

Module 7: Building Respectful and Productive Work Place Relationships

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Goal

The goal of this module is to learn how to create in groups a respectful, trusting, and supportive environment leading to enhanced productivity and member satisfaction.

Objectives

1. Clarify the preferred culture of Cooperative Extension
2. Clarify definitions of politeness, civility, courtesy, and respect
3. Understand barriers and bridges to effective communications
4. Use a process to create your own department's ground rules for effective communications
5. Improve abilities to listen in a focused, attentive manner
6. Improve abilities to provide credit
7. Improve abilities to give and receive feedback
8. Improve abilities to manage conflict

Value of this Module

- All UWEX personnel work with and in groups.
- The information provided, if used, will provide tools for well-functioning groups to work through difficult times.
- The information, if used, will help groups who are currently challenged function better.

Assumptions

- The better informed people are, the better they function.
- People have a need to be heard, understood, and taken seriously.
- The closer a decision is made to the point of work, the better the decision.

Objective 1: Clarify the Preferred Culture of Cooperative Extension

Culture

The culture of an organization consists of its vision, values, management philosophy, and climate. How does Cooperative Extension define its culture?

Vision

Cooperative Extension is Wisconsin's first-choice educational network for engaging people and their communities in positive change.

Values

Research, scholarship and community knowledge. We apply research to solve local problems. We hold ourselves accountable for the highest standards of scholarship. And we respect the indigenous knowledge of the people we serve.

People. Our people are our most important resource. All faculty and staff have a common purpose and shared privilege of serving the public.

Excellence and innovation. We explore new approaches to meeting educational needs. We hold ourselves to the highest standards for program quality and effectiveness.

Partnerships. Our partnerships include county, state and federal governments, private and public organizations, campus and county faculty and staff and volunteers. Our success rests on shared interests, responsibility, resources, and recognition.

Honesty and Integrity. We are good stewards of public trust and of public resources. We act on the values of our organization.

Diversity. We seek diversity in our faculty, staff and clientele and welcome differences in people, ideas, programs and partnerships.

Local needs and interests. **The local community is the context of our work. Our continuing local presence is vital.**

Beliefs about People

- Faculty, academic staff, support staff, and administrators are talented and honest.
- People want to do excellent work and accept responsibility.
- People want to improve themselves and our organization.

Managerial-Leadership Philosophy

- County Extension departments foster **creativity, innovation, high morale, teamwork, and shared leadership, responsibility, and accountability** for all of its members through work climates marked by **trust, respect, inclusiveness, and widespread participation.**

- Cooperative Extension’s managerial leaders at all levels are expected to carry out their functions according to the following core values:
 1. **honesty** (trustworthy, truthful, reliable)
 2. **competence** (capable, qualified, skillful, effective)
 3. **broad-mindedness** (open, flexible, receptive)
 4. **dependability** (reliable, conscientious)
 5. **supportiveness** (helpful, championing, comforting)
 6. **forward-looking** (visionary, future-oriented)
 7. **fair-mindedness** (just, objective, unbiased)

- County Extension departments provide faculty and staff with the **resources** necessary to carry out their programming functions. Those resources include effective managerial-leadership on the part of department heads and those to whom they delegate.

- County Extension departments provide **opportunities** for all faculty and staff to achieve **personal and professional growth**.

- Although the county department head has oversight responsibilities for effective departmental functioning, **all** faculty and staff are expected to share their best efforts to ensure not only productive work but also a cohesive climate marked by high morale.

- County department heads are expected to encourage faculty and staff to work with them **collaboratively, participatively, and harmoniously** to ensure departmental effectiveness.

Objective 2: Clarify Definitions of Politeness, Civility, Courtesy, and Respect

Climate

For Cooperative Extension to fulfill its vision and live out its core values and managerial-leadership philosophy, each department needs to create and sustain a climate marked by both high productivity and high morale. Professor Ed Schein, the renowned professor of organizational behavior, once said that if “a group or organization is not able to manage its internal interpersonal relationships in a positive and productive manner, then the group or organization will not be able to build and maintain itself as a functioning entity capable of achieving its potential.” Research has shown that such functional climates are marked by politeness, courtesy, civility, and respect. What do those terms mean?

- Politeness: Being duly respectful or indulgent with other people according to social norms

- **Courtesy:** A voluntary genuine and generous consideration that is helpful in nature. Peter Drucker in *Management Challenges for the 21st Century*, made the following acute observation:

Manners are the lubricating oil of an organization. It is a law of nature that two moving bodies in contact with each other create friction. This is as true for human beings as it is for inanimate objects. Manners--simple things like saying "please" and "thank you" and knowing a person's name or asking after her family--enable people to work together whether they like each other or not. If ... someone's brilliant work fails again and again as soon cooperation from others is required, it probably indicates a lack of courtesy--that is, a lack of manners.

- **Civility:** Being friendly in a reserved correct sense. George Washington created rules for civil and decent behavior:
 1. Every action done in company ought to be with some sign of respect to those that are about you.
 2. Shake not the head, feet, or legs. Roll not the eyes, nor lift one eyebrow higher than the other; wry not the mouth; and bedew no man's face with your spittle by approaching too near him when you speak.
 3. Turn not your back to others, especially in speaking; jog not the table nor desk on which another reads or writes; lean not upon anyone.
 4. Wherein you reprove another, be unblameable yourself, for example is more prevalent than precepts.
 5. Use no reproachful language against anyone; neither curse nor revile.
 6. Let your conversation be without malice or envy, for 'tis a sign of a tractable and commendable nature; in all causes of passion, admit reason to govern.
 7. Speak not injurious words, neither in jest nor earnest; scoff not at none although they give occasion.
 8. Think before you speak; pronounce not imperfectly, nor bring out your words too hastily, but orderly and distinctly.

9. While you are speaking, point not your finger at whom you discourse, nor approach too near to whom you talk, especially to his face.

