framework of this article.

J. Koziński (1981) treats self-esteem ("the real self"), next to self-description and personal standards ("the ideal self"), as one of the basic components of self-knowledge. According to him, self-esteem is a kind of evaluative judgment and concerns specific features of an individual, such as physical properties, personality traits (creative abilities, emotional maturity, motivation structure) or relations with other people (place in the family, social attractiveness). Koziński (1986) distinguishes central descriptive and evaluating judgements called self-esteem, which are identified with the "real self", as well as judgements with personal standards that make up the "ideal I" and peripheral judgements, concerning the rules of gathering knowledge about oneself and the rules according to which an individual communicates this knowledge to his environment (ibid., pp. 72-74).

B. Wojciszke (2002) incorporates self-esteem into the structure of the "self" and describes it as an affective reaction of man to himself. According to M. Kofta and D. Doliński (2004) "Self-esteem is self-evaluation. It can have different degrees of generalization: from evaluations of individual aspects of oneself - for example, intelligence, physical attractiveness, sense of humour, interpersonal competence or ability to play the guitar - to the so-called general or global self-esteem, consisting of a holistic self-esteem" (ibid., p. 579). Self-esteem is thus connected with experiencing oneself and approving one's own behaviour; it determines how an individual will behave in new situations, what strategy of action he will choose and how he will evaluate his chances (Robins, Trzeźniewski, Tracy, Gosling, 2002).

It is worth emphasizing that a person does not evaluate himself equally in all respects - he can evaluate himself very highly in terms of some features (e.g. mathematical and culinary skills) and very low in terms of others (e.g. beauty, physical fitness or computer

<sup>1</sup> They treat self-worth and self-esteem as equivalent concepts, among others J. Crocker and L.E. Park (2004); R.J. Crisp and R.N. Turner (2009); M. Dymkowski (1993); A. Góralewska-Słońska (2011); M. Huflejt-Lukasik (2010); M. Kofta and D. Doliński (2000); M. Łaguna, K. Lachowicz-Tabaczek, I. Dzwonkowska (2007); G. B. Moskowitz (2009); M. I. Porębiak (2005); S. Seul (1997); C. M. Steele (1988); W. Tuszyńska-Bogucka, J. Bogucki and D. Dzduch (2013).

<sup>2</sup> Like J.D. Brown, K.A. Dutton and K.E. Cook (2001); J.D. Brown and M.A. Marshall (2001); H. Grzegółowska-Klarkowska (2001).

In A. Carr's concept (2009, p. 269) self-worth lies at the heart of the sense of value and self-efficiency. In this approach, self-worth consists of two components: self-worth and self-efficiency (ibid., p. 226).

<sup>3</sup> In the analysis of the discussed concepts A. Zbonikowski (2010) points out that high self-worth does not necessarily mean a high level of self-worth. An inadequately overestimated self-worth may be a form of masking an immature sense of self-worth, causing fear of confrontation with social evaluations (cf. also: Baumeister, Smart, Boden, 1996).

skills). Moreover, depending on the circumstances, each of these elements may be assessed differently. Therefore, it is difficult to talk about global self-esteem, which in this perspective cannot be either the sum or the average of detailed assessments. Global self-esteem depends to a large extent on the level of assessment of this trait, which an individual considers to be the most important and dominant among other traits (Niebrzydowski, 1976, p. 46).

A. G. Greenwald and M.R. Banaji (1995, p. 11) also distinguish overt and covert self-esteem. Hidden self-esteem is an unconscious and often automatically appearing self-esteem, which is a response to stimuli concerning oneself (cf. also Doliński, 2002). Overt self-esteem corresponds to the principles of reasoning (Szpitalak, Polczyk, 2015, p. 13). Researchers also distinguish authentic and defensive self-esteem (McFarlin, Blascovich, 1981), dependent and independent (Crocker, Park, 2003).

N. Branden (2006, pp. 19-20) defines correct self-esteem as a sense of certainty that one is capable of thinking and coping with the basic challenges of life, as well as the conviction of one's own worth, the right to happiness and success and to the satisfaction of one's needs and desires.

The concept of self-acceptance, on the other hand, concerns a generalised, positive attitude towards oneself, including both cognitive and emotional aspects (cf. e.g. Koziński, 1986, Niebrzydowski, 1999).

Self-worth alongside the cognitive component, which is self-knowledge and the affective component includes the evaluative component of the concept of self (Oles, 2016, p. 37).

The sense of self-worth has its psychological implication in the sense of self-dignity (cf. e.g. Jankowska, 2011, p. 205), and this dignity results from the personal nature of man, who is not an object but a subject (Bucińska, 2001, p. 33).

Although the sense of dignity is understood differently in psychology (cf. Oles, 2007), it is worth emphasizing after V. E. Frank (1984, p. 19) that human dignity remains intact, regardless of circumstances. S. Steuden (2011) analyses it in three dimensions: self-respect, confidence in oneself and one's own abilities, and full acceptance of oneself with the awareness of one's strengths and weaknesses (cf. also Dirt, Steuden, 2017, p. 82).

Self-worth is treated as one of the types of self-identity that makes up a personal identity. It is a kind of affective-reflective experience (Brygola, 2013, p. 289; cf. also Roese, Olson, 2007).

