

COMMUNICATION DEFINED...

Make a general list of what you describe as communication. List everything you can think of.

You have probably heard someone say, “We need better communication.” Or... “We need good communication.” What do you think communication means when you put the word, ‘good’ and ‘better’ in front of it?

What would you describe as ‘GOOD’ Communication?

What would you describe as ‘BAD’ Communication?

Do you think it’s important to have ‘GOOD’ communication? Circle one.

YES	NO
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Whichever one you circled, take a minute to write down why...

COMMUNICATION REDEFINED...

Okay, thanks for taking time to answer those questions. You just needed to clear your head regarding your current ideas about 'COMMUNICATION'. That's why you just dumped it all on the previous page. Now, this part is fun... take that page, wad it up, and throw it away! Yep... in the trash. Throw away what you think about good communication.

Now let's start fresh.

People too often talk about 'GOOD' Communication and 'BAD' Communication. Communication is NOT good or bad, it just simply IS. It doesn't have a value to it. People are always communicating. They can't help it. Even when you choose to say nothing, you are communicating something. It may be "I don't have anything to say." Or "Kiss my butt." Whatever the case you ARE sending a message, even when you don't say a word. So this lesson on Communication is probably going to be quite a bit different than anything you've seen before. That's good. After finishing this unit, you will be equipped with information that very few people know about and you can absolutely use it to your advantage.

The word 'communications' usually brings up images of television and radio and other media efforts in our technologically advanced society. You might think of yourself as a radio or a television when it comes to communicating. You are either ON... sending your information out into the world, or you are OFF... shut down, with no sound or picture coming out. Televisions pick up a signal from a satellite when they are ON, and they don't pick up the signal when they are OFF. BUT... if you look at the satellite, regardless if the TV is on or off... the signal remains.

In reality, you are the satellite that emits a constant signal, NOT the TV. You cannot simply turn your communication ON or OFF. Even when you think you are shutting down your communication by going to your room and closing the door on the world, you are *still* sending your signal. You are never OFF.

What signal might you be sending from your communication satellite when your door is closed?

THIS is why it's important to learn a little about communication. NOT because you need to have 'better' communication or 'good' communication, but because you need to be aware of the communication you are *already* sending out! ... Then you can adjust as necessary.

Here are some good reasons to dive into this information and really pay attention...

- If you are sending out a signal no matter what you do, you might as well communicate intentionally or 'on purpose'.
- If you know how to use your signal effectively, you can get along in a lot of different environments.
- You can stop assuming people 'know what you mean', because they don't!
- Controlling your communication signal can get you a whole lot more - - a whole lot faster in life.

What is being communicated?

Take a look at the situations below and decide what this person might be communicating.

EXAMPLE:

Jack shows up late for work about three times a week. He doesn't call his boss and tell him. Jack shows up, goes on about his business, and never mentions being late.

What might Jack be communicating?

(Just to name a few...)

That he doesn't care about his job and the people he works with.

That he doesn't really know what time he is supposed to be there.

That he doesn't have a watch.

That he can't tell time.

That he has to drive his sister to school before work every day.

That he is mute.

That he over sleeps every day.

That he has problems he doesn't want to talk about.

A combination of one or more of the above reasons.

What else?

No matter what's really going on with Jack, which thing do you think his boss might believe he is communicating by being late?

So is Jack really benefiting from the kind of communication he is sending?

How do you think it will work out for Jack eventually?

Since Jack is communicating no matter what he does, what could he do differently to use his signal to his OWN benefit?

What is being communicated?

Let's try another...

Maria has a short temper. She yells at people randomly for so particular reason, including her friends. **What might Maria be communicating?**

(Just to name a few...)

That she is scary and mean.

That she is going to hurt someone if they get in her way.

That she doesn't want any friends.

That she is mad all the time.

That she can't hear very well and doesn't know she is yelling

That she is scared about something.

That she has Tourettes.

That someone is always yelling at her and that's the only way she knows.

A combination of one or more of the above reasons.

What else?

No matter what's really going on with Maria, which thing do you think her friends might believe she is communicating by yelling a lot?

So is Maria really benefiting from the kind of communication she is sending?

How do you think it will work out for Maria eventually?

Since Maria is communicating no matter what she does, what could she do differently to use her signal to her OWN benefit?

What is being communicated?

Let's try another...

Alaine doesn't really talk to or even look at anyone other than her group of friends. Even though she is one of the prettiest girls at school, she always has a frown on her face. What might Alaine be communicating?

(Just to name a few...)

That she is a snob.

