

## 7: FOUR STYLES OF COMMUNICATION

### Discussion Questions:

1. What is effective communication?
2. What are the five basic levels of communication?
3. What are non-verbal cues?
4. What are the four styles of communication and which is the most effective?
5. What are "You Messages?"
6. What are the five parts of an effective "I Message?"
7. What is validation and how do we do it?
8. What are additional communication rules and tools?

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"WISE MEN TALK BECAUSE THEY HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY;  
FOOLS, BECAUSE THEY HAVE TO SAY SOMETHING."

~ PLATO

### 1. What is effective communication?

- A. Communication is \_\_\_\_\_ between human beings.
- B. Communication is both a \_\_\_\_\_ and a \_\_\_\_\_ process.
- C. It is important to note that whether we are actively communicating or saying nothing at all, we are \_\_\_\_\_ communicating.

### 2. What are the five basic levels of communication?

- A. There are many different levels to communication based upon who you are speaking to and for what purpose. The first level is known as the \_\_\_\_\_. As its name suggests, this level denotes a very surface or casual level of communication.
- B. The second level is based around \_\_\_\_\_. In this level of exchange individuals are both giving and receiving information based solely on the data that needs to be communicated.

- C. A third level of communication includes the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of the individual. Here, besides sharing information or data, individuals are willing to share their perceptions, feelings, judgments and beliefs about the topic being discussed. This is a deeper level than the other three levels of communication already discussed.
- D. The deepest and more profound type of communication is known as \_\_\_\_\_. At this level of communication, individuals are approaching \_\_\_\_\_ and honesty with their communications. Absolute empathy is possible at this level of communication and there is nothing that is being hidden or kept from view.
- E. To engage in the highest levels of communication, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ are of critical importance. Trust is the essence of important communication. Without trust, there is little chance that a conversation or dialogue will ever move beyond the simple transactional styles of communication. The deeper the trust you have with another individual or group, the more willing you will be to self-disclose and take the risk to enter a deeper level of communication.
- F. When increasing your levels of self-disclosure, it is important to know that there are both \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ that come from entering into the deeper relationship. The benefits of self-disclosure is that you develop a keener awareness of self, you have an improved ability to deal with problems, you improve your communication and effectiveness, you develop closer and more meaningful relationships, and you become a \_\_\_\_\_ for engaging in these most powerful types of relationships.

### 3. What is non-verbal communication?

- A. Non-verbal communication comes in many \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
- B. It can be said that we are communicating all of the time whether we are speaking or not. In fact, it has been discovered through research that between \_\_\_\_\_ of our communications come through the non-verbal channels of communication.

- C. Non-verbal communications are used to both \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ verbal communication. As such, non-verbal communication is an important area of study for an aspiring leader.
- D. There are many channels of non-verbal communication. One is the nature of your \_\_\_\_\_. The nature of one's physical appearance tells much about how that individual wishes to be perceived. And while we should not always judge a book by its cover, appearances do communicate volumes about an individual's intent.
- E. Another key non-verbal medium is \_\_\_\_\_. Facial expressions tell us much about what a person perceives. It is interesting to note that while some facial expressions are culturally specific, many of them are universal in nature. Such emotions as happiness, sadness, anger, surprise, fear, and disgust are universal in nature and are often expressed by the face in a similar fashion.
- F. \_\_\_\_\_ is another non-verbal communication tool. Eyes convey much meaning in how we communicate. In general we rarely use eye contact for extended periods of time. Extended eye contact can be a sign of attraction or hatred.
- G. It is important to be able to read these cues. It should be noted that women often make more \_\_\_\_\_ than men, that listeners make more contact than speakers, and that different cultures use eye contact differently. Like other forms of communication, it is important that you understand the cultural nuances of any non-verbal type of behavior.
- H. Body language is another type of non-verbal communication. Body language is known as a \_\_\_\_\_. Like the eyes, body language can tell you much about an intended message. While a slumped posture may denote low spirits, an erect posture usually indicates high spirits. Leaning forward often represents interest, while leaning away may mean a disinterested person. Crossing arms can (not always) represent defensiveness while uncrossed arms can (not always) represent a willingness to listen. Needless to say that there are \_\_\_\_\_ that give clues to an actual intended message.

