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Life On The Inside

By Joshua Muggleton

About Me

- Born Guildford, Surrey
- Home-schooled for 2 years
- Transfer to primary school
- Early Literacy problems
- Social Difficulties
 - “Buddy”
 - Became the butt of jokes
 - Lost interest in socialisation
 - Odd behaviours

About Me

- Secondary school transfer
 - School had good OFSTED reports and well regarded
 - Asked for meeting with SENCO
- Depression
- Minor concessions
 - Box in office instead of locker
 - 45 mins per week with support worker
- School Attendance dropped
- CAMHS

About Me

- Diagnosis (age 15)
- Nervous breakdown
- EOTAS
 - Adaptations to the Curriculum
- January 2005 (age 16) – Signed off school by CAMHS
 - Study at home
- June 2005 – GCSE's (7C, 1B)
 - Taken at Surrey County Council offices

About Me

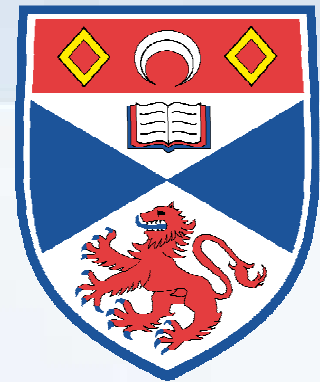
- September 2005 – Satellite Virtual Schools
 - Recovery Year
 - Studied Mathematics, Economics, Physics and Computer Science
 - Still wanted to learn in a Mainstream environment
 - Stress of exams caused another minor breakdown
 - Never left house for more than 3 hours per week

About Me

- September 2006-June 2008 – Farleigh Further Education College/City of Bath College
 - Residential, Aspergers specific college
 - 1-to-1 key worker
 - Taught in mainstream environment
 - Teachers had some training in Aspergers Syndrome

About Me

- June 2008
 - A Level Psychology Grade A (All in one year)
 - A Level Maths Grade A
 - A Level Business Studies Grade B
 - As level Physics Grade D
- Accepted to University of St Andrews
 - BSc (Hons) Psychology



Communication

- Part of the Triad of Impairments
- Often one of the first signs of Autism/Aspergers syndrome
- In communicating feelings and attitudes...
 - 7% is done through words
 - 38% is done though vocal quality
 - 55% is done though body language (Mehrabian, A, 1981)
 - Imagine reading a letter with only every 10th word printed
- Childhood
 - Late developing language
 - Sometimes only develop minimal language
 - Common for children to develop language then “lose it”
 - Can persist – leads to selective mute-ism

Communication

- Childhood
 - Echolalia
 - Repeating your words right back at you
 - Using borrowed phrases
 - Especially from adverts
 - Repeating words they associate with an emotion
 - “Don’t throw the dog out the window”
 - Wanting to be naughty?
 - Eye contact hard
 - Little eye-contact in infancy tell-tale sign



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Eye contact particularly important in relationships



Communication

- Childhood
 - Limited range of facial expressions/tone of voice
 - Only has happy/sad/angry/etc
 - Flattened affect / monotonous voice
 - Few indications of mood
 - Seen as going from 0 to 10 with nothing in-between
 - Often goes in time
 - Due to exposure/social pressure/communicative pressure?
 - Can still present in later life

Communication

- Growing up
 - Trouble with Jokes
 - Cannot understand why something is funny
 - Often own jokes only make sense to self
 - Can lead to inappropriate laughter
 - Literal interpretation