10. Speak not evil of the absent, for it is unjust.

From a more contemporary viewpoint, Stephen L. Carter in his article “Civility: Manners, Morals, and the Etiquette of Democracy” posits that civility imposes the following duties:

1. Our duty to be civil toward others does not depend on whether we like them or not.
2. Civility requires that we sacrifice for strangers, not just for people we happen to know.
3. Civility has two parts: generosity, even when it is costly, and trust, even when there is risk.
4. Civility creates not merely a negative duty not to do harm, but an affirmative duty to do good.
5. Civility requires a commitment to live a common moral life, so we should try to follow the norms of the community if the norms are not actually immoral.
6. We must come into the presence of our fellow human beings with a sense of awe and gratitude.
7. Civility assumes that we will disagree; it requires us not to mask our differences but to resolve them respectfully.
8. Civility requires that we listen to others with knowledge of the possibility that they are right and we are wrong.
9. Civility requires that we express ourselves in ways that demonstrate our respect for others.
10. Civility requires resistance to the dominance of social life by the values of the marketplace. Thus, the basic principles of civility--generosity and trust--should apply as fully in the market and in politics as in every other human activity.
11. Civility allows criticism of others, and sometimes even requires it, but the criticism should always be civil.

12. Civility discourages the use of legislation rather than conversation to settle disputes, except as a last, carefully considered resort.

- Respect: To feel or show deferential regard for, to avoid violation of or interference with others, willingness to show consideration or appreciation. J.P. Moreland, the famous theologian made the following observation:

There is a difference between *intrinsic* value and *instrumental* value. Something has *intrinsic* value if it's usable and good in and of itself; something has *instrumental* value if it's valuable as a means to an end . . . When you treat people as *instrumentally* valuable, or only as a means to an end, you're dehumanizing them. You're treating people as things when you treat them merely as a means to an end. You only **respect** people when you treat them as having *intrinsic* value.

Rudeness, the opposite of respect, has several well-documented negative effects on the workplace as documented in a 1999 survey of almost 800 people conducted by Christine Pearson, Professor of Business, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill:

1. 28% lost work time avoiding the instigator
2. 53% lost work time worrying about the incident
3. 37% believe commitment to employer declined
4. 22% decreased work effort
5. 10% decreased amount of time spent at work
6. 46% contemplated changing jobs
7. 12 % changed jobs

Verbal violence is an extreme form of rudeness Hostile language, even when it doesn't escalate to physical force, is toxic to a work environment.

Objective 3: Understand Barriers and Bridges to Effective Communications

Communication: The Key to an Effective Work Climate

Great departments—those that are marked by high productivity and high morale—are places where excellence in communications abounds. But what is communication, what are its elements, and what are some of the barriers and bridges to effective communications?

Communication is simply the **creation of understanding**. Please see Attachment #1. As you can see, it requires not just a sender but also a receiver. But communication is not just the sending and receiving of messages. For effective communication to occur, the message that the sender sends must be understood in pretty much the way the sender

intended. And there is the rub. This communication model looks simple, but for effective communication to occur, one has to control noise.

The noise can emit from the **sender**. He or she may not have a clear idea; may be oblivious to the audience's language level, needs, and wants; may not care if the receiver interprets the information correctly; or may not carefully plan the communication to get positive results.

The noise can emit from the **message**. The content may be poorly organized, impenetrable, or contradictory; the tone may be condescending, arrogant, or wishy-washy; the attitude of the speaker may be harsh, rude, and sarcastic.

The noise may emit from the **channel** selection. Perhaps, the words and the gestures contradict one another. You've been in conversations in which the words said, "Yes," but the body language screamed, "NO!!!!!" Perhaps, the sender selected the wrong medium for the message, using, for example, inflexible e-mail to resolve a conflict with a peer, something that should always be done face-to-face.

The noise can emit from the **receiver**. He or she may not be paying attention to the sender, doing paperwork while pretending to listen, daydreaming, etc. The receiver's work environment may be marked by physical noise levels that prevent clear understanding. Or the receiver may be distracted from concentrating on the message because of the thousands of distractions that occur within the brains of normal human beings. Because we can think a whole lot faster than most people can speak, we find uses of that time. We wander, wonder about other matters, focus on irrelevant matters. How many of you have had this experience? You are speaking with someone when without provocation, the other person's eyes seem to glaze over and you are aware that he or she is no longer in the room. Noise can also occur when the listener does not ask questions for clarification, for example, of terms, deeper meanings, vague statements, etc.

The most important contributor to misunderstanding, however, is the noise that is implicitly contained in using words. Each of us has in our brains our own specific meanings of every noun, verb, adjective, and adverb in our language. What one person understands as **assertiveness**, for example, may very not be shared by others. When asked to name a person that the audience would label **assertive** and then describe that person with adjectives other than the word **assertive**, people have stated everything from **aggressive** and **rude** to **confident** and **civil**. Why do our meanings differ? We develop our meanings through our own personal experiences with the word: from all the contexts in which we have heard the word, used the word, and read the word. Because our experiential contexts differ, so must our word meaning differ also. If receivers don't go through the exercise of putting words into their own words and feeding them back to the sender, misunderstanding can easily occur.

Lastly, noise can emit from the **feedback** the receiver gives back to the sender. It may be nonexistent, delayed, vague, dishonest, or inappropriate in tone.

To eliminate these barriers to effective communications, people do the following:

As a Sender:

1. Understand the **audience(s)** language and needs
2. Use the **“you” attitude**, putting the audiences first
3. Clarify for themselves the **idea, purpose**, and desired end **result**
4. Be strongly **motivated** to create clear understanding
5. **Plan** the communication thoroughly (please see Attachment #2 for a useful template)

Effective communicators craft their **Messages** to convey –

1. the content in simple, clear, concrete terms in a form understandable to the audience
2. an attitude of politeness, courtesy, civility, respect
3. an ethos (picture of the character of the sender and organization) as honest and credible

Effective communicators also carefully select the channels for the communication, depending on the purpose, audience, and physical constraints. Usually the most effective form of communication is face-to-face, followed by telephone, and then, written. Why? Because face-to-face communication allows the sender more tools with which to work, both the words and the body language; face-to-face communications also allow for give and take between sender and receiver, clarification of word meanings, questions and answers, etc. Using the written word exclusively to create understanding, as noted above, is usually one-way, allows for only delayed feedback, and is fraught with the potential for misunderstanding

As a **Receiver**, effective communicators—

1. Attend to the other
2. Minimize external and internal distractions
3. Ask appropriate questions
4. Assign approximate meaning
5. Paraphrase what they hear the other saying—put it in their own words

Lastly, effective communicators send **Feedback** that is marked by—

1. Timeliness
2. Specificity, concreteness, clarity
3. Honesty
4. Politeness, courtesy, civility, respect

Please see Attachment #3 for some exercises that will help you clarify critical points about communications, the bedrock skill of effective people.