N. Branden and L. Niebrzydowski (1993) believe that self-worth consists of self-dignity, self-respect and self-confidence, which determines the effective functioning of a person.

## 1.2 The development of self-worth

A set of judgments and ideas about one's own person (one's external appearance, intelligence, character traits, emotional maturity, as well as relations with other people or life aspirations), which is created during one's life, is an important factor of one's individual experience. A person acquires knowledge about himself not only through deliberate, intentional observation of himself in action and self-reflection, but also through the assessment of other people, especially significant people, the results achieved at school or at work, on the basis of which he unintentionally formulates judgments about himself (Kozielecki, 1986, 14-18).

The process of creating a self-image that leads to the formation of a sense of identity is important for the development of self-acceptance. The individual, by creating the image of himself, creates the image of the "real self", which boils down to the evaluation of one's own abilities and the image of the "ideal self" which results from the adopted patterns, ideals and hierarchy of values (Misiewicz, 1983, p. 43n.).

The various information that make up self-knowledge is subject to internal evaluation and is connected with the emotional relationship of the individual to himself (Kulas, 1986, Śliwak, Zarzycka, Dziduch, 2001).

Properly shaped self-awareness leads to a search for the answer to the question "who am I?", which is contained in self-understanding. Self-understanding involves self-esteem as a result of one's own evaluation and interpretation. These two elements are the foundations of self-knowledge, without which it is impossible to speak of experiencing oneself and one's own value, which in turn has to do with self-acceptance. The lack of self-acceptance, also on the level of social life, leads to a situation in which life loses its deeper meaning. A person who does not believe in his own abilities, is uncertain of himself, is unable to pursue his goals and suppresses his desires (cf. e.g. Lauster, 2000, p. 144).

It is the decisive role of significant persons, especially parents, that is most often emphasized among the basic conditions for the formation of self-worth, (cf. e.g. Cardinali, D'Allura, 2001; Coopersmith, 1967; Harter, 2006; Kernis, 2005; Niebrzydowski, 1976; Oleś, 2003; Ryś, 1997, 1999ab, 2006; Ziemska 1977); comparison of the results of one's own activities with those of others plays a similar role (Niebrzydowski, 1976, p. 46-47).

G. R. Schiraldi (2011, pp. 12-19) posits that self-worth is made up of three important components. These are: unconditional value, unconditional love, and development, which is effective when the first two elements function efficiently. Unconditional value means that every person as a person has the same inalienable and unchangeable value. It cannot be gained, increased or decreased in any way through the assessment of oneself (sex, race, age, health, appearance, economic status, profession, promotions, etc.) or the action of external

factors (e.g. the way we are treated by others, decisions made, adversity of fate, relationships with others, popularity, etc.). This basic value, according to Schiraldi, contains attributes needed for a good life. These include the ability to love, think rationally, persevere, experience beauty or make good decisions. A person's development allows for their improvement. External factors, all kinds of events and circumstances may influence the perception of a person's worth, but they do not change it. Today's civilization, and especially the influence of the media, shape the conviction that a person is less worthy when he has no power, wealth, youth or beauty (ibid., p. 12-19).

Development is an important element. Development is a direction and process, not a goal. It does not change the basic worth of a human, but helps to experience it with greater satisfaction. Development occurs when a person elevates himself or others, develops his character and personality and discovers ways of enjoying healthy pleasures (ibid.).

Self-worth can change throughout a person's life. However, it is its formation in childhood that can have the greatest impact on its condition and level in adult life (Brzezińska, Appelt, Ziółkowska, 2008, p. 215-216, Ryś, 1997, p. 125-137).

Wrong self-worth may be formed as a result of parents' excessive severity, excessive requirements, constant dissatisfaction with the child's achievements, too rigid rules, and excessively protective upbringing (Brzezińska, 1973; Ryś, 2011; Lewandowska-Kidoń, Wosik-Kawala, 2009; Ziemska, 1985).

Proper relations between parents and young person and conditions providing him with a sense of security predispose him to be open to positive messages and to increase his self-confidence. This facilitates establishing contacts with the environment, creating positive relations with others, especially with peers, which are a source of satisfaction, which convince the individual of his own worth and increase his trust in others (Zbonikowski, 2010, p. 18).

Comparing oneself with peers becomes an important element of self-worth (Biernat, 2016, p. 160-162; Kulas, 1986; Leśniak, 2003; Pankowska, 2008, p. 247-248). The attitudes of teachers become important. D. Pankowska (2008, p. 254) emphasises the attributes of teachers' behaviour: respect for the subjectivity of young people, respect for the individuality of each pupil, active and careful listening in contact with the pupil, satisfying those mental needs which can be satisfied in the school environment, showing interest, applying proper assessment procedures, limiting competitive activities in the group.

A. Rożnowska (2004, p. 16) enumerates what ought to be developed in students: the formation of the ability to communicate well, to self-accept, to be satisfied with life, to reconcile with oneself, to have inner peace, to adapt, as well as to have delineated areas for work.

D. Wosik-Kawala (2007, p. 47) emphasises that teachers ought to help students to get to know themselves, especially to discover their strengths and weaknesses, to work on their own development, to plan and forecast their own actions and develop the ability and to make the right choices.

