

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

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IS ANYBODY REALLY LISTENING?

IS IT REALLY POSSIBLE TO INFLUENCE ANOTHER PERSON'S POINT OF VIEW?

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Here are some tips that can help interactions with other people with whom you interact and would like to influence. These pointers can help you achieve a more effective dialogue with these people. The ideas presented here are designed to keep such dialogue open, and will help you to be clear and persuasive, without triggering a negative reaction in those interactions. The intent is for you to make your point while creating as little resistance in the other person as possible. We want to be able to engage in a creative and productive interchange. The ultimate goal is to resolve whatever issues are at hand and maintain a good working relationship with the other person.

- Be sure you are listening to what the other person is saying in detail. Follow the rules of engagement for good listening that is attached. The goal is to allow the other person to feel completely heard before you enter into the discussion with your point of view. They must “discharge their capacitors” first.
- Be sure that you feel heard in the discussion as well. Follow the rules of engagement suggested for reflective listening. The goal here is to be sure that you feel that all of your points have been heard, if not agreed with. Agreement may come after you have exchanged viewpoints and achieved clarity: hearing and being heard.

After you have established a “clear” field of communication by following the first two points above, and then begin the process of getting to agreement, no agreement, or continuation. Tips for this part of the process are contained on the second page attached.

- Try as often as possible to stay on your side of the net, by using “I” statements about what you think and see as the issues and the resolutions. Try not to make interpretations about what the other person is thinking. Ask them, but don't tell them. Seeking clarity is fine, but this can become argumentative if you don't listen, clarity, and let them know how you see the issues from your perspective.
- If you get stuck in a major difference of “fact” or opinion, then repeat the processes above, see if you can get any further clarity on assumptions and details, and then be willing to move to a continuation of the process at a later date with a third party, either technical or process-oriented. Sometimes you can lose perspective when the

going gets hot and heavy with differences in opinion as to what is at what level of severity or detail.

- Ultimate end goal from the personal/human point of view is to not create resistance to hearing and being heard by triggering reactions that are counterproductive—in either you or the other person.
- You can help yourself not to trigger or be triggered if you are in good shape for the dialogue. Be certain that you are well rested, well-fed, and have done your homework before the dialogue takes place.

ABOUT EFFECTIVE LISTENING...

COMMUNICATION SKILLS TOOLKIT

Reflective Listening

Objective:

Lower emotional intensity.

Understand other person's position rationally and emotionally.

Convey that understanding to the other person.

Set the stage for productive negotiation.

1. Evaluate the Emotional Intensity of the Situation.

Higher emotionality—longer the listening (discharging) phase.

2. Check Out Your Own Internal (Emotional) Response.

What would you like to do or say? How do you feel?

3. Hold Onto Your Emotional Response.

Try to be a neutral observer.

Avoid: defending, placating, disagreeing, agreeing, minimizing, distracting, problem solving, threatening, complying, arguing, debating, giving in, interrupting, helping, or fleeing

4. Accept the Other Person's Reality.

Try not to agree or disagree.

Allow them to talk as long as they need to.

5. Reflect Their Position and Their Feeling in Your Own Words.

Try to be complete and succinct.

Use phrases like: "It seems like", "it sounds like", and "Are you saying". "I understand" etc.

6. Check For Agreement.

Ask if they feel that you understand their point.

Ask if you missed anything.

Ask if there is anything more regarding this issue.

If anything is incomplete, go back to step 5 or earlier

7. Check For Emotional Release

Notice their body language—If they sigh they are likely done!

If emotional intensity remains, go back to step 5 or earlier
Communication Skills Toolkit

ABOUT CONFLICT AND DEBATE...

Negotiation and Conflict Resolution

Objectives:

Present both sides of the issue.

Identify differences and similarities.

Present proposals and counter-proposals.

Reach mutually beneficial agreement.

1. Be Prepared

Do your homework Establish priorities and goals explore alternative outcomes.

2. Be Positive

Focus on areas of agreement.

Emphasize the relationship.

Review progress Value differences.

3. Identify Your Triggers

Recognize and rewrite old scripts.

Adjust your pace and style.

Set limits and call time out.

4. Own Your Part

Encourage feedback.

Draw the other person out.

Use "I" messages.

5. Propose and Counterpropose

Ask for what you want.

Stay focused on your goals be creative and flexible.

Seek unconventional solutions.

6. Close to Deal

Confirm the agreement: Acknowledge mutual flexibility.

Ask for and offer feedback.

Schedule review and renegotiate.

ABOUT GETTING ALONG...

Effective Interpersonal Management

- Seeks Mutual Benefits in all Interactions
- Agreements/Solutions are Mutually Beneficial
- All Get Committed to an Action Plan
- Life is Viewed as Cooperative rather than Competitive
- Not an either/or Philosophy
- Not based on Power or Positions as much as based on Principle of Interdependence
- One Person's Success is not Achieved at the Expense of/or the Success of-Others
- Stay with the Process Over and Over Again until you get to the Mutually Satisfying Conclusion-Whether it to be win-win Compromise or no Deal

Show Common Courtesy at All Times.

TRAINING IN EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Goal: *To develop your ability to improve effective interpersonal communication in an office setting.*

Understand the “culture of the organization” so as to help identify the most appropriate communication systems; i.e., what works here and what doesn’t!

