

## TOSS OUT MALE TROPES: MEN ARE MORE THAN BLACK AND WHITE

Part 2: He Said/She Said — Crafting Super Realistic Dialogue



**JP Robinson & Gregg Bridgeman**

Toss Out Male Tropes:  
Men are More Than Black and White  
**He Said/She Said—Crafting Super Realistic Dialogue**  
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## Successful Christian Self Publishing

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This URL will be provided several times.

## Why Dialogue Matters

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Dialogue instantly reveals your skill as a writer. It's one of the first things a literary agent or an editor will check when evaluating the marketability of any book.

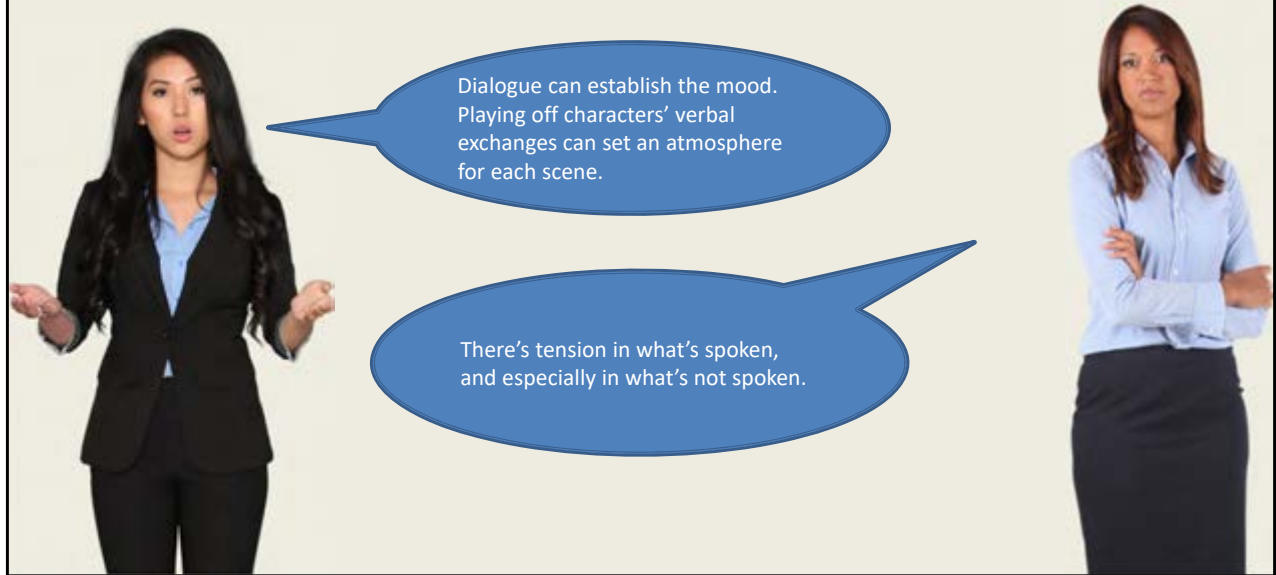


### **Why is this class important to you?**

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## Why Dialogue Matters

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Good dialogue can establish the mood. Playing off characters' verbal exchanges can set an atmosphere for each scene.

Good dialogue creates tension in what's spoken, and especially in what's not spoken.

## Why Dialogue Matters

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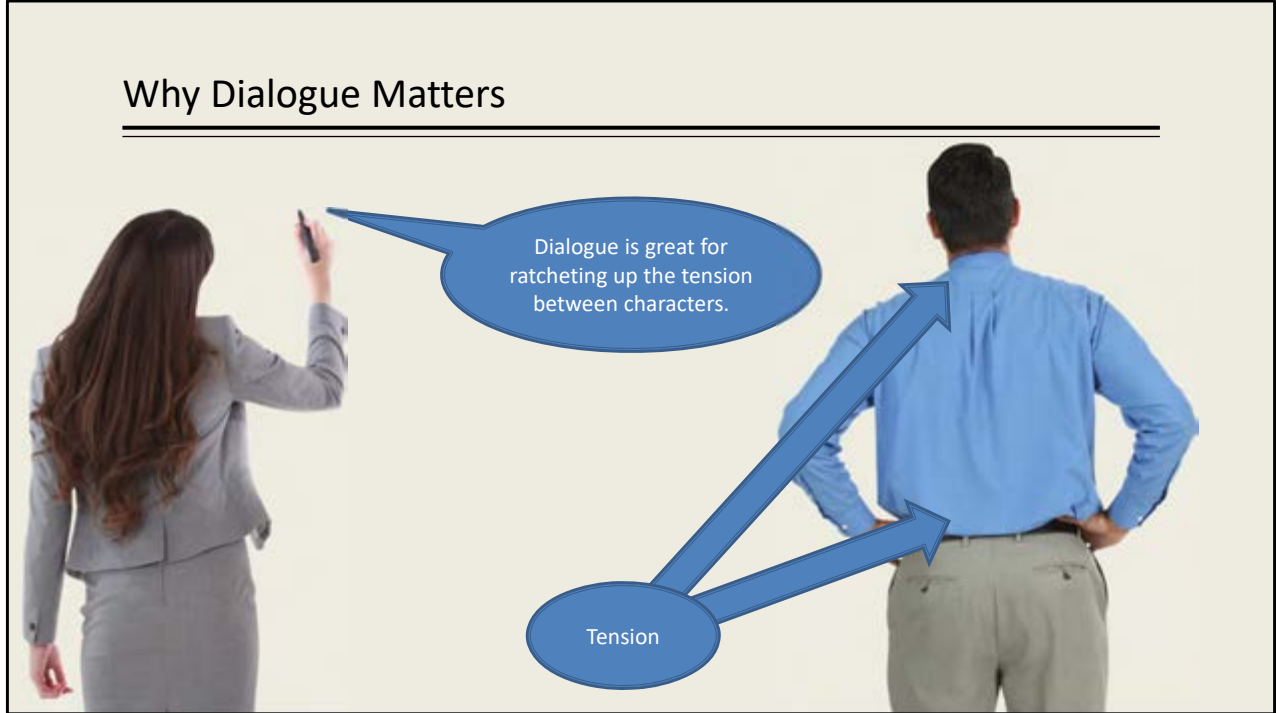


Dialogue can help establish the backstory and reveal important plot details that the reader may not know about yet.

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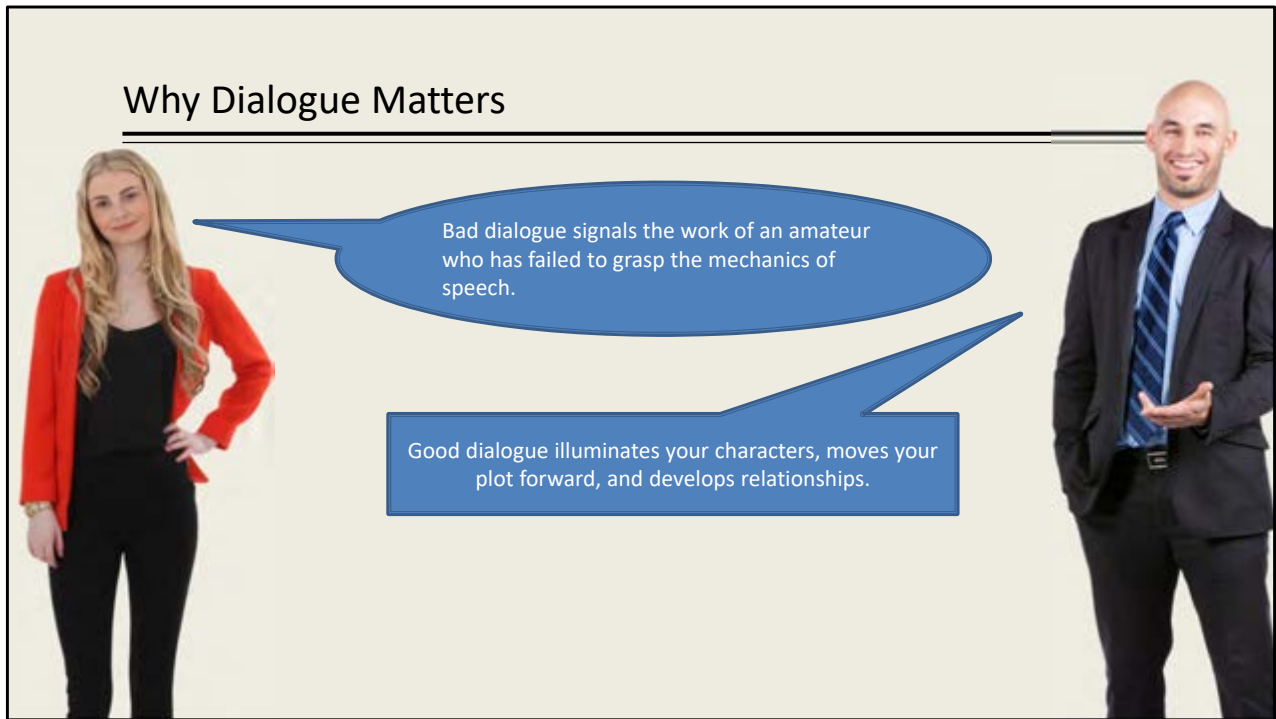
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Good dialogue is great for ratcheting up the tension between characters.

## Why Dialogue Matters

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Bad dialogue signals the work of an amateur who has failed to grasp the mechanics of speech.

Good dialogue illuminates your characters, moves your plot forward, and develops relationships.

## Common Dialogue Tendencies

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In my experience, there are three groups of writers.

**Most** writers fall into one of first two groups:

- 1.) either they hate writing dialogue and try to avoid it as much as humanly possible, OR
- 2.) they love writing dialogue and fill their entire novel with mostly useless exchanges.

The **third group** of writers:

3) understand the importance of dialogue in a story and know how to use dialogue as a tool to enhance their storytelling.

THAT is the group you want to join forever and ever.



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# Agenda (Three Acts)

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- I. Characteristics of Good Dialogue
- II. He Said / She Said
- III. Techniques for Super Realistic dialogue



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- I. Characteristics of Good Dialogue
- II. He Said / She Said
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I.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF GOOD DIALOGUE

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Act I. **CHARACTERISTICS OF GOOD DIALOGUE**

## Ten Characteristics of Good Dialogue...

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1. has a purpose
2. is not weighed down by exposition
3. without sounding *precisely* like the way people talk in real-life, *evokes* the way people actually talk
4. doesn't use too many 'ly' adverbs
5. Isn't redundant
6. goes easy on exclamations, exhortations, & aposiopesis
7. is boosted by dialogue tags, gestures, and action, to easily follow who is speaking
8. reveals personality, and characters only very rarely say precisely what they are thinking (never "On the Nose")
9. occasionally employs accurate jargon, dialect, and drops some words
10. sounds unique for every character

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1



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2



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3



WITHOUT SOUNDING *PRECISELY* LIKE THE WAY PEOPLE TALK IN REAL LIFE, GOOD DIALOGUE *EVOKES* THE WAY PEOPLE ACTUALLY TALK

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4

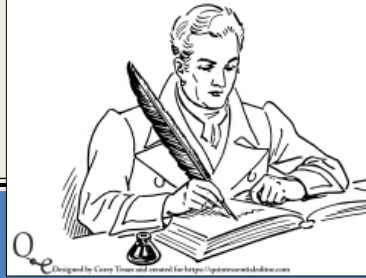
THE CAUTIONARY  
TALE OF ADVERBS

**GOOD DIALOGUE DOESN'T USE TOO MANY 'LY' ADVERBS**

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5

*Page 37. I have described the darkness in fifteen distinct ways. Now I must describe how this made the character feel...*



## GOOD DIALOGUE ISN'T REDUNDANT

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6

**GOOD DIALOGUE GOES EASY ON  
EXCLAMATIONS, EXHORTATIONS, &  
APOSIOPESIS**



**GOOD DIALOGUE GOES EASY ON EXCLAMATIONS, EXHORTATIONS, & APOSIOPESIS**

7

## LET'S TALK ABOUT IT



GOOD DIALOGUE IS BOOSTED BY DIALOGUE TAGS, GESTURES, AND ACTION, SO THE READER CAN EASILY FOLLOW WHO IS SAYING WHAT

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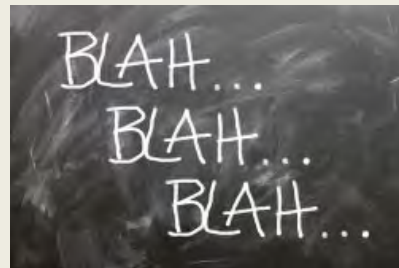
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You may not like this, but truth be told, the verbs *said*—or *asked* in the case of an interrogative—should really be your “go-to” verb when writing dialogue.

*Said* and *asked* are unusual words primarily because we interpret them in a very mechanical way. In fact, when we see either of these words, we mentally gloss over them as if they represented no more than a comma or a full stop.

BUT you don't want to use it every single time. In a lot of submissions, I review I tend to find things like this:

“blah, blah,” he said.  
“blah, blah,” she said.  
“blah, blah,” he said.  
“blah, blah.” she said.  
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BUT you don't want to use it every single time. In a lot of submissions, I review I tend to find things like this:

### **Not so good dialogue:**

“blah, blah,” he said.  
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“blah, blah.” she said.  
“blah, blah,” he said.  
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Good dialogue is boosted by dialogue tags, gestures, and action, so the reader can easily follow who is saying what

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However, there are a ton of words you can use in place of SAID. The next 2 slides contain nearly 600 of them...

... and this file is available to you as a spreadsheet.

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A	(B- continued)	(C- continued)	(C- continued)	(E- continued)	(G- continued)
<b>*When written, not spoken</b>	Bawled	Circulated	Crooned	<b>Engraved*</b>	Gulped
Abjured	Beamed	Cited	Cross-examined	<b>Engrossed*</b>	Gurged
Accepted	Beckoned	Claimed	Crowed	Enjoyed	Gushed
Accused	Began	Coaxed	Cursed	Enjoyed	H
Acknowledged	Begged	Comforted	Cussed	Entreated	Haggled
Adided	Believed	Commaned	<b>D</b>	Enumerated	Hastened to add
Addressed	Beltitled	Commented	<b>Dashed Off*</b>	Enuniciated	Hastened to say
Admitted	Bellowed	<b>Committed*</b>	Debated	Equivocated	Hedged
Admonished	Berated	Communicated	Deceived	Estimated	Held
Advised	Beseached	<b>Comped*</b>	Decided	Exacted	Hemmed and Hawed
Advised	Besought	<b>Complained</b>	Declared	Exaggerated	Hesitated
Advocated	Bleated	<b>Composed*</b>	Decreed	Exclaimed	Hinted
Affirmed	Blew up	Conceded	Defended	Exhorted	Hissed
Agonized	Blubbered	Concited	Delivered	Expatriated	Hollered
Agreed	Blurted	Concluded	Demanded	Explained	Hooted
Alleged	Blustered	Concurred	Demurred	Exploded	Howled
Allowed	Boasted	Condemned	Denied	Exposed	Hypothesized
Alluded	Boomed	Condescended	Denoted	Expostulated	I
Announced	Bossed	Conferred	Denounced	Expounded	Imagined
Answered	Bragged	Confessed	Described	Expressed	Imitated
Apologized	Breathed	Confided	Detected	Extended	Imparted
Appealed	Broadcasted	Confirmed	Determined	Extolled	Implied
Appeased	Broke in	Confused	Dictated	<b>F</b>	Implored
Approved	Brought forth	Confuted	Digressed	Faltered	Imported
Argued	Burst	Conjectured	Directed	Fancied	Importuned
Articulated	<b>C</b>	Consented	Disclaimed	Finished	Inclined
Asked	Cackled	Consoled	Disclosed	Foretold	Indicated
Assented	Cajoled	Contemplated	Discussed	Forewarned	<b>Indited*</b>
Asserted	Calculated	Contended	Disposed	<b>Formulated*</b>	Inferred
Asseverated	Called	Contested	Disrupted	Founded	Informed
Assumed	Caroled	Continued	Disseminated	Fretted	<b>Inked*</b>
Assured	Carpel	Contradicted	Distributed	Fumed	Inquired
Attested	Cautioned	Contributed	Divulged	<b>G</b>	<b>Inscribed*</b>
Attracted	Censured	Coed	Doubted	Gagged	Insinuated
<b>Authored*</b>	<b>Chalked*</b>	<b>Copied*</b>	<b>Drafted*</b>	Gasped	Insisted
<b>Autographed*</b>	Challenged	Corrected	Drawled	Gawped	Instructed
Awered	Changed	<b>Corresponded*</b>	<b>Drew Up*</b>	<b>Ghosted*</b>	Insulted
Averted	Charmed	Coughed	Drowned	Giggled	Interjected
Avoided	Charged	Counseled	<b>Dropped A Line*</b>	Glowered	Interposed
Avouched	Chatted	Countered	<b>Dropped A Note*</b>	Granted	Interpreted
Awowed	Chattered	Courted	<b>E</b>	Greeted	Interrogated
Awakened	Cheered	Crabbed	Echoed	Grieved	Interrupted
<b>B</b>	Chided	Cracked	Elaborated	Grinned	Intimated
Babbled	Chimed in	Craved	<b>Emailed*</b>	Groaned	Intimidated
Baited	Chipped in	<b>Created*</b>	Emitted	Growled	Intoned
<b>Banged Out*</b>	Chirped	Cried	Emphasized	Grumbled	Invited
Bantered	Choked	Cried out	Emphasized	Grunted	Itemized
Bargained	Chortled	Criticized	Encouraged	Guessed	
Barked	Chuckled	Croaked	Ended	Guffawed	