In his adolescence, a young human begins to search for answers to questions about his existence, creates a picture of himself on the basis of the information provided by his surroundings, on the basis of the comparison with others and through self-reflection (cf. e.g. Fidelus, 2009).

A young person's positive attitude towards the world and people is conducive to the fact that the environment will also refer to him with approval, which strengthens his openness and shapes his attitude of self-acceptance (Niebrzydowski, 1988, p. 40).

In the course of development, areas concerning social and moral functioning are becoming increasingly important, while self-esteem is no longer as emotional as at the beginning of adolescence (Kulas, 1986, p. 56). The tendency to discover the motives of one's own behaviour is increasing, which allows one to build a more complex concept of oneself (Kon, 1987, p. 195). Adolescents are beginning to make more and more serious demands on themselves, and they are also beginning to distance themselves from the opinions of other people (Saarni, 1999, p. 85).

In normal personal development, with age, self-esteem becomes increasingly more realistic and stable (Kon, 1987, p. 195). The level of modification of self-esteem, but to a much lesser extent than in previous years of life, can be influenced in adulthood by living in close relationships, study experiences or situations at the place of work (Reykowski, 1977).

Social comparisons (cf. Corcoran, Crusius, Mussweiler, 2011), as well as the pursuit of maintaining self-worth (Tesser, 2000) and reducing cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 2007) are becoming important mechanisms for regulating self-esteem.

Close interpersonal relations play a special role in shaping self-worth in adulthood, which can confirm and strengthen a person's self-esteem (Leary et al., 1995; Szpitalak, Polczyk, 2015)<sup>4</sup>. Maintaining self-worth is extremely important in human life. Being certain of one's own value, one is able to set goals and believes in achieving them, and has no problems with establishing contacts with people (Wojciszke, Doliński, 2008, p. 334).

On the other hand, research shows that people whose parents in their childhood were not loving, did not show proper upbringing attitudes, were not supportive, kind, when they themselves are parents, they cause unfavourable changes in their own children's self-image. These children are characterized by low self-worth, awareness of the lack of satisfaction of basic needs, they have problems in establishing and maintaining close relations with others (Ryś, 1992). When they grow up it is extremely difficult for them to build a positive self-

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<sup>4</sup> People with normal self-worth are more able to forgive themselves and others (cf. e.g., Eaton, Struthers and Santelli, 2006; Eaton, Struthers, Shormons, Santelli, 2007).

image. As a result, the lack of self-confidence and self-worth can affect every aspect of their lives (Forward, 1992).

Many studies have shown that parents' assessments, their attitudes towards the child, and the upbringing styles are the main factors shaping a child's self-worth. The roles that are assigned to a child in the family are also important (Radochoński, 1986, p. 19).

Lowered self-esteem makes it difficult to gain recognition and self-respect, which is essential for one's well-being. Such a state in turn entails dissatisfaction with oneself and disbelief in one's own abilities. As a result, it leads not only to fear, anxiety or a sense of worthlessness, but in extreme cases even to extreme self-criticism in which a person can be not only ruthless or intolerant of himself, but even cruel to himself (Niebrzydowski, 1976).

Low self-esteem means that a person assesses himself worse than it is justified, fails to see the merits and value of his actions (Reykowski, 1977), rejects information about his importance for others, which he receives from his surroundings as contradictory to his own point of view; instead, opinions indicating his shortcomings are quickly integrated, which is further exacerbated by the inadequacy of his own self-esteem. He is more sensitive to criticism, opinions expressed by others about him, he does not seek active participation in the group's activities, he also tends to isolate himself from society, which deepens his loneliness (Niebrzydowski, 1976, p. 50n.).

Persons who have grown up in a family where love was not shown may feel inferior to others (cf. e.g. Conway, 1997; Kobiałka, Strzemieczny, 1988; Ryś, 1998, 1999a, 2014), develop an other-directed self-worth, depending on the opinion of others (Melody, 1993, p. 80).

Seeing oneself through the prism of evaluations formulated by others may lead to more or less conscious manipulation of one's own image, which may also modify one's self-perception and self-worth (Seoul, 1997, p. 61; cf. also Dymkowski, Tarczyńska, 1994).<sup>5</sup>

## **2. Issues of interpersonal communication**

### **2.1. The concept of communication and its conditions**

Most often, communication is considered as a process of exchanging content between the sender and the recipient, using a specific channel (it can be verbal, non-verbal, visual, aural or visual/auditory). Knowledge of the processes responsible for human communication gives an opportunity to explain the mechanisms that are crucial for the development of people's social behaviour (cf. e.g. Nęcki, 2000, p. 9).

<sup>5</sup> Comparing yourself with others can modify the self-esteem. If someone scores higher, this fact may decrease the person's self-worth. The decrease in self-esteem resulting from comparisons is the greater, the greater the success of this person, and the closer he is to a given individual (after: Wojciszke, 2002, p. 156).

In the systemic perspective, the whole communication process is more than just the sum of its individual elements. The system of social communication consists of many subsystems and may be subject to various processes, including development, regression or stagnation. How complex the system is is conditioned by the complexity of its internal elements (after: *ibid.*, p. 24).

