

Communication is complex!

Materials:

- Tinker toys – one set per couple

9 yellow wheels	4 long sticks	8 medium sticks	3 short sticks	1 handkerchief
1 blue wheel	2 yellow circles	2 purple joints	1 yellow connector	

Initial instructions for all

Communication is a key component in life. It is very important in the health of a marriage. This activity will help us demonstrate that communication is more than just words.

A couple will be working as a team. One will build something and one will give instructions as to what to build.

• Part 1

- Hand out 1 set of tinker toys per team. There will not be a paper handout for part 1.
- Ask for one person from the team to stand (identified as team member #1) and leave the room with facilitator #1 (it doesn't need to be all female or all male, just ask one person to stand).
- The person remaining at the table will open the bag and place the tinker toys in front of them on the table.
- Facilitator #1 will give the simple instructions that they are to share with their spouse:
- **“build a four-sided object with something hanging in the middle.”**
- They are to not elaborate, not use their hands to gesture what to make, not give any further details or give any non-verbals to help. Simply repeat the instruction when asked by your spouse for specifics.
- Team member #1 will return to their seat and Facilitator #2 will tell them to begin and that they have 3 minutes to complete the project.
- When time has expired, have couples briefly show their creations. Ask someone from team #1 to share the instructions.
- Solicit responses to the following questions:
 - What was challenging with this type of communication?
 - Is spoken communication foolproof?
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• Part 2

- Team member #1 can lay the pieces in front of them on the table.
- Team member #2 will leave the room with facilitator #1.
- Facilitator #2 can handout **Exercise 5 model** to each team **face down** on the table.
- Facilitator #1 will give the following instructions to team member #2: **“We are going to take away the communication of sight for this exercise and blindfold your spouse. When you return to your spouse, help them put the blindfold over their eyes. There will be a handout with a diagram of what you are to build. When told, turn over the handout and give instructions to build. However, all the instruction that you can give is by gently tapping their partner on their forearm with one of the sticks if they are doing something wrong. Absolutely no talking or positive affirmation. Only give negative feedback with the stick.”**
- While facilitator #1 is giving instructions outside of the room, facilitator #2 will tell team member #1 **“we are going to take away the communication of sight for this exercise. When your spouse returns, they will help you place the blindfold over your eyes.”**
- Team member #2 will return to their seat and facilitator #2 will tell them to help with the blindfold. Wait for everyone to be ready and tell them to turn over the handout and begin. They will have 3 minutes to complete the project.
- When time has expired, remove the blindfold and have couples briefly show their creations. Ask someone from team #2 to share the instructions.
- Solicit responses to the following questions:
 - What was challenging with this type of communication?
 - How did it feel to receive only negative feedback and no verbal communication (parallel to some marriages)