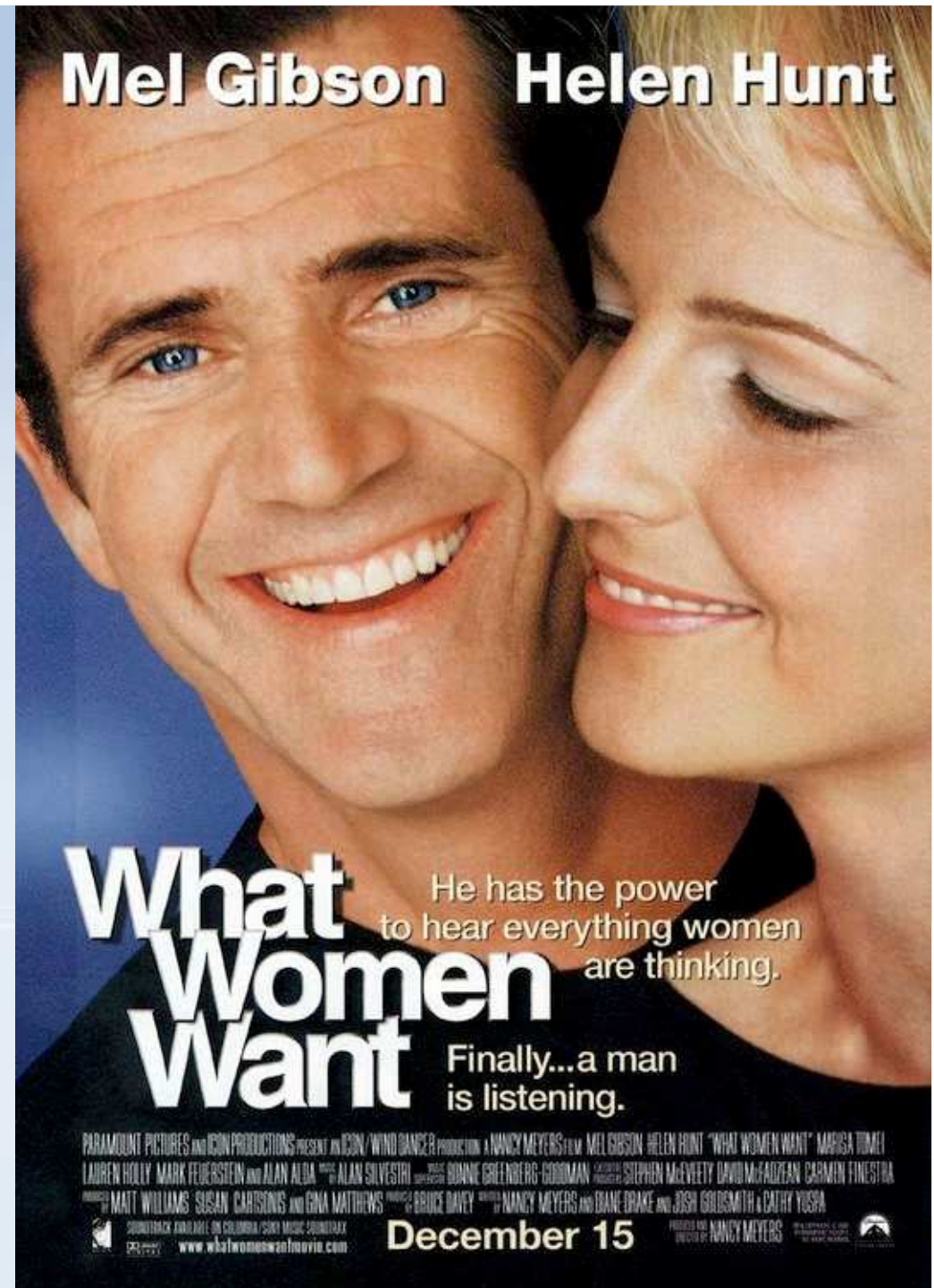
- Sarcasm – can take as real
 - Can cause conflict of information – leads to stress
- Trouble understanding Idioms
 - Chip on your shoulder, until the cows come home, piece of cake

Communication

- Non-verbal communication (NVC)
 - Body language, facial expressions
- Do not have the inbuilt NVC to English dictionary in our head
 - We have to manually learn body language
 - Then refine for individuals
 - Makes social interactions hard
 - Does not equal insensitivity
- Can lead to “talking at people” rather than “talking to people”

Communication

- Non-verbal communication (NVC)
 - Inability to read body language
 - What Women Want





Communication

- Ideas for help
 - Most interventions specific to situation
 - Saying “I am feeling xxx” when talking to us
 - Other visual cues can work too (ie Happy/sad/angry cards or badges)
 - “Transporters” DVD
 - Medium term studies show some improvement, still awaiting long term studies
 - Creating a list of “code phrases”
 - List of non literal phrases / social phrases which require a certain response

Communication

- Ideas for help
 - Give it time
 - Lots of stuff going on – sometimes we need to think before we speak
 - Keep speaking and we keep thinking!
 - Think before you speak
 - Have you avoided idioms/ metaphors – is it clear?
 - Simplify
 - Sometimes there are too many options
 - “A or B” can be better than open ended
 - Communicate with home/school
 - Co-ordinate!

