Effective Communication Strategies

Presented to
The Lakewood Leadership Academy

"There are times when we are all the same and there are times when we are all different. There is always room for us to listen and judge, disagree and blame, just as there is always room for us to listen and learn, take in other points of view and empathize. Understanding is a choice."

Workshop Facilitator
Forrest L. Story
Public Sector Excellence
publicsectorexcellence@gmail.com
publicsector-excellence.com
(562) 997-3901
Effective Communication Strategies

Agenda

Perspective: Leaders pack a wallop. They set the tone and atmosphere for the workplace. Their impact is huge in influencing employees to choose either joy or despair to describe the workday. How they communicate is at the core in the wallop they pack. It is also at the core in the relationships they build and the trust they engender from those relationships - either in a moment or over time.

Objective: In this workshop we are going to focus on four of the most common forms of communication and their influence in practicing leadership at all levels.

1. Written Communication: (letters, memos, notes, emails, and texts).

2. Oral Communication: (presentations, one-on-one meetings, telephones, and virtual calls).


4. Active Listening: (Receiving information and putting your response on hold).

"The art of communication is the language of leadership."
For Openers

Study the following collection of thirty words. Having looked them all over, pick the fifteen you like the best. Indicate your selection by circling or underlining each of the fifteen. The words are numbered for reference purposes only. You may pick as many words as you like from either column, as long as you pick a total of fifteen, no more and no less. There is no "trick" to this exercise; it's just a matter of personal preference. Do not ask for further instructions.

1. oversight
2. careless
3. enthusiasm
4. crisis
5. confidence
6. flat
7. tolerable
8. service
9. dependable
10. energy
11. stagnant
12. faith
13. imagination
14. humor
15. meager
16. worry
17. practical
18. timid
19. approval
20. apology
21. harp
22. decline
23. punctual
24. loyalty
25. permanent
26. hazy
27. vigor
28. ability
29. sketchy
30. alibi

"Keep your audience in mind."