A through I

J	O	(P- continued)	(R- continued)	(S- continued)	U
<b>*When written, not spoken</b>	Objected	Published	Replied	Speculated	Underestimated
Jabbered	Observed	Puled	Reported	Spied	Understood
Jeered	Offered	<b>Pushed A Pencil*</b>	Reprimanded	Spluttered	Undertook
Jested	Orated	Put forth	<b>Reproduced*</b>	Spoke	Upbraided
Joked	Orated	<b>Put In Writing*</b>	Reputed	Spouted	Urged
Joshed	P	Put Out	Requested	Spattered	Uttered
<b>Jotted Down*</b>	Painted	<b>Q</b>	Required	Squeaked	<b>V</b>
Judged	Passed on	Quacked	Requisitioned	Stammered	Validated
Justified	<b>Penciled*</b>	Quaked	Responded	Stated	Ventured
K	<b>Penned*</b>	Qualified	Restated	Stipulated	Verbalized
Keened	Perceived	Quarreled	Retorted	Stressed	Verified
Kibitzed	Persisted	Quavered	Revealed	Stuttered	Vociferated
<b>Knocked Off*</b>	Persuaded	Queried	<b>Rewrote*</b>	Suggested	Voiced
<b>Knocked Out*</b>	Pestered	Questioned	Roared	Supposed	Volunteered
L	Petitioned	Quibbled	<b>S</b>	Surmised	Vouched
Lamented	Piped up	Quipped	Said	Suspected	Vouched for
Laughed	Pleaded	Quizzed	Sang	Swore	<b>W</b>
Lectured	Pledged	Quoted	Schmoozed	Sympathized	Waffled
Leered	Pointed out	<b>R</b>	Scuffed	<b>T</b>	Wailed
<b>Lettered*</b>	Pondered	Raged	Scolded	Tattled	Wangled
Lied	<b>Posted*</b>	Railed	<b>Scrawled*</b>	Taunted	Wanted
Lit	Postulated	Rambled	Screamed	Teased	Warbled
Lisped	Pouted	Ranted	Screached	Testified	Warned
Listed	Praised	Rattled off	<b>Scribbled*</b>	<b>Texted*</b>	Went on
<b>M</b>	Prayed	Raved	<b>Scribbled*</b>	Thanked	Wept
Made known	Preached	Reassured	<b>Scrivener*</b>	Theorized	Wheeled
Made public	Predicted	Rebuffed	Seconded	Thought aloud	Whimpered
Magnified	Premised	Recalled	Seethed	Threatened	Whined
Maintained	Presented	Recited	<b>Set Down*</b>	Thundered	Whispered
Marvelled	Presumed	Reckoned	<b>Set Forth*</b>	Ticked off	Whooped
Mentioned	Presupposed	Reckoned that	Settled	Told	Wondered
Mewled	Prevaricated	Recommended	Shared	Told off	Wooded
Mimicked	<b>Printed*</b>	Reconciled	Shouted	Tolerated	<b>Wrote Down*</b>
Moaned	Probed	Recorded	Shrieked	<b>Took Down*</b>	<b>Wrote Up*</b>
Mocked	Proceeded	Recounted	Shrugged	Touted	<b>Wrote*</b>
Mourned	Proclaimed	Recovered	Shuddered	Trailed off	<b>Y</b>
Mouthed	Prodded	Recriminated	Sighed	<b>Transcribed*</b>	Yakked
Moved	Profaned	Referred	<b>Signed*</b>	Transferred	Yapped
Mumbled	Professed	Refused	Snapped	Transmitted	Yawped
Murmured	Proffered	Reiterated	Snarled	Trembled	Yelled
Mused	Promised	Rejoiced	Sneered	Trilled	Yelped
Muttered	Prompted	Rejoined	Snickered	Trumpeted	Yowled
Nagged	Promulgated	Related	Sniffed	<b>Turned Out*</b>	<b>Z</b>
Narrated	Pronounced	Released	Sniveled	Twanged	Zipped
Narcissitated	Propheesied	Remarkd	Snorted	<b>Tweeted*</b>	
Nodded	Proposed	Remembered	Snobbed	Twittered	
Noted	Protested	Reminded	Solicited	<b>Typed*</b>	
<b>Noted Down*</b>	Provoked	Remonstrated	Sought	<b>Typewritten*</b>	
Notified	Publicized	Repeated	Specified		

## J through Z

Good dialogue is boosted by dialogue tags, gestures, and action, so the reader can easily follow who is saying what

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Armed with verbs other than *said*, there may be a temptation to transform the previous example into something like the following:

“blah, blah?” he *asked*.  
“blah, blah,” she *replied*.  
“blah, blah,” he *reiterated*.  
“blah, blah.” she *interjected*.  
“blah, blah?” he *queried*.  
“blah, blah,” she *protested*.

The obvious problem is that it is equally bad.

Armed with verbs other than **said**, there is a temptation to transform the previous example into something like the following:

**Not so good dialogue:**

“blah, blah,” he asked.  
“blah, blah,” she replied.  
“blah, blah,” he reiterated.  
“blah, blah.” she interjected.  
“blah, blah?” he queried.  
“blah, blah,” she protested.

**In a misguided effort to avoid “repeating oneself” (redundancy) with said after said after said, the author comes up with a variety of identifying verbs and, let’s be honest, in some cases they don’t even accurately relate to the dialogue.**

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## Good dialogue is boosted by dialogue tags, gestures, and action, so the reader can easily follow who is saying what

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It's fine to leave off the identifier entirely whenever it's **crystal clear** who is speaking.

“blah, blah?” Boris kept his face perfectly schooled and tried to hide the tension in his neck as he awaited her reply.

Natasha studied his face, sensing that Boris hid something much bigger behind his casual question. “blah, blah.”

“blah, blah.”

She knew something else, something unsaid, lurked behind his deep voice. “blah, blah.”

“blah, blah.” Boris signaled for the waitress to bring him the bill.

“blah, blah,” Natasha blurted, regretting it almost immediately.

Look for opportunities to enhance characterization. Color the dialogue with some secret inner thought or emotion. Add some “stage business” like picking up a coffee mug or tapping a fingernail.

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8

## LET'S TALK ABOUT IT



**GOOD DIALOGUE REVEALS PERSONALITY, AND CHARACTERS RARELY SAY PRECISELY WHAT THEY ARE THINKING (NEVER “ON THE NOSE”)**

**GOOD DIALOGUE REVEALS PERSONALITY, AND CHARACTERS ONLY VERY RARELY SAY PRECISELY WHAT THEY ARE THINKING**

## Good dialogue is never “on the nose”

The term “On the nose” can refer to overly expository narrative text, but more often generally refers to unnatural sounding dialogue where the characters say exactly what they think, or where they describe in excruciating detail what they plan to do, somewhat like a ‘60s Bond villain on a monologue.



When they got in the car, Natasha said, “Boris, I am so mad at you because you always flirt with my sister, Doris, and you know how jealous I get and how competitive I am with her.”

Is this something Natasha would actually say? Sounds pretty unnatural, forced, stilted, etc., doesn’t it? That’s because real people often go to great lengths to NOT say exactly what they’re thinking or feeling. What if Natasha said this to Boris instead?

When they got in the car, Natasha said, “Remind me the next time we’re at my parents. I think they have a copy of Doris’s prom picture. You can keep it in your wallet.”

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When they got in the car, Natasha said, “Boris? Remind me the next time we’re at my parents. I think they have a copy of Doris’s prom picture. You can keep it in your wallet.”

## Good dialogue is never “on the nose”

The following example is from the late **Elmore Leonard**. Leonard was known as a master of dialogue.

You would never read one of his books and expect to find something like this farcical example.

In the following scene, two criminals, Bill and Marty, are planning a bank heist. Marty is a two-time loser and a hardened criminal with a penchant for violence. Bill is socially awkward, and rather a weak man, but he is able to open the safe.



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**Elmore Leonard’s earliest novels were Westerns published in the ‘50s but he went on to specialize in crime fiction and suspense thrillers. Many of his books and short stories have been adapted into dozens of motion pictures and television shows like *Out of Sight*, *Hombre*, *Mr. Majestyk*, and *3:10 to Yuma* as well as the long running FX television series *Justified* which is set in Kentucky.**

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Bill asked Marty, “But why do we have to be there before lunch? Can’t we just eat lunch then go?”

Marty answered, “Are you actually the dumbest bank robber alive? We have to go there before lunch for three reasons. First, because the vault is on a timer. Second, because the armored car arrives between noon and one so if we go in the afternoon, the vault will be empty. Third, our contact at the alarm company can only disable the alarm for a short amount of time. If we don’t get in and get back out before lunch, we need not even do this!”

As you can see, the answer I supplied for Marty here is very, very on the nose. It is also well out of character for two-time loser and general tough guy, Marty. Elmore actually wrote the dialogue in that scene like this:

Bill asked Marty, “But why do we have to be there before lunch? Can’t we just eat lunch then go?”

“Shut up,” Marty explained.

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9

## LET'S TALK ABOUT IT



GOOD DIALOGUE OCCASIONALLY EMPLOYS ACCURATE JARGON, DIALECT, AND DROPS SOME WORDS

GOOD DIALOGUE EMPLOYS JARGON, DIALECT, AND OCCASIONALLY DROPS SOME WORDS

## Good dialogue employs Jargon, Dialect, and occasionally drops some words

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Occasionally, in real life conversations, people speak with a certain brevity that drops words from one or more sentences.

Instead of:

“I’m so very sorry, Boris,” Natasha said, “but I simply can’t come over right now.”

A character might say:

“Sorry, Boris,” Natasha said. “ Can’t make it.”



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Use proper **jargon**. Sparingly, but **accurately**, for realism.

Military, Law Enforcement, Pilots, Lawyers, Medical Practitioners, and just about every other profession use lots of jargon and acronyms.

**Do your research** and use the **proper jargon** to keep it real.

“Roger, Twelve-Alpha. I read you Five-by-Five.”

A computer specialist is going to employ a ton of technical terms. Research is essential in every case.

A surgeon in an operating room is going to use **jargon** and speak in acronyms and initialisms. For example, he might (or might not) refer to a femoral head ostectomy as a "feo." He could say distal or proximal to indicate proximity, or the Latin terms dexter or sinister to indicate the left or right and anterior and posterior to indicate the back or front.

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If your character has an accent or uses **dialect**, you may wish to reflect that in your dialogue as well. Don't be afraid to experiment as long as your spelling remains consistent and reads like it sounds.

“Aye, Lass. Thus is a kilt Ahm weerin, an a tartan broach as weel. An wut’n you like ta take a wee keek at mah broadsword, no doubt. Aye. I seen ya haverin.”

But as you can see, it is possible to go overboard.

If your character has an accent or uses dialect, you may wish to reflect that in your dialogue as well. Don't be afraid to experiment as long as your spelling remains consistent and reads like it sounds.

“Aye, Lass. Thus is a kilt Ahm weerin, an a tartan broach as weel. An wut’n you like ta take a wee keek at mah broadsword, no doubt. Aye. I seen ya haverin.”

But as you can see, it is possible to go overboard.



## **Don't go overboard with Dialect**

Occasionally, in real life conversations, people may use cultural dialectics when speaking English. Attempting to imitate subcultural dialects could be seen as a "racializing" style of stereotype, and offend readers.

Comedian Margaret Cho points to the following common stereotypical speech patterns that you want to avoid:

wrong=wong  
right=white  
fried rice=flied lice  
Eileen=Irene  
like=rike  
hello=hero  
thank you=sank you  
I think so=I sink so



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In 2018, a comedian produced a documentary entitled “The Problem with Apu” which led to the New York Times publishing a series of editorials pointing out the numerous stereotypes the fictional character on the animated TV series “The Simpsons” perpetuates against people from South Asian descent. As a result, the show stopped using the character and Hank Azaria stepped down as the voice actor.

The stereotypical dialectic to avoid is swapping out “B” for “P” and speaking very fast with a monotonous cadence.

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## Don't go overboard with Dialect

Comedian Steve Harvey has a famous routine where he riffs on Ebonics which encompasses a specific dialect of American English. Many sources can point to stereotypical dialect you want to avoid:

She BIN hadat han'-made dress.

=She's had that hand-made dress for a long time, and still does.

Ah own no wut homey be doin.

=I don't know what my friend is usually doing.

Ah ax Ruf cud she bring it ovah to Tom crib.

=I asked Ruth if/whether she could bring it over to Tom's place.

(\*Source: Hamilton University—*What is Ebonics?*)



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10



LET'S TALK  
ABOUT IT

GOOD DIALOGUE SOUNDS UNIQUE FOR EVERY CHARACTER

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## **Good dialogue sounds unique for every character**

---

- Every character has to have his or her own voice complete with his or her own preferred speech pattern, rhythm, and dialect.



- Otherwise, all of your characters are going to sound like just one person.

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# Agenda (Three Acts)

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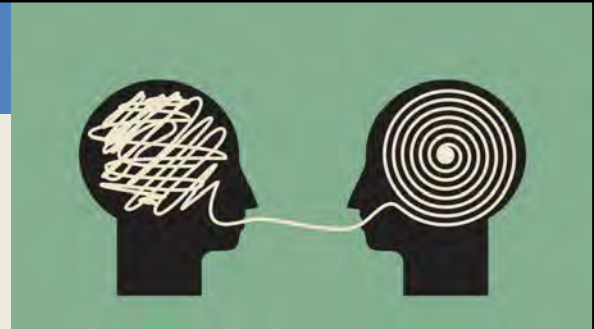
- ~~I. Characteristics of Good Dialogue~~
- II. He Said / She Said
- III. Techniques for Super Realistic dialogue



## Agenda (Three Acts)

- ~~I. Characteristics of Good Dialogue~~
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II.



## HE SAID / SHE SAID

The Key to Super Realistic Dialogue

<http://SuccessfulChristianSelfPublishing.com/MoreThanBW/>

Act II: **HE SAID / SHE SAID**

The key to super realistic dialogue

## HE and SHE each SPEAK differently

---



There are **fundamental differences between men and women** and you can accurately depict these differences in your dialogue (and the narrative).

- SHE tends to speak very **passively** at all times to either sex.
- HE tends to speak more **actively** to men and somewhat less actively to women.
- SHE seeks **consensus**, agreement, validation and **without ownership**.
- HE makes **individual** choices and **with ownership**.



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## HE speaks much more actively and with ownership

---



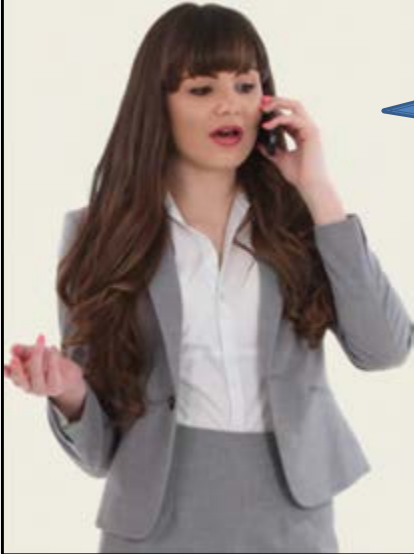
I did this. I fought that.  
I grilled this or that.  
I killed something.  
She cooked the thing I killed yesterday.  
I caught something else.  
I'll go do that tomorrow.  
I made some money. He ran a 10k.  
I hit bad traffic on the way in.  
You should to do this or that.  
He ought to know better.  
I showed her how to do it twice already.  
How much should we make/take/bring?