Communication

- Ideas for help
 - For me: Comedy DVDs helped with Jokes/sarcasm
 - Children: Using visual cards (PECS – Picture exchange communication system) or cartoons for communication
 - Can be used for giving daily schedule / asking questions / giving instructions
 - Teenagers/Adults: Written communication
 - msn (emotions :P 😊 :D)
 - E-mail

**Friendship is like
peeing your
pants.**

**Everyone can
see, but only
you can feel its
warmth.**



Friendships

- Why is Friendship so important?
 - Humans by nature are social creatures
 - We have a need to belong
 - We have a need to talk to, to relate to
 - It is genetic

Friendships

- People on the spectrum have that desire too
 - We don't always know how to express it
 - We don't know how to engage
 - We don't know the rules which govern social interaction
 - We simply don't always know how to make friends
- This is hard to deal with
 - Some people withdraw, and cut contact
 - Some people get angry

Me and Friendship

- Everybody wants a friend, for me it was about the ability to get a friend
- At primary school, assigned a “buddy”
 - Drawn into friendship circle as “runt of litter”
 - The butt of jokes
 - Never felt like I belonged
 - Mild bullying/teasing
 - Always made to be “it” when was a terrible runner

Me and Friendship

- Got to the stage where I would rather be by myself
- Spent time in library
- Walked along lines on playground
- Stayed away from people
- Wore thick clothes
 - Felt safe
- Wanted someone to talk to/play with who wouldn't make fun of me

Me and Friendship



Me and Friendship

- Secondary school like primary but worse
 - More bullying → more isolation
- Teachers lack of knowledge increased the problem
- Bullying became more varied
 - Tripping up in corridor
 - Kicking chair
 - Trying to provoke me
 - Teasing/name calling

Me and Friendships

- Started Saturday work at Riding Stables
 - Easier to make friends
 - Socialisation was secondary – getting the job done was the priority
 - More relaxed atmosphere
 - Space to go and have a quiet few mins.

Friendships

- Problems starting friendships
 - Understand what others are saying
 - Subtext
 - Body language
 - Social cues
 - Social language/cues
 - What to say
 - What to do
 - “do I look fat in this?” type questions
 - When to end the conversation
 - Appropriate conversation

Friendships

- Problems starting friendships
 - Fear of rejection
 - Unsure how to start a conversation
 - Defining the difference between relationship and friendships
 - Appropriate person?
 - Cannot pick up on the social cue to join in
 - Rehearse
 - Slow it down – video tape/drama and PAUSE