The process of communication is composed of many elements. The first of them is the intention with which a person undertakes communication. These intentions can be different: to satisfy one's own needs or those of the recipient, to achieve common goals and many others. Not always the party initiating the conversation is aware of why he started the conversation. Lack of awareness of one's own intentions can be a disruptive factor, making the message sent to the recipient unclear. It may also happen that the sender will have several intentions, sometimes contradictory, which also makes the message difficult to read (Grzesiuk, Trzebińska, 1978, pp. 15-37). Not all intentions are overt. For example, information provided by politicians is not only to inform about the current state of affairs, which is an overt intention, but also to shape civic attitudes, which is already a hidden intention (Folkowski, Maruszewski, Nęcka, 2008, p. 502). The next stage of the communication process is the formulation of the message, i.e. selection of the content the sender wants to convey. Then the message is coded, through verbal or non-verbal behaviour, which at the same time will be considered as a signal sent to the recipient by means of words, gestures, mimics. The message thus formulated will be transmitted to the recipient. The recipient must decode, reproduce and interpret the message (Grzesiuk, Trzebińska, 1978, pp. 15-37). This process requires from the recipient, apart from understanding the sentences, gestures or facial expressions transmitted by the sender, also a certain amount of knowledge about the world. Although the recipient may understand a message on the verbal and non-verbal level, his lack of specific knowledge will become an obstacle to correct reception of it (Folkowski, Maruszewski, Nęcka, 2008, p. 502).

Verbal communication will predominantly take place through the sound channel as the main medium. Another way of linguistic communication is the culturally conditioned one, i.e. through writing, which today exists in many languages but has appeared independently in many ancient cultures of the world (Kurcz, 2004, p. 269).

Non-verbal communication includes facial expressions, gestures, voice height, organization in space, body posture, etc. It was found that basic emotions, i.e. fear, anger, surprise, disgust, happiness and sadness are universal and are expressed non-verbally in a similar way in all cultures (after: Kurcz, 2004, p. 272-274). Non-verbal communication is considered to be an integral part of communication. It has several important functions, such as communicating information, regulating interactions, expressing emotions, creating metacommunication, controlling social situations, shaping and controlling impressions (Leathers, 2007, p. 35).

Verbal communication is more subject to conscious control, hence verbal lies are more difficult to detect than false non-verbal behaviour (Kurcz, 2004, p. 272-274).

If both communication systems – verbal and non-verbal – function in harmony with each other, i.e. they send coherent messages, then the communication becomes of high quality. Problems will arise when these systems become discrepant. Messages sent by the sender are then difficult to receive for the recipient (Leathers, 2007, p. 33).

Individual differentiation of an individual's disposition, which is a determinant of the nature of communication activities undertaken by people in interpersonal contacts, is defined as a style of communication (Harwas-Napierała, 2006, p. 26). The style of communication can be analysed on two levels, which determine each other. The first of them will be micro-behaviour consisting in the fact that the content is given an appropriate form, while the second is macro-behaviour, which will be a recurring pattern of micro-behaviour (after: *ibid.*).

There are generally three basic communication models in the literature. These include the one-sided, two-sided/interaction model and the relational/transactional model (Stewart, 2007, p. 36-58).

The one-sided communication model is the most simplified model. It runs from sender to recipient, without taking into account the feedback. It does not take into account whether the message was received by the recipient. Communication in this sense is seen as an action. The action is determined by the choice of the sender. It does not take into account what is happening between the parties to the process but only what is happening inside the sender (Stewart, 2002; after: Harwas-Napierała, 2006, p. 22). In general, this model occurs in families with the authoritarian type of parenting, focused on control. In such families the boundaries are rigid, and the role of parenthood focuses only on carrying out orders and checking whether the required orders and prohibitions are observed (*ibid.*).

People change as a result of the communication process (Stewart, 2007, p. 49). Thanks to communication, relations can be created that enrich both the recipient and the sender (Kądziołka, 2012, p. 120). Booth, Butterfield and Trotta (1994) have shown in adult studies that tender messages strengthen relationships.

Adult studies have shown that not only receiving tenderness is beneficial to the individual, but also giving it (Floyd, Mikkelson, Tafoya, et al., 2007). This is due to the nature of feelings in which kindness is reciprocal. Floyd (2002), creator of the Affection Exchange Theory (AET), assumed that all people are born with the need for love and the ability to give it. Floyd (1997) introduced the term "affectionate communication" and pointed out that it is an essential part of building and maintaining close relations. "Affectionate communication" is defined by the author as an intentional and open expression of kindness, tenderness and love for another person. This includes behaviours through which people communicate a cordial relationship with each other. Feelings can be expressed in various ways,

e.g. verbally, but also through actions for the benefit of a loved one, such as care, protection, assistance in problem solving (Floyd and Morman, 1998).

Research shows that there are significant differences between men and women in communication. They relate to the range of topics covered and the way of conducting conversations. Women speak more than men and use more sophisticated vocabulary. They are more expressive and emotional in their statements. Men's utterances are most often direct and have the character of informational messages (Deaux, Lewis 1984; Argyle, 2002).