Objective #4: Use a Process to Create Your Own Department’s Ground Rules for Effective Communication

A tool that departments across Cooperative Extension use to create and sustain climates marked by politeness, courtesy, civility, and respect is called “Creating Ground Rules for Communication.” Here is an example of one group’s actual ground rules:

Example of Communication Ground Rules

Created & Committed to October 5, 1998

Please evaluate the degree to which the group is living out each of the following ground rules. Put your evaluation on the line to the left of the item.

Scale: 1 = Lousy 2 = Poor 3 = Adequately 4 = Quite well 5 = Excellent

1. _____ Don’t interrupt one another; allow the other to complete his or her thought.
2. _____ Reconfirm these communication ground rules at the beginning of each meeting.
3. _____ Be committed to listening to one another.
4. _____ Communicate directly if you need to defer listening to a later specific time.
5. _____ Follow up on pledges and promises.
6. _____ Shelley sends Ken’s calls through Terri when he’s in a meeting.
7. _____ Hold our meetings in the morning before the busy telephone times begin.
8. _____ Be tactful and considerate; respect others’ opinions; embrace diversity.
9. _____ Be open to new ideas.
10. _____ Contribute to an environment in which it is safe to express ideas.
11. _____ No sarcasm or ridicule.
12. _____ Be honest, candid, say what you mean.
13. _____ Offer help to others.
14. _____ Be forthright without fear of repercussions.

15. _____ Be direct with feedback to one another; don't talk behind other people's backs. Don't triangulate.
16. _____ Don't embarrass or humiliate others at meetings.
17. _____ Ask for permission before you approach others to talk.
18. _____ Try to achieve win/win or no deal with our negotiations with others.
19. _____ Offer constructive solutions.

The Process

The process is simple but can be very effective. The four steps are as follows:

1. As an entire department, identify desired goals
2. Brainstorm effective ground rules
3. Rate level of importance
4. Establish plan to maintain awareness of the group's efforts

The process works this way:

1. Schedule at least 1½ hours for all group members to participate. Pick a time and day to maximize participation. It is best to have a facilitator who is not a member of the group.
2. The facilitator will be responsible for running the meeting.
3. Task #1 is to come to agreement as to how decisions will be made by the group: e.g., unanimous, consensus, majority rules, the director rules??? It is recommended that the goal be consensus, with majority rules as a fall back. A requirement for this would be that the minority(s) believes that they had the opportunity to be heard, were understood, and that their views were honestly considered.
4. The group should then agree on what their goals for the group will be. What type of department climate do you work in? Come to consensus on where your department **currently is** in terms of politeness, courtesy, civility, and respect. Come to consensus on where your department **needs to be**.

5. The group should then brainstorm ideas for ground rules that could help contribute to the success of the group.
6. When the brainstorming is completed, the proposed rules should be evaluated as to the relative importance of their desired outcome to the functioning of the group: e.g., absolutely essential, very desirable, good but not essential, etc.
7. The group should then seek consensus on which rules should be their working standard.
8. The final list should be formally adopted including each member signing their name indicating their willingness to comply and help each other maintain the standards they have adopted.
9. It is recommended that a reading of the ground rules take place at every formal meeting of the organization.
10. Create an evaluation form for ground rules (see the earlier example)

Objective #5: Improve abilities to listen in a focused, attentive manner

As described earlier, listening well is not an innate trait. Like all other skills, it can be broken down into a set of behaviors that need to be repeatedly practiced to be mastered. Here, we describe verbal and nonverbal behaviors that help and hinder effective listening, four skills in responsiveness that promote active listening, and a practical exercise that you can use to improve your ability to listen with understanding to others.

The following helping and nonhelping verbal and nonverbal behaviors come from studies and instruction in counseling psychology (Barbara Okun, *Effective Helping: Interviewing and Counseling Techniques*. North Scituate, Massachusetts: Duxbury Press, 1979). After all, what counselors do primarily is listen. As you read through the following, ask yourself the question, “To what degree do I practice these behaviors when I am interacting with others?”

Helping Behaviors

Verbal

Nonverbal

uses understandable words

uses a tone of voice similar to that of the person needing the help

reflects back and clarifies what the other is saying

maintains good eye contact--no glaring or staring blankly

appropriately interprets

occasionally nods the head

summarizes for the other

shows some facial animation

uses verbal reinforcers: “mm-mm,” “I see,” “Yes”

positions self close to the other person physically

calls the other by his or her first name

occasionally smiles

uses humor occasionally to break the tension

uses a moderate rate of speech

is nonjudgmental

leans in toward the other

adds greater understanding to the statements of the other

occasionally touches the other

phrases interpretations tentatively to elicit feedback

Most important of all of the above are **being nonjudgmental** and maintaining appropriate **eye contact**. When you are conversing with another and you sense that much of what you are saying is being judged and found wanting, what is your response? Most people feel a bit or a lot threatened and clam up, precisely what a good listener does not want to have happen. Maintaining appropriate eye contact is the most important nonverbal behavior in our culture. The good listener’s eyes are wide open, relaxed, focused, warm, and smiling, inviting the speaker to continue. Looking away from the other person as he or she is speaking, rolling of the eyes, staring blankly into space, glaring at the other are all signs of disinterest, nonconnection, or a threatening demeanor, all alienating the speaker. One major purpose of active listening is to build bonds of trust between the sender and the receiver. Being judgmental and using one’s eyes as weapons destroy trust and build social distance, creating the basis of more misunderstanding.

