

on reactions of others, that presentation of self has

taped and humanized the process by clowning around on camera before settling back to work. Later, their assembly tasks were viewed and analyzed by the workshop director.

Uses for the equipment began to multiply after a few months. It was used to show parents how their child was doing in the residence, school, or workshop, and thus opened up new lines of communication and provided new reference points for discussion between staff and parents.

It was used to show the Board of Directors what a fine job the staff was doing. It was used to make training tapes on emergency first aid, behavior modification techniques, and teaching techniques. It was used to tape work done at other agencies to improve the work at ours. And finally, it was used as a therapeutic tool. I could tell you about Lazlo in terms of a controlled feedback study but would prefer to save that kind of write-up for the many mental health journals that hunger for new information on treating those less sane or less intelligent than their editors. Lazlo probably taught me more than I taught him. He was nineteen, educably retarded, and an Orthodox Hassidic Jew. He had a keen sense of humor and an innocence and charm that made him instantly and infectiously likeable.

Lazlo shook and bobbed his head whenever he spoke - a condition that had no physiological basis (as I found out reading the files - Crass's objections having been overruled by the kindly Executive Director) and which Lazlo himself wished to eliminate.

So each day we talked for ten minutes, Lazlo in front of the camera, me just off to the side. Eventually, playbacks were introduced after each interview. Headshake counts went like this:

May 4th	203 headshakes in 10 minutes
May 9th	114 headshakes in 8 minutes

Playbacks began and headshakes were remarkably reduced to:

May 11th	6 headshakes in 10 minutes
May 16th	14 headshakes in 10 minutes

Eventually with playbacks, Lazlo stopped shaking his head altogether. When the playbacks were discontinued for a month, Lazlo increased his headshaking significantly. It was all very empirical and controlled and sent me off on a group of similar experiments which, I maintain, demonstrate that video feedback can be an important therapeutic tool in assisting the retarded to help themselves change behavior. Now this may be evident to all of you who have grown your hair longer after seeing how silly you look, short-haired on playback. But in a therapeutic world of operant conditioning, if you can change behavior and explain it in terms other than reinforcement, then you are either stupid or wrong. Well, I may be both, but I do think Lazlo changed because he was confronted with a poor presentation of self, and in a world where we conduct our actions based to a large extent on the reactions of others, that presentation of self has to be damned straight. It cannot involve distracting incessant headshaking. Lazlo took note of this and eliminated that behavior accordingly.