**NOTE:** Active verbs, pronoun "I", and ownership

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## SHE speaks more passively



I was thinking about what you said.  
Seemed like he was enjoying our conversation.  
He is such a good boy.  
She is so pretty.  
My hair is not cooperating today.  
Traffic was really bad and made me late.  
Someone should do this or that.  
I was starving. That was a really good meal.  
She was talking about that last week.  
He is going to be trouble.

**NOTE:** Passive verbs (Is Are Was Were Be Being Been), weak descriptors (Seem Seems Seemed Seemingly), and no ownership

### **SHE speaks more passively**

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## HE and SHE each SPEAK differently

- HE is typically the captain of every event HE experiences in life.
- One of HIS favorite short words is probably the pronoun "I."
- SHE tends to speak passively because, generally, SHE rarely describes any event as if SHE has any personal stake in that event when it is the case that the event has little to do with a relationship.



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## There are exceptions when HE speaks...

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- Familial relationship matters are often **passive**, for example. “I **was** thinking of my sister.” “My wife **was** amazing giving birth to my son.”

NOTE: This allows the person who he feels **deserves all the credit** to actively claim all the credit for the **accomplishment**.

- However, if it doesn't involve a very close relationship, then men generally tend to describe events very **actively** and as if they were personally involved in whatever transpired.



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## There are exceptions when SHE speaks...

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- NOTE: This is because she feels directly and **actively** responsible for **the quality of that relationship**.
- However, if it doesn't involve a relationship then women generally tend to speak very passively and as if they were not personally involved in what transpired.



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## Why Speak at All?

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- **He** believes all communication should have a clear purpose.

Behind every conversation is a **problem that needs solving** or a **point** that needs to be made. He uses communication to get to the root of the dilemma as efficiently as possible.

- **She** uses communication to discover how she **feels** and what she **wants to say**.

She sees conversation as an **act of sharing** and an **opportunity to increase intimacy** with her partner. Through sharing, she releases negative feelings and solidifies her bond with the man she loves or strengthens relationships with friends and loved ones.



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## What's the Point?

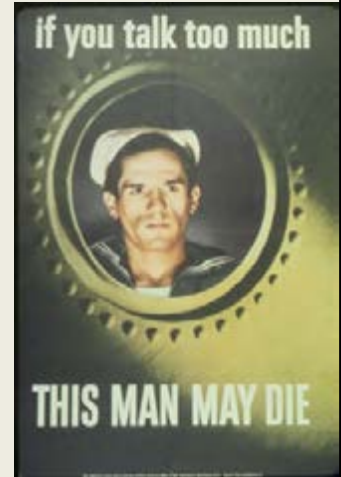
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- **SHE** uses communication to **explore** and **organize** her thoughts — to **discover the point** of the story.

**SHE** isn't necessarily searching for a solution when she initiates a conversation. **SHE'S** looking for someone to listen and **understand what she's feeling**. **SHE may not know** what information is **necessary or excessive** until the words come spilling out.

- **HE** **prioritizes** productivity, economy, and **efficiency** in his daily life, and conversation is no exception.

When **HE** tells a story he has **already sorted through the details in his own head**, and shares only those details that he deems **essential to the point** of the story. **HE** might wonder, "Why do women need to talk as much as they do?" Often, **HE** may even **interrupt** a woman once he has heard the point, or **offer a solution**.



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## Did you HEAR that?

---

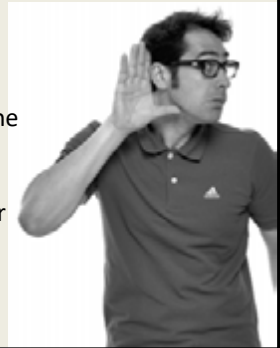
- HE is conditioned to **listen actively**.

Learning to listen patiently isn't natural for him. When SHE initiates conversation, HE assumes SHE wants his advice or assistance. HE engages with her, filtering everything SHE says through the lens of, "What can we actually do about this?"



- SHE sees **conversation as a productive end in and of itself**.

If SHE feels sufficiently heard or understood, SHE may not need to take further action to resolve a problem or "make things better." The fact that SHE **has been listened to** assuages her anxieties and dulls the pangs of negative feelings. Sharing with someone who understands and loves her heals her from the inside and equips her with the emotional tools necessary to handle the trials and tribulations of the outside world.



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## HE COPES WITH STRESS differently than SHE does



- When HE feels stress or any negative emotion, the very **LAST THING** that HE wants to do is **TALK** about his **feelings**. In fact, talking about his feelings would feel like torture.
- Often, when upset or stressed, HE will withdraw into his “cave” (become quiet and withdrawn). A man’s “cave time” is like a tiny vacation: HE reduces stress by forgetting about his problems and focusing on other things like; watching television, reading the newspaper, or playing video games. In reality, **HIS** subconscious mind is **processing** and determining a viable COA (Course of Action) to take to resolve the problem, usually by confronting it head on.
- HE will **almost always** avoid communication with HER during times of duress. If SHE persists with nurturing questions or criticism, HE will usually withdraw even further, feeling that SHE doesn’t trust him to “take care of business” on his own.
- If SHE gives him space and lets him process his stress, HE feels understood and respected.

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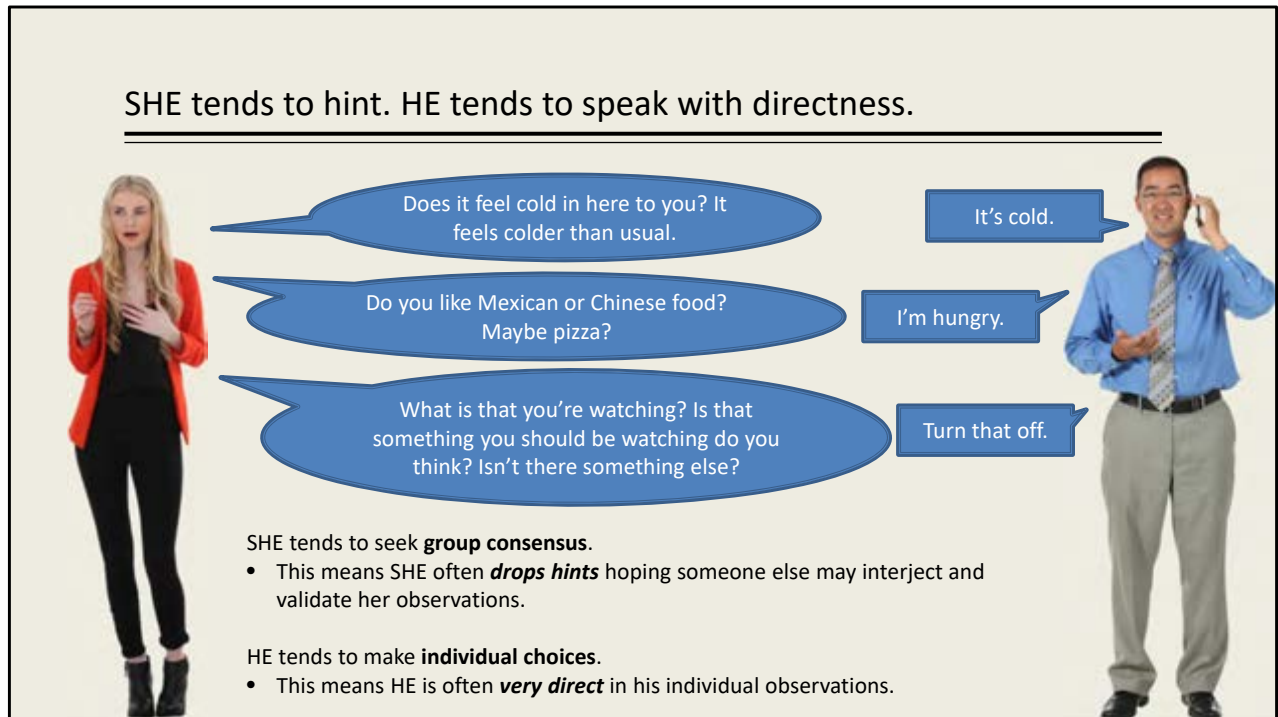
## SHE COPES WITH STRESS differently than HE does

- By using words as tools to explore and express her difficult emotions when **SHE** is upset, **SHE** is able to **process** her negative emotions... and let them go.
- **SHE** values **support** and **nurture**, and is most fulfilled by sharing, cooperation, and community because this builds or strengthens relationships.
- When **HE** shows interest in **HER** by asking caring questions or expressing heartfelt concerns, **SHE** feels loved and cared for because **HE** is fulfilling her first primary love need.



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SHE tends to hint. HE tends to speak with directness.



SHE: Does it feel cold in here to you? It feels colder than usual.

HE: It's cold.

SHE: Do you like Mexican or Chinese food? Maybe pizza?

HE: I'm hungry.

SHE: What is that you're watching? Is that something you should be watching do you think? Isn't there something else?

HE: Turn that off.

SHE tends to seek **group consensus**. This means SHE often drops hints hoping someone else may interject and validate her observations.

HE tends to make **individual choices**. This means HE is often very direct in his individual observations.

SHE uses a **LOT** more words per day than HE does



- Turns out **women do talk more than men**, but only a few thousand words per day on average. (4/5/2007 University of Texas at Austin)
- Research has shown that **women talk almost three times as much as men**. In addition, women generally speak more quickly and devote more brainpower to speaking. (2/20/2013 Science World Report)
- Previous research by Louann Brizendine at the University of California found that women speak an average of **20,000** words daily compared to only **7,000** words for men. This means that on average, women talk **nearly three times as much as men**. (2/22/2013 U Penn)

SHE uses a **LOT** more words per day than HE does

These are citations from 3 different studies.

All of these studies concluded SHE speaks anywhere from 2,000 to 20,000 words per DAY more than HE speaks.

## Sometimes HE doesn't speak at all

- Men tend to use **far fewer words** than women on a daily basis
- According to various studies, men speak anywhere from **2,000** to **8,000** to **13,000 fewer words per day** than women!
- Men tend to stick to the minimum required facts and/or explain events in **logical** order—when forced to speak at all—and rarely relate events in **chronological** order.
- For women, events that bear little relevance to any personal relationship tend to “just happen” to them and are described in a **chronological** and **linear** fashion.



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Generally Speaking, Women Like to Socialize and Men Do Not



Generally Speaking, Women Like to Socialize and Men Do Not  
CARTOON: Whew, that was close. I almost had to socialize.

## THE FLAT TIRE EXAMPLE

A lone human being drives a truck down a hill, runs over something sharp, and this is the end result.



A lone human being drives a truck down a hill, runs over something sharp, and a flat tire is the end result.

## Flat Tire HE SAID

I blew a tire when I ran over something sharp driving my truck down that hill.

All very **active** (blew, ran, driving) and **factual** but **not chronologically** ordered.

The tire blowing event, which he considers the most **significant** event, appears in his dialogue before the actual running over the sharp thing, or even the driving down the hill.

This is **not in chronological order**. He clearly had to be driving down the hill first, run over the sharp thing next, then get the flat tire last.



I blew a tire when I ran over something sharp driving my truck down that hill.

OR

I blew a tire this morning.

Active. Not in chronological order.

The tire blowing event, which he considers the most **significant** event, appears in his dialogue before the actual running over the sharp thing, or even the driving down the hill.



## Flat Tire SHE SAID

---

---

I was coming down that hill in the truck and then there must have been something sharp in the road because now the tire is flat.

All very **passive** (was, been, is) and **chronologically** ordered, but **not entirely factual**.

In her dialogue, even though she was actually driving the truck, her phrasing could lead one to believe she was merely a passenger in the truck.

Note that events are described in exact chronological order and stated using “to be” verbs instead of active verbs: WAS, BEEN, IS.



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## THE NEW HOUSE EXAMPLE

PROBLEM! A married couple has outgrown their house and they need to buy a larger home.



The NEW HOUSE EXAMPLE

PROBLEM! A married couple has outgrown their house and they need to buy a larger home.

## New House SHE SAID

---

Wouldn't it be great if there were a nice, quiet little house in the suburbs for sale? A house in a good school district with low property taxes?  
There are neighborhoods with community pools and playgrounds for the kids.  
Maybe there's a place with a basement for the quilting supplies and a nice kitchen. Oh, and a garage for your tools and your workbench.  
And a nice yard with room for a flowerbed and maybe a little victory garden out back. If we get a few acres, we could put in some fruit trees.  
Wouldn't that be great?

Wordcount=94 Sentences=7

Active verbs=2 "to be" verbs=4



SHE says:

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## New House HE SAID

---



I should probably buy us a bigger house.

- Wordcount=8 Sentences=1
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HE says:

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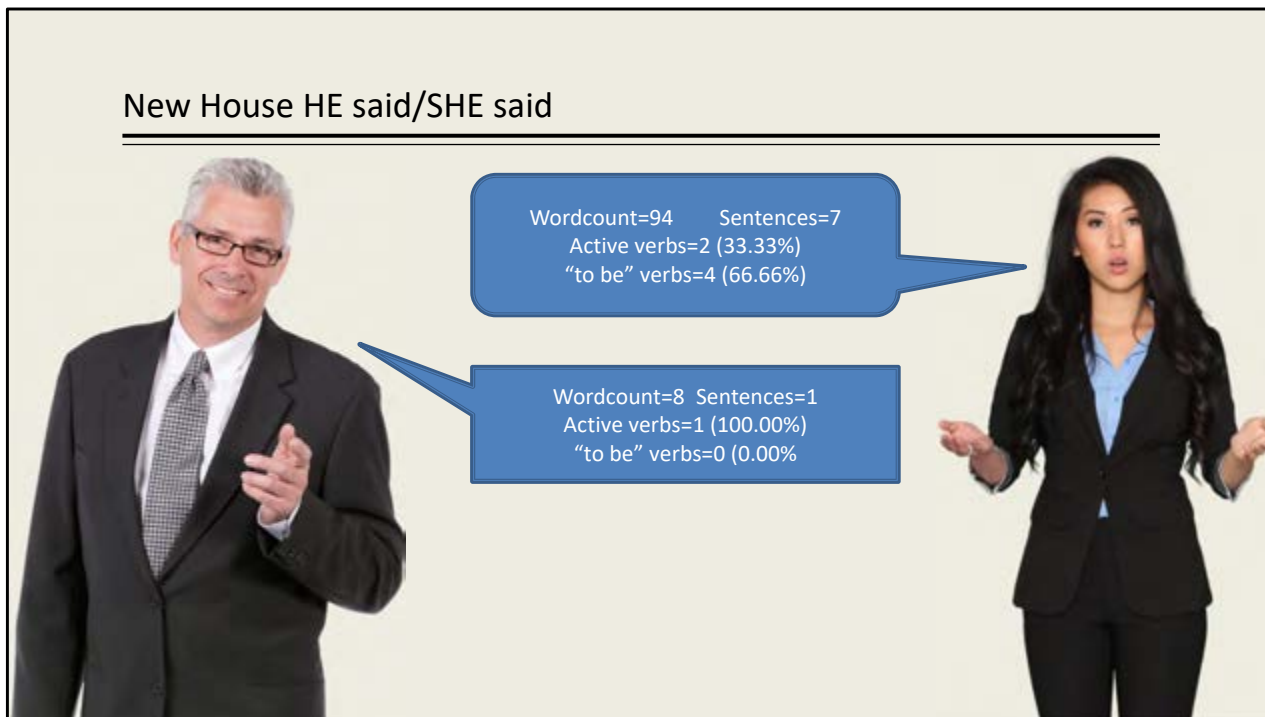
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## New House HE said/SHE said



HER Stats:

Wordcount=94

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Active verbs=2

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HIS Stats:

Wordcount=8

Sentences=1

Active verbs=1 (100%)

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## Translating HE Said

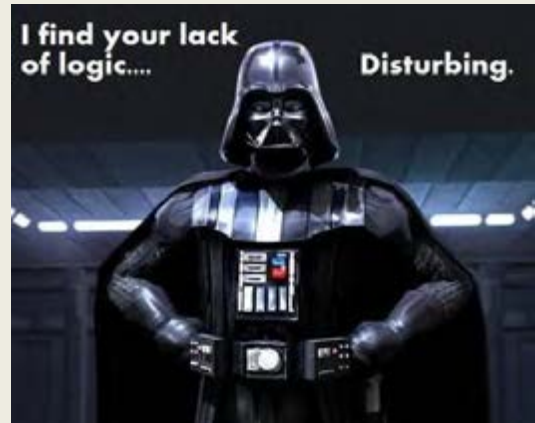
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Generally speaking, **HE** will:

- use **fewer words** than SHE will
- more **active verbs**
- describe events **factually** or **logically**,
- List events by what they perceive as **significant events first**,
- **own** whatever happened

The most significant incident—like the *flat tire*—is worth describing and prioritizing. Likely, HE perceives the other details as mundane and nearly irrelevant.

