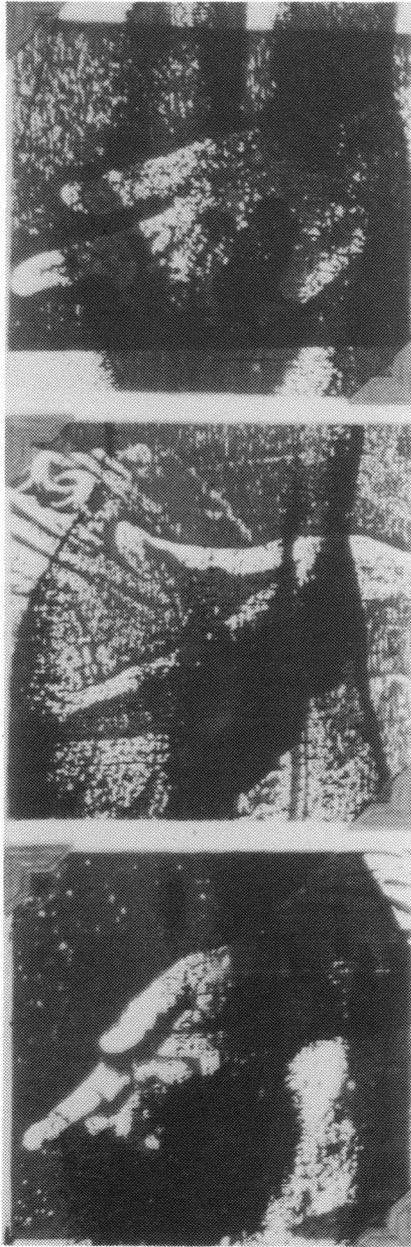


Video Review



Women and Self-Esteem. Linda Sanford. *Nicolas J. Kaufman Productions, 14 Clyde Street, Newtonville, MA 02160, USA (617-964-4466), 28 minutes.*

"It's uniquely feminine to be self-deprecating," Linda Sanford states at the beginning of her instructional film, *Women and Self-Esteem*. Sanford confronts some of the most reinforcing myths and negative self-messages that enmesh women in this self-deprecating mode and prevent them from achieving their goals.

In nearly seven years of working with women as a career counsellor, I have found that low self-esteem is one of the major barriers facing them in their efforts to return to learning or work. Women have been conditioned to take responsibility for everything that goes wrong in their life and the lives of those close to them. That conditioning begins at an early age with subtle or not so subtle messages that are passed on through family relationships or societal norms.

Linda Sanford addresses these issues directly through the use of exercises designed to help women get in touch with the "inner voice" that may be inhibiting their ability to move forward. In one exercise, she asks the participants to complete the statement, "You are ..." with how their parents would have completed the sentence when they were

ten years old. It was interesting but not surprising to find out how many of the messages were negative or double-edged. I think this poses the question of how we raise our daughters today. Have we questioned our expectations of acceptable female behaviour? Are we still putting unrealistic and even harmful expectations on our daughters or setting limits on their goals?

In the exercise dealing with developing a self-concept collage, the women visualize all the facts they have learned about themselves, the roles they play and their traits or attributes. Many of the women find opposites or polarities within the collage and others discover that they mainly define themselves in terms of others. Once again, their uncertainties about themselves are revealed and increasing self-knowledge results.

The style of the film is relaxed and participatory. Sanford's personal ease in discussing the issues related to self-esteem and encouraging the women to share their experiences is lively and involving. It is easy for the observer to feel like one of the participants. I would find it a useful film to incorporate into my Assertiveness Training course. I would also recommend it for anyone working with groups of women around the issues related to self-concept and self-esteem, particularly support groups for women who have been through a personal crisis.

*Suzanne Rosson
Dartmouth, NS*