That she thinks she is better than everyone else.

That she doesn't want any other friends.

That she doesn't know people are looking at her.

That she is really unhappy about life.

That she thinks she is weird and no one pays attention to her.

That she is very shy.

That she thinks no one wants to talk to her except the few friends she has.

A combination of one or more of the above reasons.

What else?

No matter what's really going on with Alaine, which thing do you think people in her school might believe she is communicating with her actions?

So is Alaine really benefiting from the kind of communication she is sending?

How do you think it will work out for Alaine eventually?

Since Alaine is communicating no matter what she does, what could she do differently to use her signal to her OWN benefit?

What is being communicated?

Now you try...

Write down a situation about someone you know.

What might he/she be communicating?

No matter what's really going on, which thing do you think people might believe this person is communicating through his/her actions?

So is this person really benefiting from the kind of communication he/she is sending?

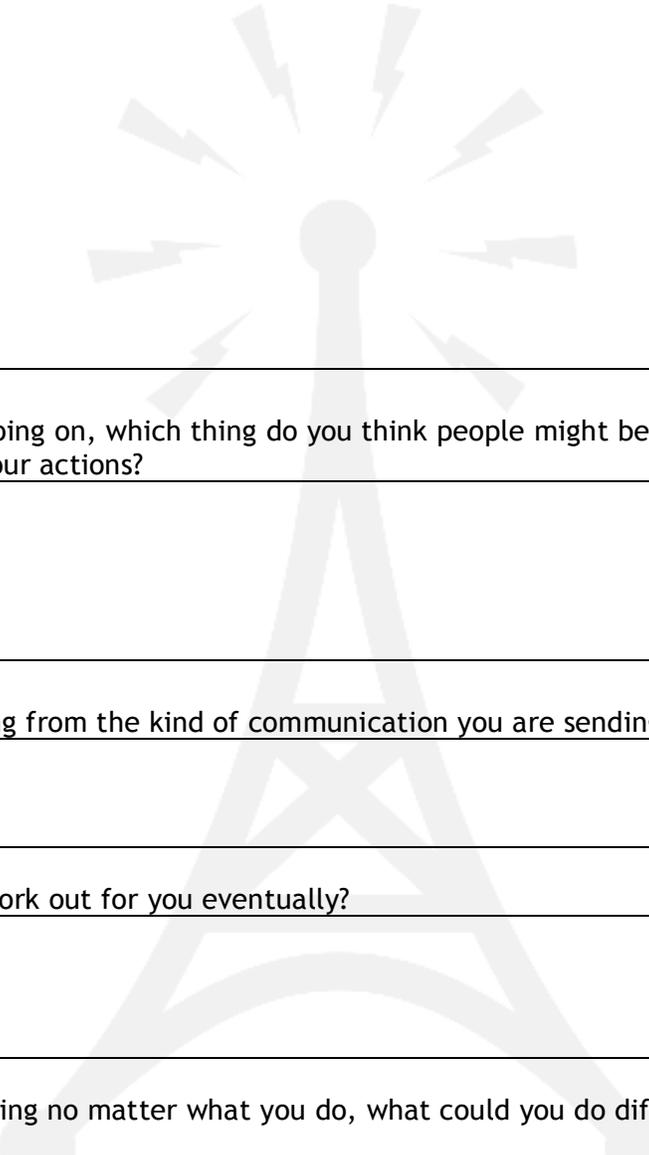
How do you think it will work out for this person eventually?

Since this person is communicating no matter what he/she does, what could they do differently to use the signal to his/her OWN benefit?

What is being communicated?

Now you try it out on yourself...
Write down a situation about you.

What might you be communicating?



No matter what's really going on, which thing do you think people might believe you are communicating through your actions?

So are you really benefiting from the kind of communication you are sending?

How do you think it will work out for you eventually?

Since you are communicating no matter what you do, what could you do differently to use your signal to your OWN benefit?

What is being communicated?

So are you starting to get the big picture? Communication is a constant signal.

- It's in the words we say and the words we don't say.
- It's in the way we present ourselves and the way we don't present ourselves.
- It's in the actions we take and the actions we don't take.
- It's in the help we offer and the help we don't offer.
- It's in the problems we solve and the problems we don't solve.
- It's in the kind of words we use and the kind of words we don't use.

Communication is everywhere, all the time, and you can use it to your advantage or disadvantage depending on how you play your cards. You can benefit from the signal you are sending by being aware of it and sending the signal on purpose. Or, you can ignore it and hope for the best. It's your choice... But at least now you know!