Again, as you read through the following list of nonhelpful behaviors, ask yourself the question, “To what degree do I practice these behaviors when I am interacting with others?”

Nonhelping Behaviors

Verbal	Nonverbal
advice giving	looking away from the other
preaching	sitting far apart or turned away from the other
placating--soothing, mollifying blaming	physical sneers
cajoling--to persuade with deliberate flattery	scowling
exhorting--urging strongly	tight mouth
extensive probing and questioning, especially "why" questions	shaking or pointing finger
directing, demanding	yawning
distracting gestures	closing eyes
using words the other doesn't understand	unpleasant tone of voice
straying off the topic	too fast or too slow rate of speech
intellectualizing	overanalyzing
talking about self too much	

Four Listening Skills

Four listening skills deserve special attention: reflecting, paraphrasing, clarifying and drawing out. Here are some explanations of these skills.

To listen actively usually requires the use of four skills. Very often, consciously or not, we tend to cut off communication rather than make the effort to understand the speaker. The following skills help the listener understand:

A. Reflecting: Here the listener restates as exactly as possible what another person has said. The opposite of **reflecting** is ignoring or judging.

B. Paraphrasing: Here the listener attempts to restate a speaker's lengthy or complex statement in his or her own words when it would be difficult to repeat the statement word for word. In paraphrasing, the listener attempts to restate the important elements of the speaker's statement to capture the meaning. The opposite of **paraphrasing** is challenging.

The ability to listen, and to demonstrate you have heard by **reflecting** or **paraphrasing**, is a significant skill because it promotes feelings of acceptance and understanding necessary for effective communication.

Reflection and **paraphrasing** are most useful when the speaker has stated relatively clearly and fully what he is thinking or feeling. Sometimes, however, even though the listener has accurately heard the speaker, he does not understand what the speaker means or he senses that the speaker may be trying to say more or less than what she actually has said. In these instances, it may be necessary to **clarify** what the speaker has said and to **draw her out**.

C. Clarifying: Here, the listener asks **clarifying** questions to understand what was said. Such questions can be either open-ended or closed-ended. Interpreting is the opposite of **clarifying**.

D. Drawing Out: Here, the listener encourages the speaker to expand what she said. Drawing-out questions may ask about the central idea of what is said or about the non-verbal cues given by the speaker. Sometimes silence can be used effectively to encourage speakers to expand on their comments. Listeners also find effective the use of the simple expression, *Please tell me more.*≡ The opposite of **drawing out** is projecting values.

Exercise in Active Listening

A useful exercise in active listening now follows, one that can be used by each and every person in the department to promote greater understanding of others, to build trust, and to help establish a department climate marked by civility, respect, politeness, and courtesy

“THIS IS YOUR LIFE” INTERVIEW

- 1. Pair off with a relative stranger for the next 30 minutes.**
- 2. Interview one another to find out who your partner is.** What is his or her nature; what makes your partner go and stop, turn on and turn off? Where has your partner been? What directions is your partner taking?
- 3. Some Suggested Icebreakers:**
 - If Ed McMahon delivered a check to you from Publisher's Clearing House for \$10,000,000, how would you spend the money?
 - If your physician told you that you had only six more months to live, how would you spend your time?
 - Best/worst cases: job, boss, associate, direct report, year, food, song, etc.

- If you were reborn and lived your life again, what one thing would you change? What would you not change?
- Biggest prouds and biggest sorries?

4. **As the interviewer, take no notes.** Just listen well, probe for clarification but not for interrogation. As the interviewee, feel free to share a realistic portrait of yourself with your partner.
5. **Make a pact at the beginning of the conversation:** all information shared is confidential.
6. When finished, please **describe below** your partner's **objectives and priorities**, his or her **values**, and his or her **directions**. What gives your partner **bliss** and **pain**?

7. **Share your reading with your partner** to clarify, validate, and deepen your perception. How well did you read your partner?
8. **Together, debrief your experience**, answering these questions:
 - What has happened to the levels of trust and openness between you?
 - Did you find any areas of common ground?
 - What did your partner and/or you **do** or **say** to encourage disclosure?
 - In what "real-world" **situations** might you use such an interview? With **whom**? For what **purposes**?
 - To ensure such an interview produces good results, what would you have to do? What encouraged your disclosure in this session?

We have used this exercise for over 25 years in our training classes, resulting in the following typical comments from participants:

- “We bonded!!”
- “We found ourselves at first to be quite stiff, but after a short while, we both felt much more comfortable with one another.”
- “We learned an incredible amount about each other. I think I’ve found my long-lost sister!”
- “As soon as my partner disclosed something kinda personal. I felt as if it was OK to do the same.”
- “I thought I knew my partner. After all, we have been working together for several years. I had no idea we had so much in common.”

Comments such as these are not unusual when people have conversations marked by excellent listening: attention, the controlling of external and internal distractions, nonjudgment, and the practice of helping verbal and nonverbal behavior. Excellent listening affords all of us the opportunity to build bonds of trust, respect, appreciation of diversity, and personal growth. Some people say that they don’t ever have enough time at work to do such interaction. We challenge that cop-out by suggesting that once every two weeks, eat lunch with a different person at work, and conduct such a conversation, using the ground rules established earlier. Active listening to your peers, colleagues, and clients compared to many other department activities can be one of the best means to promote a work climate marked by high productivity and high morale.

Objective #6: Improve abilities to provide credit

Another tool that people use to create more productive and happier workplaces is that of crediting, or positive reinforcement. B.F. Skinner, the renowned behaviorist psychologist, like his predecessors Pavlov and Watson, stipulated that behavior is determined by its consequences. That is, if a person performs an act and then is rewarded for that performance, the person will generally repeat the performance. On whole, people are pleasure seekers and pain avoiders—we seek rewards, things that satisfy our needs, desires, wants, things that help us further our objectives.