## 2.2. The language of communication as defined by M. Rosenberg

Rosenberg<sup>6</sup> (2016<sup>3</sup>), the creator of the concept of *Nonviolent Communication*, sees this form of communication as an attitude that allows for real contact, both with oneself and with others. It is a state of compassion that is considered natural and achievable when one gives up violence. This form of communication allows for changing the style of self-expression and listening to others. It allows one to express oneself clearly and honestly, with respect for oneself and for others, and with empathy to give proper attention to others. This form of communication also teaches how to pay attention to one's own and others' needs and expectations in all situations (ibid.).

This concept stipulates that people in conflict are able to exchange messages free of judgement, violence or mutual accusations (ibid.). In the *Nonviolent Communication*, Rosenberg postulated not only a change in the language that people use, but also tried to implement a completely new approach to conflicts, which should be solved without forced compromises, but in such a way that all parties to the conflict are satisfied. In such a relationship of the conflicted parties, prejudices are replaced by respect and understanding of the needs of the other party (after: Chopra, 2019, pp. 11-14).

Rosenberg's *Nonviolent Communication*, also known as the *Compassionate Agreement*, can be a great help in solving problems arising in the process of communication, as well as in avoiding errors (after: Markiewicz, Sosnowska, 2018, p. 26).

Rosenberg (2016<sup>3</sup>) defined four elements of *the Nonviolent Communication*.

They include:

- Perception, i.e. the transmission of information about specific, observed actions and facts. When you observe and formulate your observations about the other person's behaviour, you should be as objective as possible, without judging or criticising, without

<sup>6</sup> Marshall B. Rosenberg (2016<sup>3</sup>), an American therapist and doctor of psychology, recalls that already in his childhood, when he witnessed racial riots in his neighborhood and experienced aggression by his colleagues because of his Jewish origin, he wondered about the source of violence. In the course of his psychological studies, he tried to find an answer to the question: what makes people inflict suffering on others? He was not satisfied with the explanation that aggressive behaviour is a symptom of some sort of disorder. After much reflection and analysis, he put forward the thesis that the causes of aggression should be sought in the way we have learned to think, communicate and use power.

blaming the other person and putting yourself above him. Strive after a factual statement: what a person does or has done, irrespective of whether we like it or not. An observation of a given situation must not lead to generalisations. Rosenberg points out that this is very difficult because many people assume in advance that their judgment equals facts.

- Reference to the feelings that arise in connection with a given situation; we ought to define, to articulate loudly what feelings are triggered by a given event, someone's behaviour, manners, or utterance. It can be a feeling of fear, astonishment, sadness, rage or joy, peace, love. By expressing your feelings in the first person, you realize that you are responsible for your own feelings, and that you have an influence on what you feel, on your own attitude and reactions. On the other hand, statements such as "you annoy me, I am disappointed in you, you make me afraid" transfer the responsibility for your own feelings to the interlocutor, causing him to feel blamed. Rosenberg stresses that it is very important to choose the words when expressing your feelings.

- Reaching out and naming needs. Needs are inseparable from feelings. When needs are met, a person feels good, when they are not, he they feel pain. So it is important to realize, name and express your needs. Rosenberg stresses that most conflicts and frustrations result from unmet needs, which, however, can't be met because they are not present in a person's awareness and named. Your judgments, criticism and interpretation of someone's behaviour are often a substitute for revealing your own needs. Often many needs are suppressed and therefore not satisfied. Rosenberg argues that imposed inappropriate norms and stereotypes cause certain needs to be suppressed.

- Formulating requests. A request is born naturally after you realize the need. The request must be as specific as possible to be fulfilled or rejected. Your request must not be a negative opinion, i.e. an expression of what you do not want; rather, you need to be clear about what you expect.

Rosenberg (2016<sup>3</sup>) assumed that these four elements form the first phase of *Nonviolent Communication*. This is a phase of sincere self-expression. The second phase is the empathic reception of the message, also through these four elements. Once the message is sent, the sender becomes the recipient and, using the same elements, should receive the message (ibid.).

Paying attention to your feelings and insight into your own needs and those of others provide a large space to enrich the process of communication and relations with the environment (Markiewicz, Sosnowska, 2018, p. 28).

Moral judgements, comparisons, and expressing your needs in the form of demands cut you off from your inner compassion. They make you lose the sense of responsibility for your own actions, feelings and thoughts (Rosenberg, 2016<sup>3</sup>).

*Nonviolent Communication* is therefore a way of communication based on feelings and needs. It is a way of speaking and listening that builds true, living, close, understanding and

accepting relationships. It is a communication that helps you to find yourself, to reach your needs and the strategies to fulfil them (ibid.).

Rosenberg (2016<sup>3</sup>) introduced a symbolic approach to two forms of communication: on the other hand depreciation and humiliation of others typical of the *language of the jackal*, and on the other appreciation and understanding of others typical of the *language of the giraffe*.

The so-called *language of the jackal* is characterized by evaluating and judging others, comparing with others, generalizing, denying emotions, making demands instead of requests, using labels, generalizing, threatening with punishments or tempting with rewards. In contrast, a person who speaks *the language of the giraffe* is ready to listen to and be heard by the other person. A person who can reach out to his own needs and those of others, both satisfied and unsatisfied, is a person who appreciates others, addresses others with respect, expresses himself clearly and honestly, and refers to others with respect and empathy. Such a person's strategy of speaking and listening is based on looking at the other person, and at oneself, through the prism of needs. Even if his needs are not met, he can maintain a relationship with the other person (ibid.).

