How Do You Listen?:

The Relationship Between How Men Listen and Women's Power and Respect in the U.S.

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Abstract

As American culture confronts the issues raised by #MeToo, some ask, what can men do in interpersonal interactions to become allies and empower women? Building on research in linguistics, communication, sociology, as well as psychology, seven pre-registered studies investigate the relationship between how men listen during troubles talk (i.e., communication about problems) and women's sense of power and respect. We theorize and compare two styles of effective listening: more other-focused interdependent listening (e.g., asking a question) and more self-focused independent listening (e.g., giving advice). We find that though men are less likely than women to do interdependent listening during troubles talk (Study 1), men can be encouraged to ask questions (Study 2). When investigating the effect on women of how men listen, we found that women anticipate feeling more powerful and respected when listened to by a man friend doing interdependent (vs. independent) listening (Studies 3a – 3c), particularly those women who do not endorse stereotypic gender roles (Study 3c). We partially replicated these findings in two live interaction studies involving strangers communicating over text: women felt more powerful and respected when listened to by men who asked open-ended questions compared to men who gave prescriptive, unsolicited advice (Study 5), though they did not when men simply asked more questions (Study 4). We suggest that listening can assume multiple productive forms, but that compared to independent listening, interdependent listening can serve as an everyday anti-sexist practice to attenuate rather than accentuate the gender hierarchy.

Keywords: listening; power; respect; gender; culture

In the United States, a widely held assumption - especially by many women - is that men don't really listen to women, and that if men listen at all, they often do so in a condescending way. In an essay called "Men Explain Things to Me," Solnit (2012) describes how men, instead of listening, often explain things to her in a dismissive and disrespectful way – even when she knows much more about the topic. Solnit's piece inspired the term "mansplaining," which refers to the idea that some men, when in conversation with women, show a tendency to explain things condescendingly (*Mansplain*, n.d.; McClintock, 2016).

In the domain of troubles talk, or communication about problems (see Jefferson, 1988; Tannen, 2013), mansplaining may appear in the form of "manvising," or giving advice condescendingly when it is not wanted (Larson, 2019). Even if men do not condescend when listening to women communicate about a problem, according to Tannen (2013), giving advice "frames the advice giver as more knowledgeable, more reasonable, more in control -- in a word, one-up" (p. 52). Given that men are afforded more societal power and status, cross-gender patterns of communication, particularly men giving advice to women, may be among the less obvious factors that serve to perpetuate the existing gender hierarchy (e.g., Carli, 1990; Cheryan & Markus, 2020; Lakoff, 1975; Ridgeway, 2011). Unlike hierarchies of race or class, gender hierarchies are "sustained in the context of constant interaction, often on familiar terms, between those advantaged and those disadvantaged by the system" (Ridgeway & Smith-Lovin, 1999, p. 192).

In contrast to men giving women advice, men asking questions may afford women time and space to more fully communicate their perspectives, thoughts or feelings. Asking questions can elevate the voice and perspective of women, putting them in the position of authority, and in turn serve to momentarily attenuate the gender hierarchy. By asking questions rather than giving

advice, men may afford women a sense of somewhat more power and respect, and themselves the opportunity to engage in an everyday anti-sexist and gender equality-promoting practice.

In the current paper, we focus on how men listen and how such listening affects women's sense of power and respect. We interrogate one specific feature of the vast and rugged sociocultural territory that links women's psychological experience with their societal positioning and treatment and ask, in U.S. samples, when men listen to women to ask rather than to advise, does this result in women feeling more powerful and respected, thereby serving to attenuate rather than enhance the gender hierarchy in a given interaction (e.g., Pratto et al., 1994)? In doing so, we integrate basic research that has not previously been in conversation, including work from communication (e.g., Burleson, 1994; Gearhart & Bodie, 2011), linguistics (e.g., Tannen, 2013), sociology (e.g., Correll & Ridgeway, 2006; Ridgeway, 2019); and social psychology (e.g., Huang et al., 2017; Itzchakov et al., 2018; Schaerer et al., 2018).

Gender-Linked Styles in Listening During Troubles Talk

Though there are many definitions of listening (Worthington & Bodie, 2017), here we propose a novel typology: when a person discloses a personal problem ("speaker"), the partner ("listener") may listen in a more other-oriented way (e.g., by asking a question), which we refer to as "interdependent listening", or in a more self-oriented way (e.g., by giving advice), which we refer to as "independent listening". Interdependent listening is conceptually similar to various other listening typologies – including "high-quality" listening (Itzchakov et al., 2017), "active-empathic" listening (Gearhart & Bodie, 2011), "supportive" listening (S. M. Jones, 2011), and "person-centered" listening (Bodie & Burleson, 2008; Burleson, 1982, 1994), to name a few. Depending on the situation, both interdependent and independent listening are necessary and can

be equally active and empathic, and thus effective. See Figure 1 for a presentation of a conceptual model of both styles of listening that identifies a number of elements of each style.

Interdependent listening and independent listening reflect, respectively, stereotypical feminine and masculine gender roles (Eagly et al., 2000; Gilligan, 1982; Markus & Conner, 2014; Prentice & Carranza, 2002). Tannen (2013) observed that in troubles talk, women tend to ask questions or relate a similar experience as a way to connect with the other. Men are more likely, she argued, to respond to a problem by providing solutions. Previous research on gender differences in troubles talk has been equivocal in whether there are gender-linked differences in specific listening behaviors (e.g., Basow & Rubenfeld, 2003; MacGeorge et al., 2004; Michaud & Warner, 1997). In light of research suggesting men tend to have more practice with independent ways of being and women tend to have more practice with interdependent ways of being (Belenky et al., 1986; Cross & Madson, 1997; Markus & Conner, 2014; Markus & Oyserman, 1989), and that gender-associated cognitions might underly distinctions between independence and interdependence in the U.S. (Martin & Slepian, 2020), we predict that when listening to women during troubles talk, men will tend to do more independent listening than women, and that men will tend to do less interdependent listening than women.

Figure 1
Styles of Listening

Interdependent Listening	Independent Listening
Example Behaviors • Ask Questions • Attend • Attune	Example Behaviors • Advise • Analyze Problem • Affirm
Orientation: Greater other-orientation	Orientation: Greater self-orientation
Gender Stereotype: Feminine	Gender Stereotype: Masculine
Mode of Agency: Adjusting	Mode of Agency: Influencing
Result: Elevates voice of speaker	Result: Elevates voice of listener

Note. We describe two styles of listening, interdependent listening and independent listening. Both can be active, empathic, and thus effective. An array of factors - including the nature of the social context (such as the identities and relative statuses of the speaker and listener), the mode of communication (such as being written, spoken, or over video), the content of what is spoken or written (such as the use of adjectives, formality, emphasis, abstractness), as well as other features (such as the prosody, the rhythm, stress, and intonation of speech) - may influence whether listening is perceived as relatively more interdependent or more independent.

How Men's Listening Might Afford Women Greater Respect and Power

Beyond asking how men and women listen, we ask, what is the *effect* of how men listen on women? We describe why we think that when men listeners ask questions, rather than give advice, women speakers will feel more powerful and respected. Though there is certainly variability in the way questions are asked and advice is given, we use question-asking and advice-giving as paradigmatic of interdependent listening and independent listening respectively as they fit with our conceptual model of greater other-orientation vs. greater self-orientation and as they build on previous research (e.g., Eyal et al., 2018; Feng & MacGeorge, 2010). Moreover, although power and respect are distinct psychological constructs (e.g., Blader & Chen, 2012), we predict that interdependent (vs. independent) listening should boost both (though see Hurwitz & Kluger, 2017 for an example of how listen might differentially impact power and respect).

By giving speakers opportunities to express themselves, question-asking should on average lead speakers to feel more powerful and respected. Asking questions -- in particular, asking open-ended questions -- is theorized as a kind of "respectful inquiry" (Van Quaquebeke & Felps, 2016) that puts the speaker, relative to the listener, in a position of authority as they know the answer (e.g., Ross et al., 1977). Though past studies have investigated the impact of questions on the question-asker (e.g., Huang et al., 2017), few have looked at the impact on the person asked a question. An exception is Hurwitz & Kluger (2017), who shows that speakers imagining listeners asking questions and doing other "good" listening behaviors (vs. imagining bad listening) reported feeling more powerful. Taken together, this work provides suggestive evidence that speakers who are asked questions might feel more respected and powerful.

In contrast to the effect of being asked a question, being given advice, which takes space away from the recipient, should not increase their power or respect as much. Goldsmith (1992) suggests that receiving advice can threaten 'face' by causing feelings of incompetence or being controlled. Empirically, giving advice has been shown to elevate the sense of power of the advice-giver: under the guise of real interaction, participants felt powerful after giving advice (see Study 4 in Schaerer et al., 2018). If giving advice boosts the power of the advice-giver, then receiving advice may decrease the power of the advice-receiver.

We suggest that this general relationship – that speakers will feel more respected and powerful when asked questions (vs. receive advice) – will be equally likely, if not more so, when women are listened to by men. Tannen (2013) argues that "for most men, talk is primarily a means to preserve independence and negotiate and maintain status in a hierarchical social order" (p. 77). Specifically, during troubles talk, when men ask women questions rather than give advice, particularly when doing so in a condescending way, such a behavior might, at least for

the duration of the interaction, attenuate rather than reinforce the historically derived socio-structural default that men occupy a higher position in the gender hierarchy (Cheryan & Markus, 2020; Correll & Ridgeway, 2006), and in turn lead women to experience more power and respect.

Overview of Research

In light of the popular stereotypes that men don't listen, in this research we investigate across seven pre-registered studies (and four pre-registered studies in the supplement[1]) what behaviors men and women[2] report doing when responding to a woman friend talking about her problem (Study 1). Next we test a novel intervention designed to encourage men to ask questions, a feature of interdependent listening (Study 2). We then investigate how women anticipate feeling in response to being listened to by a man friend doing independent vs. independent listening (Studies 3a, 3b, and 3c). Finally, in studies using a platform enabling online live text conversation between strangers, we examine how powerful and respected women speakers feel after being listened to by a man listener encouraged to ask questions (vs. a control) (Study 4), or after being listened to by a man listener requested to ask open-ended questions or to give prescriptive, unsolicited advice (Study 5).

Study 1: Do Men and Women Tend to Listen Differently During Troubles Talk?

In this study, we investigate gender-linked behavioral differences in listening. Building on previous literature in listening (Gearhart & Bodie, 2011) and on cultural variation in agency

[1] These studies investigated implicit theories and norms of listening during troubles talk (Supplemental Studies 1 and 2), as well as what men and women report doing during troubles talk generally (Supplemental Study 3) and when listening to a friend (Supplemental Study 4). Since these studies did not directly assess the core questions of our paper, namely how men listen to women during troubles talk and the effect of how men listen to women on women's sense of power and respect, they are reported in the supplement.

[2] In all studies, we recruited individuals who identified as "male" and "female," which we respectively refer to as "men" and "women". We did not recruit individuals outside of the gender binary to focus the scope of the paper. Future work would benefit from recruiting individuals outside of the gender binary and from collecting information on whether individuals identify as transgender or cisgender.

(Morling et al., 2002; Tsai et al., 2007), as well as our conceptual model (see Figure 1), we constructed twenty items that reflect two dimensions of listening – relatively interdependent listening (10 items) in which *adjusting* to the listener is a salient feature of the speaker's agency, and relatively independent listening in which i*nfluencing* the listener is a salient feature of the speaker's agency (10 items) (see Table 1). Given our assumption that neither style of listening is a priori inherently more effective, all items described positive and useful behaviors. The *interdependent listening* items reflected more other-oriented or other-centering behaviors such as *asking questions* (e.g., "I asked how my friend was feeling and why"), *attending* (e.g., "I paid attention to what was not said and to my friend's body language"), and *attuning* (e.g., "I tried to be 'in tune' with my friend's mood and feelings"). The *independent listening items* reflected more self-oriented or self-centering behaviors such as *advising* (e.g., "I tried to help my friend think about how to solve their problem or improve their situation."), *analyzing the problem* (e.g., "I provided my own understanding of the problem"), and *affirming* ("I encouraged my friend by saying things like 'you've got this') (see Figure 1 and Table 1).

