

COMMUNICATION

Interpersonal communication is a process in which individuals convey the feelings and thoughts that they want to make known. These are the basic conditions of a successful communication:

- 1. Respect for others:** means acknowledging their presence, making them feel important and valued, and accepting them as they are.
- 2. To behave realistic and natural:** is behaving without exaggeration, as you are.
- 3. To be empathic:** connotes efforts to see and understand the world by looking from other's window.

Communication is not just talking.

It is at the same time,

- Knowing what, when, where and how to say,
- To be able to understandably express what we are trying to communicate,
- To be able to talk fluently and by maintaining eye-contact,
- To focus on and notice whether our messages are received or not.

The basic premise of communication is to accept. This means trying to understand and show respect for the feelings of the other, even if we are entirely at opposites in terms of thought, idea and interpretations.

Listening

Since non-verbal messages are also a part of the communication, a good listener "hears" not only the words of the person he/she is communicating with, but also what the person is trying to tell by his/her face and body. Sometimes non-verbal messages are communication even just by themselves.

Factors that Impede Communication

Let's think about our environment... ourselves... Who comes to our mind first when we have a problem? With whom do we want to talk, share our problems? Why him/her, not anybody else? Which features of this person make him/her a good listener? It is easy and pleasurable to talk with some people around us, while communication with some people may be superficial. A lot of factors such as similar personality traits, common interests and hobbies, similar values and world views, similar moral perspectives, and parallel educational levels are crucial for interpersonal communication. In addition to these, physical attractiveness may also contribute to our communication with both same-sex and opposite-sex. However, the real determinant of the quality in interpersonal communication is listening skills. Even if we do have many common points with some people, we may avoid communicating with them.

Behaviors that Complicate Communication

1. Giving advise, finding solutions, directing:

"Do it this way, not that way..."

"Study, instead of suffering for..."

Sentences like this may evoke resistance and revolt and make the person defend against them. They may cause an interruption or redirection during communication, by generating feelings of pressure or guilt in the other.

2. Judging, criticizing, labeling:

"You always choose the easy way..."

"You are acting like a baby..."

Other person may feel that he/she has not been understood and is subject to unfairness. Consequently he/she may stop communicating or react angrily.

3. Asking questions, exploring, investigating

"Why?...What did you do to him?...What did he say?..."

In general, approaches like questioning, investigating and searching for a reason embrace prejudice, criticism or an obligatory solution. Furthermore, the conversation may move away from the main subject by getting stuck at answering the questions. Since often the aim of the person who asks the questions is not understood by the other person, he/she may start worrying or defending him/herself.

4. Diagnosing, assaying:

"You don't really want to say that"

"The real problem with you is something else"

Since these approaches reflect an attitude as if the listener already knows the intention of the person and what he/she wants to say, or reads his/her mind, the person may defend him/herself as well as may be irritated, be impatient or react angrily.

5. Cheering up, changing the subject:

“Don’t take it serious, nevermind...”

“It will be OK, don’t worry about it...”

Trying to cheer up somebody is a nice behavior; however it is important to do it after we show that we heard him/her. Otherwise, the person may feel that we did not listen and understand him/her. S/he may feel angry because of being trivialized. In general, the cheer up messages given before listening causes the person to feel degraded.

Empathy: We should listen to the person, with whom we would empathize, through all possible channels and try to understand his/her thoughts, attitudes and feelings. We should adopt the person’s perspective and experience his/her emotional situation; see everything through his/her eyes. This period of putting yourself in his/her place must be short but sufficient to understand his/her situation. At the end of this period, we should go back to our own perspective and emotional situation.

For More Information

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