*Can We Talk?*

Communication Strategies for Everyone

Introduction -- theory and practice

Communication basics

Encoding ○ Decoding

Words are only part of it

Strategies for listening and speaking

Communication styles

Expression/Direction ○ BEST ○ Birds ○ Animals ○ DISC

What's your style?

When the emotional temperature goes awry -- steering a conversation back from the edge

Green Light ○ Yellow Light ○ Red Light

The Reset Button

Feelings and Needs (NVC)

Other helpful strategies

Gracefully ending a conversation

Saying No

Meeting strategies: form ○ functions ○ points-of-view

Wrap-Up

*Communication basics*

## Communication happens whenever a message travels from one person to another. Each person filters communication differently, based on personal style and experience.

Body language and tone of voice (your own and others’)

Facial expression (positive, neutral, negative)

Body position (open, mixed, closed)

Response (affirmations, nods, hesitation)

Eye contact (engaged, mixed, avoiding)

Movement (calm, fidgeting, distance, touch)

Voice (tone, pace, silences, changes)

Strategies for listening and speaking

*Listening*: set aside judgments, give full attention, don’t figure out your response while listening, demonstrate understanding

*Speaking*: be aware of your habits, use a style appropriate to the situation, speak for yourself rather than second-guessing others, focus on needs and how to satisfy them

*Ensure understanding by paraphrasing content; invite listeners to do so too*

“This is what I’m hearing you say …” “So it looks to you like …” “How does this sound to you?” “I want to be sure we’re on the same page; so what have we got for instructions?”

*Invite further contribution; ask open-ended questions*

“What else is on your mind?” “Any further ideas?” Nod, leave space to continue. “What more do you think you might need from me?”

*Reflect implications and underlying feelings; show you understand where this is leading*

“I guess if you did that, you’d be able to …” “That might lead to a situation where …”

“If that happened to me, I’d be very annoyed.” “If I did that, I’d be proud.”

*Use I statements – stay ‘on your own square’*

“I get worried when you don’t show up on time because it holds up everyone else.”

“When I see your tools in places they shouldn’t be I wonder how they got there.”

*Use need statements – don’t take it personally*

“So it’s seems you need some time to figure out how to do this on your own.”

“Sounds like you need Tom to help you out with this part of the job.”

Move towards engagement rather than aggression or avoidance. Then both parties have a better chance of getting what each needs.

*Communication Styles*

Communication styles show how people express themselves (loud, quiet, lots of words, few words, etc.) and where their interest lies (details/data, interpersonal dynamics, the big picture, results, processes, etc.). Many style systems overlap. Which resonates with you?

*The Expression/Direction Axis*

http://www.mmsonline.com/columns/understanding-the-four-major-behavioral-styles

*Directive* is results-directed, not too expressive

*Visionary* is future-oriented, very expressive

*Amiable* is people-oriented, expressive

*Data* is detail-oriented, less expressive

*BEST*

http://www.slideshare.net/bryorio/who-are-you-14867230

*Bold* wants challenge, freedom, power, quick results, authority, action, change

*Expressive* wants popularity, influence, acceptance, to be around people, to persuade

*Sympathetic* wants adjustment time, stability, appreciation, schedules

*Technical* wants organization, rules, standards, explanations, little risk

***Birds***

http://richardstep.com/self-tests-quizzes/dope-bird-personality-test-printable/

***Eagle* is** bold, confident, results-focused

***Peacock* is** expressive, persuasive, recognition-focused

***Dove* is** sympathetic, moderate, people-focused

***Owl* is** technical, analytical, process-focused

*Animals*

http://www.sagestrategies.biz/documents/FiveMinutePersonalityTestforclass.pdf

*Lion* is practical, productive, and strong-willed, yet can be cold and domineering

*Otter* is outgoing and enthusiastic yet can be undisciplined and egocentric

*Golden Retriever* is easy-going and dependable yet can be a fearful worrier

*Beaver* is industrious and organized yet can be moody, negative, and critical

*DISC*

https://www.discprofile.com/what-is-disc/overview/

*Dominance* likes accomplishing, results, the bottom line, confidence

*Influence* likes persuading others, being open and enthusiastic, relationships

*Steadiness* likes cooperation, sincerity, dependability

*Conscientiousness* likes accuracy, expertise, competence

*Communication Style Self-Test*

## Select one statement from each pair, either a or b, that more closely describes you.

1. I prefer to: a. ask a lot of questions b. tell it like it is
2. I prefer to: a. work on my own b. work with others
3. In a team a. I am supportive of others b. I like to take initiative
4. As for my social style, a. I am a more private person b. I am very sociable
5. As for conversational style, a. I am pretty gabby b. I tend not to speak up
6. Working on new project a. I like to keep to the facts b. I like to express my opinion

## In the grid below, circle each of your responses.

Other Directed Self Directed

1. a. 1. b.

2. b. 2. a.

3. a. 3. b.

Less Expressive More Expressive

4. a. 4. b.

5. b. 5. a.

6. a. 6. b.

## Find yourself on the axis below by circling either Other Directed or Self Directed, and either Less Expressive or More Expressive, depending on which of the pair has more circles in the grid above. Connect your Expression and Direction circles. The resulting line will pass through one of the four style names.