When HE identifies a ***problem*** (like the house is too small) and a ***solution*** (buy a new house) then that is **LOGICALLY** the end of the matter. Problem solved!



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## Translating SHE Said

Generally speaking, SHE will

- **passively** describe the incident using **fewer active verbs**.
- describe it **chronologically** as events unfolded
- Describe it as something that just “happened” with little or **no ownership** of any of the milestones or waypoints
- use **more words** than their male counterparts

For her, it is more important to understand how the event **emotionally** affected them, affected a **relationship**, or was **perceived** by others.

How SHE anticipates something will make her feel **EMOTIONALLY** is more important than the **something itself**. For her, the **actual problem and solution** are less important than that SHE will **feel** a certain way once the problem is solved.



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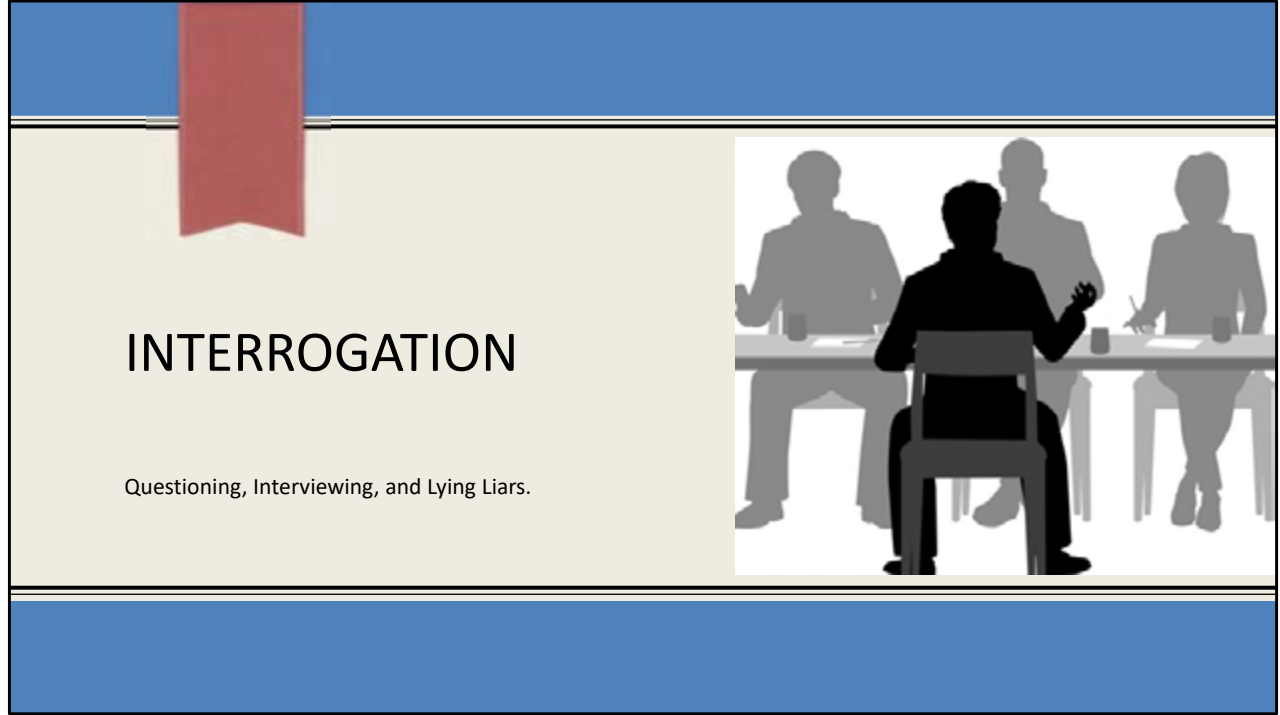
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Questioning, Interviewing, and Lying Liars.



## When HE or SHE is questioned...

- The heart of interrogation techniques can be summed up with the acronym **L.E.R.I.**

L-Listen  
E-Empathy  
R-Rapport  
I-Influence



- **L—Listen** to the subject and try to determine the underlying state of mind or emotional state of the subject.
- **E—Empathize** and establish common ground.
- **R—Establish Rapport** by which information can flow freely
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## When HE or SHE is questioned...

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## When HE or SHE lies

---



- When HE lies, most men are incapable of creating a logically coherent and realistic **timeline**. Usually, when HE is forced to review events in a linear and **chronological** way, HE will eventually slip up and leave some gap or create an impossible overlap in time.

**This is why interrogators will often “Take it from the top.”**



- When SHE lies, SHE often cannot appropriately ascribe **emotional depth** to events or incidents when those events are taken **out of chronological sequence**.

**This is why interrogators will often ask, “How do you think that made \_\_\_\_ feel when that happened?”**

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WHEN SHE ASKS  
EMOTIONALLY CHARGED  
QUESTIONS



When She Asks Emotionally Charged Questions

## SHE will ask EMOTIONALLY CHARGED questions

- SHE tends to ask **many** more **emotionally** charged questions than their male counterparts.

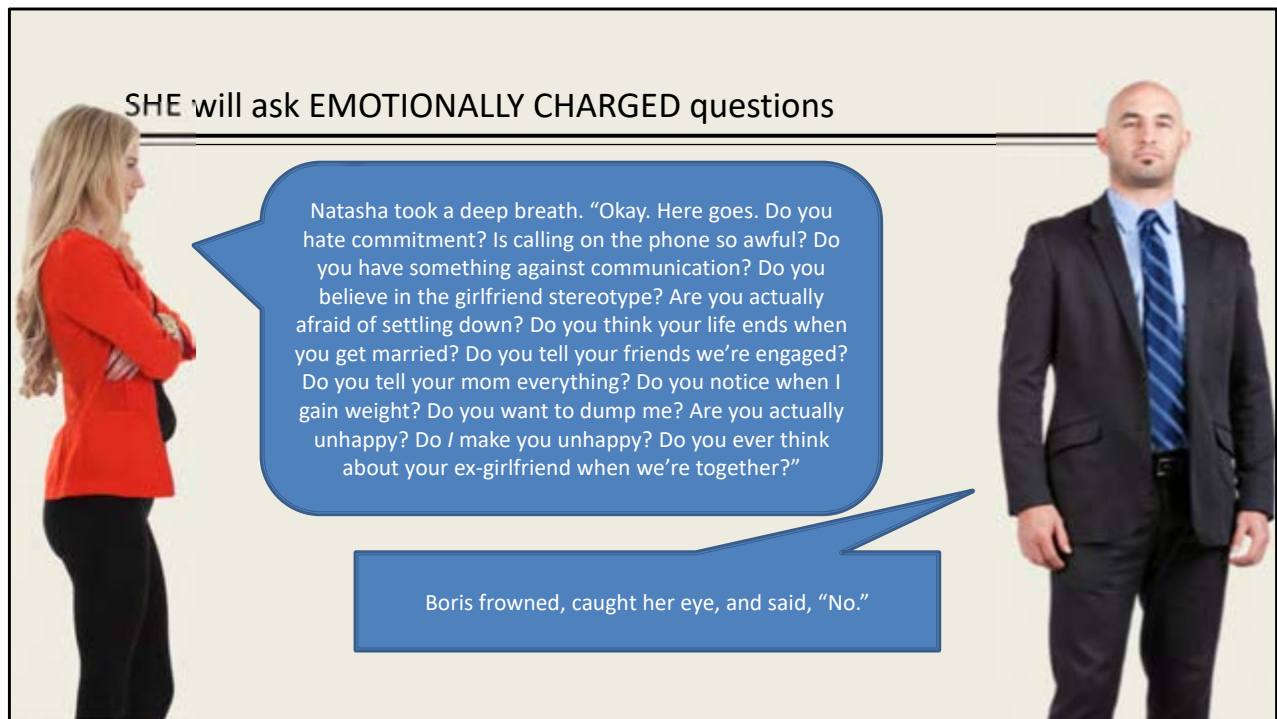


- HE tends to **dodge** emotionally charged questions as **often as possible** and has actual physiological responses when confronting them.
- Emotionally charged questions stress HIM out. HE has measurable physical and physiological reactions when confronted with emotions, especially emotions HE considers unreasonable.

SHE tends to ask **many** more **emotionally** charged questions than their male counterparts.

HE tends to **dodge** emotionally charged questions as **often as possible**.

Emotionally charged questions stress men out. They have measurable physical and physiological reactions when confronted with emotions, especially emotions they consider unreasonable.



SHE asks: Natasha took a deep breath. "Okay. Here goes. Do you hate commitment? Is calling on the phone so awful? Do you have something against communication? Do you believe in the girlfriend stereotype? Are you actually afraid of settling down? Do you think your life ends when you get married? Do you tell your friends we're engaged? Do you tell your mom everything? Do you notice when I gain weight? Do you want to dump me? Are you actually unhappy? Do I make you unhappy? Do you ever think about your ex-girlfriend when we're together?"

HE responds: Boris frowned, caught her eye, and said, "No."

# Agenda (Three Acts)

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- ~~I. Characteristics of Good Dialogue~~
- ~~II. He Said / She Said~~
- III. Techniques for Super Realistic dialogue



## Agenda (Three Acts)

- ~~I. Characteristics of Good Dialogue~~
- ~~II. He Said / She Said~~
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III.

## PRACTICAL TECHNIQUES TO CRAFT SUPER REALISTIC DIALOGUE

<http://SuccessfulChristianSelfPublishing.com/MoreThanBW/>

III. Practical Techniques to Craft Super Realistic Dialogue





We'll start with some DIALOGUE REVISION TIPS

## Given the differences between HE SAID / SHE SAID dialogue

### **For SHE said:**

Depending on the circumstances, female dialogue can be a bit wordy and that's fine. SHE use thousands or tens of thousands more words per DAY then HE does and rarely feel that a simple "yes or no" answer is the full and complete answer.

For female characters when events "just happen" around them, they are in a "state of being." So, in the dialogue in those cases, the **passive** "to be" state of being verbs are perfectly fine.

**Actively describe any emotional response** to those same events that "passively" happened.

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## Given the differences between HE SAID / SHE SAID dialogue

---

### For HE said:

In the male dialogue, revise a lot of the initial passive “to be” verbs in their speech. When revising male dialogue, generally make it as **active** as possible.

Give them **ownership**. “I did this/I said that/I worked to **achieve** something.”

With most male characters, make his speech just as succinct as possible, nearly to the point of sounding terse. We can steal a page from Elmore Leonard’s playbook, here.

“Shut up,” Marty explained.

That is some good, tight, active, male dialogue.

REMEMBER: There are exceptions. Loving male relatives will speak softly, gently, using passive verbs, and at length with loved ones.

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CREATE OR RESOLVE  
CONFLICT



Create or Resolve Conflict

Conflict: SHE feels SHE isn't being heard



Conflict: SHE feels SHE isn't being heard

SHE: Have you even heard a single word I've said?

HE: That's a really strange way to start a conversation.



This creates conflict.

## Conflict Resolution: SHE feels heard



Conflict Resolution: SHE feels heard

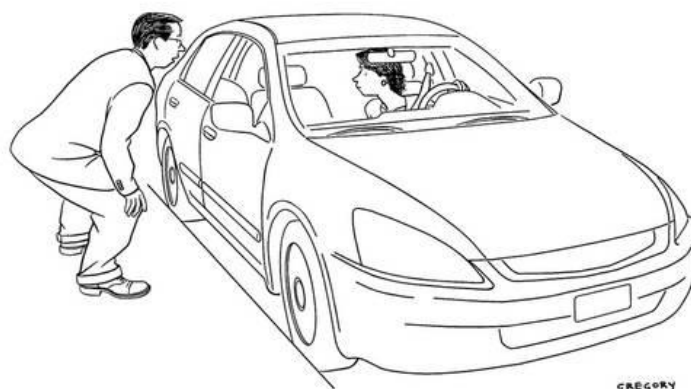
SHE: Have you even heard a single word I've said?

HE: Of course I'm listening. I'm trying to understand how you feel about what you're saying.

Conflict Resolution: SHE feels SHE is being heard

---

MALE PROSTITUTE



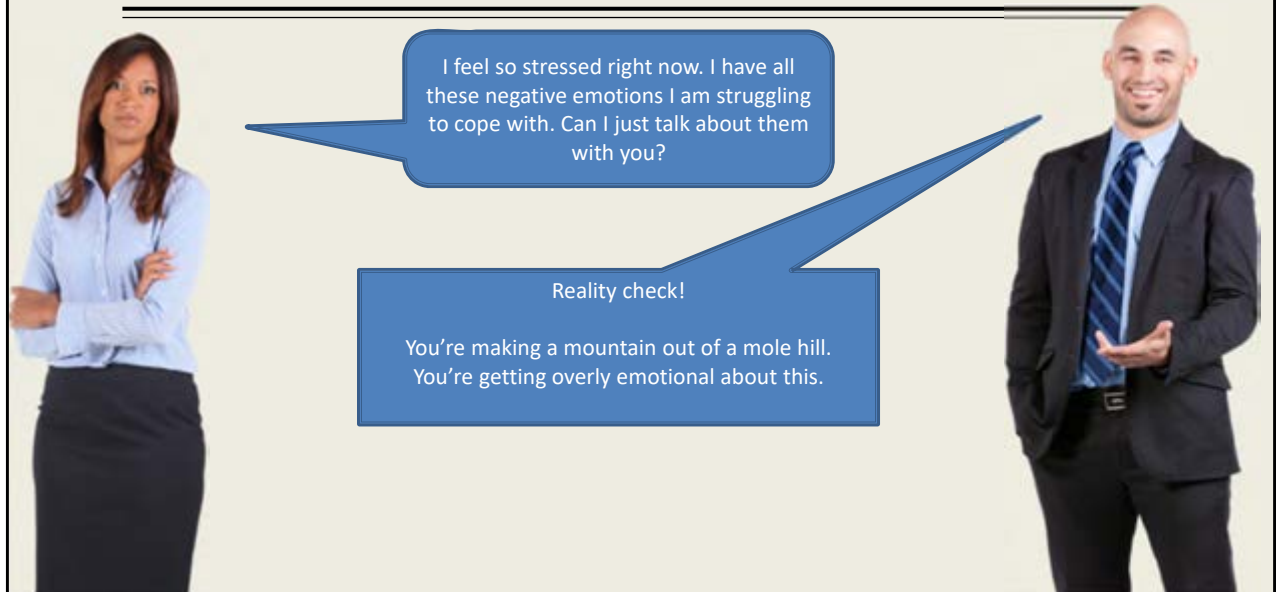
*"Oh yeah, baby, I'll listen to you—I'll listen to you all night long."*

Conflict Resolution: SHE feels SHE is being heard

CARTOON: A "male prostitute" says to a Jane, "Oh, yeah, baby, I'll listen to you—I'll listen to you all night long."



**Conflict: HE minimizes how SHE experiences stress/negative emotions**



Conflict: HE minimizes how SHE experiences stress/negative emotions

SHE: I feel so stressed right now. I have all these negative emotions I am struggling to cope with. Can I just talk about them with you?

HE: Reality check! You're making a mountain out of a mole hill. You're getting overly emotional about this.



This creates conflict.

