

WHAT MAKES IT WORK?

Top 10 Ways to Be Effective When Communicating

Be Aware: Effective communicators recognize what they are conveying, both verbally and non-verbally, about who they are to the people they are communicating with and they manage this mindfully and intentionally.

Be Congruent: Make sure that your verbal and non-verbal messages match up. When facial expression, tone of voice and body language are consistent with your words it avoids confusion and uncertainty.

Be Neutral: Use language that is free of blame or insult. Avoid saying “You” when possible. This makes the message easier to hear and respond to without being triggered or becoming defensive.

Be Cooperative: Remember that the other person wants to be right just as much as you do. Treating each other as equals makes room for everybody.

Clarify: Double check the content and the meaning of the words you hear and the words you say.

Be curious: Wonder “why?” This allows us to be creative and to explore more possibilities.

Listen: The best thing you can do if you really want someone to listen to you is to listen to them first.

Assert: Remember that what matters to you is important. How can we ever expect to get what we want or need if we don't ask for it?

Manage Emotions: Controlling strong emotions makes us more effective communicators and decision makers.

Care: If you truly believe that the other person's wants and needs matter as much as your own all the other techniques get a lot easier.

ACTIVE LISTENING SKILLS

We will be focusing on three Active Listening skills. Using these effectively and sincerely can often help the person you are speaking with to feel listened to which can really encourage them to listen to you.

Empathising is recognizing and identifying the FEELINGS that another person is experiencing and expressing. It is a way of acknowledging how they are feeling. Empathising with someone can often allow them to let go of or release difficult emotions and allow them to focus more on the future. It is part of acknowledgement and can be very effective for building trust.

Examples: So you get nervous when you don't know what to expect.
Wow, you're really excited about this!

Paraphrasing is restating, in your own words, the message you believe the speaker intends to convey. It is focused generally on the content or meaning only, rather than on identifying underlying feelings. It is done so the listener knows he understood the speaker and so the speaker knows he has been understood. Paraphrasing is also part of acknowledgement and also builds trust.

Examples: So, I hear you saying that you want me to slow down and explain things more clearly.
So, you want me to check with you before I make plans?

Open Ended Questions start with the words How, What, Who, Where, When, and Why. They cannot be answered by a "yes" or a "no", so they are very useful in finding out new information. Open Ended Questions raise specific issues, in a way that leaves the responses wide open and encourage discussion.

Examples: What are you hoping will happen from this?
How can I help you achieve this?

A D.E.S.C. APPROACH FOR ASSERTIVENESS

It's often useful to have a short cut to help us remember the steps to cover in most situations where assertive behavior is needed. Here is a helpful guide.

- A Acknowledge:** Recognize and mention something important or positive from the other person's perspective.
"I know we are in a hurry to get there and..."
- D Describe:** Describe the behavior that is affecting you. Describe each behavior as if you were a video camera: as neutrally as possible with no value-laden words.
"When the car is going 15 kmh over the speed limit..."
- E Express:** Using "I" statements, express how you feel when the behavior occurs
"I get really nervous and stressed."
- S Specify:** Specify the behavior you would like to see instead. Go into as much detail as you feel is appropriate and express this in positive terms: what you would like rather than what you wouldn't like.
"if you could please drive the speed limit..."
- C Consequence:** State the consequences that would result if the proposed new behavior was to happen: again, try to state this in positive terms. ex: "Then we can have a good roommate relationship." or "Then I would be happy inviting you out with my friends."
"then I can do a better job navigating and reading the map."

Remember that not every situation calls for exactly the same steps or the same order. There is no "cookie cutter" approach. This guide just gives you an example of the points you need to think about when being assertive with someone.

Experiment with it and make it your own!

MINI SCRIPT

Listening:

Sounds like you're feeling _____. So what I hear you saying is _____
(EMPATHY)

_____. So, _____?
(PARAPHRASE) (OPEN-ENDED QUESTION)
Who/what/where/when/why/how

Asserting:

I know that _____. And, when I see/hear/notice
(ACKNOWLEDGE)

_____ I feel _____. I would appreciate/prefer
(DESCRIBE) (EXPRESS)

If you/we could please _____ and then _____.
(SPECIFY) (CONSEQUENCE)

Listening:

Sounds like you're feeling _____. So what I hear you saying is _____
(EMPATHY)

_____. So, _____?
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HAVING A COLLABORATIVE CONVERSATION: STEP BY STEP

Step 1: Set the tone for success

- Get agreement from the other person to have a conversation
- Let them know that what they want matters to you!
- Assure them that talking with you will only be used for creating solutions, not for picking a fight or arguing
- Figure out what are the issues (topics) to talk about.
- We're only going to talk about one topic at a time, so, pick one!

Then ...

Step 2: Listen, Listen, Listen... listening first encourages him/her to listen to you!

Don't look for solutions yet!!!

- Empathize –identify his/her feelings (acknowledge)
- Paraphrase –say back to him/her what he/she said to you in your own words (acknowledge and clarify)
- Open Ended Questions –who, what, where, when, how, *why*, tell me more about

Step 3: Assert –Now it's your turn!

Still no solutions yet!!

- Acknowledge something positive about the situation
- Describe the situation neutrally
- Express your feelings –use an I statement
- Specify what you want from the other person
- Consequence –the positive consequence for him/her if they do what you ask

This is to let the other person know your interests

Step 4: Brainstorm –Now solutions!

- use both your interests to work together to come up with a solution that works for everyone

- wait until you have at least a few ideas before you decide if they are “good” or “bad” –it encourages creativity