So just in case you want to use your newly discovered POWER of communication to work things in life to your advantage, here are some helpful hints. You will be amazed at how well things will start to go your way when you try out these tools!

Communication Tool Chest:

- ❖ Communicate with your appearance.
- ❖ Communicate with your actions.
- ❖ Communicate through information that HELPS.
- ❖ Communicate through Problem Solving.
- ❖ Communicate through positive language.
 - Tell people what you want instead of what you don't want.
 - Tell people what you can do instead of what you can't do.
 - Tell people what you get to do instead of what you have to do.
 - 'BUT' out!

Communicate with your appearance.

Since people are always sending out a communication signal, what might someone’s appearance be communicating?

What do you want your appearance to communicate?

And doesn’t it have a lot to do with how you are feeling?
Write a little about how you dress when you feel ‘up’.

Write a little about how you dress when you feel ‘down’.

There are no right or wrong answers to the above questions. Your appearance will communicate different things at different times. There will be days you are short on sleep and your appearance will probably tell the story. There will be days when you feel great about your life, and your appearance will tell that story too. The important thing about your appearance is to BE AWARE of what you are communicating by the way you present yourself.

{Helpful hint... you can actually cause yourself to feel different on the inside by changing how you present yourself on the outside. You can shift a bad mood into a good mood by simply taking time to dress and look the way you’d like *to feel*. Try it!}

Let’s apply this to the workplace. Start to think about how you might want to present yourself in the job you will be getting soon. If you are applying at more than one place, do the exercise for at least three job sites.

Where would you like to work?	What would you like to communicate through your appearance?	How will you do that?

Communicate with your actions.

Have you ever noticed someone who is saying one thing but you get a feeling that something totally different is going on inside of them? What gives you that idea?

Often times, people’s words and their actions don’t match up. For instance if you ask someone, “How are you?” and they reply, “Fine. Things are really good.?” but the whole time their eyes are looking at the ground, their shoulders are slumped, and they are kicking the dirt. Do you really believe they are fine? The message that person is sending is incongruent or said another way... it doesn’t fit. So which message do you believe from that person... The words or the actions? Most of us believe the actions more than the words. You’ve probably heard someone say, “Actions speak louder than words.” It’s true. What we DO communicates more about us than what we SAY.

What might some of these common actions be communicating?

Good eye contact	
Little or no eye contact	
Arms crossed	
Posture straight	
Posture bent	

What can someone communicate with their actions even when they aren’t saying a word?

- Flirting
- Ignoring
- Sadness
- Fear
- Anger
- What else?

Now that you are aware that your actions are sending communication signals, what will you do differently?

What will you do the same?

❖ Communicate information that HELPS.

If someone said something nice about someone else tell it. If they said something hurtful, don't tell it. It's not brain surgery. Put yourself in the shoes of the person receiving the information. If you heard it, would it help you or make you feel good? Or if you heard it, would it hurt you or make you feel sad? Don't over think it. Use your gut reaction to the question. People are often tempted to get into other people's business in the name of 'friendship' or 'truth'. When in reality, they usually just end up making things worse. You are smart. When you have information that is likely to hurt another person. What will you do with it?

In the workplace, this particular tool often comes in handy in dealing with office gossip. The workplace is a hotspot for gossiping and stirring up trouble. You just *thought* there was drama at school! When people get together in one place where money and responsibility (or the lack of it) are the primary reasons for showing up each day, it can get ugly! Workplace gossip breeds and grows and has more drama and cat fighting than a good chick flick. It is your employer's greatest nightmare. So the best thing you can do is STAY AWAY from it! Don't get involved. Don't listen, don't spread it, don't let it suck you in. If you can simply stay out of the drama, you will be communicating to your employer that you are there to WORK, not cause trouble. When your boss sees your message through your actions, you will get more money and a better chance at advancement. When it comes to office gossip, remember what Patch the Pony says, "Nay, Nay, Stay away!" ☺

How will you decide if the information you are getting is helpful or hurtful to someone else?

(You might want to ask yourself... what benefit will the person I am telling receive when I tell it? What benefit will I receive when I tell it? Is my motive selfish?)

How will you decide if you are going to share it or not? (It's a lot easier to think through this now, than when you are standing in the moment trying to decide...)

How might you do things differently in your life when you think about how information helps or hurts someone else?

Communicate through Problem Solving.

Lots of people have a stuff to complain about. It's pretty normal to have some chaos and confusion in life. And lots of people work through their problems by processing them out loud, which means talking to someone about the problem... or sometimes just venting! That's okay, depending on WHO you decide to talk to... And what you do with the information once you've processed it.