We asked men and women to self-report which behaviors they did during a recent troubles talk interaction with a woman friend (see the supplement for two related studies this work was based on). We predicted that during troubles talk with women, men and women would differ in their respective frequencies of doing each listening type (i.e., interaction), such that men do more independent listening (e.g., give advice) than women, and that men do less interdependent listening (e.g., ask questions) than women.

Table 1

Listening Behaviors Used in Study 1

Item	Behavior
	Interdependent Listening
1	I asked how my friend was feeling and why.
2	I paid attention to what was not said and to my friend's body language.
3	I tried to show I had time to hear my friend talk about what was on their mind.
4	I limited how much I talked about myself.
5	I was careful not to interrupt my friend until the full story was told.
6	I tried to be “in tune” with my friend's mood and feelings.
7	I asked my friend clarifying questions about their problem.
8	I repeated back what my friend said to show I understood them.
9	I said things like "that's hard" or "sorry to hear that."
10	I tried to encourage my friend to keep talking by saying things like "mm-hmm" or "tell me more."
	Independent Listening
11	I tried to help my friend think about how to solve their problem or improve their situation.
12	I gave some advice or made a suggestion about what do next after hearing about the problem.
13	I tried to identify what seemed to be at the heart of the problem.
14	I provided my own understanding of the problem.
15	I tried to help my friend find some silver lining in the situation.
16	I tried to help my friend be in a more positive mood.
17	I shared a similar problem or experience to show that other people also have this kind of problem.
18	I told my friend that their problem was common and their feelings were normal.
19	I encouraged my friend by saying things like "you've got this."
20	I told my friend I understood where they were coming from.

Note. Supplemental Studies 3 and 4 used items #1 - #6 and #11 - #17, as well an additional item.

Method

Participants

We attempted to recruit 200 men and women per condition (i.e., 80% power for Cohen's $d = 0.28$ in a two-sample t-test). After pre-registered exclusions (see supplement), we had 387 participants (201 women and 186 men): $M_{age} = 37.58$, $SD_{age} = 11.74$; 71.32% White / Caucasian, 10.59% Black / African American, 8.01% Asian / Asian American, 3.36% Hispanic / Latino, 1.29% Middle Eastern, 0.76% Native American, 4.65% multiple ethnicities; 49.10% graduated community college or less, 50.90% graduated a four-year college or more. We obtained approval of the Stanford Institutional Review board to conduct this and all studies contained in this research.

Procedure

Participants were first asked to identify about a recent time a woman friend came to them with a problem, and to write about the problem and how they responded. Participants then indicated which of twenty behaviors they did, ten for interdependent listening behaviors and ten independent listening behaviors (see Table 1). This served as our pre-registered confirmatory measure. Participants were then asked several exploratory questions about their friend, their self-construal (Aron et al., 1992; Singelis, 1994), demographics including gender (gender identity definition from "Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Definitions," n.d.), and feedback.

Results

As registered, we conducted a general linear mixed effects model (family "binomial") predicting the item rating as a function of the interaction of gender and listening type, with their main effects, as well as random intercepts for item and subject. Contrary to prediction, we did not find a significant gender-by-listening type interaction, $b = -0.17$, $SE = 0.11$, $z = -1.53$, $p = 0.13$ (women and independent listening as referents). Also contrary to prediction, we did not find

evidence for the simple effect that men were more likely to do independent listening than women (women: $M = 7.14$ out of 10 items, $SD = 2.14$ items; men: $M = 6.83$ items out of 10, $SD = 2.39$ items), $b = -0.18$, $SE = 0.12$, $z = -1.49$, $p = 0.14$; if anything, there was a trend in the opposite direction.

As predicted, however, we found evidence for the simple effect that women were more likely to do interdependent listening than men (women: $M = 7.79$ items out of 10 items, $SD = 1.70$ items; men: $M = 7.25$ items out of 10 items, $SD = 2.03$ items;), $b = 0.36$, $SE = 0.13$, $z = 2.84$, $p = 0.005$. This simple effect is likely a result of a main effect of gender: we found post-hoc evidence that women were more likely than men to report doing *any* listening behavior (listening coding: independent listening = 0.5, interdependent listening = -0.5), $b = 0.27$, $SE = 0.11$, $z = 2.44$, $p = 0.015$. See the supplement to look at post-hoc analyses looking at gender differences by item, as well as a post-hoc factor analysis.

Discussion

In Study 1, we asked men and women to self-report how they listened to a woman when she related a problem. Contrary to prediction, we do not find evidence for an interaction between gender and listening style as predicted; in retrospect, rather than compare the behaviors of men, in mixed-gender dyads, to women, in same-gender dyads (as all participants identified a time when they listened to a woman friend), it might have been more appropriate to compare men in mixed-gender dyads to women in mixed-gender dyads, as status-related expectations might be more pronounced in mixed gender dyads (e.g., Carli, 1990). Notably, we do find post-hoc evidence that men do less listening overall, including interdependent listening (as hypothesized). Moreover, both men and women report doing *both* types of listening with a high frequency (i.e.,

above the midpoint), suggesting that both men and women find both types of listening viable and valuable.

Study 2: Can Men Be Encouraged to Ask Questions?

In light of finding in Study 1 that men (vs. women) report doing less listening overall, including less interdependent listening, we theorized that one barrier to more interdependent listening might be that men, given their often-higher status roles, are less familiar and practiced with interdependent listening. To encourage men to do more interdependent listening, we created a novel intervention ("Being a Good Listener") suggesting that being a good listener involves asking questions – one aspect of interdependent listening. Adding to a growing body of manipulations designed to encourage effective listening (Itzchakov, 2020; Itzchakov & Kluger, 2017), our intervention was designed to define listening. We compared this intervention to two control conditions – an active control that motivated good listening but without specific suggestions about asking questions, and a non-active control that provided no instruction.

In our study, after receiving the intervention or control content, men listened to a nine-minute audio clip of a woman describing a relationship problem. Afterwards, men had an opportunity to hypothetically respond to the troubles communicated by the woman in the audio clip, as well as to answer questions about the material. We predicted that men in the intervention condition, compared to men in either control, would be more likely to ask a question and that they would have more accurate recall of what she actually said.

Participants

We pre-registered that we would recruit 1,200 participants for a qualification study[3], and of those that qualified, we would recruit 150 men (i.e., 50 per condition). This sample size was

[3] For all other studies we used CloudResearch, which allowed us to recruit from Mechanical Turk Workers identified by CloudResearch as being male- or female-identified (though notably there was always a small percentage of false positives, which were always excluded; see supplement).

determined by the funds we had available. Of the 1,229 survey responses received during the qualification survey, we invited 572 men the following day to complete the study. Of these, 131 were complete and valid after pre-registered exclusions (including excluding those who indicated having a technical problem with the audio file; see the supplement), 48 in the intervention, 46 in the active control, and 37 in the non-active control (M_{age} = 34.15, SD_{age} = 10.10; 70.23% White / Caucasian, 10.69% Black / African American, 7.63% Asian / Asian American, 4.58% Hispanic / Latino, 0.76% Middle Eastern, 0.76% Native American, 0.76% Other, 4.58% more than one ethnicity chosen; 48.85% graduated community college or less, 51.15% graduated a four-year college or more).

Procedure

Participants took a qualification survey and then on the next day, the men who filled out the survey were invited to take the main study. On the qualification survey, we assessed several exploratory moderator measures (adaptions from: Aron et al., 1992; Federico & Ekstrom, 2018; Singelis, 1994), demographic information (age, gender, ethnicity, education) and feedback. The next day, for the main study, participants were invited back, and were randomly divided into three groups: the intervention, the active control, and the non-active control.

Description of Intervention, Active Control, and Non-Active Control. The Being a Good Listener intervention provided reasons to do listening (e.g., participants in the intervention read that "Being a good listener helps us feel connected with friends and relatives coming to us with a problem"); defined what it meant to be a good listener (e.g., "asking questions, being empathic, and concentrating your attention on the speaker")[4]; noted that "e.g., "experiencing difficulty is a sign that you are being a good listener!") (see Oyserman et al., 2018); and asked

[4] For other mindset interventions that inspired this component of our intervention, see Blackwell et al. (2007) and Crum et al. (2013).

participants to do a saying-is-believing exercise (i.e., “Please restate in your own words how being a good listener means being open, asking questions and sometimes experiencing difficulty”) (see Aronson, 1999). The active control only had one component, in which we supplied reasons to do good listening (rather than be a good listener); these reasons were the same as those provided in the intervention. The active control did not include any other component from the intervention (i.e., connecting listening to asking questions; reframing difficulty; or the saying-is-believing exercise). Participants in the non-active control received no content before the listening activity.

Listening Activity. All participants were then directed to what they were told was a “listening activity”, in which they were told they would be “asked to listen to Natasha describing an emotional personal experience” which referred to feelings and experiences after the death of her grandmother. Participants then listened to the 9:34 minute audio clip (taken from Study 5 in Schumann et al., 2014).

Measures. After listening to Natasha, participants were asked to “Imagine you were in a situation where Natasha told you that story in person. Please write what you would say to her in response. This is intended to mimic real-world listening.” We registered that we would test whether or not participants in the intervention asked more questions than Natasha. After collecting the data, we counted whether or not participants asked a question (e.g., “Is this the first time you've lost someone close to you?”) or said they would ask Natasha a question (e.g., “I would ask her how she is doing these days.”).

Participants were then asked seven multiple choice questions about the content they heard; these questions were adapted from exploratory materials in Schuman et al. (2014). We created a sum of the number of correct questions to assess participant recall. Following these

measures, participants were asked a series of exploratory questions about the activity and themselves (Federico & Ekstrom, 2018; Jackson & Marsh, 1996; The American National Election Studies, n.d.), their demographics, and feedback.