Of course, we’ve all heard the maxim from effective parenting classes: “Catch them doing something good and reward them. The same applies to the workplace. But there are some guidelines for using positive reinforcement well, a process that you can use to do it well, and a whole plethora of different things that may be reinforcing to an individual of a group.

Some Guidelines for Effective Crediting

For positive reinforcement to work well, the praise must be **earned** and the giver of it must be **sincere, specific, timely, and individualized**.

All of us know a “hustle” when we hear one; images of oily flatterers come immediately to mind: the Grinch, the snake-oil salesman, the suck-up. Unearned praise given by a distrustworthy sender does a lot more damage than no praise at all. Thus, ensure that the receiver deserves the reinforcement and that you deliver it with sincere, honest intent, politely, civilly, courteously, and respectfully.

Secondly, much of the praise given in workplaces is too generally to be really useful. What, specifically, comprises a “Good” job? What’s “Excellent”? Thus, ensure your praise mentions specific facts regarding the actual performance of the receiver—timeliness, quality, quantity, reduction of waste, happiness of clients, etc.

Third, if you provide praise too long after the performance, its positive effects diminish. Giving positive reinforcement only during annual performance review makes it seem ritualistic and dishonest. Thus, ensure you provide reinforcement immediately.

Lastly, not everyone wishes positive reinforcement given in the same way. Some people love public praise, their name in lights; others would die if they were singled out in public. Gear your praise to the receiver’s preference is the best advise. And give praise privately unless you know for sure the receiver desires a public venue.

A Method of Giving Credit

Here is a simple formula that you can use to provide positive reinforcement at home and at work:

Use this method when the work of someone whose work matters to you--

- ✓ **exceeds** standards
- ✓ **consistently meets** standards
- ✓ **meets** standards **not usually met** by that person

Use the following process:

1. Make a *general reference* to the performance being credited.
2. Sincerely *thank* the person.
3. Give *specific examples* of the performance.
4. Mention the *personal qualities or competencies* that led to the performance.
5. Mention the *resulting benefits* to the department or organization.

Forms of Rewards

Different rewards are wanted needed by different people; one size does not fit all. An inappropriate reward is often never forgotten just as an appropriate one can be cherished forever. Here are some rewards that you may find helpful to use in rewarding different individuals. Examine each item. Consider how the people in your sphere of influence would respond to each reinforcer. For each item ask:

- A. Do you have it under your control or can you get it? If your answer is “No,” delete it
- B. Would it be reinforcing for that person or group? Same as above.
1. Letter of commendation
 2. Asking person for advice or opinions
 3. Oral praise
 4. Letting the person report her results to upper management
 5. Increased responsibility
 6. Allowing a person to make decisions affecting his work, organization, strategies, or plans
 7. Memo to superiors on performance of subordinates with copy to subordinate
 8. Passing along compliments from others
 9. Choice of tasks
 10. Put positive information into personnel folder
 11. Remove constant supervision
 12. Early start on vacations requirement
 13. Represent department at meetings
 14. Spruce up work area
 15. Time off
 16. Secretarial service
 17. Positive comments on performance improvements
 18. Exception to a company policy procedure
 19. Transfers
 20. Quick follow up on requests, problems, etc.
 21. Name on bulletin board for meeting some goal
 22. Training for a better job
 23. Additional help
 24. Talking to person about something she is interested in
 25. Work on special projects
 26. Help you in some of your duties
 27. A “thank you,” a nod, a smile, a handshake, a pat on the back
 28. Personal phone call or note from you
 29. Flexibility in work scheduling
 30. Job rotation
 31. First choice at extra training
 32. Talking to that person about some new equipment, tool, or anticipated positive reinforcer, e.g., “I bet you’re really looking forward to picking up that new car tonight.”
 33. Listening
 34. Promotions
 35. Raises
 36. Flex time
 37. Bonuses

38. Fringe benefits
39. Parking spaces
40. Car fare to work
41. Car pool using company vans
42. Cup of coffee, donuts, free use of vending machines
43. Gift certificate
44. Plaques, trophies, diplomas
45. Clothing: t-shirts, hats, jackets with special logo, etc.
46. Free lunch, dinner for two
47. Article with special logo or insignia on it, e.g., coffee mug, pen, tie clip, pin
48. Other tangibles of small to large economic value

We're sure you can add to this list. The most surefire way to determine what reinforces the receiver would appreciate is to ask the person or someone who really knows the person well. That shows respect.

Objective #7: Improve abilities to give and receive feedback

Another tool that good communicators use to help enhance the climate of a department is that of constructive feedback. Good communicators not only know how to dish it out but also how to take it.

When another person has a suggestion or is delivering a performance that you would like to help the other improve, it's time to provide feedback. But it needs to be done sensitively, thoughtfully, and respectfully. As with giving positive reinforcement, there are some guidelines for doing so well and a process that you may wish to follow.

Guidelines for Giving Effective Constructive Feedback

As with most other types of communications, feedback for it to be effectively used must be earned, honest, specific, timely, and respectfully delivered. A high level of trust sure helps, too.

A Process of Providing Constructive Feedback

Use this process when you want to help another person improve a suggestion or a performance.

Use this sequence:

1. **Listen** in depth to the suggestion or **observe** closely the performance.
2. Give an **itemized** response:
 - ✓ Specify the **merits**.
 - ✓ Specify your **concerns**.
3. **Identify** ways to retain merits and reduce or eliminate concerns.
 - ✓ Invite/make suggestions.

- ✓ Give/invite reactions.

5. **Summarize** suggestions/steps agreed upon.

Guidelines for Receiving Constructive Feedback

But who likes to be criticized, right?!! Not many; only those interested in improving! One of the biggest barriers many of us have is resistance to feedback caused by a great number of potential factors: fear of attack, our early upbringing, negative experience with people we perceive as hurtful, etc. And we have all developed defenses against such attacks, ranging from sarcasm to withdrawal. Here are some specific suggestions to allay our fears and open ourselves up to helpful feedback.