Assess What is Acceptable and What is Not

Feedback loops and feedback “disconnections”—How these patterns influence effective communication.

Practice Frequent Check-Ins

Identification of personal communication styles within the staff group, using the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator as a road map.

How Can an E best Manage an I?

Getting in shape for effective communication—A short course in Stress Management. To enable each member of your team/staff to learn techniques to stay in the present and not become reactive under stress.

Be able to Identify Your Triggers

Do Whatever Relaxes You-In Advance

Breathe and Get The Interaction Into Proper Perspective

Dealing with Conflict—How to get to Win-Win!

What Will It Cost to Negotiate?

Can You Be Influenced?

Reflective Listening—The Key Tool In Your Kit.

HOW TO INFLUENCE MANAGEMENT STYLES

Behavior patterns and belief systems which characterize management styles take a long time to develop, and are reinforced by many years of practice. These patterns and belief systems (attitudes) can be modified, expanded, and even changed dramatically by the acquisition of new skills and new habit patterns.

However, such a process is likely to require a great deal of time and effort, and the learner will encounter a good deal of resistance to changing these attitudes and behavior patterns which have effectively served the person well over the years.

We have found that it is necessary to engage the “learner” in a process of taking the time to examine the potential barriers to developing new habit patterns and new attitudes, and shifting old belief systems. It is necessary to consider what coping mechanisms might be exposed to scrutiny and what attitudes might be challenged when this process is undertaken. Focusing attention on the deeply entrenched older habit patterns and belief systems is apt to create tension and discomfort, even though the person is committed to attempting to adopt some new behaviors.

The work is to help the individual and the team to take the time that is necessary to engage in the work described above, and to develop a climate in which the new skills and attitudes about effective management practices can flourish. I strive to help the individual(s) stay with the process, learning more about how to be more effective in their relationship with other people, and learning more creative ways to interact and to thereby influence others.

ABOUT NOT BEING A VICTIM...

HOW TO BE MORE ACCOUNTABLE AND LESS A VICTIM IN YOUR INTERACTIONS WITH OTHERS

When you engage with another person in any form of dialogue, try and observe the following rules of engagement in order to maximize your overall effectiveness. Otherwise you may be at risk of becoming a Victim in the encounter.

1. Always attempt to recognize your part/role in the particular situation. Try to accept more than 50% of the responsibility if are able to tolerate the feeling that may result. Try to be willing to take on even more of the responsibility to resolve the situation!
2. Try to forgive the other person if you feel they are the primary reason why things have gone wrong. They say that to err is human, and to forgive is divine”---but to forgive is also human---and in addition, it can release chemicals that make you actually fell good.
3. Learn from these situations so you will be able to do better the next time. Renew your efforts to approach the particular situation again and again if necessary.

You are apt to become a Victim in particular situation if you ignore or deny your role in the problem. You may be tempted to blame the other person and then rationalize your position. In the final analysis, you may end up resisting and hiding from further attempts at dialogue which might lead to constructive problem solving.

Remember the **Titanic Principle**---“What you don’t know---or aren’t really paying attention to---**Will hurt you!**”

So be willing to pay attention, stay on the playing field and stick with the process.

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- **Practice Frequent Check-Ins**

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- **How Can an E best Manage and I?**

Getting in shape for effective communication—A short course in Stress Management. To enable each member of your team/staff to learn techniques to stay in the present and not become reactive under stress.

Be able to identify your triggers.

Do whatever relaxes you in advance.

Breathe and get the interaction into proper perspective.

- **Dealing with Conflict—How to get to Win-Win!**

What will it cost to negotiate?

Can you be influenced?

Reflective Listening—The Key Tool in Your Kit.

SOME TIPS ON HOW TO BEST MANAGE YOUR STRESS

STRESS MANAGEMENT

A. Identify your sources of stress.

Internal—External. Where do they originate?

B. Place in context. *Prioritize.*

How important is it to deal with them? Really.

C. Develop 1-2 strategies for their management. *What can you do realistically?*

What have you done?

Then –Get in shape for stress management.

1. Check out your “Internal Environment .

What are your health and attitudinal habits like? *Exercise, diet, gossip, rumors, etc.*

2. Check out situational variables.

What is your work environment like? Physical setting? Enough light, air, sound levels, privacy, etc.

3. Communication skills.

Reference “COMMUNICATIONS TOOL KIT”. *More effective interpersonal management skills.*

Q/A

RECOVERING FROM DISTRESS

1. Care for and respect yourself each day.
2. Live in the NOW, focus on one thing at a time.
3. Accept the things you cannot change.
4. Change the thing you can..
5. Experience your emotions one day at a time.
6. Savor your life experiences-work, play, food, feelings and relationships.
7. Spend some time each day in a normal relaxed state.
8. Avoid distressing people and situations containing your distress triggers.
9. Find a retreat-internal or external—and visit it regularly.
10. Balance your life with nourishing meals, enough sleep and realistic amounts of exercise.
11. Accept responsibility for yourself, your behavior, your feelings and fulfilling your needs.
12. Avoid self-medication and mood altering substances.

R.M. Spath, LM FCC, May, 1990