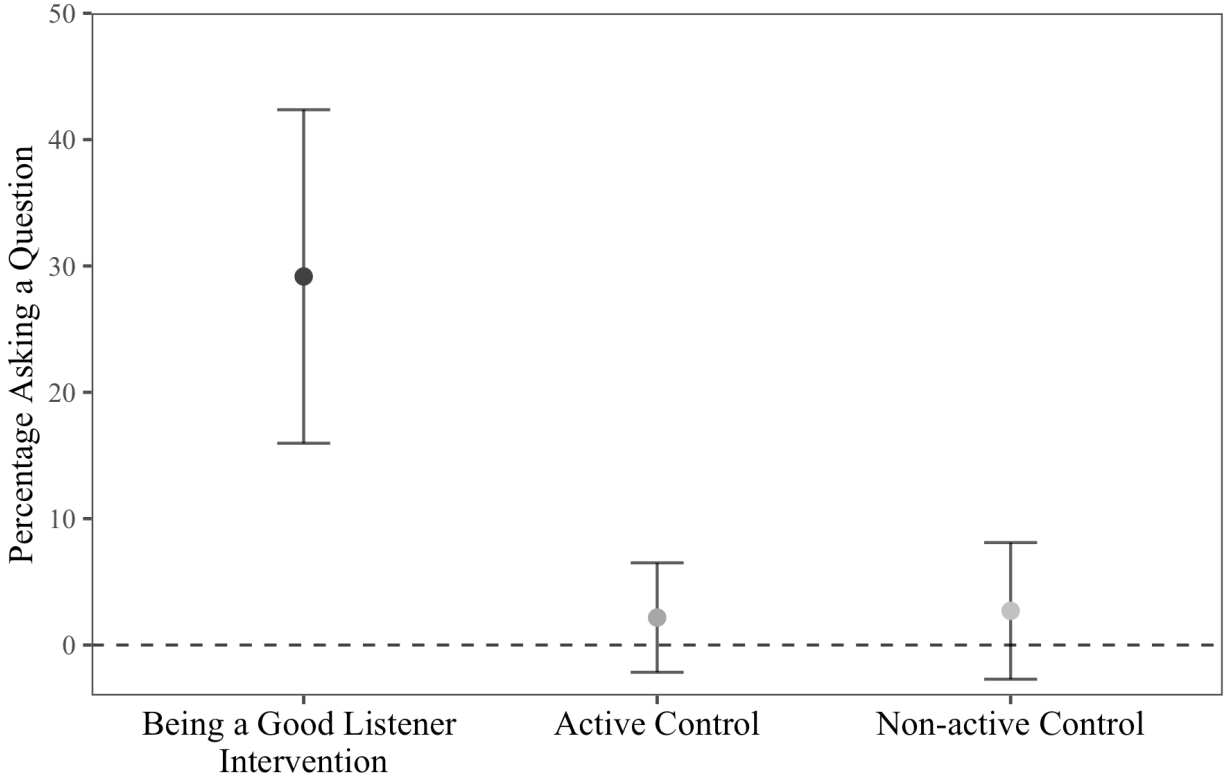
Results

We used a logistic regression to predict whether or not a participant asked a question as a function of condition (effects coding to compare the intervention to the average of both controls). Consistent with our prediction, men in the Being Good Listener intervention were more likely to ask a question (29.2%) than men in the active control condition (2.2%) or in the non-active control condition (2.7%), $b = 0.94$, $SE = 0.26$, $z = 3.86$, $p < 0.001$, OR = 2.55. See Figure 2.

We used a linear regression to predict whether the log-transformed number of questions answered correctly (as the data was not normally distributed) differed as a function of condition (same condition). We did not find evidence for a difference in the number of questions answered correctly by participants in the intervention condition ($M = 5.33$ questions out of 7; $SD = 1.55$ questions) and the two control conditions (non-active control: $M = 5.24$ questions; $SD = 1.61$ questions; active control: $M = 5.37$, $SD = 1.55$), $b = 0.003$, $SE = 0.02$, $t(128) = 0.11$, $p = .911$, $d = .01$.

Figure 2

Intervention Led More Men to Ask a Question Compared to Controls (Study 2)



Note. Participants received either the Being a Good Listener Intervention, an active control or a non-active control. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Discussion

This study provides evidence that our intervention successfully encouraged some men to ask questions, one form of interdependent listening behavior. We tested a novel "Being a Good Listener" intervention in which we motivated men to be good listeners. Compared to two controls, this intervention led more men to ask a question (29.2% vs. 2.4%) in a hypothetical troubles talk interaction with a woman stranger. Contrary to prediction, we did not find evidence that men differed in their recall of content of the audio clip, and furthermore, men in all conditions recalled much of the content (approximately 75% correct).

The fact that so few men asked questions, even in the intervention condition when men were explicitly told the value of question-asking as part of being a good listener, suggests that on average most men need even stronger encouragement to ask questions than provided by the intervention. Perhaps men thought that asking questions would prolong their participation in the study, or perhaps they thought the topic was too sensitive to discuss with a stranger (see Hart et al., 2021). Overall, however, the findings are an initial indication that, as predicted, men can be encouraged to ask questions.

With the finding that men are somewhat less likely than women to do independent or interdependent listening (Study 1), and that men can be motivated to do interdependent listening (Study 2), we next turn to investigating whether in a given interaction, men doing interdependent (vs. independent) listening can address the default power imbalance between men and women.

Studies 3a, 3b, and 3c: Do Women Anticipate Feeling More Powerful and Respected When Men do Interdependent Listening vs. Independent Listening?

In these three studies, we investigated whether women anticipate feeling more powerful and respected when men do independent (vs. interdependent) listening. Women participants read about their friend Ryan doing interdependent or independent listening when they shared a personal problem (i.e., a recent break-up; Studies 3a, 3b, and 3c) or a professional problem (i.e., receiving challenging feedback at work; Study 3b only). Women then reported the extent to which they anticipated feeling respected and powerful, as well as other related pre-registered measures, i.e., feeling understood, sense of trust, relative size of self, and social status. We predicted a main effect of interdependent (vs. independent) listening for all measures (all measures registered by Study 3c).

Drawing on research on gendered differences in communication generally (Karpowitz & Mendelberg, 2014) and in troubles talk specifically (Tannen, 2013), we designed vignettes (see Table 2) to reflect the behaviors described in Figure 1 and in Table 1. For instance, for the personal problem, in the *interdependent* vignette, the listener, Ryan, *asks questions* ("Ryan asks about how you've been doing since the breakup"), *attends* ("Ryan doesn't interrupt and nods his head"), and *attunes* ("Ryan says he's sorry"). In the *independent* vignette, Ryan *advises* ("he also offers some advice on how to cope"), *analyzes* the problem ("He says breakups are really tough on everybody"), and *affirms* ("he is going to get some mutual friends together soon"). Consistent with our theorizing that both interdependent and independent listening can be empathic and effective, we constructed the vignettes so that Ryan appeared as caring and concerned in both vignettes.

Study 3a Method

Participants

Our pre-registered goal was to recruit 100 participants from Mechanical Turk for each vignette. After pre-registered exclusions (see supplement), we were left 198 women (97 in the interdependent vignette, 101 in the independent vignette): M_{age} = 40.48, SD_{age} = 12.22; 75.76% White / Caucasian, 10.61% Black / African American, 4.04% Asian / Asian American, 4.55 Hispanic / Latino, 0.51% Middle Eastern, 0.51% Native American, 4.04% multiple ethnicities; 50.51% graduated community college or less, 49.49% graduated a four-year college or more).

Procedure

We recruited women to a study "exploring how people talk about their problems." After consenting, women participants were asked to imagine that their romantic partner suddenly breaks up with them, and then to write how they would feel after hearing the news. Women participants then read a vignette describing a troubles talk interaction, in which their friend Ryan

did interdependent listening or independent listening (see Table 2). Participants then were asked to write how they would feel after meeting with Ryan. Participants then took a series of measures designed to assess how they would feel after interacting with Ryan.

Table 2

Vignettes for Studies 3a – 3c

Interdependent Listening Condition	Independent Listening Condition
Personal Problem (Studies 3a, 3b, and 3c)	
Now imagine that a few days after the breakup, you meet up at a coffee shop with Ryan, a new friend of yours. After the two of you chat for a bit, you mention to Ryan that your partner recently broke up with you. Ryan says he's sorry and asks what happened. You tell your story. As you describe what happened, Ryan doesn't interrupt and nods his head. A few times when you pause, Ryan asks a few questions. Mostly, though, he waits for you to continue talking. When you finish telling your story, Ryan tells you what he thinks he understood, and then asks if you could tell him more about the relationship. Later in the conversation, Ryan asks about how you've been doing since the breakup. Ryan says that while he can't really know how you're feeling, it seems really hard. After you describe how you've been doing, Ryan asks what, if anything, you've been doing to cope and feel better. Ryan doesn't talk about his own problems, and never checks his phone. At the end of the conversation, Ryan says he will check in on you in a few days, and asks what else he can do to help.	Now imagine that a few days after the breakup, you meet up at a coffee shop with Ryan, a new friend of yours. After the two of you chat for a bit, you mention to Ryan that your partner recently broke up with you. You tell a bit of your story. Ryan says he gets how you're feeling. He describes his own breakup and how he was really upset and felt so bad. He says breakups are really tough on everybody but that he has found that eventually things get better. When you finish telling your story, you talk about how you have been feeling since the breakup. Ryan makes a joke, and it seems like he's trying to cheer you up. He suggests that you look on the bright side of things, as there might be a silver lining. Later in the conversation, Ryan tells you what he says he thinks was at the heart of the breakup. He also offers some advice on how to cope with the situation. At the end of the conversation, Ryan says he has to leave, but that he is going to get some mutual friends together soon and to let him know if you need some help.

Interdependent Listening Condition	Independent Listening Condition
Professional Problem (Study 3b only)	
Now imagine that a few days after receiving this evaluation, you meet up at a coffee shop with Ryan, a new friend of yours. After the two of you chat for a bit, you mention to Ryan that you received some bad news at work. Ryan says he's sorry and asks what happened. You tell your story. As you describe what happened, Ryan doesn't interrupt and nods his head. A few times when you pause, Ryan asks a few questions. Mostly, though, he waits for you to continue talking. When you finish telling your story, Ryan tells you what he thinks he understood, and then asks if you could tell him more about how your work has been going over the past few months. Later in the conversation, Ryan asks about how you've been doing since you received the evaluation. Ryan says that while he can't really know how you're feeling, it seems really hard. After you describe how you've been doing, Ryan asks what, if anything, you've been doing to cope and feel better. Ryan doesn't talk about his own work problems, and never checks his phone. At the end of the conversation, Ryan says he will check in on you in a few days, and asks what else he can do to help.	Now imagine that a few days after receiving this evaluation, you meet up at a coffee shop with Ryan, a new friend of yours. After the two of you chat for a bit, you mention to Ryan that you received some bad news at work. You tell a bit of your story. Ryan says he gets how you're feeling. He describes similar feedback he once received from a supervisor, and how he was really upset and felt so bad. He says work-related criticism is really tough on everybody, but that he has found that eventually things get better. When you finish telling your story, you talk about how you have been feeling since the you received the evaluation. Ryan makes a joke, and it seems like he's trying to cheer you up. He suggests that you look on the bright side of things, as there might be a silver lining. Later in the conversation, Ryan tells you what he says he thinks might be at the heart of your supervisor's evaluation. Ryan also offers some advice on how to cope with the situation. At the end of the conversation, Ryan says he has to leave, but that he is going to get some mutual friends together soon and to let him know if you need some help.

Measures

Dependent Measures. We pre-registered predictions about the following dependent measures: power, respect, and understood. We also include relative size of self, subjective social status, and trust as primary measures as we pre-registered these by Study 3c. Note that we also asked participants additional questions about the conversation and Ryan, their self-construal (Aron et al., 1992; Singelis, 1994), demographics and feedback.

Power (confirmatory). Women participants rated the extent to which they agreed (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree) with three items, including "I had control over what we talked about", "The conversation went the way I wanted it to", and "The conversation was not on my terms" (reverse-coded) ($\alpha = 0.67$). These items were based in part on Anderson et al. (2012) and Anderson & Galinsky (2006). To score this measure, we obtained an average of the items.

Respect (confirmatory). Women participants rated the extent to which they agreed (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree) with three items about the conversation, including "Ryan respected me", "Ryan respected my feelings", and "Ryan did not respect my opinions" (reverse-coded) ($\alpha = 0.67$). To score this measure, we obtained an average of the items.

Understood (confirmatory). Women participants rated the extent to which they agreed (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree) that they felt "heard", "understood", and "listened to" ($\alpha = 0.93$). To score this measure, we obtained an average of the items.

Size of Self (exploratory). To assess power graphically rather than verbally, and assess a power in a gestalt way, we assessed the extent to which participants felt small or large in relation to Ryan ("size of self"). Women participants were asked to choose one of five images that best depicted their conversation with Ryan. Each image consisted of two circles, one with the word

"you" and one with the word "Ryan." The images ranged from the "you" circle being much smaller (1) to much larger (5) than the "Ryan" circle.

Trust (exploratory). To assess trust, we asked women participants were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree) with three items describing the extent to which they trusted Ryan, including "I trust Ryan," "I feel comfortable around Ryan", "I look forward to talking more with Ryan" ($\alpha = 0.90$). To score this measure, we obtained an average of the items.