1. Approach the situation with an intent to learn rather than with an intent to protect.
2. Resist the natural instinct of feeling personally attacked.
3. Don't deny the feedback
4. Don't defend yourself
5. Don't justify yourself
6. Don't argue
7. Don't say, "yes but"
8. Repeat back in your own words, as accurately as you can, the message you heard.
9. Ask the person to be more specific. The intent for doing this is to gather more relevant data which will help you understand what, why, when and where the desired behavior is expected of you.
10. Offer or ask for a solution for addressing how to close the gap.

Objective #8: Improve abilities to manage conflict

The realities of today's office environment include conflict between individuals and between units. Conflict can be seen as a situation when one person's desires differ from those of another. The causes of conflict are legion, and the effects of unresolved conflict are apparent to most everyone: wasted time and other resources, turnover, lack of productivity, poor morale, organizational sabotage, disappointment, anger, pain, and sadness—the very opposites of what we should all be trying to create in our departments. In this section, you will find some useful information on the causes of conflict, some enlightened assumptions about conflict, and some helpful tools to use when managing conflict in your personal and professional life. This section is placed last in the module because it is built on all that has gone before it. To manage conflict well, you need to be able to send appropriate and clear messages, listen with your eyes and ears, and give and receive constructive feedback.

Causes of Conflict

Two types of causes can readily be identified; some of the items overlap. You can use the following causes to analyze a conflict that you or your department is currently experiencing, the idea being that if you can identify the root causes of a conflict, you are in a much better position to resolve it.

Organizational

1. **Task Interdependence.** When units within an organization depend upon one another for information, resources, time, money, people, etc., conflict is inevitable. Coordinating and sharing resources is difficult. The more interdependent the units are, the greater the potential of conflict.
2. **Shared Resources.** All organizations have limited resources. The greater the squeeze of time, money, facilities, people, etc., the higher the potential for conflict.
3. **Goal Incompatibility.** Units often have different goals. For example, clients might be demanding more services while the county wishes to slash budgets. Also, sometimes units have different standards. Quality assurance wants the goods to meet all the specs; sales wants to ship them as is and send the revised software later. Conflict arises to the extent that goals or standards are incompatible.
4. **Differentiation.** Units develop their own ways of doing things: policies, procedures, norms, management styles, etc. To the extent that these differ between units, the potential for conflict is higher.
5. **Uncertainty.** Most organizations work in changing, turbulent environments caused by new technologies, new customer demands, new regulations, shifts in the economy, etc. Coping with these changes creates stress. The greater the changes, the greater the potential that the people will see themselves as losing rather than winning. Win-lose situations create conflict.
6. **Reward Systems.** Organizational incentives often cause conflict between units. If one unit is rewarded for the attainment of goals at the other unit's expense, competition rather than cooperation is fostered.
7. **Jurisdictional Ambiguities.** When job responsibilities between units are unclear, conflict will result.
8. **Communications Breakdowns.** Poor communications, intentional or unintentional, usually result in misunderstandings and misperceptions between units. Mistrust and conflict increase as communications break down.

9. **Differences in Power or Status.** High-status units possess more influence than do those of lower status. Conflicts arise when low-status units resist being influenced or try to increase their power at the expense of higher-status units.

Interpersonal

1. **Perceived Incompatibility of Self-interests.** Parties believe that a win-lose situation exists; one person will gain while the other will lose. Conflicts arise when people perceive conflicts in motives, goals, aspirations, and roles.
2. **Perceived Scarce Rewards.** Parties think the pie is not big enough for two.
3. **Perceived Inequity of Rewards and Status.** People are particularly sensitive to matters of equity, believing the rewards they receive should equal their contributions. People should get what they deserve. We constantly create and adjust mental equations regarding our own input/output balance and those of others. Conflict arises when we feel we are being treated unfairly.
4. **Differences in Self-Concept and Temperament.** Conflict arises when person A's self-image differs from B's perception. For example, person A doesn't perform a task because she fears failure; person B thinks she is just lazy. Person A is extroverted, articulate, outgoing, preferring engagement; person B, introverted, quiet, thoughtful, preferring isolation. Both believe the other has problems. People differ in where they prefer to focus their attention and get energy, how they prefer to take in information, how they prefer to make decisions, and how they prefer to deal with the outer world.
5. **Ego-Centrism/Obliviousness of Others.** Some people falsely assume that they are the only ones right in their judgments about the world and that others are wrong except in those cases when the others agree with them. People differ in beliefs, values, priorities, norms, standards, methods, and attitudes. Misunderstandings and disagreements, thus, are normal. Misunderstandings can be resolved. Actual differences cannot be resolved unless one or both parties change. If they don't want to compromise their differences, they can at least agree to disagree.
6. **Poor Communications.** What person A meant to say and what person B understood often differ. People don't always agree on word meaning. Some senders are inarticulate; some listeners, oblivious. Our heads have different dictionaries. People are not equally informed and see facts differently.
7. **Perceived Absence of Mutually Acceptable Alternatives.** Person A wants to play music loudly in the front room; person B wants to study quietly there.

Neither wishes to move. Perhaps no mutually acceptable alternatives exist, or they haven't been generated. Perhaps both parties are stubborn. Fistfight ensues, but conflict is not resolved.

Some Assumptions About Conflict

While there are many causes of conflict, organizationally and interpersonally, that affect each of our departments daily, we can do something about them. The following assumptions are provided as food for thought and action. We think they provide a helpful approach, an optimistic approach, a courageous approach, a realistic approach to dealing with the greatest destructiveness of conflict in the workplace.