People who depreciate others, perceive the other's statements as an attack, reproach, criticism, evaluation, judgment, etc. The same words uttered by a person who appreciates others are perceived as expressing pain, frustration, powerlessness, i.e. as an expression of unmet needs (ibid.).

## II. Own research

### 1. The research problem and hypotheses

The primary purpose of the research, the results of which will be presented in this article, was to seek an answer to the question whether there is a relationship between the feeling of being loved and those forms of communication that are metaphorically expressed as *the language of the giraffe* and *the language of the jackal*, i.e., communication that understands others or that is the depreciation of another person.

The fact that this problem is worth analysing is confirmed many analyses in the literature to date.

Already in the seventies of the last century M. Ziemska (1977) emphasized that the experience of unconditional acceptance fosters "learning to experience yourself as a value, as someone who is worth loving and who can love" (ibid., p. 146). Many studies have shown that self-acceptance results from satisfying the need for love, which determines human development more than other mental needs (Ryś, 2006, p. 157). It should be stressed that already in childhood, man must feel that he is a value for others in order to become a value

for himself (Misiewicz, 1983, p. 38n). The way we understand ourselves and the world is conditioned to a great extent by the emotional climate of the first years of life (Kon, 1987).

S. Coopersmith (1967) studies show that if children feel that their parents treat them with attention, respect and trust, then they begin to think of themselves as people worthy of trust and respect, while at the same time expecting such behaviour from other people (cf. also: Gałkowska, 1999, p. 103). A. Combs and D. Snygg emphasize that you accept people in your future environment on condition that you felt accepted by your parents. This means that the more a child feels loved and accepted, the more he will be able to accept others (after: Siek, 1986, p. 299).

At the beginning of the research we formulated a hypothesis that there is a relationship between the feeling of being a person and the language of communication in young adults. The hypothesis assumed that:

- the higher the score on the *Lack of belief in being loved*, the higher the score on the scale of the *Language of the depreciation of others*; and
- the more a person feels loved by others, the higher the score on the scale of the *Language of Understanding of others*.

## 2. The methodology of testing and methods used

The research was conducted as part of a research project carried out at the Institute of Psychology at Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw. The following research methods were used in the research: Forms of Communication developed by M. Ryś and P. Kwas, and SSWIR – Sense of Self-worth in Interpersonal Relations developed by M. Ryś.

### 2.1. Self-Worth Scale in Interpersonal Relations

The Interpersonal Reliance Self-Worth Scale (SSWIR) was constructed to examine people who have married an alcoholic addict or the spouse has become addicted during the duration of marriage. The results show that this scale can be more widely used and can also be used to study self-worth in interpersonal relationships (Ryś, 2014, p. 116). This questionnaire defines the relationships in which the researched person thinks about satisfying the needs of their loved ones, doing so at their own expense, also assuming responsibility for their loved ones (ibid.).

The following five scales have been distinguished in the tool design: *Lowered self-worth*, *No respect for one's rights*, *No belief in being loved*, *Taking responsibility for the feelings and actions of others; controlling others*. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient showed the following values for the above mentioned scales: for the *lowered self-worth* scale the coefficient was  $\alpha=0.704$ , for the *lack of respect for one's own rights scale* the coefficient was  $\alpha=0.696$ , for the

*lack of belief that one is loved* the coefficient was  $\alpha=0.746$ , for the *acceptance of responsibility for the feelings and actions of others scale* the coefficient was  $\alpha=0.759$ , for the *control of others scale* the coefficient was  $\alpha=0.701$ . The scale consists of 42 questions (ibid.).

The results on the *Lowered Self-Worth* scale illustrate the self-worth of the examined person. The higher the score, the lower the self-worth. A high result shows a lack of self-confidence. Satisfying one's own needs is pushed to the background, the attention is mainly focused on the needs of others, despite the costs incurred (ibid.).

The *lack of respect for one's own rights* scale concerns the ability of an individual to defend his rights. The higher the score on this scale, the lower the ability to defend one's rights. Such a person agrees to meet too high expectations without any protests. Such people are unable to force their own opinion and often even agree to gross injustice (ibid.).

The third scale is about the *lack of belief in being loved*. A high score on this scale will indicate a lack of confidence in love from the loved ones. Such people want to make sacrifices for others, and when this sacrifice is not accepted they feel abandoned and unloved (ibid.).

High score on the scale of *Accepting responsibility for the feelings and actions of others* will mean that a person often takes responsibility for the behaviour and emotions of others. Such a person tries to solve problems for them and make them feel better when they are sad; takes responsibility for the consequences of others' misbehaviour without paying attention to possible costs. Such a person tries to help his loved ones even when they do not expect it or even when they do not want it (ibid.).

The last scale included in the questionnaire is the *Others Control* scale. A high score on this scale will mean a lack of feeling of security, which is satisfied by over-controlling others (ibid.).

The analysis presented in this article uses the results concerning the problem in question, i.e. the third scale concerning the feeling of being loved.