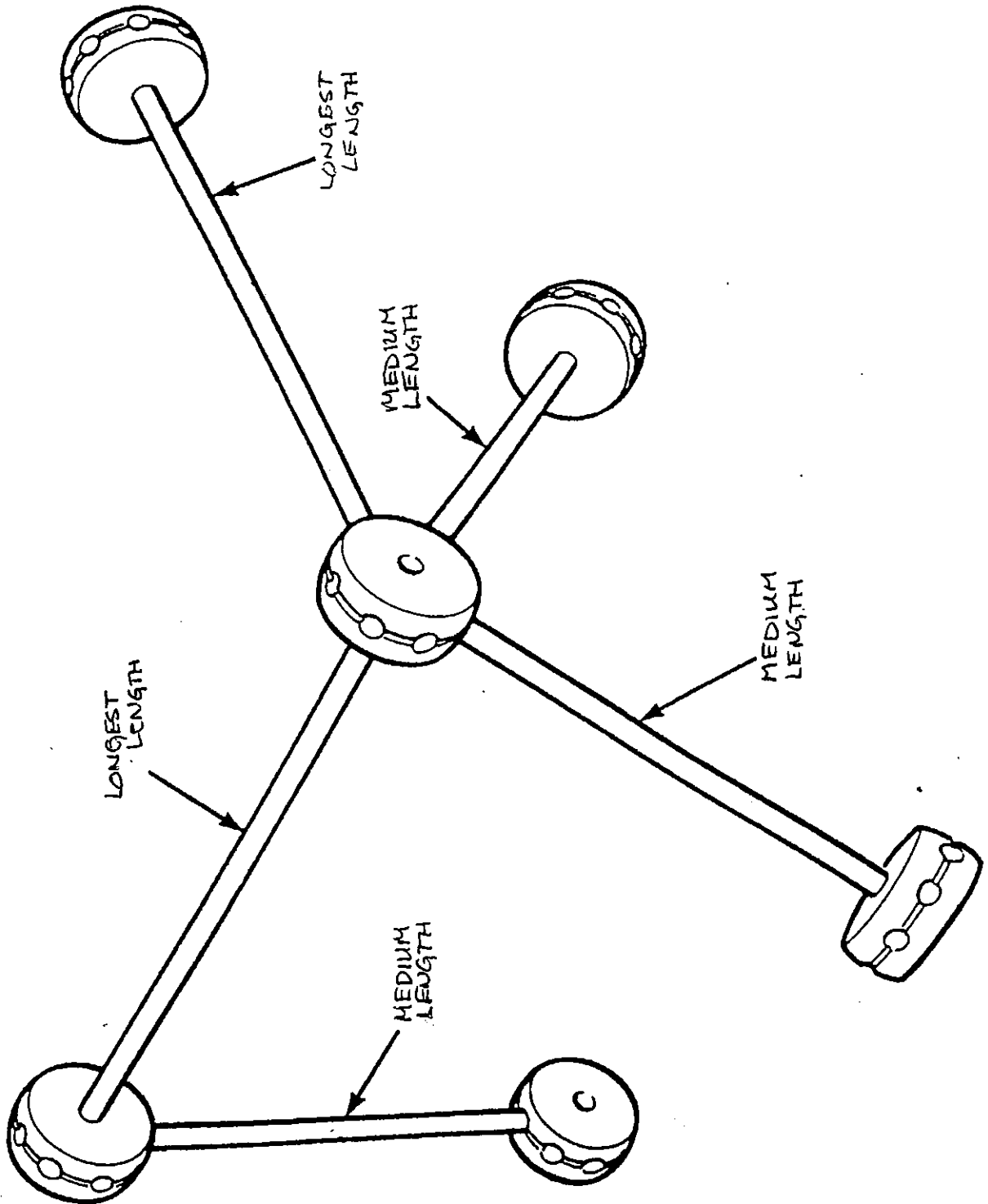
Part 3

- Team member #2 can lay the pieces in front of them on the table.
- Team member #1 will leave the room with facilitator #1.
- Facilitator #2 can handout **Exercise 6 model** to each team **face down** on the table.
- While facilitator #1 is giving instructions outside of the room, facilitator #2 will tell team member #2 **“we are going to take away the communication of sight for this exercise. When your spouse returns, they will help you place the blindfold over your eyes.”**
- Facilitator #1 will give the following instructions to team member #1: **“We are going to take away the communication of sight for this exercise and blindfold your spouse. When you return to your spouse, help them put the blindfold over their eyes. There will be a handout with a diagram of what you are to build. When told, turn over the handout and give instructions to build. However, all the instruction that you can give is with positive spoken words. Give them animated positive feedback when they are doing something right. (i.e. yes, excellent, that is awesome, outstanding!). Do nothing if they are doing something wrong.”**
- Team member #1 will return to their seat and facilitator #2 will tell them to help with the blindfold. Wait for everyone to be ready and tell them to turn over the handout and begin. They will have 3 minutes to complete the project.
- When time has expired, remove the blindfold and have couples briefly show their creations. Ask someone from team #1 to share the instructions.
- Solicit responses to the following questions:
 - What is good/bad with this type of communication?
 - How did it feel to receive only positive comments? (parallel to some marriages)