1. **Conflict and disagreement are normal in human relationships.**
Because of different life experiences (upbringing, culture, education, previous experience in relationships, etc.), people must see the world differently. Most think that his or her view is the “correct” one, for we interpret the world through only our limited experience. People are often in conflict because they do not understand the other’s frame of reference; do not understand or share the same values, objectives, and priorities; or are competing for the same resources—attention, money, position, etc.
2. **Conflict may be a good thing.**
Conflict provides an opportunity for people to recognize and value differences of opinion, open up their worldview, expand their perspective, and solve problems. It gives both parties the opportunity to learn, to improve, to practice tolerance, and to achieve satisfactory resolution of emotional tension that often hampers both parties’ creativity, productivity, trust, and communications both on and off the job.
3. **A mutually acceptable solution can often be found.** If one can adopt an abundance mentality, thinking “win-win or no deal,” and communicate in an honest, courageous, assertive, but considerate and respectful manner, people can move from disagreement to compromise to collaboration to synergy.
4. **Any of the parties in conflict can contribute to its resolution if one takes personal responsibility and initiates communications.**
 - My contribution to relationships is under my control; the part others choose to play is not under my control.
 - When I change, my relationships change.
 - Waiting for other persons or situations to change so that I can change equals no change.
 - The way I am treated by others depends partly upon how I “train” them to treat me.
 - Risk-taking is part of change. I may be rejected.

5. **Trusting behavior can evoke trusting behavior.**
The principle of social reciprocity stipulates that we get back what we give to others. “What goes around, comes around.” If people want others to trust them, listen to them, care for them, respect them, etc. they must give it first. They then stand a better chance of having it returned by others. Trusting behavior can be demonstrated by openness to influence, risk taking and willingness to change when faced with new information. As Sitting Bull once said, “Offer your opponent the peacepipe first.”

5. **Consensus and synergy are likely only when people choose to cooperate in a win-win relationship rather than compete. Sometimes one must accommodate; other times, one must compete with all you have.**
Because of past experiences (often deprivations, rejections, and other painful emotional experiences), some people cannot **not** try to compete, to win at all costs, even that of personal relationships. When dealing with a battler on an unimportant issue, let the other win to gather social credits for later use. When dealing with a critical issue, as Sitting Bull continued, “Fight them with everything you have. And when it is over, let by-gones be by-gones.”

7. **Some conflicts may never be resolved because of fear, rigidity, intolerance, anger, paranoia, disfunctionality, or other emotional or mental impairment.**
Most often it is best to sidestep others’ negativity, sarcasm, and malicious ridicule. Often, people with low self-esteem ridicule others to make themselves feel better about themselves. Rather than taking such stuff personally, making oneself co-dependent on other’s opinions of your value as a human, be assertive and be honest regarding your convictions and your rights to be treated with respect.

Communication Ground Rules for Conflict Management

Because conflict management is of such importance, it has its own set of communication ground rules. Above all else, both parties have to agree to have a face-to-face conversation about their disagreement. Without both parties agreeing to negotiate, the conflict will not be resolved, only buried, causing only more anger, fear, and sadness. Second, before two people can even attempt to have a conversation about a specific conflict, we strongly urge them together to review and commit to the following dos and don’ts. Sometimes, it is very helpful to have a facilitator help the parties in conflict by holding them accountable for following through on the rules.

Directions: To ensure effective communication, please confirm your agreement to follow these ground rules. These rules are those followed by people seeking to build more positive, less stressful, and more productive relationships. The guiding principle is to approach this communication with an **intent to learn** rather than an **intent to protect**. Add to the list if you wish, but ensure that each addition is **specific and realistic**.

Be honest. Say what is on your mind now.	Be open with what’s inside you.
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Be honest. Say what is on your mind now.	Be open with what's inside you.
Be specific.	Provide examples.
Don't use the words "never" and "always."	Listen in depth to the other. Paraphrase what you hear the other person saying.
Ask questions to clarify what the other is saying.	Maintain good eye contact.
Focus on behavior that the other person controls.	Don't interrupt the other.
Focus on only one specific behavior at a time.	Stay here. Don't walk away mentally, emotionally, physically, or psychologically.
Be direct but tactful.	Use "I" statements instead of "You" statements; e.g., "When this happens, I feel" rather than "When you do this, it makes me feel"
Don't attack the other by ridiculing, taunting, or otherwise being rude and hostile.	Don't defend yourself by blaming others, avoiding, or withdrawing.

A Process of Conflict Management: Stop, Start, Continue

A truly effective process to deal with a conflict that you are having with another is to use an approach that comes out of marital counseling. It's called Stop, Start, and Continue.

1. Create/validate communication ground rules.
2. Each person writes one 3" X 5" card for the other, specifying--
 - # One thing the person wants the other person to **stop** doing
 - # One thing the person wants the other person to **start** doing
 - # One thing the person wants the other person to **continue** doing

Note: No more than **one** specific behavior is to be written for each start, stop, and continue. That will prevent piling on. Also, the behavior **must be under the control of the person addressed.**

3. The pair starts, by first one of the parties providing the **stop** on his or her card to the other, listening for feedback, answering questions, and negotiating agreement. The receiver listens in depth, asks for specific examples, probes for deeper understanding, and paraphrases what he or she hears the other saying. If the other is not willing to commit to stopping the behavior, then he or she must indicate his or her reasons for not being able to make the commitment to change.
4. The process continues with the other person providing his or her **stop** to the other, following the process in #3.

5. The process continues with the giving, receiving, negotiating, and committing to the remaining **starts** and **continues**.
6. Cards containing commitments are then posted, reviewed often, and used by one another to hold the other accountable.
6. The parties and the facilitators debrief on the process and provide affirmations for the courage to care and to communicate.