Public Sector Excellence
Most people like these words:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ability</th>
<th>dependable</th>
<th>helpful</th>
<th>popularity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>abundant</td>
<td>deserving</td>
<td>honesty</td>
<td>practical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>achieve</td>
<td>desirable</td>
<td>honor</td>
<td>praiseworthy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>active</td>
<td>determined</td>
<td>humor</td>
<td>prestige</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>admirable</td>
<td>distinction</td>
<td>imagination</td>
<td>proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>advance</td>
<td>diversity</td>
<td>improvement</td>
<td>progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>advantage</td>
<td>ease</td>
<td>industry</td>
<td>prominent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ambition</td>
<td>economy</td>
<td>ingenuity</td>
<td>propriety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>appreciate</td>
<td>effective</td>
<td>initiative</td>
<td>punctual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>approval</td>
<td>efficient</td>
<td>integrity</td>
<td>reasonable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aspire</td>
<td>energy</td>
<td>intelligence</td>
<td>recognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attainment</td>
<td>enhance</td>
<td>judgment</td>
<td>recommend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>authoritative</td>
<td>enthusiasm</td>
<td>justice</td>
<td>reliable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>benefit</td>
<td>equality</td>
<td>kind</td>
<td>satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>capable</td>
<td>excellence</td>
<td>lasting</td>
<td>service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cheer</td>
<td>exceptional</td>
<td>liberal</td>
<td>simplicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>comfort</td>
<td>exclusive</td>
<td>life</td>
<td>sincerity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>commendable</td>
<td>expedite</td>
<td>loyalty</td>
<td>substantial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>commendation</td>
<td>faith</td>
<td>majority</td>
<td>success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>comprehensive</td>
<td>fidelity</td>
<td>merit</td>
<td>superior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>concentration</td>
<td>fitting</td>
<td>meritorious</td>
<td>thorough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>confidence</td>
<td>genuine</td>
<td>notable</td>
<td>thrift</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conscientious</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>opportunity</td>
<td>truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cooperation</td>
<td>grateful</td>
<td>perfection</td>
<td>useful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>courage</td>
<td>guarantee</td>
<td>permanent</td>
<td>valuable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>courtesy</td>
<td>handsome</td>
<td>perseverance</td>
<td>vigor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Most people dislike these words:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>abandoned</th>
<th>evict</th>
<th>meager</th>
<th>standstill</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>abuse</td>
<td>exaggerate</td>
<td>mediocre</td>
<td>straggling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>affected</td>
<td>fail</td>
<td>misfortune</td>
<td>stunted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>alibi</td>
<td>failure</td>
<td>muddle</td>
<td>superficial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>allege</td>
<td>fault</td>
<td>neglect</td>
<td>tamper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>apology</td>
<td>fear</td>
<td>negligence</td>
<td>tardy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bankrupt</td>
<td>flagrant</td>
<td>obstinate</td>
<td>timid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beware</td>
<td>flat</td>
<td>odds and ends</td>
<td>tolerable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>biased</td>
<td>flimsy</td>
<td>opinionated</td>
<td>unfair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>blame</td>
<td>fraud</td>
<td>oversight</td>
<td>unfortunate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>calamity</td>
<td>gloss over</td>
<td>plausible</td>
<td>unsuccessful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>careless</td>
<td>gratuitous</td>
<td>precipitate</td>
<td>untimely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cheap</td>
<td>hardship</td>
<td>prejudiced</td>
<td>verbiage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>collapse</td>
<td>harp</td>
<td>premature</td>
<td>waste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>collusion</td>
<td>hazy</td>
<td>pretentious</td>
<td>weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>commonplace</td>
<td>ignorant</td>
<td>retrench</td>
<td>worry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>complaint</td>
<td>illiterate</td>
<td>rude</td>
<td>wrong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>crisis</td>
<td>imitation</td>
<td>ruin</td>
<td>crooked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>immature</td>
<td>shirk</td>
<td>cut-and-dried</td>
<td>implicate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shrink</td>
<td>deadlock</td>
<td>impossible</td>
<td>sketchy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>decline</td>
<td>improvident</td>
<td>slack</td>
<td>desert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>insolvent</td>
<td>smattering</td>
<td>disaster</td>
<td>in vain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>split hairs</td>
<td>discredit</td>
<td>liable</td>
<td>squander</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dispute</td>
<td>long-winded</td>
<td>stagnant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Written Communication
Some Thoughts for Starters
Objectives of Business Writing

1. ______________________________________________________
2. ______________________________________________________
3. ______________________________________________________

A Good Opening Sentence
Should Do At Least Four Things

1. ______________________________________________________
2. ______________________________________________________
3. ______________________________________________________
4. ______________________________________________________

A Good Closing Sentence
Should Do At Least Four Things

1. ______________________________________________________
2. ______________________________________________________
3. ______________________________________________________
4. ______________________________________________________

"Get your audience involved."

Public Sector Excellence
Short Words vs. Long Ones

Longer words sound impressive but sometimes a shorter word will do. Think of a shorter word (a synonym) to replace the longer one. A synonym is another word that means the same thing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Short Word</th>
<th>Long Word</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>delinquent</td>
<td>utilize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>enlargement</td>
<td>individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>expire</td>
<td>beverage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>facility</td>
<td>consume</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>acquiesce</td>
<td>domicile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>comprehend</td>
<td>prevaricate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inquire</td>
<td>remuneration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>terminate</td>
<td>transpire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inhabit</td>
<td>demonstrate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>expeditious</td>
<td>expenditure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vehicle</td>
<td>cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sufficient</td>
<td>initiate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attempt</td>
<td>purchase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>articulate</td>
<td>relate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>initial</td>
<td>remittance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>depart</td>
<td>remit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>implement</td>
<td>accomplish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>acquire</td>
<td>require</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>supplement</td>
<td>affirmative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>approximate</td>
<td>obsequious</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Elegant Variations**