State Status (exploratory). We adapted the MacArthur Network community ladder (Adler & Stewart, 2007) with the idea that it might reflect a gestalt sense of respect at the time of the imagined the interaction. This measure is typically used to assess subjective socioeconomic status as a moderator, but here we try to use it as a dependent measure to reflect the participants' state or momentary status rather than a more enduring sense of status. Women participants were asked where they thought they would place themselves on a ladder where the top rung (10) represented "the people who have the highest standing among their friends" and the bottom rung (1) represented "the people who have the lowest standing among their friends."

Study 3a Results

For each of our primary measures, we ran linear regressions predicting each score (average of items where applicable) as a function of listening type (1 = interdependent listening, 0 = independent listening). We report the means in Figure 3 and Table 3.

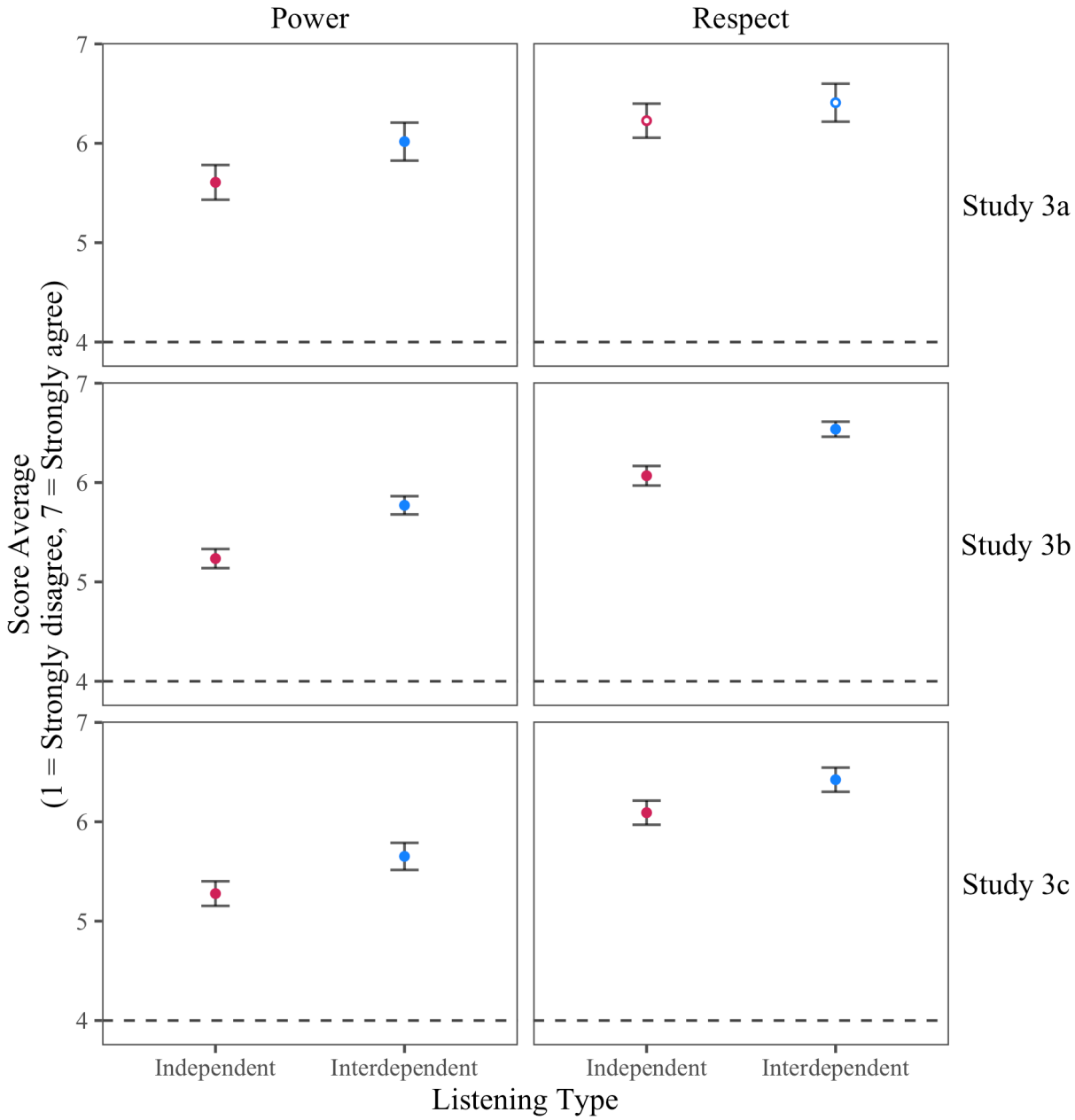
As predicted, we found that women who imagined their male friend Ryan doing interdependent (vs. independent) listening anticipated feeling *more powerful* [$b = 0.41$, $SE = 0.13$, $t(196) = 3.14$, $p = 0.002$, $d = 0.45$]. Contrary to prediction, we did not find evidence

between condition for *respect* [$b = 0.18$, $SE = 0.13$, $t(196) = 1.40$, $p = 0.163$, $d = 0.20$] or *feeling understood* [$b = 0.07$, $SE = 0.12$, $t(196) = 0.57$, $p = .568$, $d = 0.08$].

Though not predicted, we found post-hoc evidence that women who read the interdependent (vs. independent) listening vignette anticipated *having a larger self* in relation to Ryan [$b = 0.64$, $SE = 0.15$, $t(196) = 4.28$, $p < .001$]. We did not find post-hoc evidence for a difference by condition in *state status* [$b = 0.28$, $SE = 0.28$, $t(196) = 0.99$, $p = .323$, $d = 0.14$] or *trust* [$b = -0.13$, $SE = 0.14$, $t(196) = -0.93$, $p = .354$, $d = -0.13$].

Figure 3

Women Anticipate Feeling More Powerful and Respected When Men Do Interdependent (vs. Independent) Listening (Studies 3a, 3b, 3c)



Note. Women participants rated how they would feel when sharing a personal problem (all studies) or professional problem (Study 3b only) to a man friend doing independent listening or interdependent listening. Study 3b collapsed across problem type. The y-axis is truncated, and gray, dashed line represents midpoint of scale. Red-filled or blue-filled shape indicates that the comparison is significant at $p < .05$ level; white-filled shape indicates that the comparison is not significant at $p < .05$ level. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Table 3

Effects for Interdependent and Independent Listening Vignettes (Studies 3a, 3b, and 3c)

	Power	Respect	Understood	Size of Self	State Status	Trust
			Study 3a			
Interdependent Listening (n = 97)	6.02_{a} (0.95)	6.41_{a} (0.95)	6.39_{a} (0.90)	4.16_{a} (1.06)	6.80_{a} (2.14)	6.01_{a} (1.19)
Independent Listening (n = 101)	5.61_{b} (0.89)	6.23_{a} (0.87)	6.32_{a} (0.77)	3.52_{b} (1.04)	6.52_{a} (1.81)	6.15_{a} (0.76)
			Study 3b			
Interdependent Listening (Personal Problem) (n = 207)	5.85_{a} (0.83)	6.60_{a} (0.69)	6.57_{a} (0.68)	3.91_{a} (0.94)	6.74_{a} (1.85)	6.38_{a} (0.91)
Independent Listening (Personal Problem) (n = 174)	5.24_{b} (0.96)	6.08_{b} (0.95)	6.02_{c} (0.99)	2.91_{c} (0.78)	$6.23_{b,c}$ (1.69)	5.92_{b} (0.99)
Interdependent Listening (Professional Problem) (n = 189)	5.69_{a} (1.03)	6.47_{a} (0.84)	6.38_{b} (0.91)	3.68_{b} (1.10)	$6.55_{a,b}$ (2.02)	6.26_{a} (1.05)
Independent Listening (Professional Problem) (n = 211)	5.23_{b} (0.96)	6.06_{b} (1.01)	6.03_{c} (1.07)	2.68_{d} (1.10)	6.02_{c} (2.02)	6.01_{b} (0.97)
			Study 3c			
Interdependent Listening (n = 205)	5.65_{a} (0.98)	6.42_{a} (0.87)	6.41_{a} (0.90)	3.59_{a} (1.02)	6.98_{a} (1.91)	6.14_{a} (1.06)
Independent Listening (n = 199)	5.28_{b} (0.90)	6.09_{b} (0.88)	6.12_{b} (0.88)	2.78_{b} (0.72)	6.17_{b} (1.91)	5.89_{b} (1.04)

Note. Conditions featured a personal problem (Studies 3a – 3c) or a professional problem (Study 3b only). Within a study, means in the same column with different subscripts differ at $p < .05$ level. Measures without pre-registered predictions and analyses in grey. Measures slightly differed across studies (see text).

Study 3a Discussion

We found that women who thought about a man friend doing interdependent (vs. independent) listening when sharing a personal problem reported they would feel more powerful. Validating this finding on power, we found post-hoc evidence that women anticipated having a larger sense of self relative to their partner in the interdependent vs. independent condition. Contrary to prediction, we did not find that women the two listening conditions differed in how understood or respected they thought they would feel.

To build on these initial findings, we replicated and extended this study in Study 3b. To make sure that the effects we observed were not due to the problem type, we assessed women's anticipated reactions to a man friend doing interdependent (vs. independent) listening with respect to not only a personal problem (i.e., a break-up) but also a professional problem (i.e., tough feedback at work).

Study 3b Method

Participants

Our pre-registered goal was to recruit 200 participants per condition; we doubled our sample size from Study 3a to increase our power. After pre-registered exclusions (see the supplement), we were left 781 women: 207 in interdependent vignette about a personal problem; 189 in interdependent vignette about a professional problem; 174 in independent vignette about a personal problem; and 211 in the independent vignette about a professional problem (M_{age} = 40.14, SD_{age} = 12.99; 74.39% White / Caucasian, 10.12% Black / African American, 5.63% Asian / Asian American, 3.07% Hispanic / Latino, 0.64% Middle Eastern, 0.13% Native American, 0.38% other, 5.63% multiple ethnicities; 44.55% graduated community college or less, 55.44% graduated a four-year college or more).

Procedure

As in Study 3a, we recruited women to a study "exploring how people talk about their problems." After consenting, participants were asked to imagine either that their romantic partner suddenly breaks up with them ("personal" problem), or, to imagine that their supervisor told them that they were not on track to being promoted ("professional" problem), and then were told to write how they would feel after hearing the news. Participants then read a vignette describing their friend Ryan did interdependent listening or independent listening; the professional vignette was modeled after the personal vignette (see Table 2). Participants then were asked to write how they would be feeling after meeting with Ryan. Participants then took a series of measures designed to assess how they anticipated feeling after interacting with Ryan.

Measures

As in Study 3a, we measured power, respect, understood, relative size of self, state status, and trust; we pre-registered predictions for all measures except trust. Respect ($\alpha = 0.88$), understood ($\alpha = 0.94$), and trust ($\alpha = 0.90$) were operationalized in the same way as in Study 3a. To better capture the dimension of sense of power, we added three additional items, including "I was able to get Ryan to listen to listen to what I said", "I felt powerful in the conversation," and "I felt strong talking to Ryan" ($\alpha = 0.85$). For the size of self measure, we modified the graphical representation to keep the distance between "you" and "Ryan" the same distance apart. For the state status measure, we modified the instructions to be clearer that this measure should reflect how participants feel at that moment. Following these primary measures, we assessed the same exploratory, demographic and feedback measures used in Study 3a.

Study 3b Results

To test a main effect of interdependent listening (vs. the independent listening), as registered, we predicted each score (average of the items where applicable) as a function of the interaction of listening type (1 = interdependent listening, 0 = independent listening) and problem type (effects coding to average the two types of problem, where personal problem = -0.5 and professional problem = 0.5), and their interaction. Below, we report the coefficient of listening type.