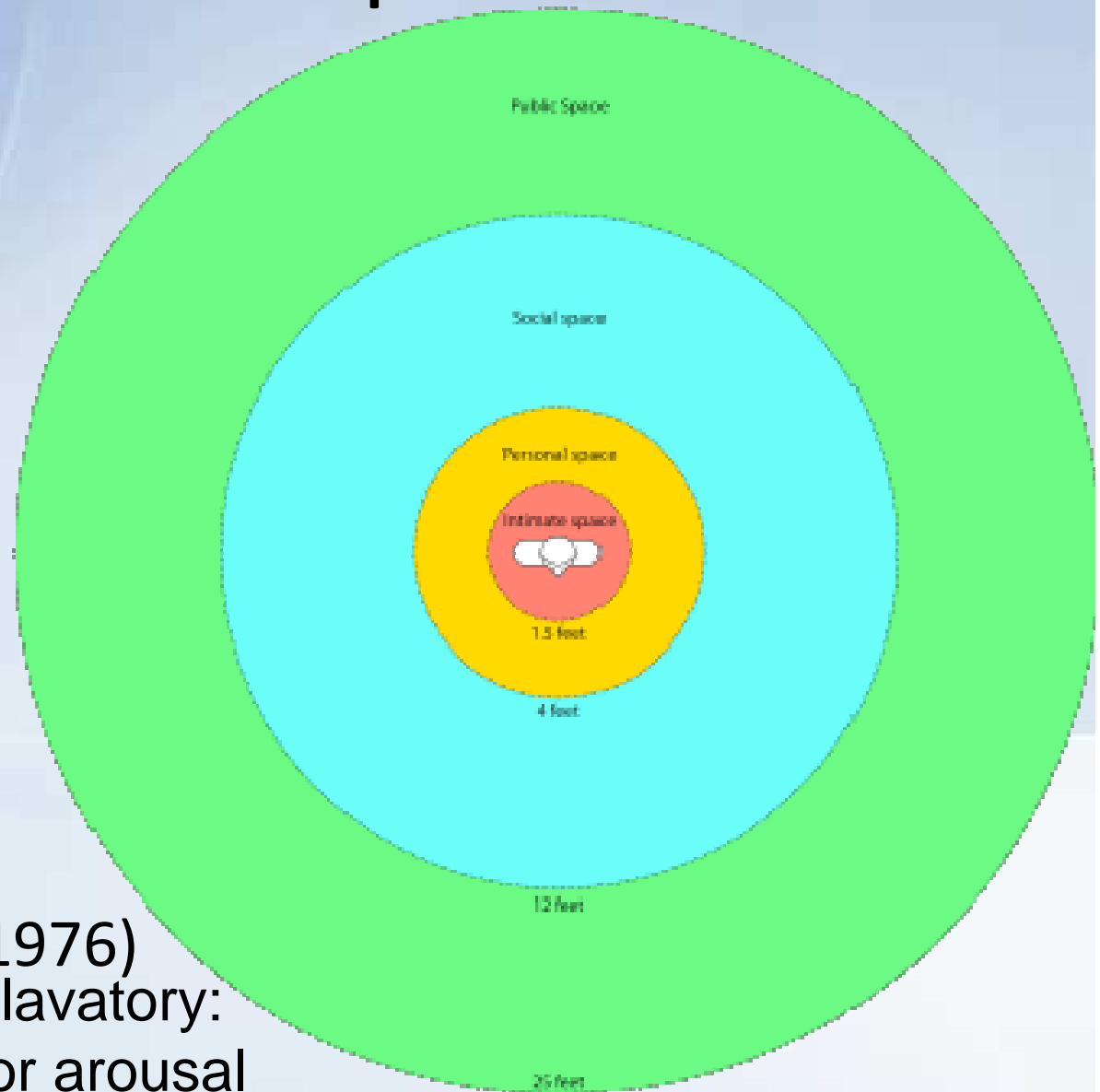
Friendships

- Personal Space
 - by Hall, E.T (1966)
 - Public 12ft – 25 ft
 - Social 4ft – 12 ft
 - Personal 1.5 ft – 4ft
 - Intimate <1.5ft
 - Not black and white

- Lavatory

experiment

- Middlemist et al (1976)
Personal space in the lavatory:
suggestive evidence for arousal



Friendships

- Problems starting friendships
 - Social Touch
 - Sensory homunculus
 - Touch sensitivities
 - Social touch
 - Hands
 - Arms
 - Face
 - Lips

