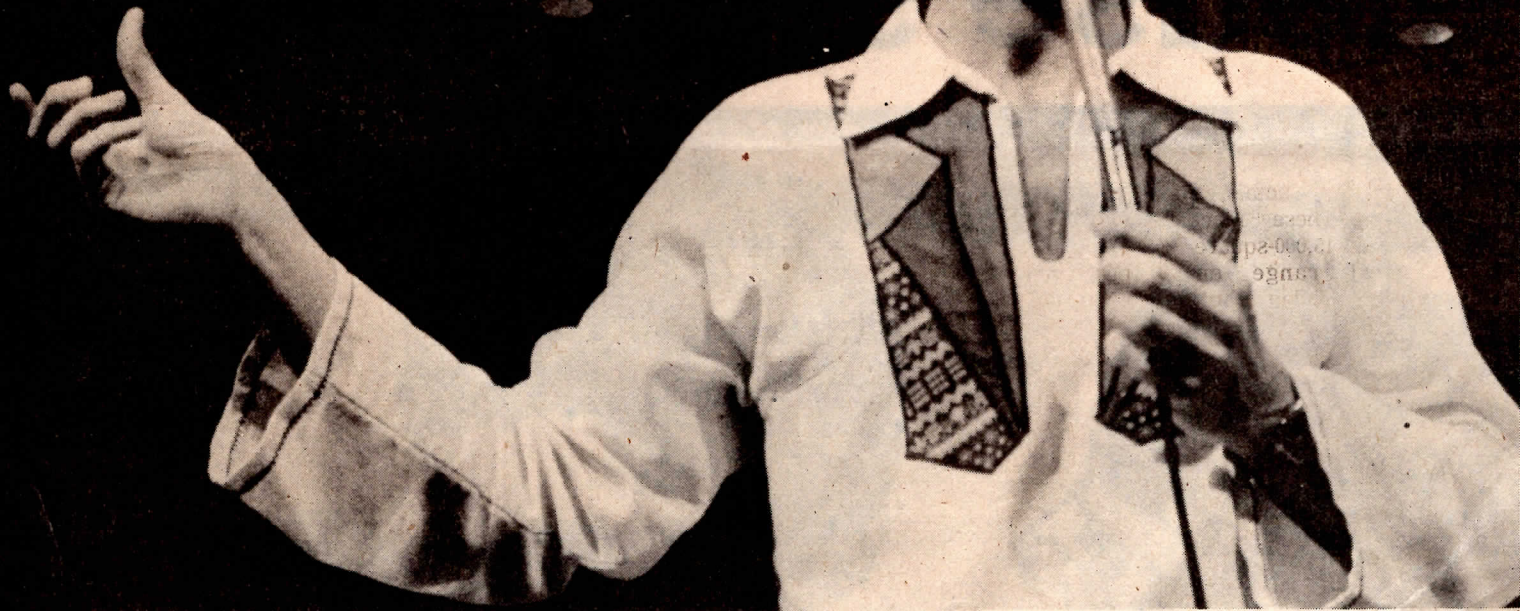


"The social pressure for success often turns men into success objects...with women, the social emphasis on attractiveness turns them into sex objects."



Daily News photo by Mike B...

Warren Farrell, author of "The Liberated Man", addresses an audience at Moorpark College Sunday night.

With changing times come new roles

By MIKE BANKS

Ralph has spent the past 45 years of his life inching his way toward success. He first thought a college education would guarantee him a good job and bring him that success. It didn't. Then came law school, a job with a large corporate law firm, when a junior and finally a senior partnership in that firm.

The senior partner position was Ralph's highest goal, but failed, ultimately, to bring him the success and happiness he assumed would be his. Not only did his achievements seem empty, but his wife of 20 years divorced him and he realized he had alienated his children.

Ralph is a character from a story told by author Warren Farrell at Moorpark College where women and men gathered Sunday night for a workshop to increase awareness of sex biases and discrimination in our society.

Farrell is the author of "The Liberated Man" and has appeared on several popular television talk shows. He also served three years on the Board of Directors of the National Organization for Women in New York City.

Farrell spoke to about 125 people at Moorpark College and led the audience in several role-playing

man. The group was asked to stand close to each other and for the women to "whisper sweet nothings" to the men.