Your goal as a leader is to seek out and pay attention to these signals and learn about their meanings. In the pursuit of this knowledge, it is often enough to notice these gestures, acknowledge them—even ask the person you are speaking with what the meaning is. This will often lead you to a more aware and complete communication style as you seek trust from those with whom you communicate.

- \_\_\_\_\_ is another type of non-verbal communication device. Proximity relates to the distance you are away from the person you are speaking with. \_\_\_\_\_ represents a more intimate conversation while \_\_\_\_\_ represents the normal personal space the average person likes between people. More formal transactions take place between \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ apart represents a more public space between individuals. Like the other non-verbal cues mentioned, much is being communicated by the space between you and those you communicate with. It is also important to remember that proximity, like all other non-verbal cues, depend upon the culture and gender of the person you are speaking with.
- In summary of non-verbal cues, it is important to remember that it is difficult to \_\_\_\_\_. As such, it is important you make the study of non-verbal communication an important part of your leadership training.

(adapted from Fritz, S., Brown, W., Lunde, J., & Banset, E. Interpersonal Skills for Leaders. 2005. Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, NJ.)

## Word-mapping of the Four Styles of Communication

### **Aggressive**

insisting, dominating, pushy, rude, overbearing, domineering, overpowering, violent, loud, destructive, hostile, superior, bossy, mean, thoughtless, threatening, explosive, "right," ridiculing, contemptuous, belittling, inconsiderate, "preachy," harsh, punishing, invading, interrupting

### **Passive**

self-pitying, victim, apologetic, self-punishing, "door mat," injured, avoiding, giving in, giving up, withdrawn, unresponsive, sacrificing, acquiescing, inhibited, unexpressive, no eye contact, retreating, ignoring, "sweet," crying, helpless, anxious, humiliated, insecure, timid, self denying, martyred

### **Passive/Aggressive**

grudge carrying, resentful, spiteful, dishonest, bitter, gossipy, malicious, revengeful, unaware, manipulative, double messages, indignant, cynical, two-faced, indirect, phony, confusing, confused, sarcastic, sulky, uneasy, fearful, anxious, late, insulted, devious, condescending

### **Assertive**

clear, direct, aware, spontaneous, energized, powerful, moving, real, honest, responsible for self, open, choosing, appropriate, negotiating, listening, confident, centered, well-bodied, expressive, coping, flexible, confronting, vital, in control of self, considering, competent, relaxed

4. **What are the four styles of communication and which is the most effective?**
- A. There are four basic types of communication. The first is known as aggressive communication. Aggressive communication aims to \_\_\_\_\_, or take advantage of another. Passive communication aims to allow others to invade, take advantage, and control, with the \_\_\_\_\_. A third type of communication is known as passive/aggressive. With this communication style, individuals aim to \_\_\_\_\_ by direct and dishonest messages. The last form of communication is assertive. Assertive communication aims to express thoughts, feelings, and beliefs openly, honestly, directly and appropriately from both parties.
5. **What are "You Messages?"**
- A. When communicating with people, there are certain practices that can help you become a more effective leader. One such practice differentiates between "You Messages" and "I Messages."

B. "You Messages" lie at the heart of \_\_\_\_\_. "You Messages" seek to accuse, control, and attack others. Such examples of this may include the following comments: "Why are you always late?" "Why did you spill the milk?" "You agree with me don't you?" Or "You really don't believe what you are saying, do you?"

**6. What are five parts of an effective "I Message?"**

A. To combat this type of communication it is important that you are able to change your communication into the "I Message" format. This includes five steps. The first is to explain how you "\_\_\_\_\_" about an individual(s) behavior or performance. The second step is to explain what you feel "\_\_\_\_\_" do a particular thing. The third component is to explain your "\_\_\_\_\_" giving the reason behind your thoughts and feelings. The next step is to ask the individuals to explain \_\_\_\_\_ about the situation, then finally to discuss how all of you can \_\_\_\_\_ to solve the problem. When putting it all together, the communication looks something like this:

***The Antidote: The Five Stage "I Message" Format***

- Step 1: I feel \_\_\_\_\_
- Step 2: + when you \_\_\_\_\_
- Step 3: + because \_\_\_\_\_
- Step 4: How do you feel about it? AND
- Step 5: What can we do to solve it?