As predicted, we found evidence that women in the interdependent (vs. independent) condition anticipated feeling more *powerful* [$b = 0.53$, $SE = 0.07$, $t(777) = 7.84$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.53$]; feeling more *respected* [$b = 0.46$, $SE = 0.06$, $t(777) = 7.34$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.53$]; feeling more *understood* [$b = 0.46$, $SE = 0.07$, $t(777) = 6.86$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.50$]; having a larger *self* in relation to their partner [$b = 1.00$, $SE = 0.06$, $t(777) = 15.60$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.13$]; having a greater *state status* [$b = 0.52$, $SE = 0.13$, $t(777) = 4.02$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.30$]; and feeling more *trusting* of their partner in the interdependent (vs. independent) condition [$b = 0.35$, $SE = 0.07$, $t(777) = 4.98$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.36$] (not predicted). See Figure 3 and Table 3. Using these same models (a registered secondary analysis), we did not find evidence for a moderation of problem type and listening style for any measure (p's > .131).

Study 3b Discussion

In Study 3b, we replicated and extended Study 3a and we found that, as predicted, women anticipated feeling more powerful, respected, understood, trusting (not predicted), having a larger self, and having greater state status, when listened to by a male friend doing interdependent (vs. independent) listening. Moreover, the problem type did not seem to matter:

we did not find evidence that the effect of interdependent (vs. independent) listening was moderated by problem type (i.e., personal vs. professional).

One limitation thus far is that we have not yet examined how women's responses to how men listen might depend on women's individual characteristics, such as their gender-related attitudes and beliefs. Though we have assumed that women will tend to be more empowered by men doing interdependent (vs. independent) listening, we theorize that not all women - particularly, we predict, women who endorse traditional gender roles - will be sensitive to the style of listening their male counterpart does. We reasoned then that women who do not endorse stereotypic gender roles might be most likely to feel more powerful and respected when men do interdependent listening. As a test of this idea, in the next study we extend Studies 3a and 3b by testing the moderating effect of women's attitudes towards gender roles, as operationalized by benevolent sexism.

Study 3c Method

Participants

Our pre-registered goal was to recruit 200 participants per condition (i.e., interdependent vignette or independent vignette), the same as Study 3b. After pre-registered exclusions (see supplement), we were left 404 women (199 in interdependent vignette, and 205 in the independent vignette): M_{age} = 39.16, SD_{age} = 13.15; 73.02% White / Caucasian, 9.16% Black / African American, 6.93% Asian / Asian American, 3.96% Hispanic / Latino, 0.50% Middle Eastern, 0.50% Native American, 0.50% other, 5.45% multiple ethnicities; 48.27% graduated community college or less, 51.73% graduated a four-year college or more).

Procedure

The procedure was very similar to Study 3a, in that all women thought about being broken up with, and then read a vignette in which imagined being listened to by their friend Ryan

doing either interdependent listening or independent listening. Afterwards, women participants wrote about how they would feel, then took six confirmatory measures, a confirmatory moderator, several exploratory moderators (Aron et al., 1992; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992; Miller & Borgida, 2016; Singelis, 1994), demographics, and feedback.

Primary Dependent Measures. Participants then took measures assessing their sense of power, size of self, sense of respect, state status, feeling understood, and feeling trusting. We pre-registered confirmatory predictions about all. Feeling understood ($\alpha = 0.93$), size of self, and state status were operationalized in the same way as in Study 3b. To assess sense of power, we included an additional reverse-scored item ("I did not feel on equal footing with Ryan.") ($\alpha = 0.85$). To assess sense of respect, we included an additional item ("I feel like I was taken seriously.") ($\alpha = 0.89$). To assess trust, we included an additional reverse-scored item ("I did not feel like I was able to confide in Ryan.") ($\alpha = 0.90$).

Moderator: Ambivalent Sexism Inventory. Participants next took the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Glick & Fiske, 1996), which asks participants to rate their agreement (0 = disagree strongly to 5 = agree strongly) with 22 items: 11 items that make up the hostile sexism scale and 11 items that make up the benevolent sexism scale, the latter of which can be decomposed into three subscales. Benevolent sexism includes valuing stereotypic feminine attributes and a belief that traditional gender roles are necessary. For our main confirmatory moderation analyses, we pre-registered that we would calculate an abridged benevolent sexism score by averaging of the protective paternalism subscale and the complementary gender differentiation subscale. We also pre-registered exploratory moderation analyses, using the full benevolent sexism score (i.e., the average of all three benevolent sexism subscales), hostile

sexism scale, each benevolent sexism subscale separately, and separate spheres ideology (Miller & Borgida, 2016) (see supplement).

Study 3c Results

Effect of Interdependent (vs. Independent) Listening Vignette

As in Study 3a, for each of our main outcomes of interest, we predicted the score (i.e., average of items where applicable) as a function of condition (independent listening = 0, interdependent listening = 1).

Women in the interdependent (vs. independent) listening condition anticipated feeling more *powerful* [$b = 0.37$, $SE = 0.09$, $t(402) = 4.01$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.40$], feeling more *respected* [$b = 0.33$, $SE = 0.09$, $t(402) = 3.80$, $p < .001$, d = 0.38], feeling more *understood* [$b = 0.29$, $SE = 0.09$, $t(402) = 3.33$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.33$], having a *larger self* [$b = 0.81$, $SE = 0.09$, $t(402) = 9.19$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.92$], having greater *state status* [$b = 0.81$, $SE = 0.18$, $t(402) = 4.48$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.45$], and feeling more *trusting* [$b = 0.25$, $SE = 0.10$, $t(402) = 2.38$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.24$]. See Figure 3 and Table 3.

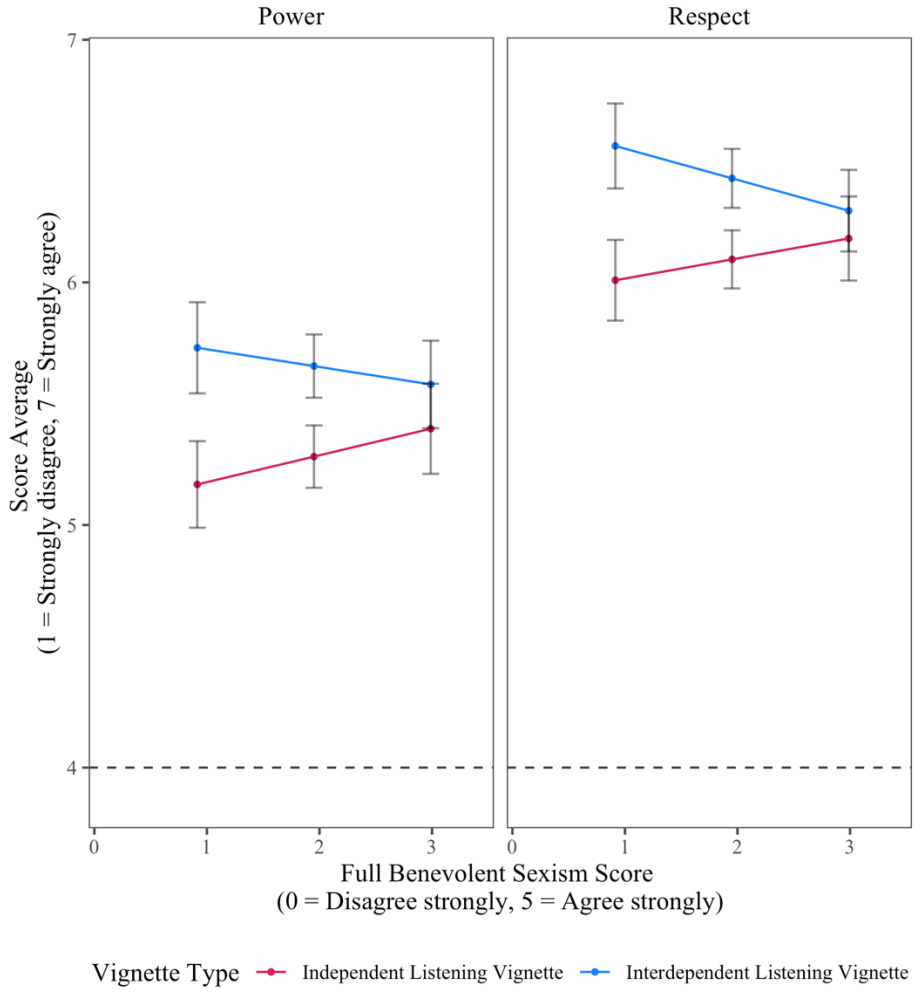
Moderation by Benevolent Sexism

We report results for a pre-registered exploratory moderation by the full benevolent sexism scale here (see supplement for other moderations, including the pre-registered confirmatory moderations by the abridged benevolent sexism scale). For all approaches, as registered, we predicted the score for each measure as a function of the interaction of condition (1 = interdependent vignette, 0 = independent vignette) and the moderator score (where a higher score reflects greater benevolent sexism), as well as their main effects. When the moderation is significant, we present simple effects for those higher vs. lower in benevolent sexism.

We found evidence that the full benevolent sexism score moderated the effect of listening type on feeling *powerful* [b = -0.18, SE = 0.09, t(400) = -2.04, p = .04]; feeling *respected* [b = -0.21, SE = 0.08, t(400) = -2.53, p = .01]; and being *understood* [b = -0.21, SE = 0.09, t(400) = -2.52 , p = .01]. See Figure 4. The effect of listening type was driven by women who do not endorse traditional gender roles: at low levels of benevolent sexism (i.e., 1 standard deviation below the mean of the full benevolent scale), we observed a simple effect of listening on feeling *powerful*, *respected*, and *understood* (p's < .001); we did not observe this simple effect of listening at high levels of benevolent sexism (i.e., 1 standard deviation above the mean). We did not find that the full benevolent sexism scale moderated the effect of listening type on *size of self* (p = .20), *state status* (p = .46), or *trust* (p = .10).

Figure 4

Women Low in Benevolent Sexism Report Feeling more Powerful and Respected when Men do Interdependent Listening (vs. Independent Listening) (Study 3c)



Note. We present moderation by the full benevolent sexism (pre-registered exploratory). We plot the mean and plus/minus 1 standard deviation of the full benevolent sexism score. The axes are truncated. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Study 3c Discussion

Replicating the findings from Study 3a and 3b, in Study 3c we found that, as predicted, women anticipated feeling more powerful, respected, understood, trusting, having a larger self, and a higher state status when listened to by a male friend doing interdependent (vs. independent) listening.

We also found evidence that the way women view gender roles, as operationalized by their views on benevolent sexism, influences the impact of each listening style. We observed that the more women who do not endorse traditional gender roles, i.e. the less women endorsed benevolent sexism, the more respected, powerful and understood they felt in the interdependent (vs. independent) condition (pre-registered exploratory).

Studies 3a – 3c Discussion

Studies 3a – 3c provide evidence that women imagining a man friend doing interdependent (vs. independent) listening reported they would feel more powerful and respected, in addition to more understood, trusting, and having a larger self, and a higher state status (all observed by Study 3c). Moreover, we find that women's view on gender roles matter: the effect of condition was most pronounced among women who reject traditional gender roles, or those who had lower scores on benevolent sexism. To build on this work, in the following two studies we study the effect on women of how men listen in live text conversations, rather than in anticipated conversations.

Study 4: Do Women Feel More Powerful and Respected When Men Are Encouraged to Ask Questions in Unscripted Conversations?

We have shown that though men do less interdependent listening than women (Study 1), they can be encouraged to do more by asking more questions (Study 2), and that furthermore, this matters as women anticipate that they would feel more powerful and respected when men do interdependent (vs. independent) listening during troubles talk (Studies 3a - 3c). One major limitation of Studies 3a – 3c is that we investigated women's anticipated reactions, not their actual reactions, to how men listen. To get beyond these limitations, we employed a novel tool: ChatPlat, a platform to study online, live text conversations (see Huang et al., 2017).