After several minutes of nervous laughter and touchy moments, audience members related their experiences to the group. Women claimed the extra height gave them a feeling of power — an uncomfortable feeling for some. One woman claimed she "couldn't think of any sweet nothings."

Many men said they felt intimidated by the women looking down on them and taking an assertive role. One man didn't seem in the spirit of the exercise when he said with a snicker, "She could say anything she wanted to — but I knew what was going to happen on the way home!"

Between the role-playing exercises, Farrell cited statistics to illustrate the way women and men are socialized into the male/aggressive and the female/passive roles.

He said studies have shown that when a male baby cries both parents tend to pick it up much later than they would pick up a female child because boys are assumed to be "tougher and can handle it." Also, male infants are held less in general,

said he wanted to become less aggressive and overbearing and have a more equal emotional attitude toward women and concentrate less on success. He said, "It's sad when you think you've reached the top of the ladder of success and find that it's leaning against the wrong building."

Farrell asserts that men learn to exaggerate power and thereby turn women into sexual objects to be conquered. He says to make objects out of the opposite sex saves us a lot of pain because it hurts less to be rejected by an object than to be rejected "by a warm human being."

To illustrate more clearly to each sex how they are seen as a stereotypical group by the other, Farrell lead them through two final exaggerated role-playing exercises. For the men there is a male beauty pageant, for the women, a role-reversal date where they ask men out on a date and men play the passive role.

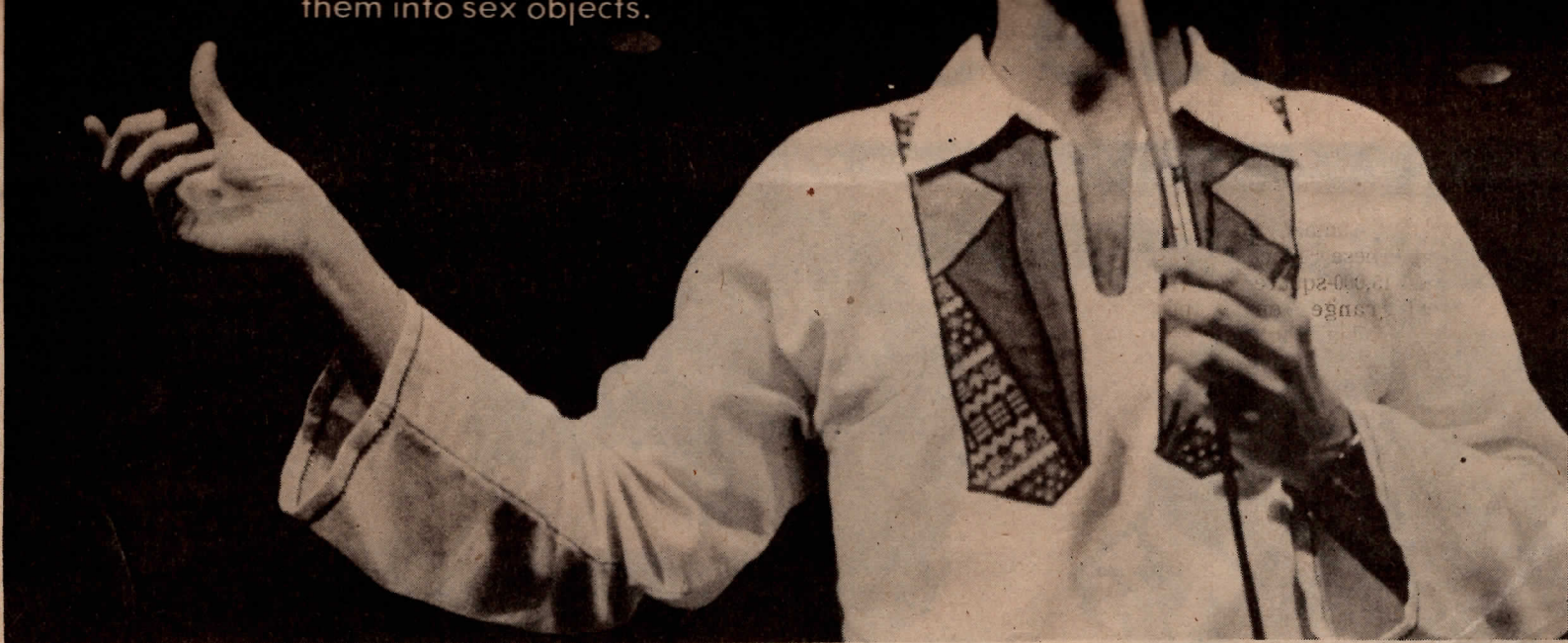
The women were to see "how far they could get" with the "boys" and the men were asked not to say anything more than yes or no during the first five minutes of the exercise. Men and women then faced off in two lines and the women were to choose a "boy" and ask him out on a

