

CLEAR AND EMPOWERING CONVERSATIONS

We all have had those moments – you know, those times in a conversation when the blank look slides across their face and we know that they didn't get our point – or when what comes back to us as a result bears no resemblance to what we asked for.

What would it be like to be able to communicate effectively? What is it that has us be powerful in our communication sometimes, and yet at others fail miserably in sharing our ideas?

We've found that there are four things that are usually missing when a communication fails:

Clarity in the message

Being conscious of the other person's situation(s)

Listening for what will make a difference in moving the conversation forward

Using the Rule of Three

Clarity in the Message:

This is probably the most easily added component of an effective communication, yet it is often the first thing we drop out. Do you plan what you are going to say? Do you practice it? Do you have someone listen to you as you say it so that you can get feedback on the effectiveness of the communication? Each of these practices will have your communication be as clear as possible.

Practices: Write it out! Go ahead and script out your message – determine who you are talking to, what they need to know to move forward, and your intention in communicating. Practicing knowing what you intend to accomplish in the communication.

Being Conscious:

Many times we begin speaking without taking into consideration what is going on in the other person's life. At that moment, for us to be effective in our communication, we need them to be focused on us, rather than on whether the babysitter showed up, their reports are on time, or how mean their mother in law was at dinner last night. Take a moment at the beginning of your communication to be sure you have the full, undivided attention of the person or people you want to communicate to.

Practices: Begin your communication with a question – for example, “Is there anything you need to say or do before we get started?” or simply “Can I have your undivided attention for 5 minutes?”

Listening:

It is amazing how powerful Listening can be! When you are committed to powerful and effective communication, it is vital that you listen for what will move the conversation forward. Listen carefully to what others say, then ask yourself, how can I answer that in a way that moves us forward to my intended result?

Using the Rule of Three

Ask any marketing person, any business school graduate, any master of communication, and they will tell you that it takes three communications for a message to have a chance of being delivered. Therefore the “old” Rule of Three is:

Tell them what you are going to tell them

Tell them what you want them to know

Tell them what you told them.

You have the opportunity in every communication to leave the other person (or people) empowered to action. And that’s the topic for our next article!

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Pt. (2)

Last month we looked at four things that we could add to communication to have it be more effective in producing the results we seek:

Clarity in the message

Being conscious of the other person’s situation(s)

Listening for what will make a difference in moving the conversation forward

Using the Rule of Three

This month we add a couple of powerful strategic tools that will enhance your ability to communicate effectively.

It’s All About Them

To powerfully communicate your ideas or intention, you must be comfortable enough with your topic to be able to set it aside and listen for what will make a difference for the other person. In listening to what the other person has to say, you can hear what will have them inspired into action. Your goal in every conversation could be to have the people you talk to left inspired into action! Remember, it is only action that produces results.

(Quick sidebar: – how many times have you said that you didn’t produce any results? Consider, that as a human being, you are constantly producing results! Your actions, or non-actions, always produce some kind of result. The game is to start looking at the results you do produce, and begin choosing to take, or not take, the actions that caused those results. Then you can actually begin to create the results you want!)

Call To Action

You have the opportunity in every communication to leave the other person (or people) empowered to action. Every conversation is an opportunity for people to see something for themselves, and to see the next right action to take to create that. Identifying that next right action can be the greatest gift you can give to another person. How hard is it to ask someone, “So what could you do to have that?”

Structures for Success

This is the fun part that so many people resist – the accountability portion of successful communication. It’s the follow up piece - you want to leave the conversation with a specific structure in place for the other person to report the results they produce. The structure of accountability is vital to the success of any project – knowing who is going to do what, when. When the report comes in, you then have the opportunity to look at what worked, what didn’t work, and what the next right action could be to produce the desired result. It’s the actions, results, and the flow of the communication that produce success in any endeavor.

And that’s the topic for next month’s article! Producing the Desired Results.

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