**Don’t use this** | **Until you consider this**
---|---
**Nouns**
aggregate | total
assistance | help
compensation | pay
discrepancy | difference
modification | change
objective | aim, goal
obligation | debt
utilization | use

**Verbs**
ascertain | find out, learn
contribute | give
construct | build
demonstrate | show
effectuate | carry out
encounter | meet
endeavor | try
facilitate | make easy
forward | send
initiate | begin
occasion | cause
proceed | go
procure | get
purchase | buy
reimburse | pay
terminate | end
transmit | send
utilize | use

**Modifiers**
approximately | about
equivalent | equal
initial | first
optimum | best
presently | now
subsequently | next
This is What "They" Use

Lensear Readability Index

100 Word Sample

Number of complete sentences $\times 3 =
+
Number of one-syllable words = ______

Total = Readability Level

----------------------------------------------------------

History Lesson: When did Charles II become King of England?

Answer: _________

_____ words per sentence, _________ one syllable.

"I'm sorry this letter is so long. I didn't have time to write a short one."
# Heavy Connectors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Don’t Use This</th>
<th>Until You Consider This</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At a later date</td>
<td>later</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At this point in time</td>
<td>now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The reason is due to the fact that</td>
<td>because</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For the purpose of</td>
<td>to, for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the normal course of our procedure</td>
<td>usually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Despite the fact that</td>
<td>though, although</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In addition to</td>
<td>also</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inasmuch as</td>
<td>since</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In order to</td>
<td>so</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a number of cases</td>
<td>some, many, often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the event that</td>
<td>if</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the majority of instances</td>
<td>most</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the neighborhood of</td>
<td>about</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the very near future</td>
<td>soon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In regard to, with reference to</td>
<td>about</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the time of</td>
<td>during</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of the order of magnitude of</td>
<td>about</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On the grounds that</td>
<td>because</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On the occasion of</td>
<td>when, on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are not in a position to</td>
<td>we cannot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under date of</td>
<td>on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will you be kind enough to</td>
<td>please</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Without further delay</td>
<td>now, immediately (or give date)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Meaningless Phrases

I have worked here for a period of two years.
We arrived at a consensus of opinion.
A study of past history tells us.

## Doublets

Thank you for your polite and courteous request.
I hope and trust you will give this matter your thought and consideration.
We find this to be agreeable and satisfactory.
That’s exactly right.

## Meaningless or Redundant Modifiers

Let’s start with the basic fundamentals. These two things are exactly identical and that can result in an acute crisis. The real danger is that by not applying the acid test we could bring about a terrible disaster. Wouldn’t that be an unexpected surprise!
Some More Meaningless and Redundant Modifiers

actual experience and etc. ask the question attached hereto at some later date blend/join/merge/mix together circle around close proximity/scrutiny collect/combine together completely filled consequent results continue on plan ahead/for the reason is because recur/repeat again final conclusion first and foremost following after free gratis foreign imports goals and objectives group meeting large/small in size mutual cooperation new innovation one and the same cooperate together enclosed herewith estimated to be about few in numbers

"Don't use 10 words when one will do."
Writing Clearly

Business writing is speaking in print. The reader doesn't want high-toned stuff; she or he wants information. There are two points to remember.

1. **Forget style** - The best way to create style in writing is to stop worrying about it and concentrate on your subject matter. Focus on what you are saying, not how you are saying it.

2. **Trim the fat** - Some writers use words as fillers. Ask yourself: Which words contribute to the meaning of the sentence and which are merely fillers? Which words make the sentence go and which seem dead and useless?

   *Here are some wordy sentences. Rewrite them so they communicate the idea as simply and concisely as possible.*

1. There was unanimity about the choice of Paul Smith for the position of secretary.

2. I am particularly desirous of becoming associated with an institution such as yours.

3. I would prefer to find again a situation where I would be assigned the challenge and responsibility of regional sales representative.