the role-playing activity ended couples shared their experience once again.

The men then got their turn reversing roles and were asked to participate in an all-male beauty pageant. The male half of the audience was lined up across the stage single file and asked to remove their shirts so the women could examine their physique, a paroxysm of the bathing suit competition in women's beauty pageants. Only two men refused to remove their shirts.

Farrell encouraged the women to hoot and call out derogatory, sometimes shocking comments about the "boys" to show them how it feels for women when they receive similar attention. The field of contestants eventually narrowed to five finalists who turned out to be the youngest members of the group, all in their early- or 20s.

After a lengthy period of hearted jesting, the men were asked to give some serious thought to what it felt for those who didn't win. When the men who had been left unchosen in the exercise expressed their hurt at being spurned, Farrell said they should "take that twenty minutes of



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Farrell invited the crowd to imagine themselves living the roles of the opposite sex.

Audience members were asked to pair up with someone of the opposite sex. Citing statistics that the average height of men is about half a chair higher than that of women, Farrell then asked the women to stand on their seats to simulate that extra height and play the part of a

man. The group was asked to stand close to each other and for the women to "whisper sweet nothings" to the men.

After several minutes of nervous laughter and touchy moments, audience members related their experiences to the group. Women claimed the extra height gave them a feeling of power — an uncomfortable feeling for some. One woman claimed she "couldn't think of any sweet nothings."

Many men said they felt intimidated by the women looking down on them and taking an assertive role. One man didn't seem in the spirit of the exercise when he said with a snicker, "She could say anything she wanted to — but I knew what was going to happen on the way home!"

Between the role-playing exercises, Farrell cited statistics to illustrate the way women and men are socialized into the male/aggressive and the female/passive roles.

He said studies have shown that when a male baby cries both parents tend to pick it up much later than they would pick up a female child because boys are assumed to be "tougher and can handle it." Also, male infants are held less in general, which leads to emotional repression, the ultimate cause of ulcers in adult men.

Farrell again asked the audience to pair up and discuss whether they had ever been a "Ralph" or had known of someone like Ralph in their lifetime and then share their feelings with the group once more.

One man said he was there because "I am a Ralph and I'm trying to swing it the other way." He

said he wanted to become less aggressive and overbearing and have a more equal emotional attitude toward women and concentrate less on success. He said, "It's sad when you think you've reached the top of the ladder of success and find that it's leaning against the wrong building."

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Farrell repeatedly referred to the men as "boys" to emphasize how disturbing it is for grown women to be called girls. He said the extent that the tag disturbed male audience members was proportional to how important it was to women not to be called girls.

After about 10 minutes more of nervous laughter and forced joking,

the role-playing activity ended and couples shared their experiences once again.

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Farrell encouraged the women to hoot and call out derogatory comments, sometimes shocking comments about the "boys" to show them how it feels for women when they receive similar attention. The field of contestants eventually narrowed to five finalists, two of whom turned out to be the youngest members of the group, all in their early- to mid-20s.

After a lengthy period of good-natured jesting, the men were asked to give some serious thought to what it felt for those who didn't win. Those who were rejected. When the men who had been left unchosen in the exercise expressed their hurt at being spurned, Farrell said they should "take that twenty minutes of silence and multiply it by twenty." Now you have some idea of the extent that women experience every day.

The evening ended with the audience forming a circle, a microphone in each arm, around the stage. There was a full minute of silence as the audience contemplated what they had learned during the evening. The silence was broken with a statement from a male participant, "Thank you, Ralph."