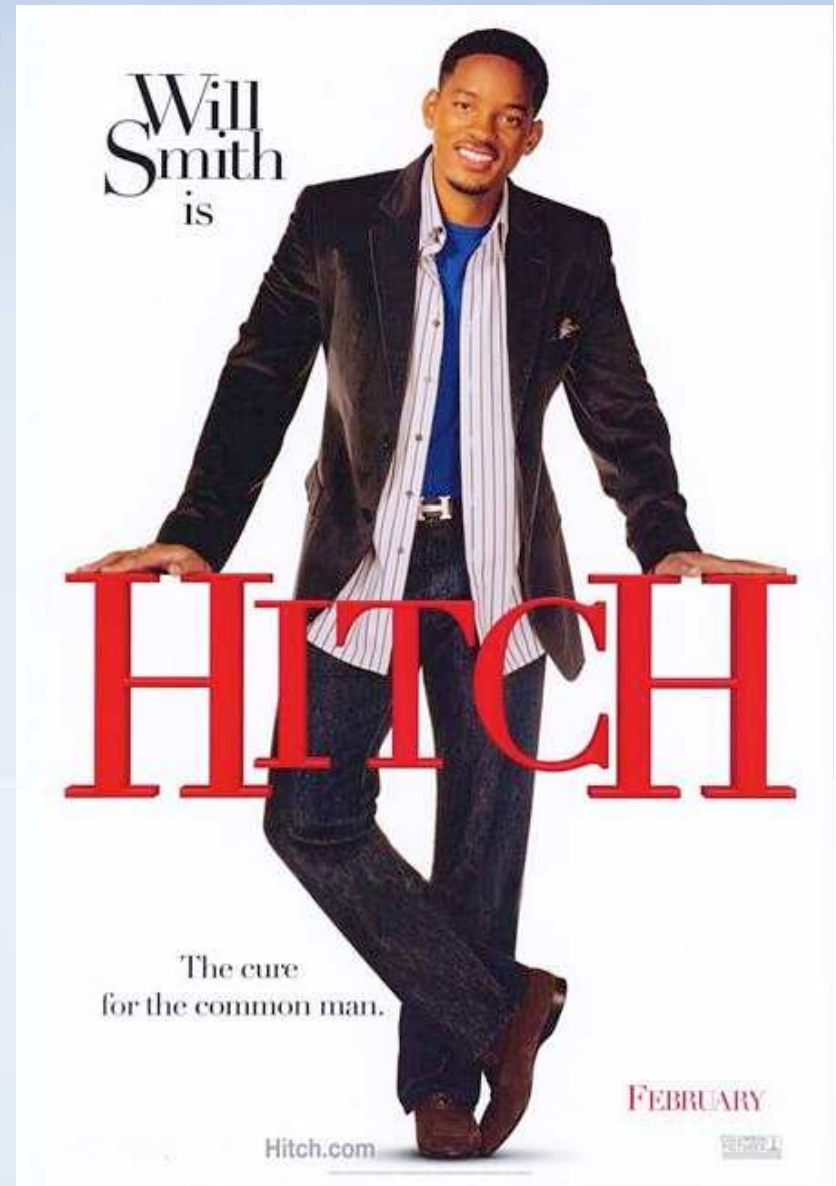


Friendships

- Problems starting friendships
 - Social Touch – what's appropriate
 - Types of handshake
 - Types of hand contact
 - Arm contact
 - Body contact
 - Don't like asking for help
 - Feel we should be able to figure it out on our own.
 - Dealing with criticism
 - Can dish it out but not take it back

Friendships

- Over thinking/planning
 - Hitch
- Problems maintaining friendship
 - Team work
 - My way (AKA Frank Sinatra Syndrome. © Tony Attwood)
 - Complements



Friendships

- What is a friend?
 - A lot of people with AS find this definition hard
 - Changes over time
 - Early years – playing with me
 - Later – helping behaviour /reciprocity
 - Tweenager – guys vs girls, shared interests
 - Teenager – personality, talking about feelings
 - Increasing levels of complexity

Friendships

- If they do not want to start a friendship, do not bug them about it – it will only make matters worse
 - Be supportive of any curiosity in making friends
 - Assist where help is wanted
 - Give resources to learn about friendships if appropriate
- You can open the door – they have to walk through it.

Friendships

- How to help
 - Comic strip creations
 - Can see words, actions **and** thoughts
 - Drama
 - Rehearsing socialisation
 - Slow down the interaction – can pick up on cues
 - Positive feedback
 - Often the only feedback we get is negative
 - Social interpreter
 - Clued up friend who can translate social interactions after the event/say what to do.

Friendships

- How to help
 - Tell them what they should have done
 - Make it positive
 - Can be social interpreter or parent
 - Shared activities on neutral ground
 - Then bring it home when there is trust
 - Social Phrase Dictionary
 - Phrases for
 - I don't want to play/ I want to play
 - I don't want to do that/ I want to do that
 - I need to go/ can I come?
 - Excuses for some time out

Friendships

- How to help
 - Reading books with a social element
 - Harry Potter
 - Parents talking to other Parents
 - See what works!
 - Secondary rather than Primary socialisation
 - Primary Socialisation: Parties, Discos, Going to someone's house
 - Places where socialisation **is** the primary goal
 - Secondary Socialisation: Work, class projects
 - Places where socialisation **isn't** the primary goal