4. Whereas the Widget has virtually stopped functioning, it has ceased to be an effective piece of machinery.

5. Enclosed please find my résumé that indicates the full range of my skills and capabilities.

6. I'm looking forward to meeting with you and discussing our problems to our mutual advantage.

7. If I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

8. Pursuant to our telephone conversation of this morning, I return herewith my Widget which no longer functions.

9. Is it possible to meet with you at your earliest convenience concerning the matter of the new position in the accounting department?

   *There is a quote you may have heard:*
   "Keep your audience in mind."

---

Public Sector Excellence
The Diluted Verb

**TAKE, MAKE, GIVE, HAVE, HOLD** and **BE** are six weak verbs which often steal the place of stronger, livelier verbs. Think how much better (and shorter!) the following sentences would be if the lively verbs were not diluted.

1. When we held the meeting the division chief made the decision that Mr. Smith should take action on the case at once.

2. The rapid growth in manufacturing had a tendency to draw workers from rural areas to cities.

3. The City Attorney made the reply that the claimant, rather than his representative, should make an appearance at the hearing to file his answers to the charges.

4. If the requested transfer to another office is a promotion, the employee should first make application and take any examinations necessary to qualify for the position.

5. We may be of assistance to you after you make the precise determination of your needs.

6. We discussed both the time and the manpower needed to perform an audit on the particular department.

7. The workman has put the equipment to use in bending wire.

8. Analysis resulted in the identification of a better quality of land use zoning plan.

Here are a few common phrases in which the strong verb is diluted. Note how verbs other than the six mentioned above are sometimes used to dilute the strong verb.

- give consideration to ......................... consider
- make an inquiry regarding ......................... inquire
- were in hopes that .............................. hoped
- comes into conflict with ........................ conflicts
- put in an appearance .............................. appeared
- was the recipient of ................................. received
- extended an invitation ............................ invited
- was in favor of .................................. favored
- said in an announcement ........................ announced
- are in agreement ................................. agree
- am in receipt of .................................... received
- make an inspection ............................... inspect
What About Email?
13 Rules to Keep It Professional and Build Good Will

Email can be a two-edged sword:
A major convenience or a ceaseless distraction.”

1. Include a clear, direct subject line. Make it specific.

2. Don’t be sloppy in an attempt to be friendly.
   “Hey dude, what’s happening?”


4. Beware of “reply all.” Think twice before hitting it.

5. Keep your message short and get to the point.
   “I’m sorry this email is so long. I didn’t have time to write a shorter one.”

6. As a general rule, respond to emails as soon as you’re realistically able to. You don’t want to leave people hanging.

7. Watch your tone.

8. Pick up the phone. Delicate messages are not appropriate to be discussed via email. Discuss only public matters through email.

9. Don’t email angry. Use exclamation points sparingly.

10. Avoid using shortcuts to real words, emoticons, jargon, or slang.
   (e.g. 4U; Gr8)


12. Include a signature block. Provide the reader with some information about you.

13. Don’t underestimate your impact. Email impressions are powerful.

"Consider the best method to deliver your message."
Business Glossary

Definitions

Program -- Assignment which can't be completed by a phone call.
Implement a Program -- Rationale for hiring more staff.
Ongoing Program -- Something which couldn't be done right the first time
   OR something we found enjoyable.

Expedite -- to mix confusion with commotion.
Expeditor -- one who expedites.
Efficiency Expert -- one who trains expeditors.

Conference -- group of people who individually do nothing but who can meet collectively
   and agree that nothing can be done.
Plagiarism - copying from one book.
Research -- copying from two books.

Reliable Source -- the guy you just met.
Informed Source -- the guy who told the guy you just met.
Unimpeachable Source -- the guy who started the story.

Translations

Under Consideration -- we never heard of it.
Under Active Consideration -- we're looking in the files for it.