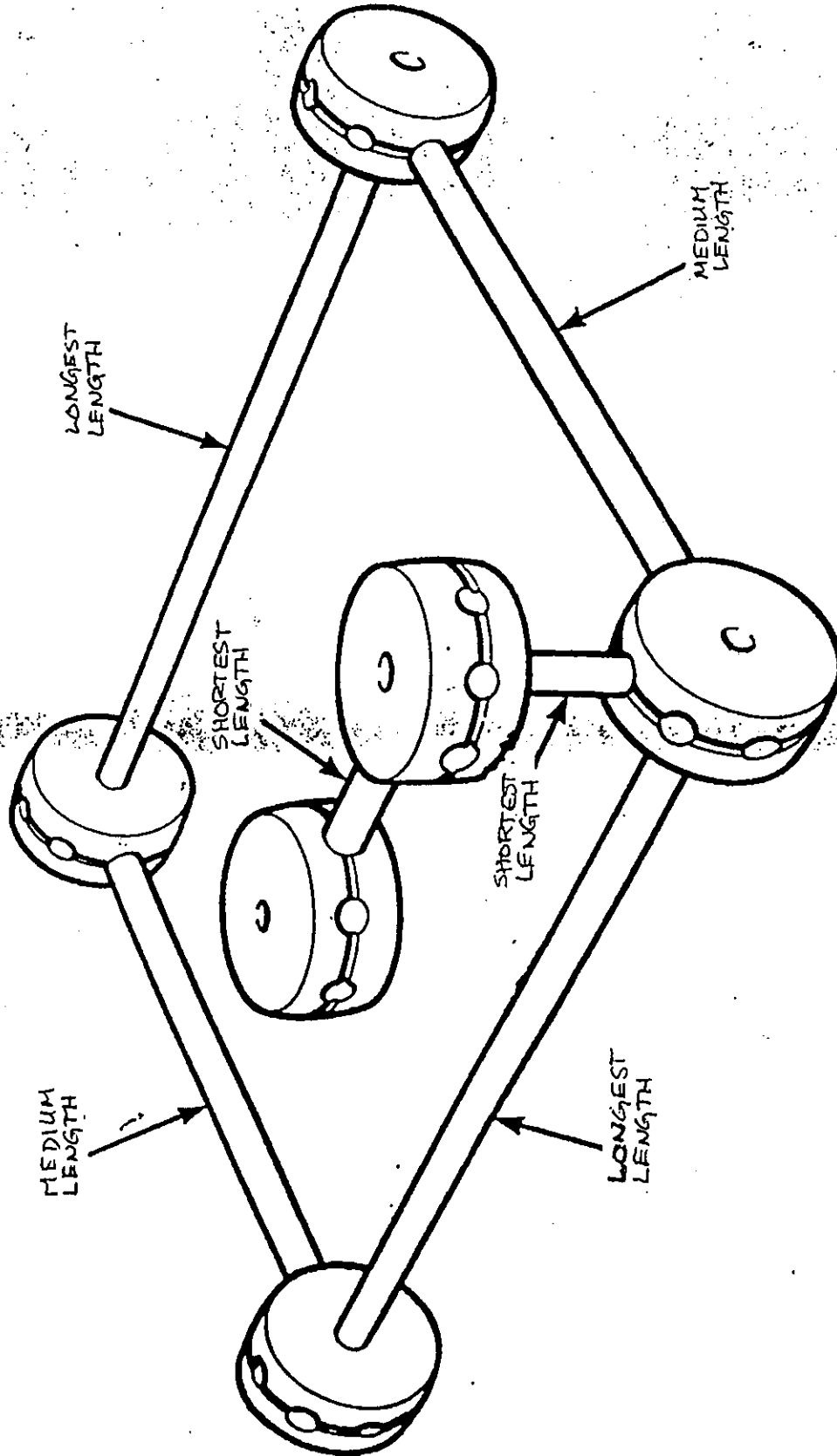
Part 4

- Team member #1 can lay the pieces in front of them on the table.
- Team member #2 will leave the room with facilitator #1.
- Facilitator #2 can handout **Magnum Opus model** to each team **face down** on the table.
- While facilitator #1 is giving instructions outside of the room, facilitator #2 will tell team member #2 **“When your spouse returns, they will help you place the blindfold over your eyes.”**
- Facilitator #1 will give the following instructions to team member #2: **“When you return to your spouse, help them put the blindfold over their eyes. There will be a handout with a diagram of what you are to build. When told, turn over the handout and give instructions to build. In this case, you can give positive spoken words when they do something right and gently tap their forearm with a stick if they are doing something wrong.”**
- Team member #2 will return to their seat and Facilitator #2 will tell them to help with the blindfold. Wait for everyone to be ready and tell them to turn over the handout and begin. They will have 3 minutes to complete the project.
- When time has expired, remove the blindfold and have couples briefly show their creations. Ask someone from team #2 to share the instructions.
- Solicit responses to the following questions:
 - What is good/bad with this type of communication?
 - What do you think makes for the best communication?
- Summarize how this will help us during the weekend

Exercise 5 Model



Exercise 6 Model



"Magnum Opus"