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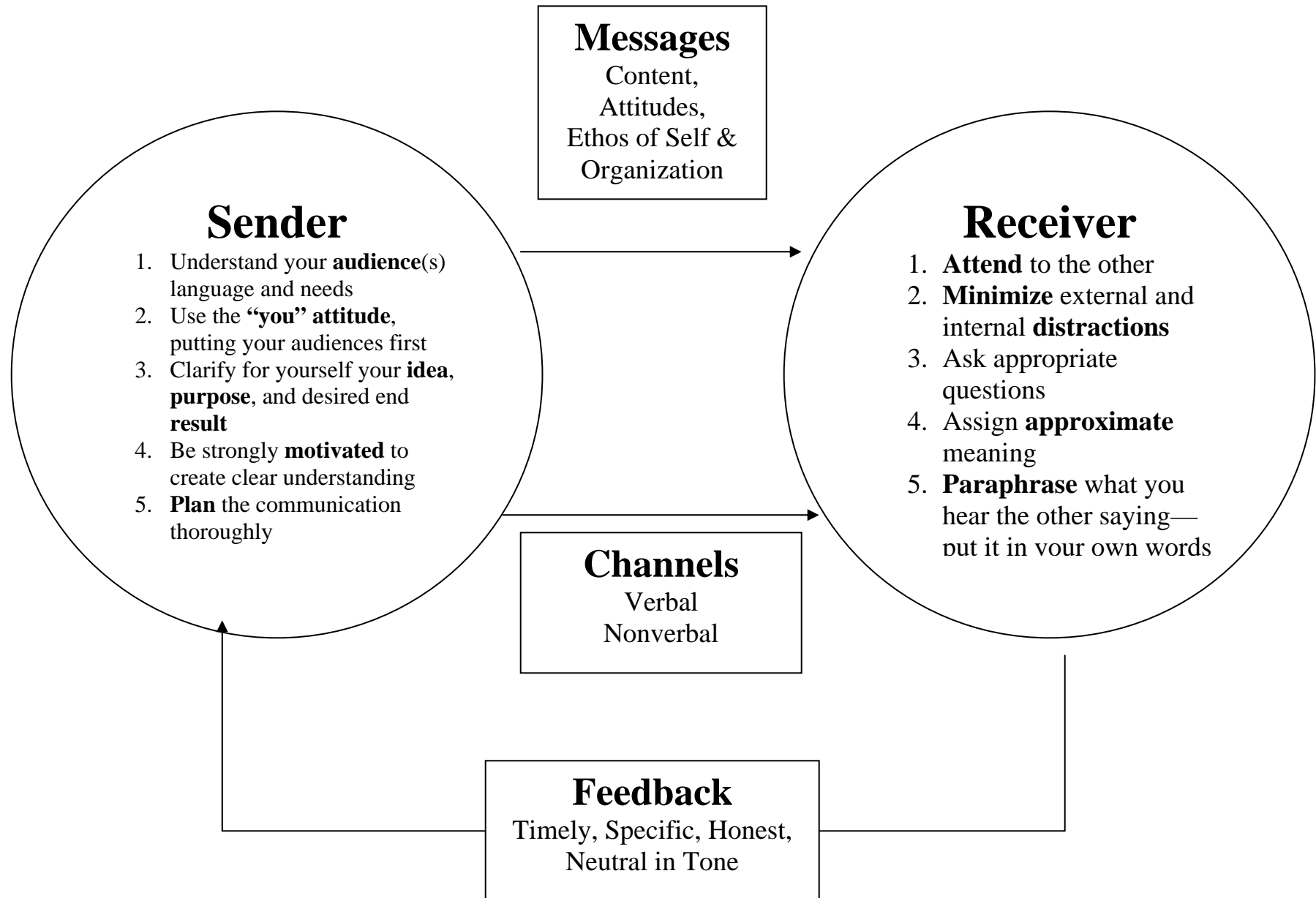
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Attachment #1

Communication: The Creation of Understanding



Attachment #2
Key Questions When Planning Communications

1. What is my **purpose** for communicating? Is it to inform, to persuade, to inspire, to document, to inquire, or to create or sustain good will?

2. What **results** do I wish to occur as a consequence of the communication?

3. What **ethos** (message about character) do I prefer to communicate?

Self: _____

Organization: _____

4. Who is the **audience**?

Demographics_____

Psychographics (needs/wants/drivers/priorities)

Knowledge, interests, and attitudes_____

5. What are the most appropriate **channels** or **means** to use to communicate to this audience for these purposes?

6. What are the most appropriate **time** and **place** for the communication?

Attachment # 3: Exercises for Clarifying Principles of Communication

Directions: For each of the points below, paraphrase it (put it in your own words), and provide a specific, concrete example from your personal or professional experience that supports it, positively or negatively.

1. Remember that our **total behavior** is involved in communication. What is said and done every day on the job is the most important part of organizational communication. Sincerity, essential honesty, living what is said, acting cooperation as well as talking it--these are basic to all good communication.

2. Always try to be sure you understand clearly yourself **what you are trying to communicate** and **what your own purpose is** in communicating. Have the clear **intent** to create understanding.

3. Try to be keenly aware of the total **physical, psychological, and emotional setting** in which you are communicating--be **flexible**.

4. Remember that no matter what we say or how we say it, **no one ever gets quite the meaning we intend**--nor do we get the meaning anyone else intends.

5. Be alert to the fact that your **total personality is communicating** as you speak. Your tone of voice, your facial expressions, your general mood may be affecting a listener's reactions even more than your actual words.

6. Be alert to every possibility of **feedback** on your communication. Ask questions to see if your listener understood what you intended. Watch for behavioral cues as to the listener's response.

7. Try to create the kind of human relations **climate** that encourages people to ask questions when they don't understand and to let you know when they disagree with you.

8. Remember that **disagreement** in human relations **is inevitable**--and normal. Expect it, and use it to sharpen your awareness of the various aspects of the problem at hand. It is a psychological truism that as the other person sees the situation, he or she is probably right.

9. Keep the communication channels open by remembering to **preserve the other person's ego**. Don't abruptly disprove his or her statement; don't be over-anxious to show up weaknesses in his or her point of view.

10. Encourage the free flow of communications by taking every opportunity to express an honest **appreciation or admiration** of the other person's thoughts and actions. Look more for virtues in your associates and direct reports--look less for faults.
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11. Listen carefully to **gripes**. Misapprehensions, and misunderstandings, which block communication, are usually revealed. Furthermore, the opportunity to state the complaint--and have it really understood--usually makes it seem less important.

12. Try to develop your skill as a listener. **Empathic listening**--putting yourself in the other person's shoes--is the highest skill of the leader. It is also one of the hardest to acquire, and can usually be achieved only by intelligent practice over a period of time.

Finally, remember that communication is a skill that must be **learned by doing**. Being conscious of the principles will not make us good communicators—we must **practice** them with discipline until they become habitual. They then become part of our “unconscious” behavior.