We're making a survey -- give us some time to think of an answer.
Please note and initial -- let's spread the responsibility for this one.
See me -- come over to my office, I'm lonesome.
Let's get together on this -- I hope you're not as confused as I am.

We will advise in due course -- If we figure it out, we'll let you know.
Please give us the benefit of your present thinking -- We'll listen to what you have to say,
   as long as it doesn't interfere with what we already decided to do.
Your idea is taken under advisement -- What you had to say did interfere with what we
   already decided to do.

Linguistic Inflation

Committees become task forces.
Schedules become time frames.
Oral, Non-Verbal Communication & Listening

Ten Strategies for Effective Communication

1. Build Your Self-Awareness

2. Tell the Truth: Be Honest and Compassionate

3. Take Responsibility for Your Communication

4. Be Open & Listen: Create Mutual Understanding

5. Be Mindful of Your Body Language & Tone

6. Build Good Will: Use the Language of Courtesy

7. Don't Blame.

8. Be Data Driven - Work with Facts

9. Build a Community (Connection) With Your Language

10. Lock up Your Ego - Give Up Your Need to be Right & Choose Through Your Communication to be:
    "The Be a Better Part of Someone's Day."

"Listening engages your audience. Get them involved."
Co-Workers

You have been in the division for six months. You get along well with your co-workers and really do like your job. You feel you do your job well. However, you are getting a little irritated with noise distractions in the work area. Because you and most of your peers work in an open environment (cubicles instead of floor to ceiling walled offices) it is easy to hear others when they are in conferences or on the phone.

Sometimes people will talk loudly (sometimes yell) to someone in another cubicle. There are times when they stand up and talk right across your cubicle. It’s beginning to irritate you. One other co-worker is bothered by the same behavior and has mentioned this to you. You like the people you work with and most of them are friendly. You don’t want to “rock the boat” but you would like people to show some respect for others instead of yelling or talking loudly.

Last week the person in the cubicle next to yours stood and yelled something to a co-worker on the other side of your cubicle. You looked up with a “glare” and said “I wish you wouldn’t talk so loudly. It bothers me when I am working.” Your co-worker just “glared” back and sat down. Since then the co-worker has been noticeably “cool” towards you. You have decided to take responsibility and try to resolve the conflict with your co-worker. You also want to resolve the noise issue and you are certain you will need your supervisor’s help on that one.

1. Could the situation (glaring back and forth) been avoided?
2. What do you do to resolve the conflict with your co-worker?
3. What are your objectives?
4. How will you handle anger and emotion if it occurs?
5. How will you involve your co-worker in the discussion?
6. What concerns do you have?
7. What concerns might your co-worker have?
8. Do you need to involve others (i.e. Your supervisor).

"Lack of communication ruins everything because of instead knowing how the other person is feeling, we just assume."
Communicating Assertively and Directly
"A Baker's Dozen"

1. **Don't become difficult yourself.** *Stay assertive & GIVE UP YOUR NEED TO BE RIGHT.*

2. Let the person vent if they are emotional or upset.

3. Offer no resistance. Don't get into an argument. Try "fogging."

4. Be empathetic. You don't have to agree with a person's feelings, but you do have to try and understand those feelings.

5. Offer you help if appropriate. Their complaint or concern may be valid.

6. When being manipulated, be an:

   \[
   S/F \\
   O \\
   B
   \]

7. Don't use the word "should." *Stay assertive.* Focus on the future. Don't dwell on the past.

8. Use "3 / 2 / 1" (For handling internal conflicts)

   \[
   3 \\
   2 \\
   1
   \]

9. Get help if you are in over your head.

10. Follow through on your promises to the person. It will make them less difficult to deal with the next time around.

11. Keep your sense of humor. The real jerks you have to deal with would have to start at "zero" to get their sense of humor back.