In this study, a woman speaker had a conversation about a problem of their choice with a man listener who was either encouraged to ask questions ("question-asking treatment"; this is a condensed version of the intervention from Study 2) or instructed to have a conversation ("free conversation control"). We theorized that men listeners in the question-asking treatment (vs. men listeners in the free conversation control) would ask more questions. Therefore, in light of our findings in Studies 3a – 3c, we predicted that women speakers in the question-asking treatment (vs. free conversation control) would feel more powerful, more respected, more understood, more trusting, and experience a higher relative size and greater state status.

Method

Participants

We planned to recruit 400 women participants (200 for each condition: question-asking or advice-giving) post-exclusions from Amazon's Mechanical Turk through CloudResearch. After administering our six pre-registered exclusion criteria and three post-hoc exclusions (this resulted in loss of 33 participants, though this did not affect the main analyses; see supplement), we had 302 unique and valid women participants, 148 in the question-asking treatment and 154 in the free conversation control (M_{age} = 38.66, SD_{age} = 12.98; 71.15% White / Caucasian, 9.27% Black / African American, 3.97% Asian / Asian American, 4.30% Hispanic / Latino, 0.33% Native American, 0.66% Other, 4.30% multiple ethnicities; 55.96% graduated a community college or less, and 44.04% graduated a four-year college or more).

Procedure

Introductory Instructions. All participants were told that they would be having a conversation with a stranger about a common problem in life, and were told that they would either be having a conversation about their own problem or a conversation about their partner's problem.

Women (Speakers) Instructions. All women participants ("speakers") were then told that they would be talking about their problem and that "your Mechanical Turk partner will most likely be a man."[5] They were reminded of the purpose of the study and told to "not ask your partner about his problem, since his role will be to be a listener." After being presented with example problems, including both personal problems (e.g., "I just moved and I am struggling meeting new people") and professional problems (e.g., "My coworkers are incompetent and frustrating"), speakers identified a problem to talk about with their partner. They were also presented with a way of starting the conversation, "Hi, my name is _____. I am in a study about conversations. I'm supposed to tell you about a recent problem. Here is the problem: _____."

Men (Listeners) Instructions. All men participants ("listeners") were told that they were to talk about their partner's problem, and told that "your Mechanical Turk partner will most likely be a woman." They were also shown the same list of example problems shown to women participants.

Men partners in the *question-asking treatment* then read "tips from the research" about being a good listener (e.g., good listeners "ask follow-up questions", and that "rather than give advice, good listeners ask open-ended questions"). After being told that "we want you to use these tips," listeners wrote about why it was important for them to ask questions while listening. Listeners in the *free conversation control* were asked to reflect on a recent time a friend came to them with a problem. This was meant to engage men actively, and thus control for the fact that

[5] By stating that women might be chatting with a man, some women were not sure that they were talking with a man: 49% did not indicate they knew they were talking with a man when asked afterwards (no difference by condition). Interestingly, this moderated the effect of condition on state status ($p = .012$), such that we observed the effect of condition only among women who knew they were partnered with a man. As such, for Study 5, we made it clear that women were speaking with a man.

men in the treatment were also thinking about problems. See Table 4 for the instructions provided to men participants.

Table 4

Study 4 Men Participant Instructions

Question-Asking Treatment	Conversation Control
Instructions: Before you enter your conversation, we wanted to provide some tips from the research on what seems to work for people trying to be good listeners. Research shows that good listeners don't form a response right away or talk about their own experiences. Instead, good listeners ask questions. They ask questions to figure out how the other person is feeling. They ask follow-up questions to better understand the problem. Sometimes good listeners ask questions to simply let the other person vent. Rather than give advice, good listeners ask open-ended questions to get the person talking. Rather than talk about themselves, good listeners try to find out more about the other person and wait to give a suggestion. We want you to use these tips to be a good listener, but we want the focus of the conversation to be about your partner's problem, and so it'll best not to talk about these tips during the conversation. **Free Response Question***:* Please describe in your own words why it might be important for you to ask questions while listening to your partner talk about her problem. 100 character minimum.	**Instructions:** To get you in the mindset of having a conversation with your partner about her problem, please think back to a recent time when you had a conversation with someone about a problem they had. **Free Response Question***:* Please describe what the other person's problem was. 100 character minimum

Note. Bolded text for control free response question in original text.

Primary Measures. After having the conversation on ChatPlat, participants were asked if they had a conversation. If they indicated they had, they then took the same six confirmatory measures used in Study 3c (i.e., feeling powerful, respected, understood, relative size of self, subjective social status and trust), except appropriately modified in light of the change in interaction (e.g., the item "Ryan respected me" was converted to "My partner respected me"; or "I trust Ryan" to "I trusted my partner").

Other Measures. Participants then were asked to evaluate their partner on a list of eight adjectives (i.e., assertive, competent, independent, confident, understanding, connecting, relational, sympathetic) and to evaluate the conversation on five adjectives (i.e., helpful, supportive, comforting, enjoyable, and interesting). We did not register predictions for these two rating measures but present them to provide context. Participants also were asked other questions about their partner, their self-construal (e.g., Aron et al., 1992; Singelis, 1994), demographic and feedback questions. Participants were not asked their ambivalent sexism attitudes as this study took place, chronologically, before Study 3c.

Exploratory Coding. To determine if the question-asking treatment led men to engage in relatively more interdependent listening behavior, two coders coded the conversation transcripts for whether the male partner gave advice or offered an opinion (e.g., "I would recommend maybe setting aside a fixed amount each paycheck/month") or asked a question (e.g., "Did you get a chance to talk to anyone in town?"; we categorized the questions into one of three types, see supplement). We also coded whether women asked for advice or an opinion (e.g., "Do you have any tips that could help me?").

Results

For all analyses, we conducted linear regressions, predicting the number of questions asked or advice given as a function of condition (question-asking treatment = 1, free conversation control = 0). Any analyses that were not preregistered are indicated as such, though all analyses used data following administered pre-registered and post-hoc exclusions.

Manipulation Check: Male Partner Behavior (Post-hoc)

The results presented in this section analyze the behavior of the men listeners. Compared to men in the free conversation control, men in the question-asking treatment asked more *questions* [$b = 1.30$, $SE = 0.23$, $t(300) = 5.64$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.65$] (treatment: $M = 3.78$ questions, $SD = 1.97$; control: $M = 2.48$ questions, $SD = 2.05$), and gave less *advice* [$b = -0.56$, $SE = 0.16$, $t(300) = -3.53$, $p < .001$, $d = -.41$] (treatment: $M = 1.02$ pieces of advice, $SD = 1.27$; control: $M = 1.58$ pieces of advice, $SD = 1.49$).[6] This suggests that our treatment did indeed encourage men to do relatively more interdependent listening (i.e., ask more questions) and relatively less independent listening (i.e., give less advice).

Effect of the Question-Asking Treatment on Power, Respect and other Main Outcomes

We did not find evidence that there was a difference between the women in the question-asking treatment and those in the free conversation control in terms of feeling *powerful* (treatment: $M = 5.50$, $SD = 0.89$, control: $M = 5.55$, $SD = 0.94$), feeling *respected* (treatment: $M = 6.17$, $SD = 0.99$; control: $M = 6.18$, $SD = 1.00$), feeling *understood* (treatment: $M = 6.16$, $SD = 1.16$; control: $M = 6.08$, $SD = 1.28$); *size of self* (treatment: $M = 3.40$, $SD = 0.78$; control: $M =$

[6] We also looked at the type of question asked. Though men did not differ by condition in the number of questions containing advice they asked ($p = .237$, $d = 0.14$), men in the question-asking treatment (vs. free conversation control) did ask more questions that inquired about the problem ($p < .001$, $d = 0.57$) and did ask more unrelated questions (i.e., ones that did not fit into a pre-defined category) ($p = .003$, $d = 0.34$).

3.27, *SD* = 0.83); *state status* (treatment: *M* = 5.75, *SD* = 2.00; control: *M* = 5.50, *SD* = 1.96); or feeling *trusting* (treatment: *M* = 5.52, *SD* = 1.23; control: *M* = 5.36, *SD* = 1.38) (*p's* > .05).

Impressions of Conversation Partner and Conversation (Post-hoc)

For each of the adjectives participants rated their partner and conversation on, we predicted the single-item score as a function of condition (1 = treatment, 0 = advice condition). We did not find a difference between conditions for how *assertive*, *competent*, *confident*, *connecting*, *independent*, *relational*, *sympathetic*, or *understanding* men listeners were rated (*p's* > .05). We also did not find a difference between conditions for how *comforting*, *enjoyable*, *helpful*, *interesting*, or *supportive* the conversation was (*p*'s > .05). Notably, when collapsing across condition, participants rated their conversation partner above the midpoint for each trait.

Effect of Men Listener Behavior on Women Speakers (Post-Hoc)

For the post-hoc measures, we conducted correlation tests, correlating each of our main measures with the number of questions asked and the number of pieces of advice received. We present only the significant correlations. We find that there was a positive correlation between trust and the number of questions asked (*r* = 0.15, *p* = .008), and consistent with this, a negative correlation between the amount of advice received and size of self (*r* = -0.12, *p* = .034). However, there was also a positive correlation between respect and the amount of advice received (*r* = 0.13, *p* = .020).

Discussion

In this study, in live text conversations, women speakers were asked to speak about a personal or professional problem with men listeners who were encouraged either to ask questions or to have a conversation. Our treatment successfully led men to ask more questions and give less advice. Unexpectedly, we did not find that there was a difference by condition in women's

sense of power, respect, being understood, trust, size of self or state status. This indicates that asking questions, an aspect of interdependent listening, is not always associated with greater respect and power relative to advice. Indeed, recent work shows that people underestimate how much they would appreciate advice, both solicited and unsolicited (Srinivasan et al., 2021). Other recent research suggests listening that challenges, rather than supports, can be useful (Behfar et al., 2020). Such work corroborates our theory that independent listening can be effective.

One explanation for why we did not observe the expected differences between conditions was that the conditions were fairly similar. Nearly all men listeners asked questions – 98% of men in the question-asking treatment and 84% of men in the conversation control asked at least one question.[7] A second explanation is that women wanted advice (around 1 in 5 asked for advice). Giving advice would be meeting the needs of the woman speaker, and thus a form of responsiveness (Reis & Clark, 2013). A third explanation is that advice was anecdotally often delivered effectively. Some men delivered advice in a more interdependent way, e.g., through question (e.g., "That sounds like a good strategy! Have you thought about looking up some memory tricks or exercises online?), or through polite suggestion (e.g., "I think that you should keep trying to save money or try to save a bit more for unexpected circumstances."). This may have been why there was a positive association between receiving advice and feeling respected; that said, we also found a small negative correlation between receiving advice and size of self, suggesting that while women might have felt more respected, advice might have reduced a gestalt sense of power.

[7] The fact that many men asked a question in this study whereas hardly any men asked a question in Study 2 might be attributable to the framing of this study as a conversation.

To isolate the effects of interdependent listening vs. independent listening, and align independent listening more closely with the type of condescending advice associated with manvising, we conducted Study 5 in which, again during live text conversations, we directed men to either ask open-ended questions, i.e., interdependent listening that should elevate the perspective of the woman speaker, or give prescriptive and unsolicited advice, i.e., independent listening that should elevate the perspective of the man listener.

Study 5: Do Women Feel More Powerful and Respected When Men Ask Questions vs. Give Advice in Scripted Conversations?