## Conflict Resolution: HE empathizes with how SHE experiences stress/negative emotions

---

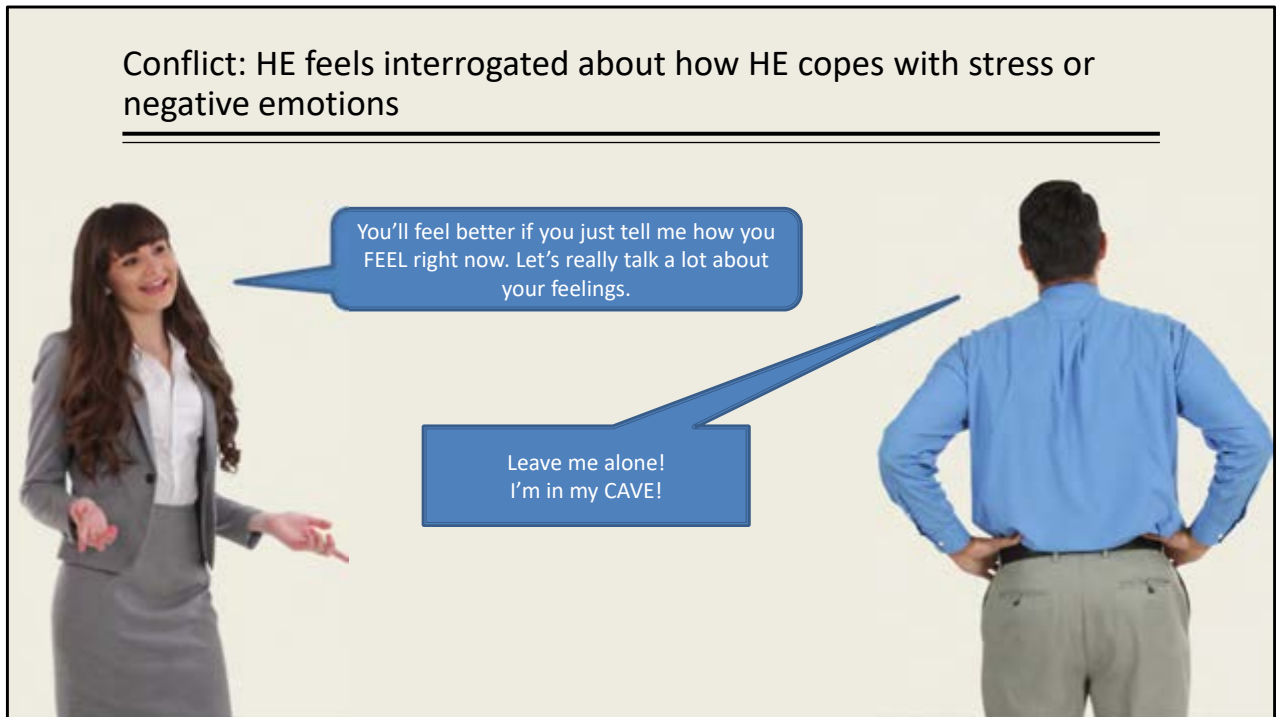


Conflict Resolution: HE empathizes with how SHE experiences stress/negative emotions

SHE: I feel so stressed right now. I have all these negative emotions I am struggling to cope with. Can I just talk about them with you?

HE: Absolutely. Let me make you some tea and you tell me how you feel. Take all the time you need. I'm here to listen.

Conflict: HE feels interrogated about how HE copes with stress or negative emotions



Conflict: HE feels interrogated about how HE copes with stress or negative emotions  
SHE: You'll feel better if you just tell me how you FEEL right now. Let's really talk a lot about your feelings.  
HE: Leave me alone! I'm in my CAVE!



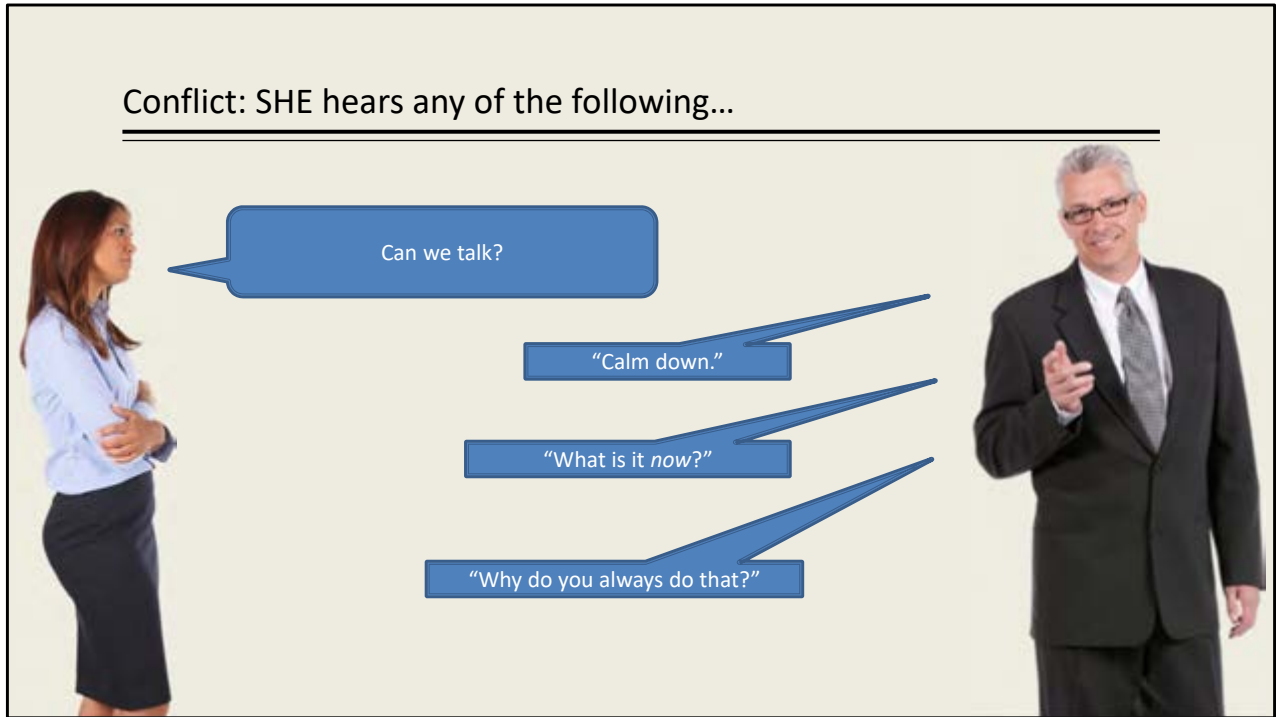
This creates conflict.

Conflict Resolution: SHE gives him space to cope with stress or negative emotions



Conflict Resolution: SHE gives him space to cope with stress or negative emotions  
SHE: I can tell you're stressed. I'm going to give you your space but I'll be around if you need anything.  
HE: Thanks.

Conflict: SHE hears any of the following...



Conflict: SHE hears any of the following...

SHE: Can we talk?

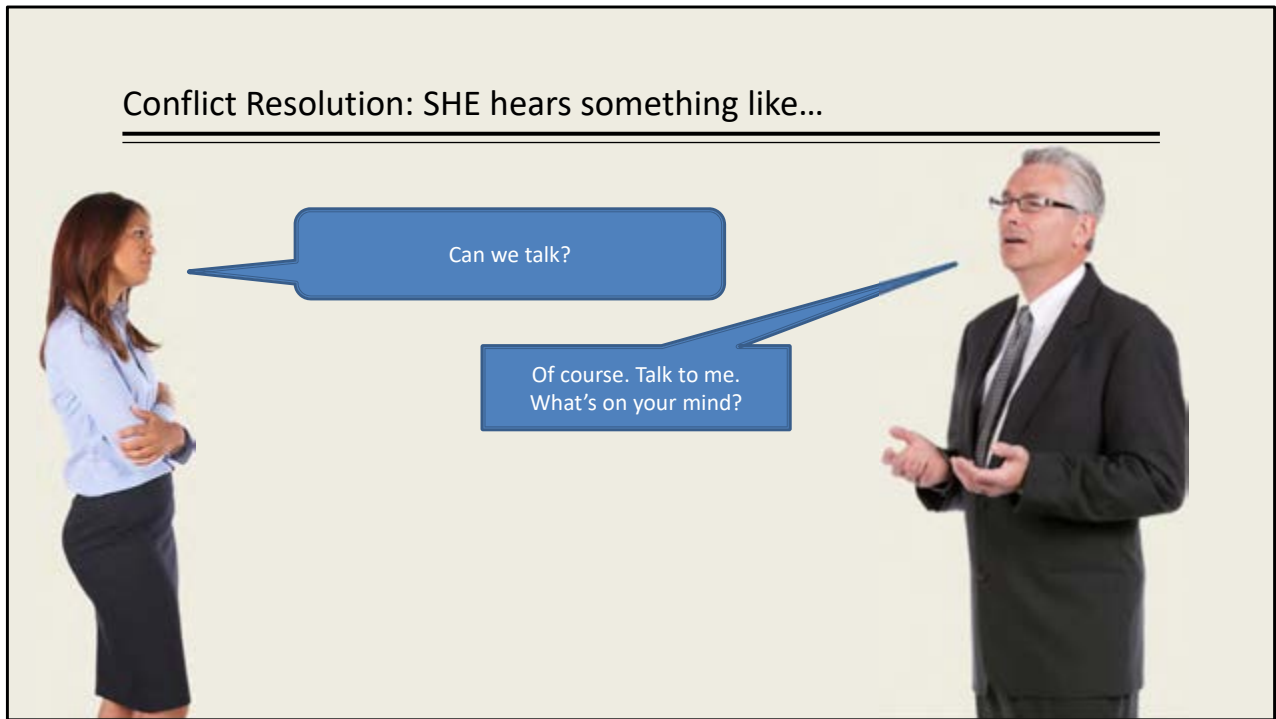
HE: Calm Down. What is it *now*? Why do you always do that?



This creates conflict.



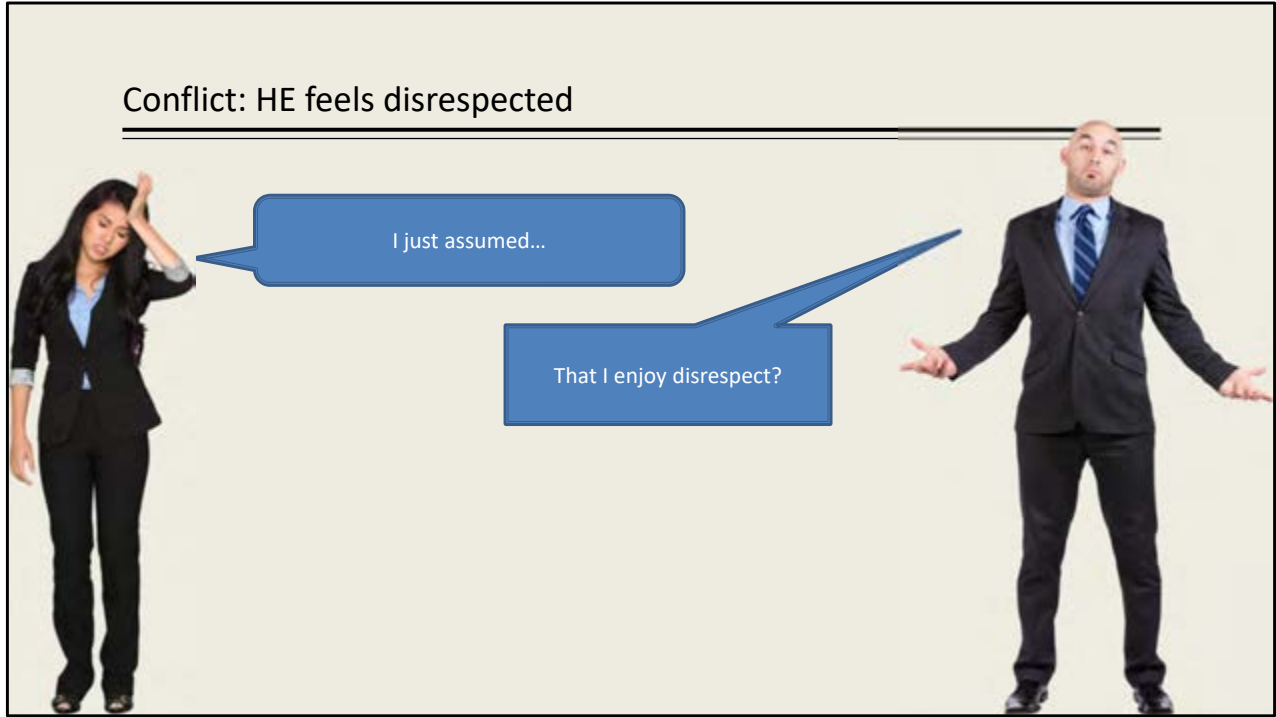
Conflict Resolution: SHE hears something like...



Conflict Resolution: SHE hears something like...

SHE: Can we talk?

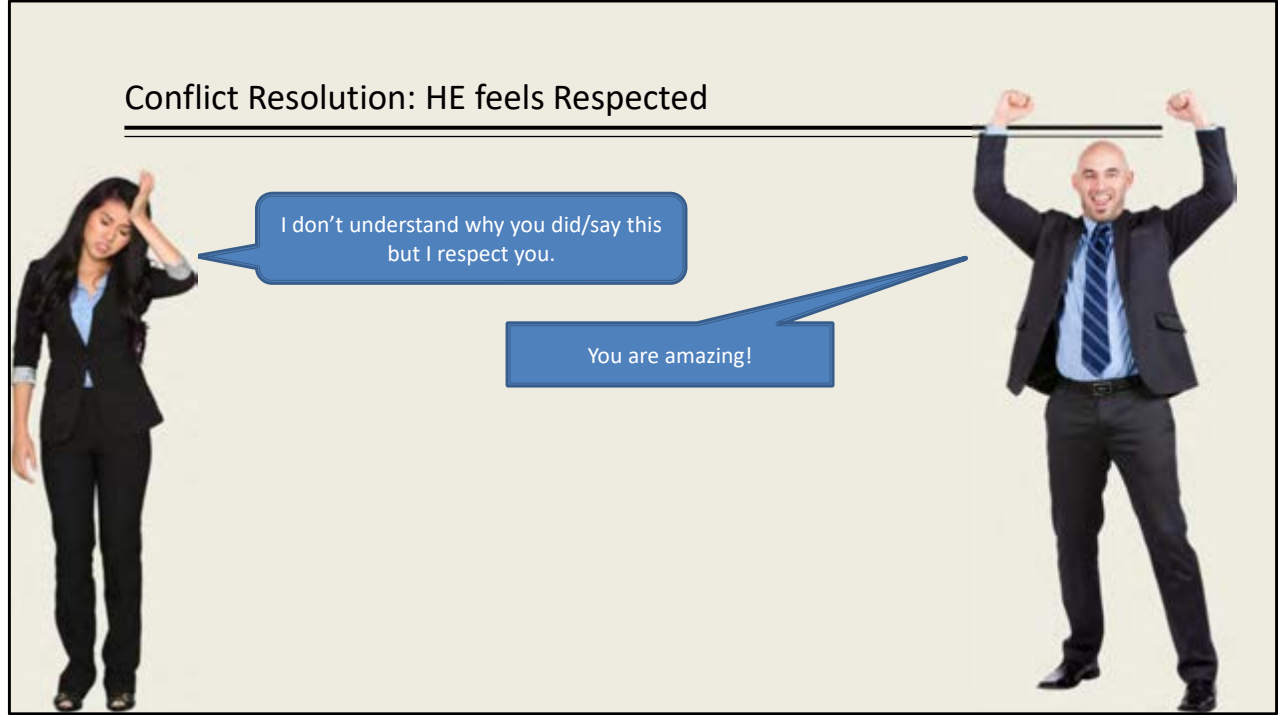
HE: Of course. Talk to me. What's on your mind?



Conflict: HE feels disrespected  
SHE: I just assumed...  
HE: That I enjoy disrespect?

