

Communication

Summary:

Fundamentals of communication

1. sender encodes message with symbols (usually words)
2. messages passes through a medium
3. receiver decodes the message
4. some media and communication are more “rich” than others
5. receiver must feel sender is: (a) competent, (b) honest
6. body language is communication

Public speaking

1. speak in a clear voice
2. use good body language
3. know your subject well
4. keep your speech simple

Helpful hints: 1. Watch politicians

2. have a theme
3. practice

Interviews

1. dress appropriately
2. have vital information
3. smile and show enthusiasm
4. be honest
5. speak up and look the interviewer eye to eye
6. come prepared

Assertiveness categories

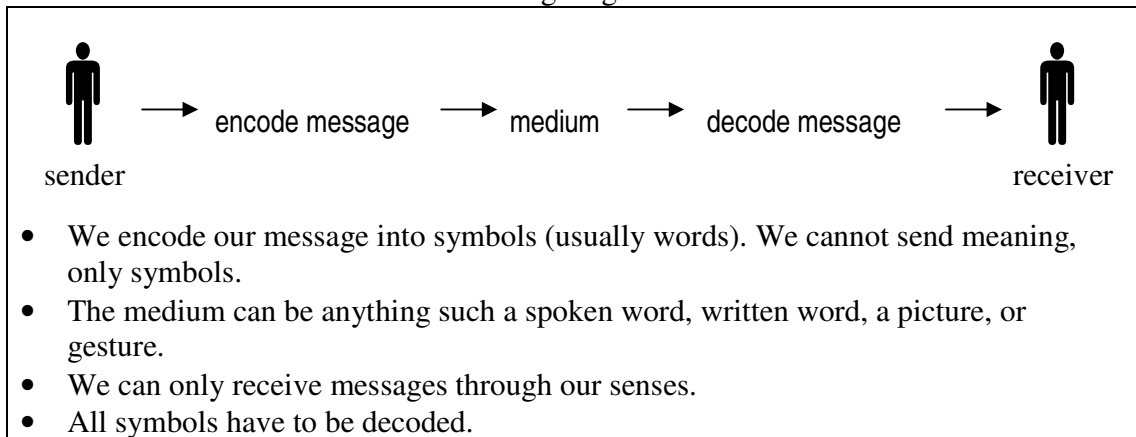
1. refusal assertiveness
2. expressing feelings both positive and negative
3. request assertiveness

tips for being assertive

1. be prepared
2. make eye contact
3. keep an appropriate distance
4. speak clearly
5. timing is important
6. listen to what the other person is saying
7. don't shout or call people names
8. don't try to make the other person feel guilty

There is probably no single topic so important for a leader than communication. All good leaders are good communicators. You cannot be an effective and good leader without being a good communicator.

What is communication? The following diagram shows what communication entails.



If the sender and the receiver are similar (same age, same culture, same language, etc.) then the communication will usually be more effective. For example, when a boy and a girl are very much in love, then communication is easy and usually very effective. On the other hand, if the sender and receiver are different (different age, different culture, different language), then communication will probably be much less effective.

The medium also has an effect on the communication. Some media (plural for medium) are more “rich” than others. For example, face-to-face communication is more effective than talking on a telephone. If the telephone connection is good the communication will be more “rich” than if the connection is poor with lots of static. Television is more “rich” than radio since a picture is added. But the telephone is usually more “rich” because there is feed-back which in not the case with television.

Feelings are usually better communicated orally while some forms of raw data, such as a schedule, are usually communicated better with written words and symbols. Often multiple media are a good idea when sending important communication.

If either the sender or the receiver is under stress, then this will hinder the effectiveness of the communication process. For example, if the sender or receiver is very tired then (s)he may not be thinking clearly. Perhaps you have tried to talk with someone when that person is very upset, angry, tired, very happy, sad, or drunk. Communication then is not so effective.

Obviously in the process of communication, what the sender meant may not be at all what the receiver understands.

**Being a good communicator is a prerequisite
to being a good leader.**

Two things are important for the receiver to feel about the sender. The receiver must feel that the sender has: (a) ability, and (b) honesty. Let’s give some examples. What if tomorrow Nelson Mandela came here to talk about democracy. Would you go to hear him? Yes, of course you would. Why? One because he has the ability or knowledge to talk about democracy. Second, you trust him.

Let’s give some other examples. Your grandmother is someone you trust. But what if she were going to talk about coaching soccer. No one would want to hear her because she

has no ability (knowledge) concerning coaching soccer. She is someone you trust but has no ability.