## 2.2. Forms of Communication

Forms of interpersonal communication were determined by means of a test called *Forms of Communication*, prepared by Maria Ryś and Paweł Kwas. This tool was constructed on the basis of the above discussed concept of Marshall B. Rosenberg's *Nonviolent Communication*. On the basis of this concept, a set of items covering different behaviours in interpersonal relations was created, which are to reflect the languages of communication distinguished by the author of the theory, called the *language of the jackal* and *language of the giraffe*. These statements were submitted for evaluation by competent judges. The test consisted of 22 statements that received high scores in judges' assessments. The task of the person subjected to the test was to respond to all positions by choosing one of

five possible answers, from definitely not to definitely yes. On the basis of this test, the respondent can be assigned results on two independent scales, which consisted of 11 test items each (after: Jaworska, Lubiejewski, Wójtowicz, 2019, p. 101).

### 2.3 The persons examined

The experiment, discussed in this article, was attended by 111 people. The group consisted of 55 women and 56 young adult men, aged 18-35 years. Among the respondents, 10.9% of women and 23.2% of men were residents of a small town, 16.4% of women and 10.7% of men were residents of a medium-sized town, and 72.7% of women and 66.1% of men were residents of a large town. 12.7% of women and 8.9% of men had vocational education, 43.6% of women and 55.4% of men had secondary education, while 43.6% of women and 32.1% of men were university graduates.

83.6% of women and 69.6% of men grew up in a full family. In a single-parent family, 1.8% of men grew up in a single-parent family due to the death of their mother whereas 5.5% of women and 7.1% of men grew up in a single-parent family due to the death of the father. 5.5% of women and 16.1% of men grew up in a single-parent family due to divorce of their parents. 5.5% of women and 5.4% of men indicated gave other reasons for growing up in a single-parent family.

90.9% of the examined women and 73.2% of the examined men had siblings whereas 9.1% of women and 26.8% of men were brought up without siblings.

10.9% of the women and 14.3% of the men rated their material situation as very good; 34.5% of the women and 44.6% of the men rated theirs as good. 49.1% of the women and 30.4% of the men assessed their material situation as average whereas 5.5% of the women and 7.1% of the men had a bad financial situation, with, 3.6% of the men having a very bad material situation.

### 3. The results

The results were analysed in relation to *the feeling of being loved* and *the language of communication*.

Table 1. Average, standard deviation for women, men and total for the variable *No belief in being loved*

PWWIR Scale	Women			Men			Total		
	n	M	$\sigma$	n	M	$\sigma$	n	M	$\sigma$
Lack of belief in being a loved one	55	26,24	9,59	56	23,80	7,27	111	25,02	7,39

n- number; M - mean;  $\sigma$  - standard deviation

The significance of differences in the group of women and men, checked with Student's t test for two independent samples, did not show any significant differences between the groups according to gender.

The measurement of the language of communication includes the results of two scales: *the language of understanding of another person* and *the language of depreciation of others*. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Average, standard deviation for women, men and total for the variable communication language

Language of communication	Women			Men			Total		
	n	M	$\sigma$	n	M	$\sigma$	n	M	$\sigma$
The language of understanding of another person	55	43,65	5,04	56	40,66	5,46	111	42,14	5,44
Language of depreciation of others	55	28,29	8,24	56	32,25	8,00	111	30,28	8,32

n- number; M – mean;  $\sigma$  – standard deviation

For the *language of communication* variable, Levene's test and Student's t test for two independent samples were carried out in order to check whether there are significant differences in results between men and women. The data obtained do not indicate any significant differences between men and women.

The analysis of research results also concerned the relationship between the self-worth variable and the language of communication variable. In order to check this relationship, a correlation for Pearson's r coefficient was calculated for the above-mentioned variables. The results of the research indicate that there are correlations between a lack of belief in being loved and depreciating others in interpersonal communication and a lack of understanding of another. The correlation is significant at  $p < 0.05$ .

Correlation coefficient values for other scales measuring self-worth and language of communication are included in Table 3.

Table 3. Pearson's correlation between the variable of not believing in being loved and the variable testing the language of communication

PWWIR Scale	Statistics	Forms of communication	
		The language of understanding	Language of depreciation of others
Lack of belief in being loved	Pearson's r	-,239*	,190*

\* significant correlation at  $p < 0.05$

The results confirmed this hypothesis. There are significant correlations between a lack of belief in being loved and depreciating others in interpersonal communication and a lack of understanding of another person.

This problem is worth analysing in relation to women and men. The results obtained in this respect are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Pearson's correlation between the variable for lack of belief in being loved and the variable for the language of communication in men and women

PWWIR	Statistics	K		M	
		The language of understanding	Language of depreciation of others	The language of understanding	Language of depreciation of others
No feeling of being loved	Pearson's r	-,388*	,327*	-,190*	,117

\*Correlation significant at  $p < 0.05$ ;

When gender division is included in the calculations, we obtain slightly different relationships. It turns out that the correlation between how a person feels being loved and how he communicates with others is important especially for women, especially when they understand each other, but also - in the absence of love - in the language of depreciating others. In the case of men, their depreciation of others has no significant connection with their sense of being loved.