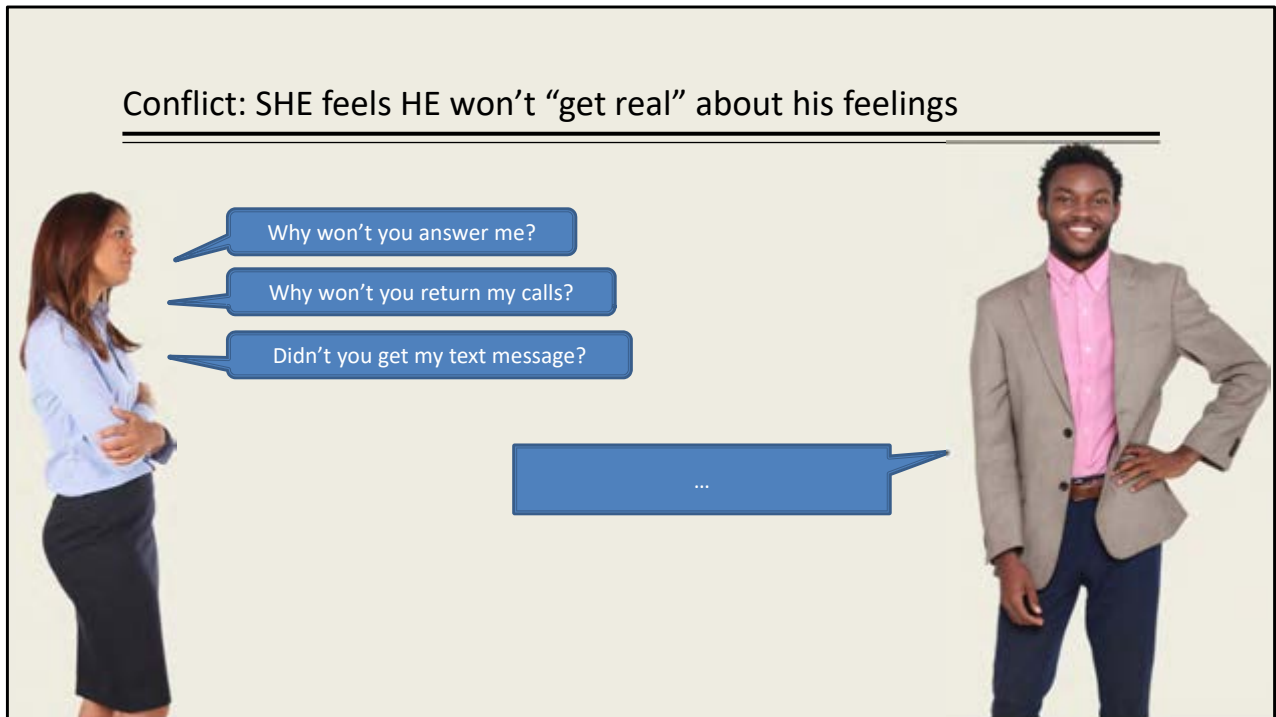


This creates conflict.



Conflict Resolution: HE feels Respected  
SHE: I don't understand why you did/say this but I respect you.  
HE: You are amazing!

Conflict: SHE feels HE won't "get real" about his feelings



Conflict: SHE feels HE won't "get real" about his feelings

SHE asks:

Why won't you answer me?

Why won't you return my calls?

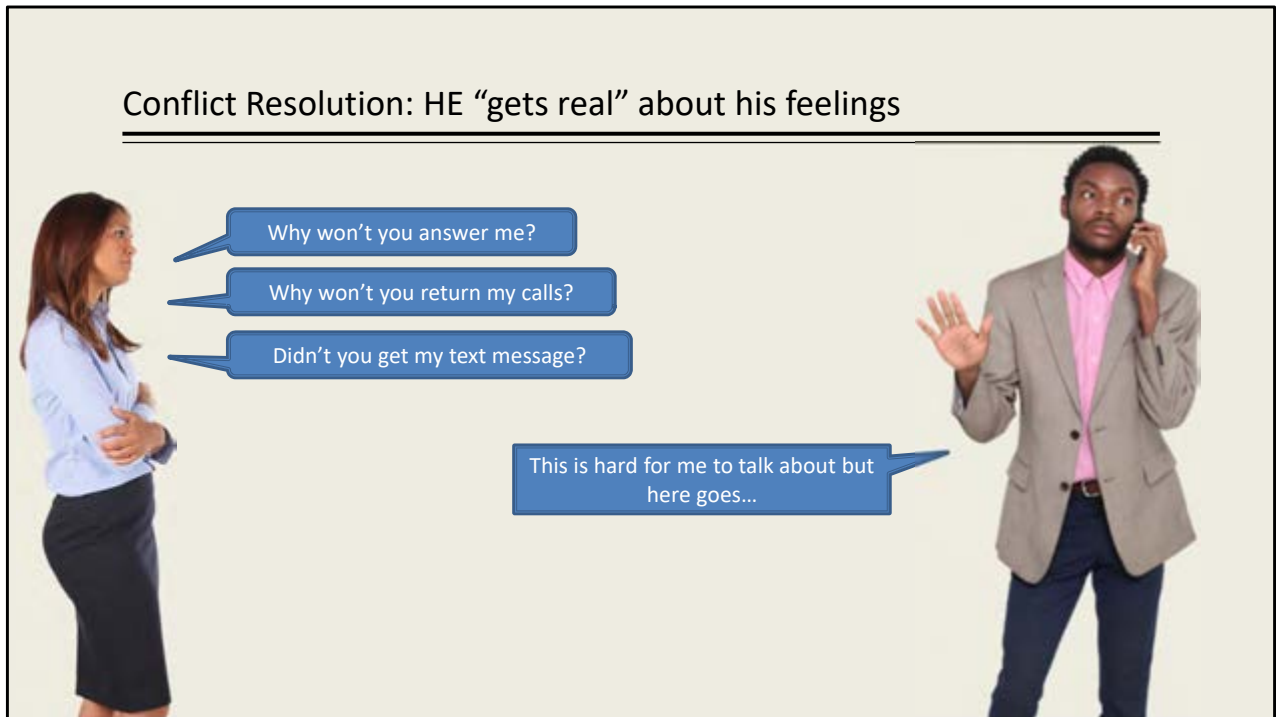
Didn't you get my text message?

HE: [nothing]



This creates conflict.

## Conflict Resolution: HE “gets real” about his feelings



Conflict Resolution: HE “gets real” about his feelings

SHE asks:

Why won't you answer me?

Why won't you return my calls?

Didn't you get my text message?

HE: This is hard for me to talk about but here goes...

Conflict: SHE will not answer the actual question HE asked



Scenario: HE needs a hammer and some nails to hang a picture.

HE sets the hammer down and goes to retrieve the nails. Upon his return, the hammer is no longer where HE left it. HE is certain he left it there, and that it cannot move itself, and concludes that the most efficient way to get it back is to question the most likely suspect.

Conflict: SHE will not answer the actual question HE asked

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Scenario: True or False?



True.

Scenario: QUESTION—True or False.

Hon? I know where we keep everything in the house. I live here, remember?

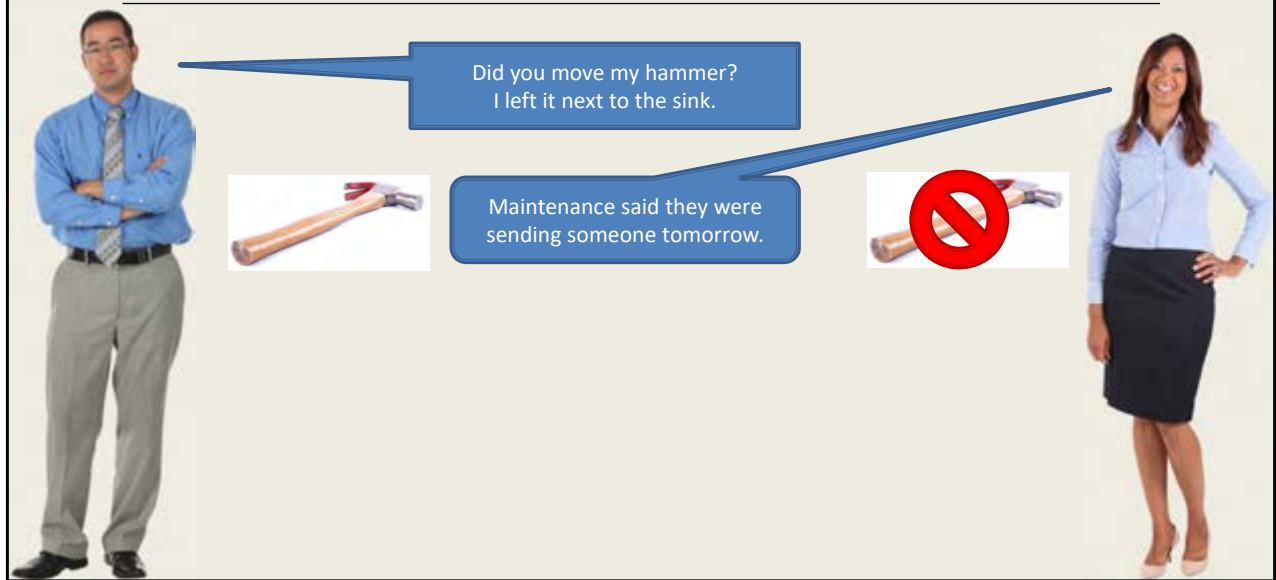
Said no husband ever.

Scenario: ANSWER—True

Hon? I could never, EVER say something like that.

You move my stuff ALL THE TIME!

Conflict: SHE will not answer the actual question HE asked

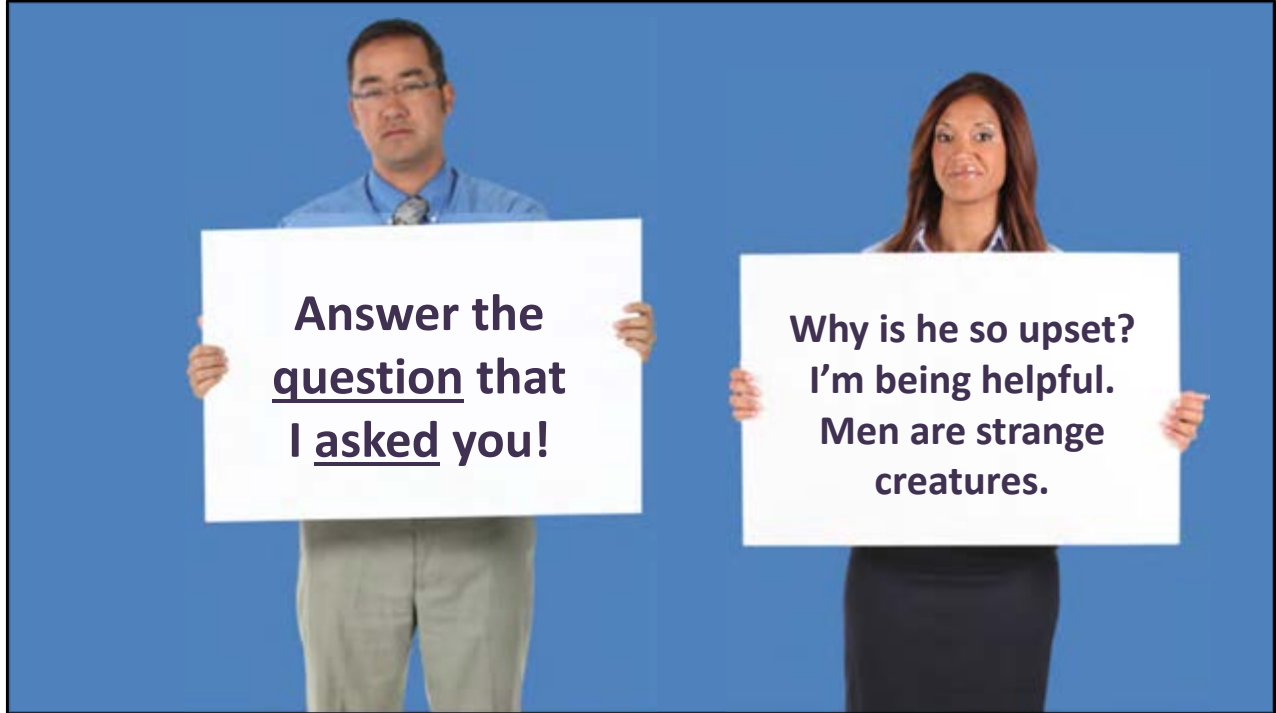


HE asks: Did you move my hammer? I left it next to the sink.

SHE answers: Maintenance said they were sending someone tomorrow.

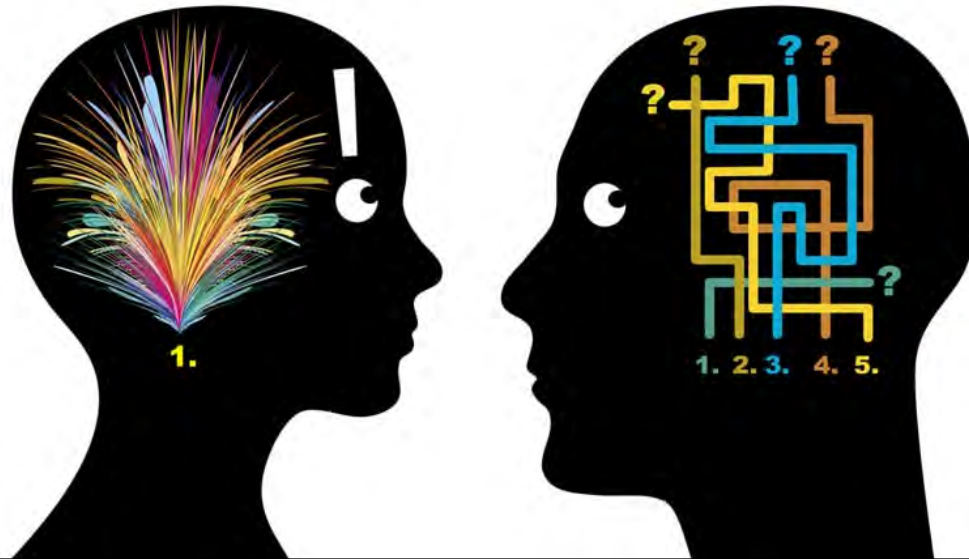


His head literally explodes.



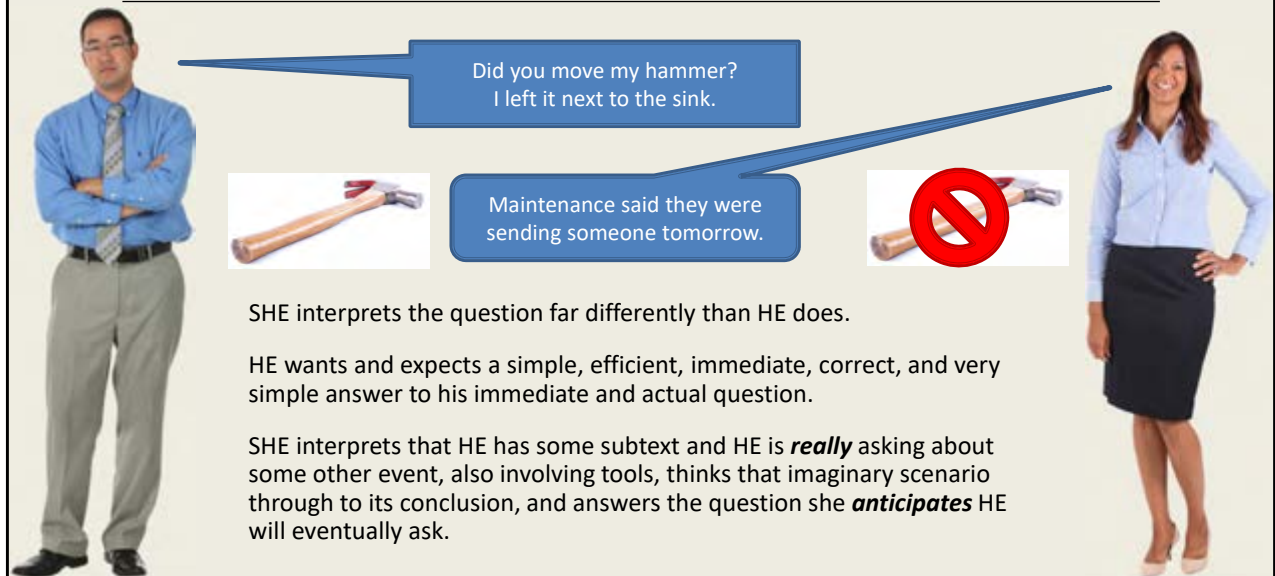
He is silently begging her to answer the question that he asked her. She silently wonders why he is upset. In her mind, she is being helpful and this unexpected reaction supports her belief that men are strange creatures.