This research was motivated by the commonly reported experience of women being manvised (Larson, 2019) or mansplained to when listened to by men (Solnit, 2012). In the previous study, we unexpectedly found that advice was sometimes delivered in ways that combined independent and interdependent listening (e.g., a question paired with advice) and which women found helpful and enjoyable. To better control for what men listeners said, we opted for more scripted conversations, again using the live text chat paradigm. Rather than choose their own problem, which might have contributed to greater heterogeneity, women speakers this study were asked to focus on their stress related to COVID-19. Men listeners were requested to either ask three open-ended questions (e.g., "How have you been dealing with everything?") or give three prescriptive pieces of advice (e.g., "To feel less stressed, my advice is to unwind …"). We intentionally had men offer advice that was more prescriptive (in the sense of providing instructions of what someone should do), such that it might elevate the authority of the man listener, and would contrast more sharply with the condition of open-ended questions, which might elevate the authority of the woman speaker. We predicted that the women speakers would feel more powerful, more respected, more understood, more trusting, and have a higher relative size of self when listened when asked open-ended questions (vs. given prescriptive

advice) by men listeners. We also predicted that these findings would be moderated by women's benevolent sexism, based on the findings of Study 3c.

Method

Participants

We planned to recruit 200 women participants per condition (i.e., question-asking or advice-giving) post-exclusions from Amazon's Mechanical Turk through CloudResearch after administering our eleven pre-registered exclusion criteria (see supplement). We had 431 unique and valid women participants, 225 in the question condition and 206 in the advice condition (M_{age} = 37.80, SD_{age} = 12.67; 71.93% White / Caucasian, 7.19% Black / African American, 11.60% Asian / Asian American, 2.55% Hispanic / Latino, 0.46% Native American, 0.70% Other, 5.57% multiple ethnicities; 37.35% graduated community college or less, and 62.65% graduated a four-year college or more).

Procedure

Introductory Instructions. Participants were invited to participate in a study about "how people communicate about their problems." All participants then read a few paragraphs designed to normalize talking with a stranger about a problem, and then were told that they would be talking about COVID-19.

Instructions for Speakers (Women). Women participants were told they would be having a conversation about their stress around COVID-19 with a man. To avoid women asking for advice or shifting the conversation to men's problems, women participants were asked to not ask their partner any questions as the purpose of the conversation was to discuss *their* experience with COVID-related stress. Finally, women participants were instructed to provide the following opening line, "Hi, my name is _____. I'm feeling stressed about COVID-19."

Instructions for Listeners (Men). Men participants were told they were going to have a conversation with a woman about her stresses around COVID-19 and that they were to either provide advice or ask questions to help her cope, which "can be helpful" in "this time of uncertainty." Men participants were provided explicit instructions on what to say, and what not to say (see Table 5).

Table 5

Study 5 Instructions for Men Listeners

Interdependent Listening Condition	Independent Listening Condition
Start of Conversation: When you sign on, we would like you to say hi and to introduce yourself by first name (if you feel comfortable doing so). Please say: *Hi, my name is* _____.	**Start of Conversation**: When you sign on, we would like you to say hi and to introduce yourself by first name (if you feel comfortable doing so) by saying: *Hi, my name is* _____.
Question #1: We've asked your partner to say how she's feeling. After she does, we'd like you to ask her what she's stressed out about. Please say: *I'm sorry you're feeling stressed. I'm interested in knowing more about what's going on. What's stressing you out most these days?*	**Piece of Advice #1**: We've asked your partner to say how she's feeling. After she shares how she is feeling, we'd like you to give her advice to take breaks from the news. Please say: *You're probably feeling stressed because of the news and social media. You should take breaks from watching or listening to news stories.*
Question #2: After your partner responds to this question, we would like you to ask her how she's dealing with everything. Please say: *Yeah, that makes sense. I can see why you're feeling stressed. How have you been dealing with everything?*	**Piece of Advice #2**: After your partner responds to this piece of advice, we'd like you to give her advice about unwinding. Please say: *To feel less stressed, my advice is to definitely make some time to unwind and do the things at home you usually enjoy doing.*
Question #3: After your partner responds to this question, we would like you to ask her what she thinks the next few weeks look like. Please say: *Thanks for sharing. What do you think the next few weeks will look like for you?*	**Piece of Advice #3**: After your partner responds to this piece of advice, we'd like you to give her advice to social distance. Please say: *I would also suggest that you practice social distancing as much as you can to keep safe and reduce the spread of the virus.*
End of Conversation: You can leave the conversation after you ask these three questions. To signal to your partner that you can both leave, please say: *I was told that we're supposed to stop the conversation after we've each written a few lines, so I think I have to get off now. Goodbye.*	**End of Conversation**: You can leave the conversation after you give her these three pieces of advice. To signal to your partner that you can both leave, please say: *I was told that we're supposed to stop the conversation after we've each written a few lines, so I think I have to get off now. Goodbye.*

Note. Participants were instructed to say the text in italics, and to not say all their lines at once.

Primary Measures. After participants had the conversation, they took the same confirmatory measures as used in Study 4, i.e., sense of respect, sense of power, relative size of self, feeling understood, and trust, except tailored for live conversations. Though we had found a difference in state status by condition in Studies 3b and 3c, we dropped this measure as an outcome, and instead administered the non-state version of this measure, the MacArthur Network community ladder (Adler & Stewart, 2007), as an exploratory moderator. We also assessed participants' benevolent sexism, and we registered we would use the full scale (unlike Study 3c, in which this was a pre-registered exploratory analysis).

Other Measures. We then asked participants to rate their partner as confident, self-centered, adjusting, accommodating and responsive (1 = not at all to 5 = extremely). Women were asked the extent to which they felt stressed by COVID-19 at the beginning and end of the study. All participants were then asked the gender identity of their partner, which they needed to answer correctly to be included in the analyses. We then assessed exploratory moderators (Aron et al., 1992; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992), demographics, and feedback.

Results

Manipulation Check

As pre-registered, the first author coded the conversations to determine if man listeners complied with instructions, and either asked questions (and did not give advice) or gave advice (and did not ask questions) (see supplement). There were high rates of compliance -- 74.5% in the question condition and 81.6% in the advice condition. There was no evidence that compliance moderated any of the findings.

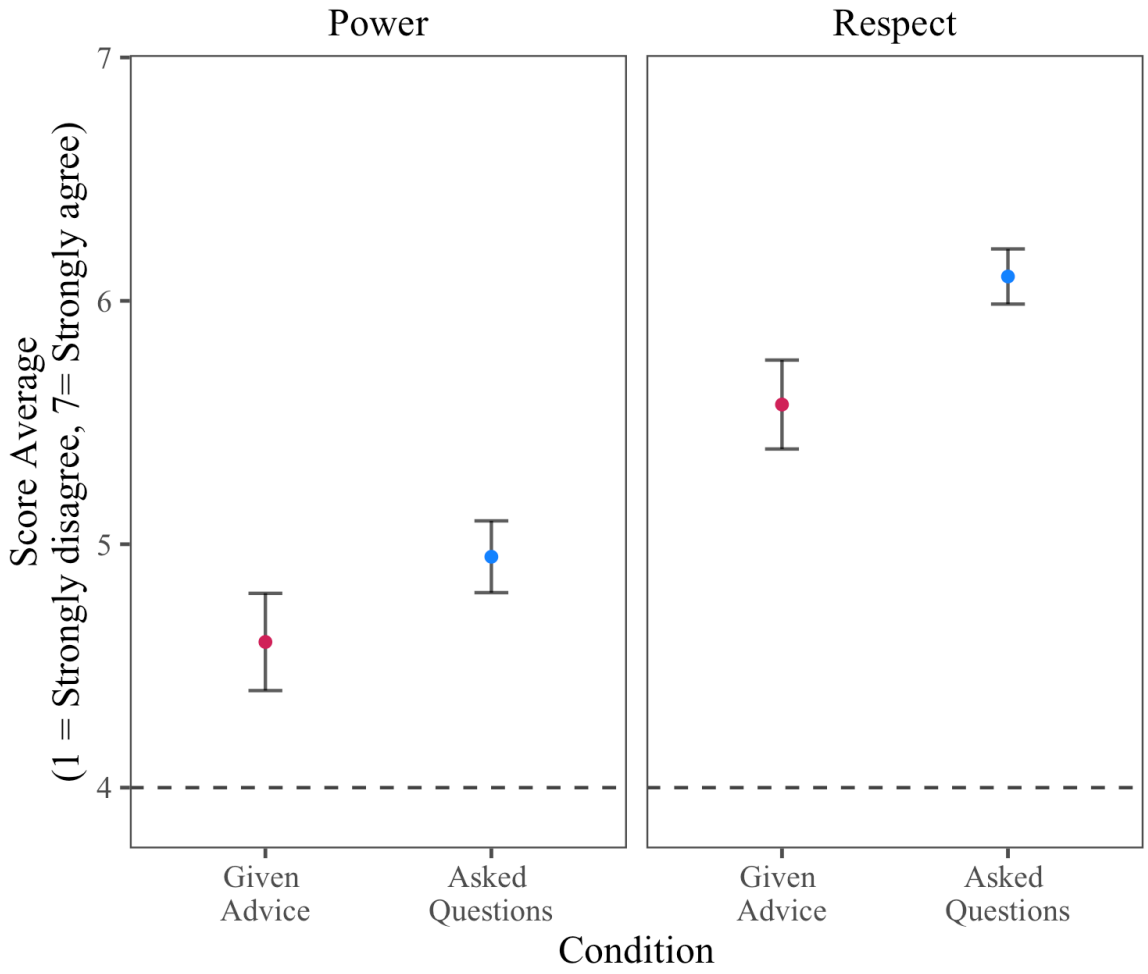
Effect of Men Asking Questions (vs. Giving Advice) on Women

We conducted linear regressions predicting scores as a function of condition (question condition = 1, advice condition = 0). We found evidence that women in the question (vs. advice)

condition felt more *powerful* [$b = 0.35$, $SE = 0.12$, $t(429) = 4.90$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.27$; question condition: $M = 4.95$, $SD = 1.12$; advice condition: $M = 4.60$, $SD = 1.45$], felt more *respected* [$b = 0.53$, $SE = 0.11$, $t(429) = 4.91$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.47$; question condition: $M = 6.10$, $SD = 0.86$; advice condition: $M = 5.57$, $SD = 1.33$], felt more *understood* [$b = 0.63$, $SE = 0.15$, $t(429) = 4.17$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.40$; question condition: $M = 5.70$, $SD = 1.27$; advice condition: $M = 5.07$, $SD = 1.84$], felt more *trusting* [$b = 0.50$, $SE = 0.14$, $t(429) = 3.58$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.35$; question condition: $M = 5.09$, $SD = 1.25$; advice condition: $M = 4.59$, $SD = 1.61$], and reported experiencing a *larger self* [$b = 0.35$, $SE = 0.09$, $t(429) = 3.88$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.37$; question condition: $M = 3.07$, $SD = 0.94$; advice condition: $M = 2.72$, $SD = 0.92$]. See Figure 5.

Figure 5

Women Felt More Powerful and Respected When Asked Questions (vs. Given Advice) by Men Listeners (Study 5)



Note. Women speakers had live text chats discussing their stresses related to COVID-19 with a man listener instructed to ask three questions ("asked questions condition") or to give three pieces of advice ("given advice condition"). The y-axis is truncated, and the gray, dashed lines represents midpoint of the scales. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Moderation by Benevolent Sexism

To investigate benevolent sexism as a moderator, for each measure, we predicted score as the interaction of benevolent sexism score (higher numbers reflect greater agreement with benevolent sexism statements) and condition (1 = question condition, 0 = advice condition).

Contrary to prediction, we did not find evidence that benevolent sexism moderated the effect of listening type on feeling *powerful* [p = .848]; feeling *respected* [p = .416]; feeling *understood* [p = .840]; feeling *trusting* [p = .279]; or the *size of self* [p = .079].