Less Expressive

Mr/Ms DATA Mr./Ms. DIRECTIVE

Other Self

Directed Directed

Mr./Ms. AMIABLE Mr./Ms. VISIONARY

More Expressive

*Communicating in Type*

*Datas*

ask detailed questions and expect detailed answers, give specific assignments

prepare thoroughly rather than 'wing it'

have several meetings along the way with progress reports rather than a final meeting

build relationships on confidence and credibility, not impressions, feelings, opinions

*When communicating with Datas*

keep things low-key, even toned, not too fast or loud

initiate changes/decisions with supporting facts upon which to base the decisions

demonstrate, with examples from the past, how you will deliver on your promises

provide sufficient time for decisions/changes; be patient, don't push

*Directives*

have business-like offices with fewer personal touches

get right down to business, telling you what they are looking for, what the requirements are, when it is needed, what kind of service is expected, etc

may seem inflexible or abrupt

*When communicating with Directives*

be direct, to the point, concise, with a plan of action rather than a personal guarantee

keep things businesslike, with a minimum show of feelings

respond directly to their problem with specifics on how you can meet their needs

let them decide about changes in time frame or the outcome

*Amiables*

are open, friendly, interested in people and how things are going for them

work well in relaxed situations

avoid anger and confrontation, even when they disagree

ask questions, work others' ideas in, need support in decision-making

*When communicating with Amiables*

start on a personal note before jumping into business

ask for their help, develop mutual agreements, strengthen the relationship

have them describe a plan that would work best for them, point out benefits to others

offer suggestions, not directives (*“Let's try this" “How can I support you?")*

*Visionaries*

express their feelings openly, have a lot of body-movement

are quick to give an opinion

change their minds a lot, have many interests

are futuristic in their thinking, see the big picture

*When communicating with Visionaries*

be adaptable, take time to listen, relax, have fun, and still get the job done

ask for their views on where they want to go and how they plan to get there

if they change their mind, ask what influenced the change

offer help to make “our” program work, confirm commitments to a change of mind

*Stylistic adaptation*

What's your style?

What's your difficult person's style?

When you adapt to another's style, they understand you more easily. Reframe these sentences using stylistic adaptation. Pretend you are Person A of one style who is talking to Person who is of a different style.

(A = Data; B = Directive) "I've assembled the history of the project for you to review."

(A = Amiable; B = Visionary) "The move to the new facility is happening too fast. No one's ready!"

(A = Directive; B = Data) "I can have the new brochures ready by next week at the latest."

(A = Visionary; B = Amiable) "The staff recognition party will be a great time!"

*When the Emotional Temperature Goes Awry*

Emotions are part and parcel of communication. However, they're not always taken into account, nor are they always obvious -- to the other person, or even to ourselves. We do need to take them into full account, however, and for that we need perspective -- the ability to step outside of ourselves and then step back into the conversation.

Green Light -- things are going smoothly, all parties demonstrate understanding

Yellow Light -- there's some misunderstanding. This is the signal for perspective

Red Light -- time to Stop!, use strategies to bring out and resolve issues

The Reset Button: Often a physical Reset helps -- agree to take a break and take up the issue later, go outside, take some deep breaths, write down your goals for the conversation, come back with more focus, more compassion, less reactivity.

Feelings and Needs: Non-Violent Communication is a practice based on the assumption that all humans have feelings and all have needs. We feel good when our needs are met; we feel bad when they aren't. NVC holds that underneath whatever happens, everyone has the same needs, for example, the need to be accepted, the need to be autonomous, the need for peace, the need to make things happen (agency).

Here are some strategies to communicate from feelings and needs.

Rather than blaming the other person, acknowledge your feelings, your emotional response to his or her behavior. Own your reaction.

“I feel …” (how you feel, not what you think)

“when you …” (the outward, observable act, not what you think is their motive)

“because …” (state the results of the act for you)

# When responding to others, use Need Statements. Seeing concerns as needs leads to satisfaction of those needs.

“So you need …” “I need …”

# Reframe these emotionally "hot" statements in terms of feelings and needs:

You’re always trying to tell me what to do

You want everything done right now

You always want to know every little detail of my life

I can’t believe anything you tell me

You say one thing and do another

You never say what’s really going on

I can’t depend on you; you’re always late

Your stuff is everywhere; I can’t keep this place in order

Every time I put something down you say I’m making a mess

*The Conversation – Real-time practice*

Write up a real-life situation where communication didn't go as well as you would have liked. Include several exchanges.

The set-up -- Pick a partner to play your partner; brief them on the background. Others in your group are observers that keep an ear/eye peeled.

The role-play -- Run the conversation. Afterwards, everyone helps identify possible changes in stylistic adaptation, body language, and tone of voice. Run the conversation again, using the changes.

What have you learned, practiced, and observed?

*Other Helpful Strategies*

Gracefully ending a conversation

When the conversation is going on too long, steer it towards a close.

1. recap what you and the other person gained from the exchange
2. set up any next steps
3. disengage (you may need to physically move).

Saying No

Practice saying No firmly and gently using these four steps.

1. acknowledge the issue

2. say No, unequivocally and up front

3. assist, but don’t get involved

4. let them know your availability on your terms.

# Meetings

Form: Agenda: optimal is having an agenda in advance with time frames.

Goals: beyond action/decision items, goals may include things like getting to know a new participant or reconciling after a difficult episode.

Check-ins: periodic check-ins during the course of the meeting help to keep things on track.

Functions: The Facilitator moves the agenda along and ensures that everyone contributes.

The Timekeeper gives a heads-up when the agreed-upon time is near the end.

The Recorder posts decisions/action items, etc. and prepares minutes.

Point-of-View: Different points-of-view in the meeting often strengthen the outcome.

Devil's Advocate/Cheerleader

Big Picture/Details

Stand Pat/Move Ahead

Everyone has power in a meeting, not just the chair, and everyone benefits when power is well used. Start and end on time, or set up a timely start/end for the next meeting. Speak up if time goes over or folks stray from the agenda. Renegotiate the end time and/or the agenda as needed.

*Satisfaction practice – good ideas*

Note, in 25 words or less, any good ideas that occurred to you in each segment. These ideas stand out from the rest and show you the path to follow.