Friendships

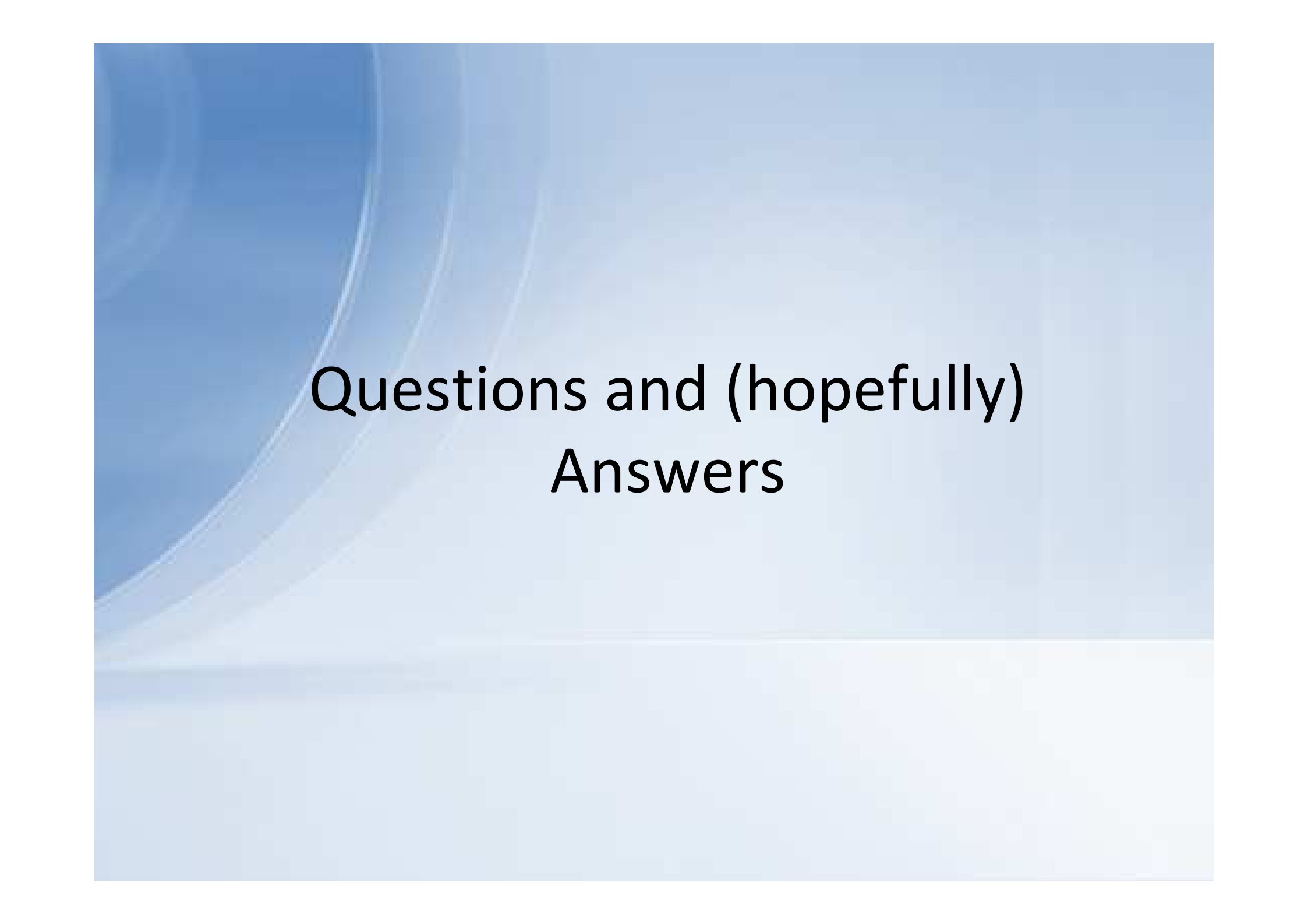
- Anatomy of a conversation
 - Starts from social norms
 - E.g “hi” “How are you?” “What have you been doing?”
 - If something notable then engage
 - Might have to engage with boring stuff
 - Or link to a Personal Statement
 - Personal Statements
 - E.g. “I went swimming” “I saw this program”
 - What you did, what you think, etc
 - Invites others to engage
 - Sometimes all we say is statements
 - Must be Relevant

Friendships

- Anatomy of a conversation
 - Engaging/commenting
 - On stuff you find interesting (or not interesting)
 - Bring in own statements, ask questions, invite further speech, bring in others.
 - Must be
 - Appropriate = level of intimacy/self disclosure/etc
 - Relevant = Close link to what has been said in last 60 seconds of conversation. If pause, then something resent/environmental
 - Positive = Accept other views (can comment constructively)

Friendships

- Anatomy of a conversation
 - End
 - Must be socially expectable
 - Must be polite
 - Must not be abrupt
 - Must not leave them thinking “did I say something wrong”/ “do I smell?”
 - Must not be too late
 - Must not be too soon

The background is a light blue gradient with several curved, overlapping lines in a darker shade of blue on the left side, creating a sense of depth and movement.

Questions and (hopefully) Answers