Impressions of Conversation Partner (Post-hoc)

For each of the adjectives participants rated their partner (i.e., accommodating, adjusting, confident, responsive, and self-centered), we regressed the single-item score (1 = not at all to 5 = extremely) as a function of condition (1 = question condition, 0 = advice condition). We found evidence that women in the question (vs. advice) condition felt their partner was *more accommodating* [b = 0.37, SE = 0.11, $t(429)$ = 3.50, $p < .001$, d = 0.34; question condition: M = 3.69, SD = 1.00; advice condition: M = 3.32, SD = 1.20], *more adjusting* [b = 0.24, SE = 0.11, $t(429)$ = 2.11, p = .035, d = 0.20; question condition: M = 3.25, SD = 1.10; advice condition: M = 3.01, SD = 1.25], *less confident* [b = -0.32, SE = 0.10, $t(429)$ = -3.32, p = .001, d = -0.32; question condition: M = 3.42, SD = 1.00; advice condition: M = 3.74, SD = 1.03], and *less self-centered* [b = -0.32, SE = 0.10, $t(426)$ = -3.18, p = .002, d = -0.31; question condition: M = 1.40, SD = 0.94; advice condition: M = 1.72, SD = 1.14]. We did not find evidence for a difference in *responsiveness*, [b = 0.20, SE = 0.10, $t(426)$ = 1.95, p = .052, d = 0.19; question condition: M = 3.80, SD = 1.03; advice condition: M = 3.60, SD = 1.12].

Discussion

In this study, we assessed whether women speakers would feel more empowered and respected talking about stress related to COVID-19 with a man listener instructed to either ask three open-ended questions (i.e., one element of interdependent listening) compared to a man listener instructed to give three pieces of prescriptive advice (i.e., one element of independent listening). As predicted, women speakers reported feeling more powerful and respected, as well

as more understood and trusting and having larger size of self, when talking with a man who asked questions rather than one who gave prescriptive advice. Further, the women speakers in the question-asking condition rated their listeners as *more* accommodating, adjusting, responsive, and as *less* confident and self-centered than women rated their listeners in the advice-giving condition. Together these results suggest that the advice-giving condition in this study was a reasonable analog of the common complaint from women that men are not listening to them.

In these conversations, we did not find that women speakers' view on gender roles moderated the effects of receiving questions (vs advice) on feeling respected or powerful (or the other confirmatory variables). Thus, we did not replicate Study 3c in which the effect of interdependent listening was most pronounced among women more attuned to equal gender roles, or those who had lower scores on benevolent sexism. One potential reason for this difference is that whereas the vignette character Ryan did positive and effective independent listening (See Table 1) in Study 3c, men in this actual interaction study gave advice that was prescriptive and even obvious. Even women who do not endorse gender role equality may have found the three pieces of directed advice unhelpful and somewhat condescending. As noted above, the men in this condition were rated consistently less positively.

General Discussion

The problem that animates this work is rooted in the experience of many women who say that when talking about a problem, men sometimes don't listen, or when they do, men respond by "manvising" or condescendingly providing advice (Larson, 2019; Solnit, 2012). Our aim was to examine this phenomenon with a social psychological lens. We began with a proposal that the relevant question for research is not *whether* men listen to women but instead *how* men listen to women. Among the many distinctions to be made in the study of listening is one that contrasts

interdependent listening (e.g. question-asking), which highlights an effort on the part of listeners to adjust to the other through paying attention and trying to understand the other, with *independent listening* (e.g., advice-giving), which highlights an effort on the part of the listeners to influence the other through expressing their own ideas. Depending on the context, both types of listening can be desirable and valuable, but they have different consequences.

We hypothesized and found that *how* men listen to women affects women's sense of power and respect, providing an empirical foundation for their common complaint. In Study 1, when men and women reported what they did when listening to a woman friend disclose a problem, we found that men reported doing less listening overall than women, including less interdependent listening. Though this main effect was not anticipated, it suggests that perhaps men are less engaged than women during troubles talk. Next, we found that we could encourage men to ask women more questions: in Study 2, men who were given information about the value of asking questions indeed asked more, although not many, questions after listening to a recording of a woman communicating a problem. Notably, we observed that very few men in the control conditions asked any questions, corroborating our findings in Study 1 that men tend to do less interdependent listening.

We next investigated how women anticipated feeling when men listen in different ways, and we found that women anticipated feeling more empowered when men do interdependent (vs. independent) listening. In Studies 3a-3c, using vignette studies, women participants were asked to imagine experiencing a problem and being listened to by a man friend doing either interdependent listening or independent listening. Women imagining their man friend doing interdependent (vs. independent) listening anticipated feeling more powerful and respected, as well as more trusting, more understood, having a larger self, and feeling greater state status (all

measures significant by Study 3c) and this was the case for both personal and professional problems (Study 3b). Moreover, this outcome was particularly evident among women who did not endorse gender-stereotypic roles (Study 3c).

Finally, we turned to studies involving live text conversation between men and women strangers to investigate the effects of how men listen on women's sense of power and respect. Unexpectedly, in unscripted conversations about a woman participant's problem of choice, we did not find evidence that encouraging men to ask more questions compared to a free conversation control elevated women's power and respect (Study 4). Since men sometimes gave advice in the form of a question or polite suggestion, in Study 5 we sought to compare interdependent listening with independent listening that more closely resembled mansplaining. We instructed men to either ask three specific open-ended questions (i.e., interdependent listening) or give three prescriptive pieces of advice (i.e., independent listening). Compared to women in the advice-giving condition, women in the question-asking condition in Study 5 reported feeling more powerful and respected, as well as more understood and trusting and having a larger size of self.

Theoretical Contributions

This series of studies makes three distinct contributions. First, we help connect the way men listen to women's sense of power and respect. To our knowledge, we are the first researchers to pursue this specific question, though certainly other research has looked at the effect of listening on speakers (e.g., Hurwitz & Kluger, 2017; Weger Jr et al., 2014), respect in relationships (e.g., Frei & Shaver, 2002) as well as the relationships among gender, power and language (e.g., Carli, 1990). Since men are very often afforded more power, or control over resources, as well as more status and respect than women (Ridgeway, 2011), the way men listen

in a given interaction can either accentuate or attenuate the gender hierarchy (Pratto et al., 1994). Our research suggests that if men listen to women in a way that elevates the voice and the ideas of the woman speaker, such as by asking open-ended questions, rather than by elevating the voice and ideas of the man listener, such as by giving prescriptive advice, women may feel more powerful and respected in a given interaction. The studies are initial evidence that interdependent listening on the part of men to women can be an everyday "anti-sexist" practice - or, a "micro-inclusion" (Muragishi et al., in prep), "microaffirmation" (J. M. Jones & Rolón-Dow, 2018), or a "high-quality connection" (Stephens et al., 2012) - that, in a given interaction, can help restore some measure of balance to the default gender hierarchy.

A second contribution is that we attempt to delineate two different styles of effective listening. In the existing research, interdependent listening is often a synonym and the model for (effective) listening. We suggest that both interdependent listening *and* independent listening can be active and empathic, and indeed we find that both men and women report doing both styles of listening (Study 1) and that both styles are valued (i.e., women anticipate and report feeling respected and powerful in Studies 3a – 5, as indicated by being above midpoint in these scales). Moreover, our categorization is a way to parsimoniously to begin to understand what listeners do when they listen (for a related enterprise, see Bodie et al., 2020, who develop a typology of listener and speaker behaviors).

A third contribution is that this research more generally helps to bring the study of listening into social psychology. Listening is a staple concern of clinical psychology and therapy. Carl Rogers (1995), for example, characterized active listening as "one of the most potent forces for change that I know" (p. 116).[8] In spite of a growing body of work investigating conversations

[8] We thank Guy Itzchakov for reminding us of Carl Rogers's views on listening.

– especially around misperceptions in conversations (e.g., Boothby et al., 2018; Cooney et al., 2017; Kumar & Epley, 2020; Mastroianni et al., 2021; Zhao & Epley, 2021) and ideological disagreement (Kubin et al., 2021; Yeomans et al., 2020) – listening has been largely overlooked, and it is only recently that social psychologists have turned their attention to it (e.g., see Hart et al., 2021; Huang et al., 2017; Itzchakov et al., 2017). Listening is a channel through which people orient, relate, and connect, and is a fundamentally social psychological phenomenon.

Limitations

Several important limitations constrain the interpretation of our results. First, our conclusions about the way men and women listen are based on self-report. In light of broad and growing culturally pervasive stereotypes (at least in middle class US. American contexts) that men give too much advice and don't ask questions, men might have *under*-reported doing independent listening and *over*-reported doing interdependent listening. Future studies could ask participants' friends and co-workers what participants' do during troubles talk.

A second limitation is that our conversation findings involve communication over live text chats. Though text conversations comprise an increasingly large proportion of daily social interactions (Morris, 2018), research has shown that people perceive one another differently when communicating with just audio (Schroeder et al., 2017). Since paying attention and other silent interdependent listening behaviors are difficult to communicate via text, it could be the case that our studies underestimate the impact of interdependent listening. Future work should investigate how men listen to women in person (or over video). Other related future directions might include looking at troubles talk among friends, not just among strangers (though troubles talk among strangers is common; see Small, 2017), as well as situations in which speakers share positive events rather than troubles (Gable et al., 2004).

A third limitation is that our studies do not answer when interdependent listening will be more empowering than independent listening. We have theorized that in general interdependent (vs. independent) listening will lead to more power and respect, and that this should be particularly true when a person of higher power or status (e.g., men) listens to a person of lower power or status (e.g., women). As Study 5 suggests, men asking women open-ended questions might be particularly effective relative to unsolicited advice. Additional studies could vary the amount, combination, order, and style of questions asked and advice given, as well as encourage men to listen in other interdependent (e.g., paraphrase) and independent (e.g., providing an affirmation) ways beyond asking questions and giving advice, respectively (see Figure 1). One interesting direction, as suggested by Larson (2019), would be to study the effect of having listeners ask speakers whether they want advice or want a chance to vent – an approach that, by centering the needs of the speaker, would lead with interdependence.

Future Directions

A necessary future direction is to examine downstream consequences of women feeling powerful and respected. This research might look at a variety consequences of individual and interpersonal outcomes of women experiencing greater power and respect, including, for example, a greater sense of inclusion or affirmation, a change in attitudes (Broockman & Kalla, 2016; Itzchakov, 2020), greater expression of opinion or voice, enhanced personal motivation, performance, improved team performance, or relationship ccommitment or satisfaction.

A second important future direction would be to investigate other status or power divides. We suspect that interdependent listening, especially asking questions, could be effective across many other power divides as well, including those of social class, race, profession, etc. or in any situation which accords one communication partner the "one-up" position, putting the other

partner in the "one-down" position. As one example, the finding that in Black or Latinx-White interactions, Black and Latinx speakers report more concern with being respected than White speakers (Bergsieker et al., 2010), suggests that interdependent listening might be particularly helpful for White conversation partners to do in cross-race interactions (see also Bruneau & Saxe, 2012).

Concluding Thoughts

In the aftermath of #MeToo, a public reckoning with sexual and power harassment, some men have described how they might serve as allies to women seeking this change (e.g., Johnson & Smith, 2018). Conceptualizing culture as a multilayered, interlocking, dynamic cycle of ideas, institutions, interactions and individuals, Hamedani & Markus (2019) implies that culture change requires extending foundational American ideals of equality to women and inscribing these ideals in all levels of culture. Such efforts could take a variety of forms. At the individual level, it might mean self-education, and at the institutional level, it might mean changing policies and practices to insure equal protection, pay access, etc. (see Chang & Milkman, 2020 for a review of organizational changes to promote gender equality). We offer here a solution directed to the interaction level of the culture cycle, focusing on the way men interact with women. If men ask questions rather than give advice to women, women might feel somewhat more respected and powerful in a given interaction. More broadly, in light of the increasingly popular interest in listening – such as executives seeking to listen more (Constine, 2017) or online courses teaching communication skills (e.g., *Communication Skills for Dialoguing Across Difference*, n.d.) – our hope is that this paper will spark further social psychological research to understand how different styles of listening might be useful in bridging power and status divides.

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