Why didn't SHE answer his question? Why did HIS head explode?



Why didn't SHE answer his question? Why did HIS head explode?  
The answer lies in the way that we think.

## Conflict: SHE will not answer the actual question HE asked



Did you move my hammer?  
I left it next to the sink.

Maintenance said they were  
sending someone tomorrow.

SHE interprets the question far differently than HE does.

HE wants and expects a simple, efficient, immediate, correct, and very simple answer to his immediate and actual question.

SHE interprets that HE has some subtext and HE is **really** asking about some other event, also involving tools, thinks that imaginary scenario through to its conclusion, and answers the question she **anticipates** HE will eventually ask.

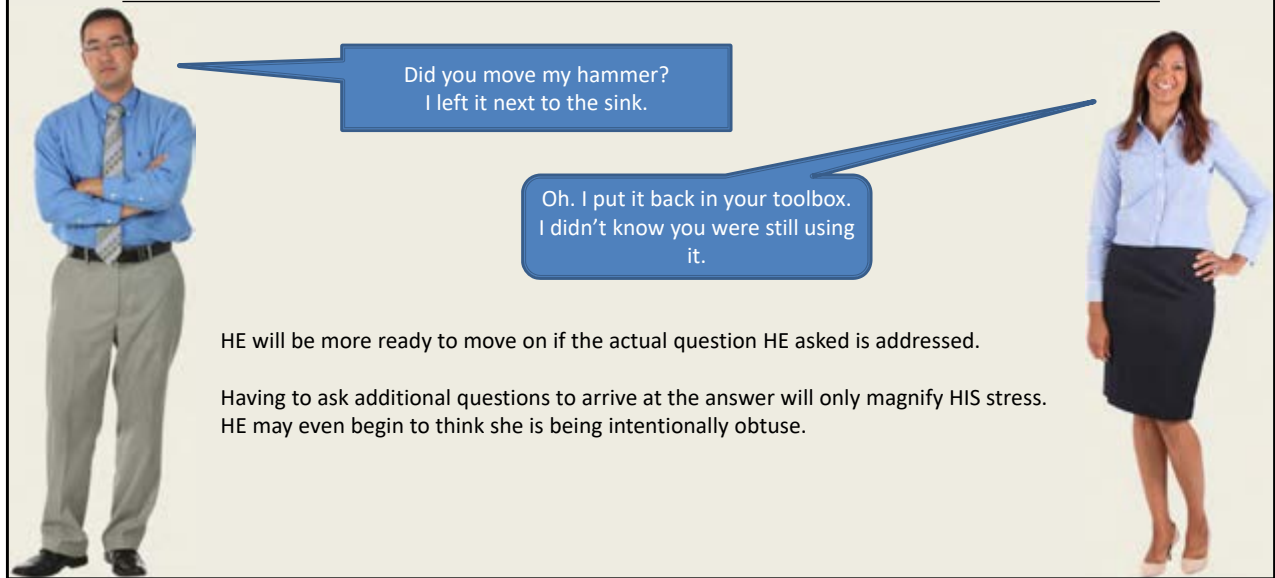
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## Resolution: SHE answers the question that HE asked

---



Resolution: SHE answers the question that HE asked

HE will be more ready to move on if the actual question HE asked is addressed.

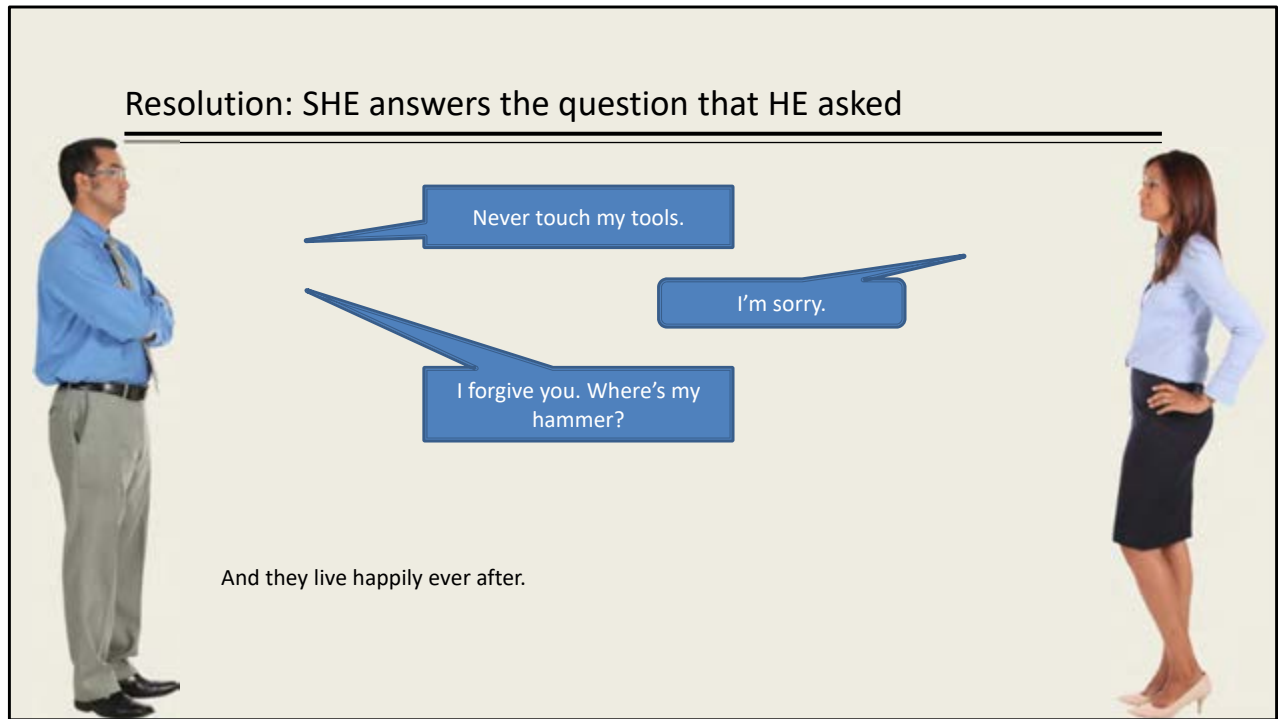
Having to ask additional questions to arrive at the answer will only magnify HIS stress.

HE may even begin to think she is being intentionally obtuse.

HE asks: Did you move my hammer? I left it next to the sink.

SHE answers: Oh. I put it back in your toolbox. I didn't know you were still using it.

Resolution: SHE answers the question that HE asked



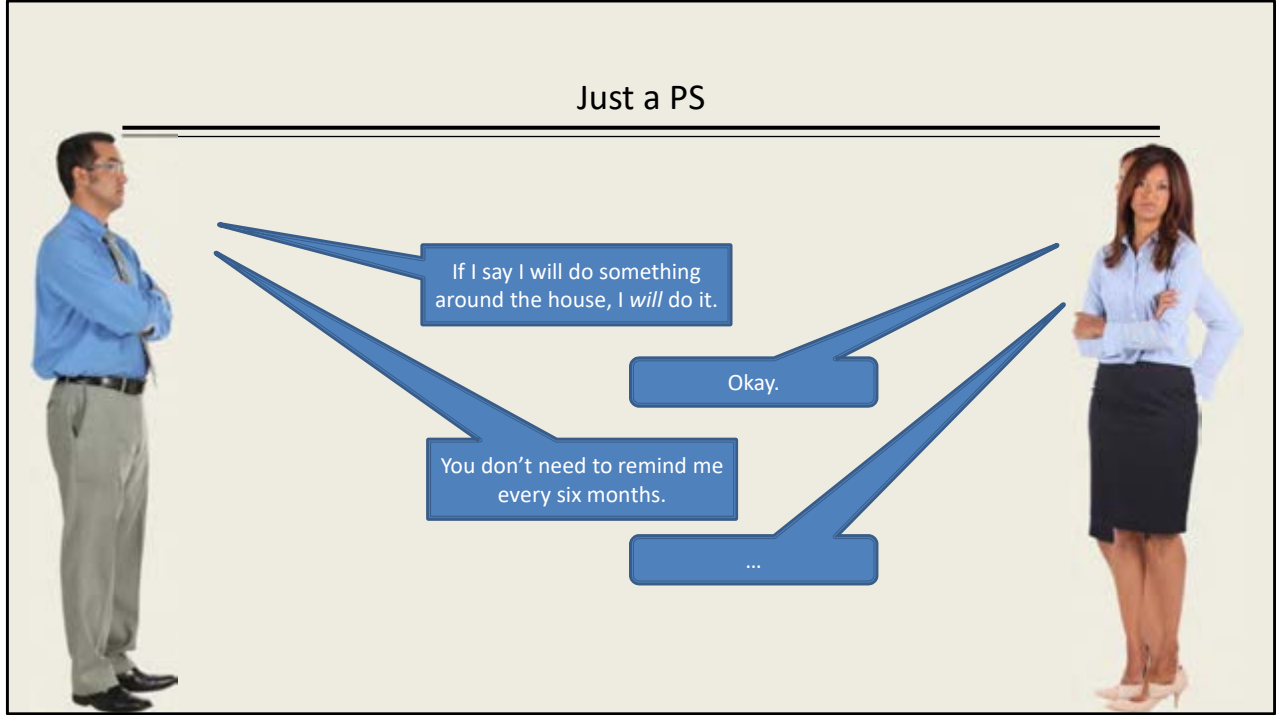
HE says: Never touch my tools.

SHE says: I'm sorry.

HE says: I forgive you. Where's my hammer?

And they live happily ever after.





PS

HE says: If I say I will do something around the house, I *will* do it.

SHE says: Okay.

HE says: You don't need to remind me every six months.

SHE says: .....

Conflict: HE can't get a simple YES or NO (What he expects)

I'm ordering pizza. You want some pizza?

**Branch 1:** The binary answer is in the **affirmative**.

**Branch 2:** The binary answer is in the **negative**.



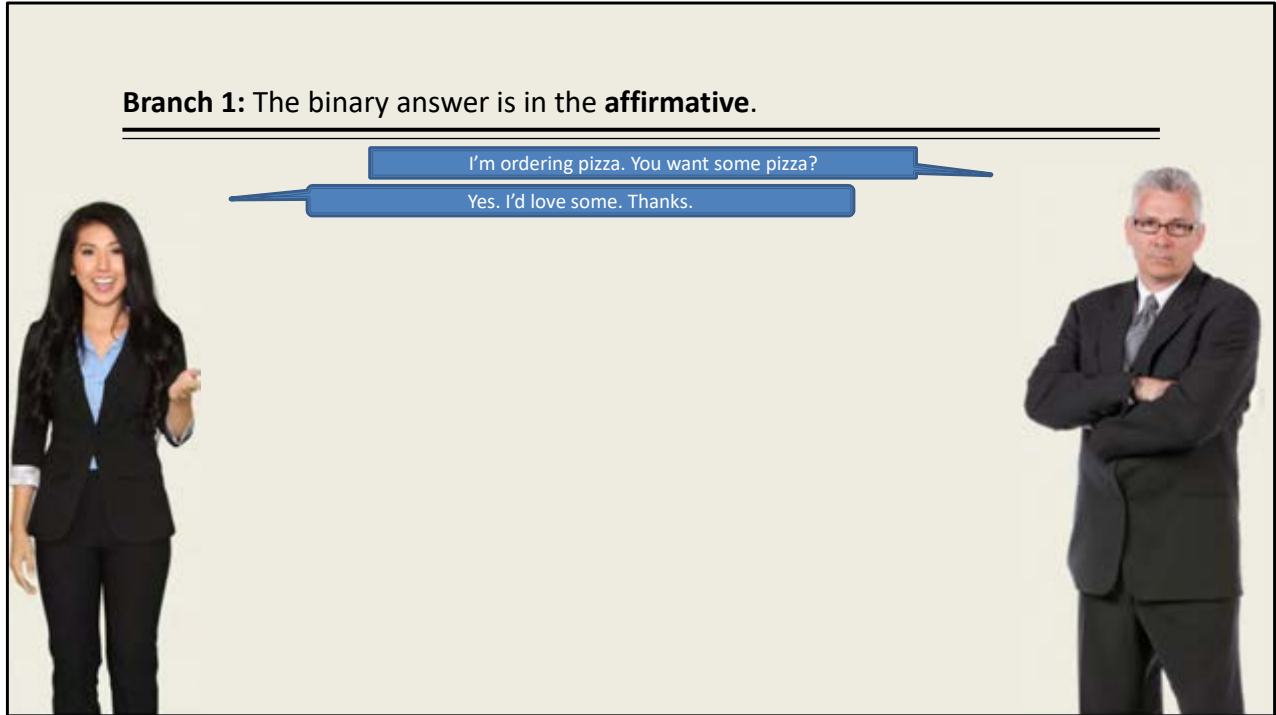
Conflict: HE can't get a simple YES or NO (What he expects)

HE asks: I'm ordering pizza. You want some pizza?

He expects one of only two possible binary responses:

**Branch 1:** The binary answer is in the affirmative.

**Branch 2:** The binary answer is in the negative.

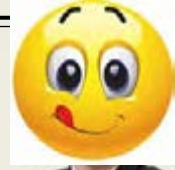


**Branch 1: The binary answer is in the affirmative.**

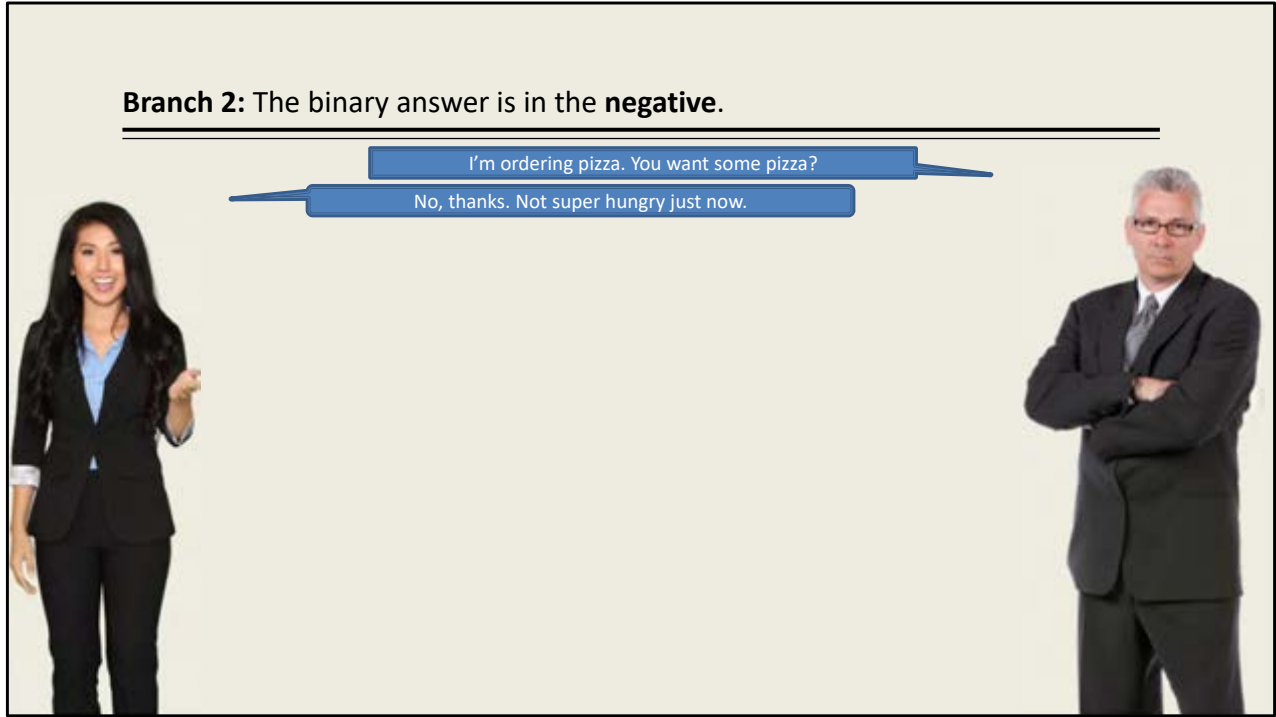
**Branch 1:** The binary answer is in the **affirmative**. (What he expects)