**EXAMPLES**

- "I feel distracted, concerned and annoyed when you are late getting to work, because the office appears unprofessional to our customers and it makes more work for others."
- "I feel discouraged and sad when the counter is left so messy after snack time because it makes more work for me."
- "When the counter isn't clean after snack time, I feel very hurt and annoyed because it makes more work for me."
- "I feel discouraged and sad and used when the counter is left so messy after snack time because it makes more work for me. I'd like to know your side and your reasons for this problem and what you suggest be done to correct it."
- "I feel distracted, worried and annoyed when you are late getting to work, because the office appears unprofessional to our customers and it makes more work for others. I'd like to know your side and your reasons for this problem and what you suggest be done to correct it."

*Always respect the agency and choice of both.*

**7. What is validation and how do we use it?**

- A. To validate somebody is the act, process, or instance of confirming or corroborating the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of another person.
- B. Validating somebody means to \_\_\_\_\_ and understand another person's point of view without having to change it.
- C. In addition to empathetically listening, it is also important to practice \_\_\_\_\_. When actively listening, you are able to repeat back to the individual what he, she, or they are saying to their satisfaction. This communicates your intention to hear and understand completely the message being conveyed to you.
- D. When validating an individual or a group, there are several responses that can be used. These include the following responses:
- I'll bet that's hard.
  - That must be frustrating.
  - I think I might have felt the same way.
  - What a difficult position to be in.
  - What a good way to handle that situation.
  - Oh, no! I know how much that meant to you.
  - That's got to be a real challenge.
  - I'll bet you miss her.
  - What an awkward situation to be in.
  - I'm so sorry that happened to you.
- E. In addition to validating responses, several validating questions should also be considered. These include:
- How did you feel about that?
  - What did you do?
  - What would you like to do?
  - What do you think caused the problem?
  - Are there other options?
  - What do you think the outcome will be?
  - What would you like me to do?
  - Would it help if I (name something you can do)?

- F. Keep in mind that when you communicate with people that they may not always remember what you said, but they will always remember \_\_\_\_\_. Therefore, make sure you communicate with both your mind and your heart so that the individuals feel validated through your communications

**8. What are additional communication tools and rules?**

- A. There are many communication rules and tools that one can use to \_\_\_\_\_ personal and professional relationships?
- B. First, it is important that you avoid \_\_\_\_\_. Second, it is important that you separate the person from the problem. Avoid statement such as "my problem with you is \_\_\_\_\_." Instead, say "my problem involves my perception of your performance on \_\_\_\_\_." Third, stay away from \_\_\_\_\_, as there are always shades of gray with any problem. And fourth, stay away from making \_\_\_\_\_ of people, especially with such limited data.
- C. Remember to cater to an individual's \_\_\_\_\_. While you may be trying to motivate somebody to complete a project, try to help the individual recognize the value the project brings to him or her, instead of what it is doing for you. (Example: "I know I have asked you to help with the park project, but this project will also count for your community service hours.")
- D. Learn to \_\_\_\_\_ with those you communicate with. While somebody may be making a request of you, make sure that you understand what you are willing and able to do. (Example: "I can promise only two hours on Tuesday to assist you in your homework project. We'll need to keep my involvement within that parameter.")
- E. Set \_\_\_\_\_. When communicating your intentions with others, make sure they understand the consequences of their actions if they go beyond their limits. (Example: "If we can't get your grades up by Christmas, which I think we can, you'll have to quit your after-school job, which means you won't be able to afford your part of the car insurance and will lose your driving privileges for a while.")



- F. Try using “\_\_\_\_\_” instead of “\_\_\_\_\_” in a conversation, this makes the communication process move forward much more smoothly. (Example: "You've really been doing a great job in the office and now I want to help you do even better in the area of telephone skills.")

“NOTHING IN LIFE IS MORE IMPORTANT  
THAN THE ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY.”  
~ **Former President Gerald R. Ford**