#### 4. Discussion of results

The results confirmed this hypothesis. There are significant relationships between a lack of belief in being loved and depreciating others in interpersonal communication and a lack of understanding of the other person.

Research to date has shown that people who do not feel loved have problems in establishing and maintaining close relationships with others (Ryś, 1992; cf. also: Forward, 1992).

Lack of belief in being loved can cause minor events, meaningless to others, to be interpreted as absence of consideration and rejection. People who do not feel loved are susceptible to emotional injuries, which can manifest themselves in a specific deformation of emotional states and take on the character of "painful hypersensitivity" (cf. e.g. Ryś, 1992).

Manifestations of love play a critical role in a child's development (e.g. Wendland-Carro, Piccinini, Millar, 1999; Lowinger, Dimitrovsky, Strauss, Mogilner, 1995; de Weerth and others, 1999; Koester, Brooks, Traci, 2000). Research on families has shown that receiving love and tenderness is one of the strongest predictors of the general mental health of children and adolescents, including self-worth (Jiménez-Iglesias, Moreno, Ramos, Rivera, 2015). Similar results were obtained by McAdams and others. (2017), who observed that the more sensitive the parent-child relationship was, the higher self-worth in young people. Other studies found that parental love combined with affirmative messages strengthened children's self-worth (Ellis, 2002) and reduced stress levels (Schrodt, Ledbetter, Ohrt, 2007). Studies by Field, Lang, Yando, and Bendell (1995) have shown that the more friendly young people were to communicate with their mother, father and close friends, the greater their interest in school, higher self-worth, lower depression and lower risk of other disorders.

J. Conway (1997, p. 91n.) points out that a person who does not feel loved does not acquire the basic skills necessary to function properly in life, which are trust in others, autonomy concerning one's own boundaries, initiative, identity, closeness, productivity, integrity.

An individual who does not feel loved takes a defensive attitude, has a constant feeling of not being able to do anything well enough, of being worse than others (cf. e.g. Kulas, 1986).

The problem of the perceived lack of love from others is very serious and can be traced back to childhood. According to J. Bradshaw (1994), parents who were not able to show love to their child in their relations with the child do not provide an opportunity for them to learn to love themselves and have proper contact with other people.

According to B. Melody (1993, p. 80), parents who do not show love to their child subconsciously put pressure on the child to renounce his natural needs and desires. Thus, as such children grow up, they may feel inferior to others and develop an other-directed sense of self-worth, depending on the opinions of others.

People who have an unmet need for love are often disapproved of by others as well. They expect rejection from their surroundings, evaluate their actions unfavourably and are very sensitive to negative reactions of others.

The relationships obtained in the study also indicate that in the language of communication with others, the feeling of being loved plays a greater role in women than in men, and that the depreciation of others in men is not significantly related to the fact that they do not feel loved.

The above may be due to the fact that in many social situations men and women behave differently. Argyle (2002), giving examples of differences in the functioning of women and men in social situations, discusses them in the context of the communication process, preferences for functioning in close interpersonal relations, as well as needs which can be satisfied by interactions with other people. Women, compared to men, have greater affiliate needs, so they spend more time in the company of others, are more willing to make more intimate friendships, care more about social bonds and good relations with others, prefer a friendly atmosphere in interpersonal relations. Women are also more supportive, more often give positive reinforcements, more often smile or shorten the distance, e.g. through tactile contact (ibid.).

Research also shows that men are more independent than women, their friendships are based more on competition and domination, they compete with each other to be higher in the hierarchy of the group, and they often gain a leadership position thanks to physical fitness and competence (ibid.). In social relations they show more confidence and even aggression. Women talk to each other more often, while men spend more time together doing various activities (playing sports, watching matches, etc.) (Deaux, 1994).

### Summary

The interdependencies found in the research indicate the relationship between the feeling of being loved and the language of communication with others. For both women and men, the language symbolically called the *language of the giraffe*, i.e., understanding and appreciating others, being attentive while listening to the other, recognizing needs, and relating to others with respect and empathy, is related to the sense of being loved, but for women, satisfying the need for love plays a greater role in communication than for men. On the other hand, the depreciation of others, the so-called *language of the jackal*, i.e. evaluating and judging others, comparing, generalizing, denying emotions, making demands instead of requests, using labels, generalizing, threatening with punishments or tempting with rewards in women is connected with the fact that they do not feel loved, while in men this dependence has not proved significant. In further research it would therefore be worthwhile to analyse other conditions of interpersonal communication, especially in men.

To sum up, it is worth emphasizing that people who use forms of communication that depreciate others, who judge others, do not satisfy their need for contact, nor the need for contact with others. This problem is very complex: people who do not believe that they

are loved, often also cannot honestly and without envy appreciate others. Thus, a vicious circle can form: the more aggressively someone treats others, the more his environment moves away from him, causing a growing lack of feeling of being loved.

Breaking this vicious circle can be either a change of communication into the language of kindness, understanding of the other person, appreciation of the other person, or work on raising self-worth and shaping proper self-love. Neither of these ways is easy and each requires great effort. It seems, however, that the latter way may result in an easier realization of the beautiful message that *What you say can change the world*, because the words you say will flow from a heart full of love for yourself, for others and for the world.

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