Let's say some fellow is going to give a talk on how to treat women. However, you happen to know that he has multiple girlfriends and he abuses them. He may possess lots of knowledge about the subject but you would not trust him. Therefore, you might not be so eager to hear him speak. So two things are important for effective communication; you must have the trust of your listeners and know what you are talking about.

Ability and trust are important to the listener.

Body language

We speak with our bodies. We speak with the expressions on our face. We speak when we move our hands. These are examples of body language.

What are some common examples of body language?

1. If we fold our arms across our chest, it may mean we are cold. However, usually it means that we are "closed." If you are speaking to someone and the person folds his/her arms across the chest it would usually mean the person is not agreeing with you.
2. When a person turns away from us or looks away from us, it usually means (s)he is not interested in what we are saying. Likewise, if people lean forward toward us when we speak, it will usually mean they are interested.
3. When speaking, a smile from the listener usually shows attention. A frown or scowl shows disagreement.
4. When speaking, holding the hands together flat with the palms touching in front of the body usually shows confidence.

Public speaking

We can think of communication as both formal and informal. When we are talking to our friends we use informal communication. We may not speak in complete sentences. We may use slang. An example there are many slang words for the word *money* such as "bread," "paper," "clams," and "bucks." Instead of saying "yes" we may say "yeah," "yo," or "yep."

In formal language we usually don't use slang. We tend to use complete sentences. Another example is with writing. If you are writing a letter to your girlfriend/boyfriend then the letter might be informal. However, if you were applying for a job, then the letter would be more formal.

In public speaking we are usually talking about more formal language. Studies have shown that public speaking causes more fear than just about anything else that most people would have to do.

Many are fearful of public speaking.

There are a few simple rules to follow when doing public speaking. They are listed below:

1. *Speak in a clear voice.* No matter what you want to say, no one will hear you if you do not speak clearly so that people can easily hear you.
 - a. Your voice should be loud, clear, and not too fast.
 - b. Move your lips.
 - c. Put your words on your lips, not in the back of your throat.
 - d. If you are speaking in a large room, imagine that you are speaking to the person in the back.

2. *Use good body language.*
 - a. You should look enthusiastic, confident, and relaxed. If you look bored, your audience will not listen to you. If you are tense, your audience will know. If you lack confidence, your audience will know.
 - b. One of the most important things you can do is smile.
 - c. Make sure you make eye contact. Sometimes when we are fearful, we look away from the audience. It is important that we make eye contact with the audience.
 - d. Your feet should be about shoulder length apart. Don't sway back and forth.
 - e. Don't put your hands in your pocket or "wring" your hands while you speak. Don't fidget, slouch, rock back and forth, or play with your hair or clothes.
3. *Know your subject well.* You may look good and sound good, but if you have nothing to say your audience will soon tire of listening to you.
 - a. Preparation is important. If you don't have something to say, then don't try to say something. If you prepare well, you are likely to do well.
 - b. Don't read.
4. *Keep your speech simple.*
 - a. One "rule" of public speaking is not to have more than three points to any speech. If you have more people will not remember. They will tire and stop listening.
 - b. You have heard the saying "the hungry cat catches the most mice." This also applies to public speaking. Stop while the audience is still "hungry" for more.
 - c. Don't try to tell all that you know.
 - d. Use everyday language. Don't try to show off by using "big" words.

You can learn a lot by watching public speakers, especially good ones. Politicians are usually very good public speakers. You don't have to agree with what they are saying to learn from them. Have you been to a public political rally and heard politicians speak? What can you say about them? They can easily be heard. Their message is very simple; anyone can understand it. They appear confident, relaxed, and enthusiastic. They smile and make eye contact. They don't read.

Another thing that politicians have is a theme. This is different from a topic. For example, one can speak on "good food." That is a topic. A theme for this topic might be "you should eat good food daily." When you have a theme and are enthusiastic about it, then usually your audience will be also.

One theme that all politicians have is "I can lead this society better than anyone else." If they don't have this theme, they won't be politicians very long. This is why people follow them. What if a politician got up and said, "Uh... I think, uh, maybe...uh ...that I can ...uh, help you somehow...uh, perhaps..." That person would not get any votes.

A topic is a phases while a theme makes a statement. For example, let's say you want to speak on families. That is your topic. Your topic may even "good families," "maintaining good families," or "characteristics of good families." A theme might be "we should maintain good families," "good families are essential," or "good families should be strengthened."