12. Don't forget you are human. If you "stick your foot in your mouth," sincerely apologize and start over.

13. After you have successfully worked with a difficult person, congratulate yourself and tell a colleague how you did.
Strategies for Effective & Authentic Communication

Strategy 1. Self-Awareness

Self-awareness is the skill of being aware of and understanding our emotions as they occur and as they evolve. If we don't know ourselves and what we're feeling, how can we possibly know or understand someone else and how they feel. Self-awareness helps us to be confident in what we have to offer, whether it is personally or professionally.

Emotional Awareness Exercise
"What Pushes Your Buttons?"

1. Happy
2. Unhappy
3. Embarrassed
4. Anxious/Anxiety
5. Angry
6. Upset
7. Sad
8. Frustrated

"My life is in the hands of any fool who makes me lose my temper."
Strategy 2: Tell the Truth: Be Honest & Compassionate

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

Strategy 3: Be Responsible for Your Communication

- Not only for what you say, but also ensuring you have been fully understood.
- Take ownership of your message and be responsible for the fall-out or negative response.
- Be present when communicating. This means to listen and ask for feedback. Stay focused and ask questions when (not if) your mind wanders or drifts to another thought.
- Listen until others have no more to say.
- Paraphrase without judgement.
- Interrupt politely.
- Be relevant.
- Be concise.
- Be humble and be real.

*How can you see the endless possibilities surrounding you at this time?*

*By stopping all judgement.*

- *Roxanna Jones*
Strategy 4: Be Open & Listen: Create Mutual Understanding

Active Listening - What it Looks & Sounds Like
(Adapted from "Mind Tools" from Emerald Works

Pay attention.
- Eye contact. Look at the speaker directly.
- Put aside distracting thoughts.
- Don't mentally prepare a rebuttal.
- Avoid being distracted by environmental factors
  (i.e. side conversations, multi-tasking)
- Listen to the speaker's body language.

Show that you're listening
- Encourage the speaker to continue with small verbal comments
  like "I see", "yes" and "uh huh."
- Smile when appropriate.
- Make sure your posture is open and interested.

Provide Feedback
- Reflect & paraphrase. "What I'm hearing is...", "If I understand you correctly..."
- Ask questions to clarify. "What do you mean when you say...?", "Is this what you mean...?"
- Summarize periodically. "This is what I have so far..."

Defer Judgment
- Don't interrupt and allow the speaker to finish.
- Don't interrupt with counter arguments.

Respond Appropriately
- Be candid, open and honest in your response.
- Assert your opinions respectfully.
- Apply the "Golden Rule."

“We should listen as learners and not as judges”
John Perry, Human Productivity Systems
Former Project Manager, Engineer and Physicist: NASA X-15 Project
Listening
The First Rule of Leadership:
Be Ready and Open to Listen

Six Levels of Listening
- Ignoring
- Pretend Listening
- Selective Listening
- Attentive Listening
- Active Listening
- Empathic Listening

Active Listening Techniques
- Maintain eye contact
- Smile
- Don't interrupt
- Nod in acknowledgment
- Repeat important points to check for understanding
- Probe for additional information
- Ask questions if you don't understand or your mind wandered.
- Take notes if necessary.

Empathic listening should be used:
- When we are not sure we understand.
- When we are not sure the other person feels understood.
- When the interaction has a strong emotional component.

What is Empathy?

*The reason why so few people are agreeable in conversations is that each is thinking more about what he intends to say than about what others are saying, and we never listen when we are eager to speak.*

- Francois La Rochefoucauld
Listening

The Second Rule of Leadership:
See the First Rule!

Internals
- Mental distractions
- Self involvement
- Selective attention
- Listening with an agenda

Externals
- Background noise
- Uncomfortable seating
- Visual distractions
- Telephones/texts

The truth is that if we get distracted, we allow it to happen. Our hearts aren’t in the listening mode.