**HE and SHE** enjoy yummy pizza together.



**Branch 1:** The binary answer is in the **affirmative**. (What he expects)  
**They** enjoy yummy pizza together.

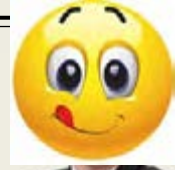


**Branch 2: The binary answer is in the **negative**.**

**Branch 2:** The binary answer is in the **negative**. (What he expects)



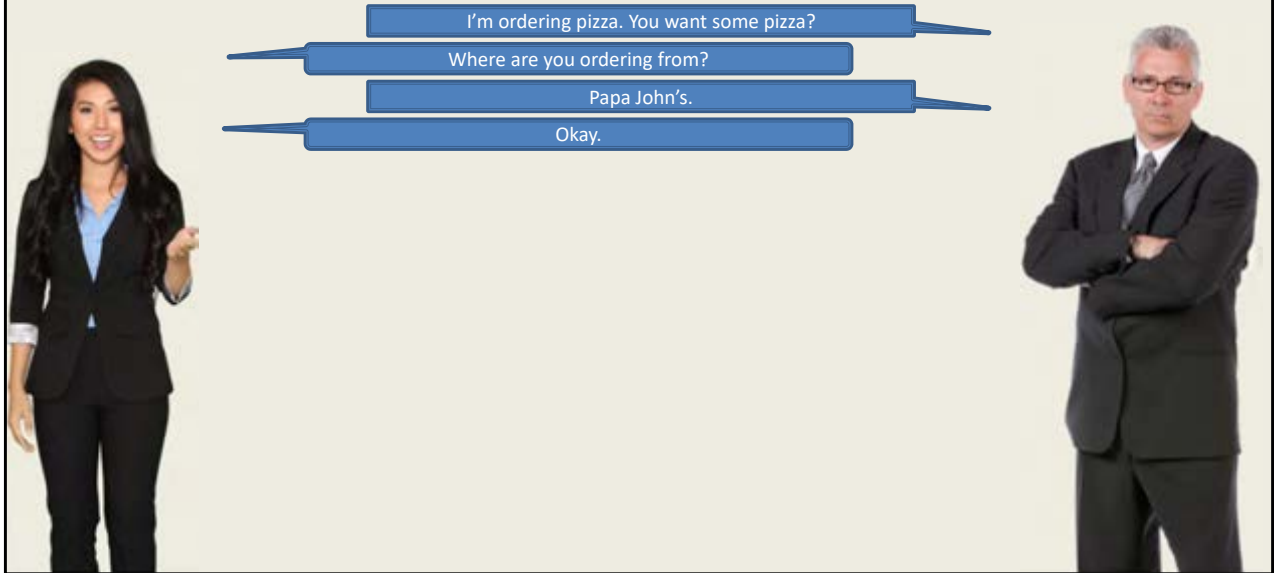
HE enjoys yummy pizza by himself, SHE is happy, and life is good.



**Branch 2:** The binary answer is in the **negative**. (What he expects)  
He enjoys yummy pizza by himself and life is good.

**Branch 3:** The binary answer is unobtainable. (What actually happens)

---



**Branch 3:** The binary answer is unobtainable. (What actually happens)



He is holding his forehead to keep his head from exploding.



**Branch 3: The binary answer is unobtainable. (What actually happens)**

---

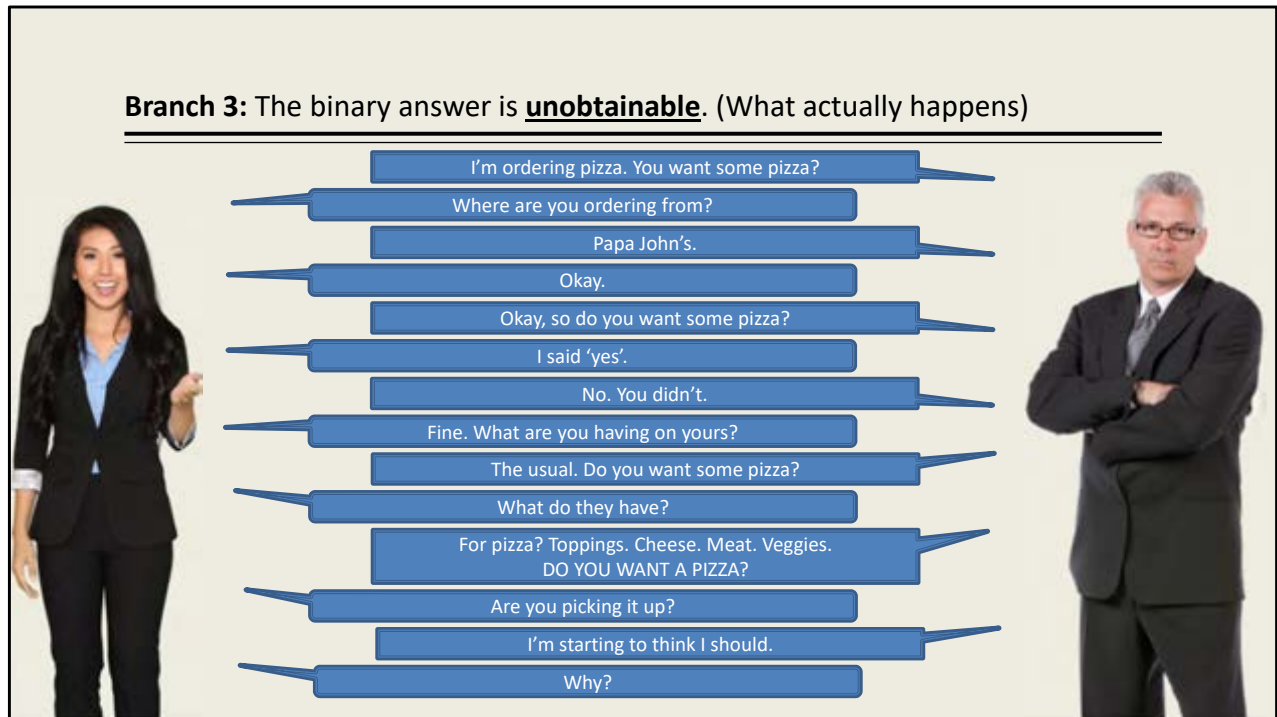


I'm ordering pizza. You want some pizza?  
Where are you ordering from?  
Papa John's.  
Okay.  
Okay, so do you want some pizza?  
I said 'yes'.  
No. You didn't.  
Fine. What are you having on yours?  
The usual. Do you want some pizza?





He is holding his forehead to keep his head from exploding.  
And so is he.



What HE does not expect is a branch 3 answer.  
Branch 3: The binary answer is unobtainable.

HE: I'm ordering pizza. You want some pizza?

SHE: Where are you ordering from?

HE: Papa John's.

SHE: Okay.

HE: Okay, so do you want some pizza?

SHE: I said 'yes'.

HE: No. You didn't.

SHE: Fine. What are you having on yours?

HE: The usual. Do you want some pizza?

SHE: What do they have?

HE: For pizza? Toppings. Cheese. Meat. Veggies. DO YOU WANT A PIZZA?

SHE: Are you picking it up?

HE: I'm starting to think I should.

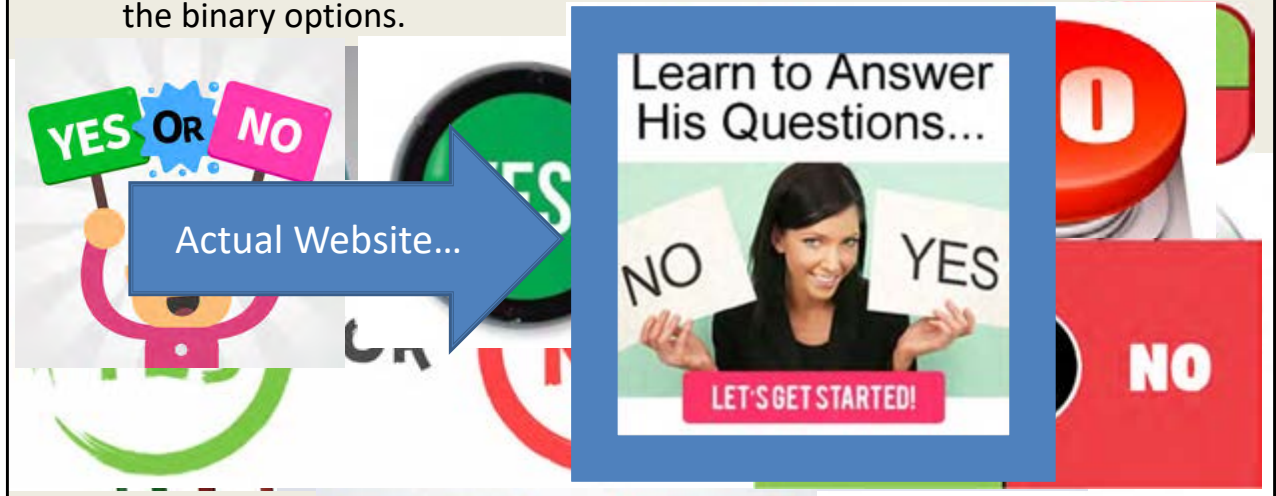
SHE: Why?



He is holding his forehead to keep his head from exploding.  
And so is he.  
And now, so is he.

Obviously...

The resolution to this conflict is to provide an answer using one of the binary options.



The resolution to this conflict is to provide an answer using one of the binary options. There are books and websites that can help learn how to answer with a binary response.



TRUCE!

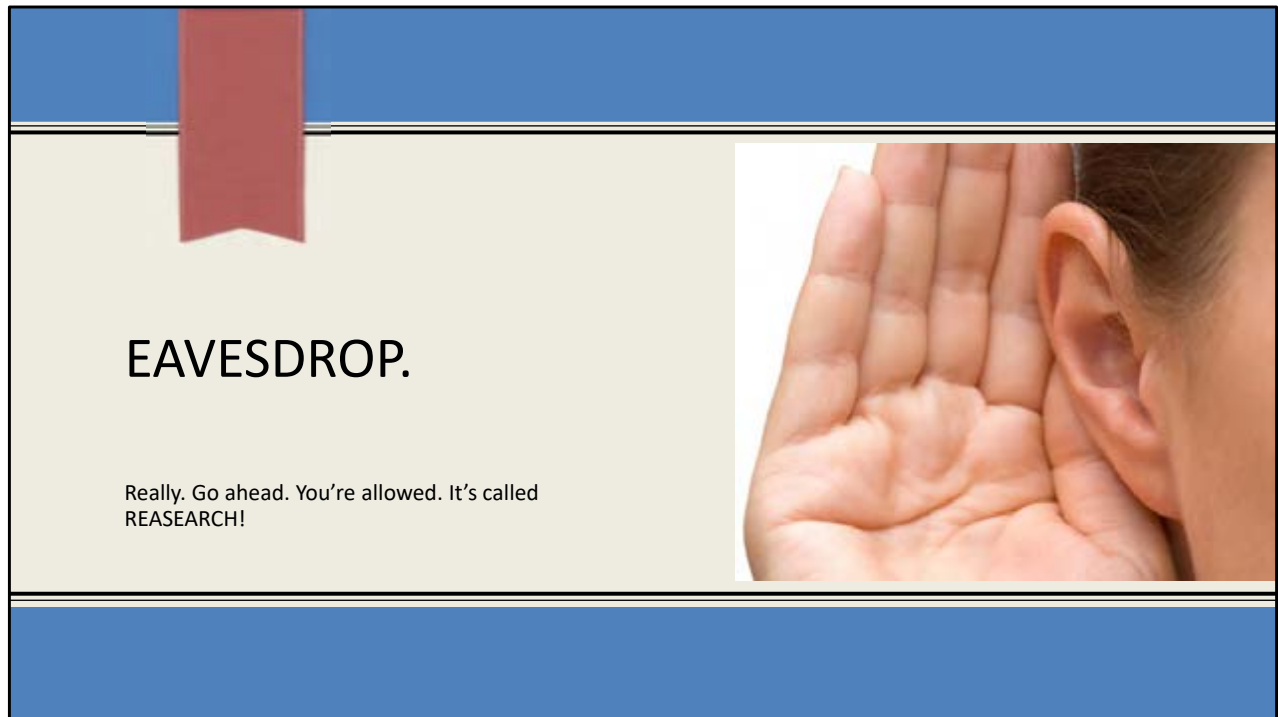


There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither **male nor female**; for you are **all one** in Christ Jesus.  
—Galatians 3:28 (NKJV)

Let's call a TRUCE on this particular battle.

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

—Galatians 3:28 (NKJV)



**EAVESDROP.**

Really. Go ahead. You're allowed. It's called REASEARCH!

Eavesdrop.

Really. Go ahead. You're allowed. It's called REASEARCH!  
You are SERIOUSLY allowed.

## Eavesdrop...

---

- ...and keep a close eye out as well
- Become a student of conversation
- Coffee shops, shopping malls, and restaurants are alive with people talking, laughing and sharing stories.
- While away a Saturday morning in a local coffee shop, jotting down conversation topics that are bandied around from table to table.
- Unabashedly pay attention to gestures, tones, facial expressions, and reactions as those very snippets from real life can help you write compelling, believable dialogue.
- Conversation isn't merely an exchange of words. Oh no, we also use body language to get our message across, so it goes without saying that this needs to be captured in your dialogue.



...and keep a close eye out as well

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Conversation isn't merely an exchange of words. Oh no, we also use body language to get our message across, so it goes without saying that this needs to be captured in your dialogue.



## ACT IT OUT

Read it aloud.



Read it aloud and act out the scene and the dialogue.

## Read it aloud. Act it out.

---

- During the editing process, you should always read your manuscript aloud, and do pay special attention to your dialogue.
- If the dialogue doesn't flow, or you're tripping over your words, it's not going to sound right to the reader either.
- Even though you're not capturing every part of a conversation in your dialogue, everything that's written should sound like an actual person said it. If not, it's time to erase and try again.



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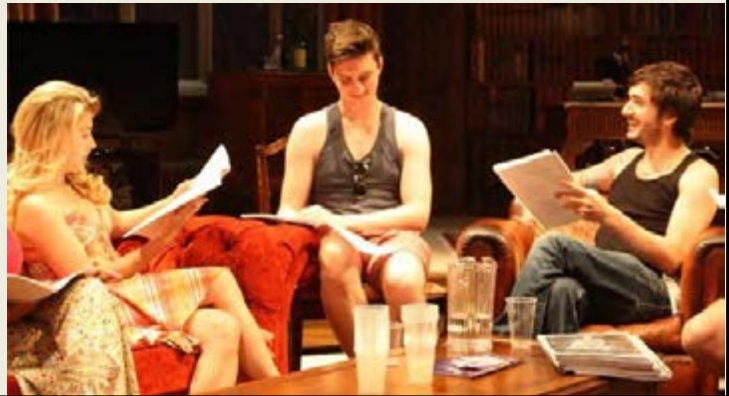
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- Listen for **clichés**. Listen for **overuse** or **repeated use** of any phrases.
- Listen to see if each character has a **unique voice**.
- If you're in a writers' group, you might even ask other members to read your dialogue aloud



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Listen to see if each character has a **unique voice**.

If you're in a writers' group, you might even ask other members to read your dialogue aloud



## Revision Can be VERY Important.

(Editor's note—Please revise this sentence for proper punctuation!)

A woman without her man is nothing.

**HE** punctuates:

A woman, without her man, is nothing.

**SHE** punctuates:

A woman: without her, man is nothing.

(Editor's note—Please revise this sentence for proper punctuation!)

A woman without her man is nothing.

**HE** punctuates:

A woman, without her man, is nothing.

**SHE** punctuates:

A woman: without her, man is nothing.



## MEN ARE MORE THAN BLACK AND WHITE

<http://SuccessfulChristianSelfPublishing.com/MoreThanBW/>

Questions?



**Next time:  
Part 3: Toss Out Male Tropes**

<http://SuccessfulChristianSelfPublishing.com/MoreThanBW/>