Look at the following and tell which is a topic and which is a theme

1. Agriculture is essential	7. Churches in transition
2. Education in nation building	8. Politicians should be honest
3. We need good hospitals	9. Orlando Pirates and their fans
4. Corruption much be stopped	10. Challenges of this century
5. African development	11. Husbands and wives
6. Primary school education	12. Marriages need to be strong

The topics are 2, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, and 11. The themes are 1, 3, 4, 8, and 12. Do you notice the difference? The themes make a statement; they are complete sentences.

Another rule is to treat your audience with respect. Don't talk "down" to them like small children. Don't lecture them as though they were stupid.

Below is a checklist for public speaking.

Voice

1. clear voice Yes No

Body language

2. enthusiastic Yes No

3. look confident Yes No

4. look relaxed Yes No

5. smile Yes No

6. eye contact Yes No

7. good use of hands Yes No

Preparation

8. know subject well Yes No

9. well prepared Yes No

10. did you read? Yes No

Delivery

11. simple language Yes No

12. maximum 3 points Yes No

13. kept interest Yes No

14. understandable Yes No

15. show respect Yes No

There is a lot more to speaking than simply doing the above 13 characteristics. However, this is a start. If we don't do the things then we will not be good speakers. These are 13 characteristics to start with. After you have mastered these 13 characteristics, then you can work on other more subtle characteristics.

One thing is important for improving as a good communicator. Communication is a skill, just like playing football. Therefore, you need to practice. If you have fear of speaking in front of many people, then start speaking to a small group of young children. Then gradually increase the size and age of your audience.

You may become a good public speaker by practicing.

Activity:

Have each person give a short speech (two to five minutes). Here are some topics that most people should be able to speak about:

1. why I love my mother (father, favorite teacher, etc.)
2. why people should visit KwaZulu-Natal (Durban, etc.)
3. why democracy is important for South Africa

Interviews

How should you communicate and act for a job interview. Remember, you will never have a second chance for a first impression. The following is a list of things to do, or not do, when going for an interview:

1. Dress appropriately – Generally you should wear the same type of clothing as the job. For example, if you want to be a secretary in an office, then dress like one. Wear smart casual clothing. Don't look like you are going to the beach. If you are looking for a job that interacts with the public, then appearance is important.
2. Have vital information – You should have your ID and other essential documents.
3. Smile and show enthusiasm – Look like you are happy to meet the person(s) doing the interview.
4. Be honest – It is foolish to lie during an interview. You can always turn a “negative” into a “positive.” Some examples follow:
 - a. Let's say you didn't finish school. You can say that you made foolish mistakes but you have learned from them and now you are eager to learn.
 - b. If you have a criminal record, you may mention that you have made mistakes in the past but you are very sorry and since then you have turned your life around.
 - c. If you have no experience for that particular job, then you may tell the interviewer that you are eager to be trained and learn the job correctly.
5. Speak up and look the interviewer eye to eye – You must show some assertiveness. No one wants to hire someone who seems to lack initiative. Don't mumble.
6. Come prepared – You may be asked a few simple questions that are usually asked at interviews. Think through these questions and have good answers ready. They are:
 - a. Why do you want work here?
 - b. How can you help us?
 - c. What are your long range plans?
 - d. What will you do if we don't hire you?

Activity:

Have participants practice doing interviews.

Have participants critique each other's interviews.

Assertiveness

Some people are bullies. Bullies are people who intimidate others. For example, you may have know some in school. They may hit on you or say things to make you angry.

Some people have the opposite problem. They are not assertive enough. While no one likes a bully, it is important to be assertive so that people don't take advantage of you. The good news is that you can be assertive and still be a nice, likable person.

There are three different categories of assertive behavior. It is important to learn these and practice these.

1. refusal assertiveness – This is how to say “no” in the right way at the right time. Sometimes we need to say “no” because we are being taken advantage of, we just don’t want to do it, or it involves something we think is harmful or we are uncomfortable with. For example, a friend may ask you to go drinking with him/her and you don’t want to go. Here is how to do it:
 - State your position – “No, I can’t do that.”
 - Explain your reason – “I have something else to do then.” Or “I just don’t want to do that.” Or “I am uncomfortable doing that.”
 - Express understanding – “I hope you can find someone else to do that.” If the request is dangerous or illegal, there is no need to make understanding statements such as “I hope you find someone else to get drunk with.”