Why We Don’t Hear Others

If you want to listen so you really hear what others say, make sure you’re not a:

- **Mind reader.** You’ll hear little or nothing as you think “What is this person really thinking or feeling?”
- **Rehearser.** Your mental tryouts for “Here’s what I’ll say next” tune out the speaker.
- **Filterer.** Some call this selective listening – hearing only what you want to hear.
- **Dreamer.** Drifting off during a face-to-face conversation can lead to an embarrassing “What did you say?” or “Could you repeat that.”
- **Identifier.** If you refer everything you hear to your experience, you probably didn’t really hear what was said.
- **Comparer.** When you get sidetracked assessing the messenger, you’re sure to miss the message.
- **Derailer.** Changing the subject too quickly tells others you’re not interested in anything they have to say.
- **Sparrer.** You hear what’s said but quickly belittle or discount it. That puts you in the same class as the derailer.
- **Placater.** Agreeing with everything you hear just to be nice or to avoid conflict does not mean you’re a good listener.

“Great minds discuss ideas,
average minds discuss events,
small minds discuss people.”

- Admiral Hyman Rickover – U.S. Navy
When Others Criticize You
“In a Nutshell”

When your team members offer you honest feedback, they’ll watch your reactions to decide if they should continue speaking. Encourage them to help you improve your own performance by following these suggestions “in a nutshell:”

• **Don’t rush to respond.** Listen; don’t explain or justify. Even if you feel the criticism is unwarranted or stems from a misunderstanding, you should listen now and explain later. Defensiveness will stifle future comments. You don’t want to give the impression that you’re more interested in justifying your actions than in understanding what you’re hearing.

• **Ask for specifics.** Encourage team members to give you more information and reactions. Example: “That’s very helpful. Tell me more. What else should I know about that?”

• **Express your honest reaction.** You don’t have to have a ready answer or a quick solution. In fact, it’s OK to say “I’m surprised you said that, but you may have a point” or I’m not sure what to say. I never thought of that, but I will from now on.”

• **Thank them for their comments.** Let your team members know you understand the effort and courage it took to make those comments. Express your appreciation as you plan for future feedback sessions.

"Between stimulus and response, there is a space. In that space lies our freedom and power to chose our response. In our response lies our growth and freedom."

-Victor Frankl
Develop Better Listening Skills

Research indicates that we spend 75% to 80% of our waking hours communicating. Why does it seem to fall apart during conflict?

“No man would listen to you talk if he didn’t know it was his turn next.”

- Edgar Watson Howe

1. Look at the speaker
2. Don’t interrupt
3. Focus on understanding
4. Determine the need at the moment
5. Check your emotions
6. Suspend your judgment
7. Sum up at major intervals
   a. Clarify
   b. Confirm
8. Ask questions for clarity
9. Always make listening your priority
Strategy 5: Be Mindful of Your Body Language & Tone

Read the following gestures, physical positions and facial expressions. Write down what you think each can communicate.

1. Arms crossed.
2. Chin resting in hand.
3. Tapping fingers on table.
4. Pacing.
5. Furrowed brow.
7. Shaking head from side to side.
8. Rolling the eyes.
9. Nodding head up and down.
10. Shrugging shoulders.
11. Sounding argumentative.
12. Not making eye contact.
13. Responding with anger.
15. Trying to communicate while you are upset.
16. Any others you can think of.
Strategy 6: Build Good Will: The Language of Courtesy

Some phrases and words can be irritating to people and may be interpreted as discourteous. Below is a guide to some "basics" in, "The Language of Courtesy."

1. Make "Seems to be," Appears to be," & "Might be," parts of your speech.

   NOT: "You made a mistake here."
   BUT: "There appears to be a mistake here."

   NOT: "This isn't the right form."
   BUT: This doesn't seem to be the right form."

2. Avoid phrases which blame the person or point up their or inadequacy.

   NOT: "You haven't followed my instructions."
   BUT: "It seems my instructions were not clear."