Activity:

Have the participants divide into pairs. One does the asking while the other one does the refusing. You might write these on small pieces of paper so that one will not know what is requested until it is actually asked for. Have participants refuse requests for the following:

1. “Friend, let’s go drinking.”
2. “Friend, I am selling these bottles of perfume. Buy one from me.”
3. “Friend, I need someone to watch my small child while I go for a job interview.”
4. “Friend, I need R50 now. I will pay you back Saturday.”
5. “Friend, I have some stolen clothes. Can I keep them at your house?”
6. “Friend, I am going out with my new boy/girlfriend. I want to wear you shirt.”
7. Boss to worker: “I want you to work Saturday.”
8. Boss to worker: “If you will falsify this record, then I will give you Friday off and still pay you.”
9. Boss to worker: “My daughter is getting married and we are asking everyone to contribute R50 for a gift.”
10. Boss to worker: “I’m selling these biscuits for my church. They are R20 for 50.”
11. Mother: “Watch the children as I have to go to the grocery.”
12. Father: “I need you to work for me all day Saturday repairing the roof.”
13. Boy to Girl: “Let’s go to my house. No one is there and we’ll be alone.”
14. Boy to Girl: “I forgot to bring a condom but this one time won’t matter.”

2. Expressing feelings – This involves telling others how you feel.
 - Express positive feelings – “You did a great job.”
 - Express negative feelings – “I am upset with what you did.”

Notice that in expressing positive feelings we use the word “you” while in expressing negative feelings we use the word “I.” Certain words are appropriate in certain places. For example you might say, “Mom, that is a wonderful meal you cooked for my friends and me; I love you.” It might not be appropriate to say to your boss, “Mr. X, I appreciate your understanding and helping me complete that project; I love you.” It is usually a good idea to express negative feelings, if possible, in private. No one wants to feel put down in front of his/her friends. *Tact* is the ability to say something negative without causing the other person to be upset. For example,

if someone played poorly in the football game, you might say, "I know you tried hard but sometimes things just don't go like we wish." Note: Tact is not lying.

Activity:

Divide the group into pairs. Have them role-play. Express feelings for the following:

1. Someone sang very well.
 2. A close friend sang but not very well.
 3. A good friend gives you a gift that you don't like.
 4. Your boss favors capital punishment and asks your opinion about it.
 5. Your boy/girlfriend's mother cooks you a meal but you don't like it.
 6. Your boy/girlfriend's father says he does not like your clothes.
 7. Your teacher tells you that you are lazy.
 8. An elder tells you that you are in the wrong political party.
 9. Your parent tells you that you have poor taste in music.
 10. Your parent tells you that you sleep too much (or don't get enough sleep).
 11. A friend tells you that you are wrong to not party late every Saturday night.
3. Request assertiveness – This involves getting information, clarification, and asking for something. This may involve several tactics. Let's look at some of them:
- For getting information – "Boss, I'm still confused about how to do this job." "Can you tell me again what to do?"
 - For getting clarification – "Could you repeat how to clean this again?" or (after being given directions to a new place) "So I go two kilometers on this road. Then I turn left at the large tree. Then I go about 200 meters....."
 - For asking for something – "Boss, my sister is getting married in two weeks and I would like to take off Monday. I will work extra this week and next so that my work will not suffer. May I have Monday off?" or "Would you please turn that music down as I am trying to concentrate on this important letter?"

Some tips for being assertive

1. be prepared (make sure you know exactly what you want to say)
2. make eye contact
3. keep an appropriate distance (both too far and too close are not wise)
4. speak clearly
5. timing is important (don't try to reason if either you or the other person are angry)
6. listen to what the other person is saying
7. don't shout or call people names (this will only cause them to resist what you are saying)
8. don't try to make the other person feel guilty (If you don't give me what I want, then you are insensitive/ uncaring/ pig-headed/ wrong/etc.)

Activity: Divide the group into pairs. Have them role-play the following requests:

Information

1. You want to know how to get to a certain place.
2. You need to know what your mother wants you to do for the birthday party.
3. You need to know what your father wants you to do to get the garden clean.
4. You need to know what your boss wants you to do about the lost items.

Clarification

5. Your boss explained how to cut the wire mesh but you still don't understand.
6. Your boss explained how to write the directions but you still don't understand.
7. Your boss explained how to measure the volume but you still don't understand.
8. Your boss explained how to start and stop the machine but you still don't understand.
9. Your boss explained why he can't pay you today but you still don't understand.

Request

10. You need R10 until tomorrow.
11. You need to ask your boss to take off work next Friday.
12. You need to ask to be excused from the birthday party of your friend.
13. You need your boss to write you a letter of reference.