   NOT: "You should have gotten your application in yesterday."
   BUT: "I'm sorry, but the filing deadline has expired."

3. Instead of pointing out errors, use gentle questions to help people find the errors for themselves.

   NOT: "Your final sum in column 6 is wrong."
   BUT: "Could you double-check the final sum in column 6."
   OR (Pointing with a pen or pencil) "Is this right? I can't seem to get the same total."

4. When giving advice, use questions often. They encourage thinking and usually make to advice more acceptable.

   NOT: "If I were you..." OR "My advice to you is..."
   BUT: Have you thought about this...? OR "Could we try...?"
   OR "Would there be a chance that...?"

5. Make a good portion of your statements opinions. Use "I believe," "It seems to me," and "I think."

   NOT: "You're in error."
   BUT: "I believe you're in error."

   NOT: "You're in the wrong office. You should be in Roo, 328."
   BUT: "I don't think this is the office you want. I believe you'll find it in Room 328 which is down the hall two doors, on your left."
Strategy 7: Don't Blame: Shift the Focus to the Future - Problem Solve

- Be informed by the past, not shackled to it.
- No one has a monopoly on the truth. You could be wrong.
- Motivate others by offering/selling "hope."

Strategy 8: Be Data Driven - Work with Facts

- Avoid second guessing and making assumptions about what others are feeling, thinking or meaning.
- "Listen as a learner and not as a judge."
- Be aware of the difference between your subjective opinions and the objective facts.
- Know the difference between quantitative & qualitative analysis, and be honest with others which is which.

Strategy 9. Build a Community (Connection) With Your Language and Through Your Actions

- Show others that you care.
- Show others that you are interested in them and what they have to say and share.
- Be consistent. Your words should match your actions.
- Always endeavor to do what you say.
- Avoid one-way communication. Allow people to feel as if they "belong" in the communication.
- Be teachable.
- Stay humble.
Strategy 10. Remove the Ego - Give Up Your Need to be Right & Choose to be "A Better Part of Someone's Day."

“be no ego”

ego (noun) 1. the self:
2. an inflated sense of self-significance

Imagine a world without it. There would be no...

- Toes to step on
- Feelings to hurt
- Fair shares to grab
- Territory to defend
- Fault to allocate
- Back to watch
- Last words to get
- Ideas to hold back
- Embarrassment to bear
- Battles to win
- Knowledge to prove
- Entitlement to have
- Encouragement to withhold
- Credit to seek
- Grudges to hold
- Jealously to feel
- Revenge to take
- Hidden meanings to construe

How To “be no ego?”

Stay ___________________
Be _____________________
\Listen __________________
Appreciate _______________
Relax ___________________

1. When/where do you think our egos get in the way of communication, teamwork & personal effectiveness?

2. How can we help each other minimize the impact of an ego moment?

Source and Inspiration for this moment in the workshop:
Sam Parker, Inspire Your People: Sparker@InspireYourPeople.com
Five Extra Steps to Sharpen Your Leadership & Communication Skills

1. **Be Approachable.** If your colleagues and friends feel intimidated or worried that you may not respond well, they're less likely to come to you with information.

2. **Be Patient.** Not everyone communicates in the same way. Taking the time to be sure you've understood the other person and communicated clearly can pay dividends.

3. **Be Self-Aware.** It's okay if you're still developing your communication skills, nervous, or having a bad day. It takes time - and practice - to become a skilled communicator.

4. **Check for Understanding.** Don't be afraid to invite feedback or ask questions to ensure everyone's on the same page.

5. **Switch Out the Messenger.** Allow other team members or leaders to develop their communication skills by empowering them to lead discussions and meetings.

*The most basic and powerful way to connect to another person is to listen. Just listen. Perhaps the most important thing we ever give each other is our attention.... A loving silence often has far more power to heal and to connect than the most well-intentioned words.*

- Rachel Naomi Remen, MD
UCSF School of Medicine