In your personal life, you probably have people who help you through a situation and people who just make it worse by being negative or telling everyone your problems. (Back to the stuff you just did on the last page... there are people who choose to hurt you instead of help you when they have information.) So hopefully you've figured out who the right people are in your life, and you have one or more people you can count on.

At work, it's not as simple as telling your work-related problems to whomever you feel comfortable with. It's telling your work-related problems to the RIGHT person, who can actually do something to help you change the situation. Often times, the RIGHT person WILL NOT include your co-workers or people who might report to you if you are a supervisor. The RIGHT person will usually be someone you report to or someone on the same level as the person you report to.

To your employer, there are two kinds of employees...

Complainers & Problem Solvers.

Complainers notice things that aren't going right, then gripe and complain about it but don't offer any solutions to the problems. They just make the people around them upset and they stay stuck in a circle of complaining.

Problem Solvers notice things that aren't going right, and come up with ways to make them better. They don't mind saying what's not working, and they offer ways to make things work.

If you want to be a Problem Solver, here's how...

When you notice something that is happening that is not useful for the workplace, the employees, or the customer...

- Define it, using the 5 P's. (See The 5 P's in Problem Solving)
- Use the 5 P's to come up with a plan to solve it.
- Decide who can help you change it.
- Set up a time to visit with the RIGHT person or people

Ask yourself these questions to determine who the RIGHT person might be...

- Who can help me make this situation better?
- Who cannot help me make this situation better?
- Who might actually make the situation worse?

How might this tool help you be a better employee and move up faster?

❖ **Communicate through positive language.**

- Tell people what you do WANT instead of what you don't want.
- Tell people what you CAN DO instead of what you can't do.
- Tell people what you GET TO do instead of what you have to do.
- 'BUT' out!

This tool is one of the most effective, useful ways you can communicate. You will see small changes immediately and huge changes over time using this tool. Using positive language is contagious. When you use it, you began to paint a brighter and better present and future for yourself and everyone you come in contact with.

Here are very simple and very powerful ways to use positive language.

- **Tell people what you do WANT instead of what you don't want.**

People spend a lot of time thinking and talking about all the things they DON'T want. And the more they talk and think about them, the more those things seem to come their way! So the quickest way to get more of what you do want and less of what you don't want is to shift your focus to the positive... When you are talking and you hear yourself saying what you *don't* want. STOP. Turn it around. Talk about what you *do* want.

For example...

If you need some downtime and your mom keeps trying to talk to you...

Instead of saying, "Mom, I don't want you to bother me for the next two hours."

Try saying, "Mom, I want some alone time for the next two hours, please."

If you're using their car and your parents keep making you nervous about wrecking or driving too fast...

Instead of saying, "I don't want to wreck the car... I don't want to get a ticket... I don't want my parents to keep griping at me..."

Try saying, "I want to stay safe, and I want a good driving record, so my parents will trust me with the car."

Make a list of 5 things you DON'T want.

Now use that list to make a list of 5 things you DO want.

❖ **Communicate through positive language.**

- **Tell people what you CAN DO instead of what you can't do.**

The same idea from the last page applies to what you can do and what you can't do. When someone asks you to do something or wants something from you, practice telling them what you CAN do even if it's different from what they asked for...

For example,

If your friend wants you to meet him at the mall right away...

Instead of saying, "I *can't* meet you at 10. I won't have time to get there."

Try saying, "I *can* meet you at 11. That will give me time to get there."

If a customer asks you to hold an item until tomorrow and the store policy says you can't...

Instead of saying, "I *can't* hold it until tomorrow."

Try saying, "I *can* hold it until 9pm tonight."

- **Tell people what you GET TO DO instead of what you have to do.**

If you put yourself on a recorder, how many times to do you think you'd hear yourself saying, "Well I have to do this, then I have to go here, then I have to meet my friend, then I have to go to work..."

If you make a TO DO list. What's on it? What do you *have* to do?

Make one now.

TO DO List...

I have to	I have to
I have to	I have to
I have to	I have to
I have to	I have to
I have to	I have to

Now, go back through the list and forget the word 'have'. Replace it with the word 'get'.

I get to	I get to
I get to	I get to
I get to	I get to
I get to	I get to
I get to	I get to

How does that feel? Aren't some of the things you get to do really a privilege? Maybe even a luxury? That's something to get excited about! This may sound goofy, but see if it helps you change your perspective on life a little. Sometimes all it takes to put you in a completely different frame of mind is a spin on words. It's amazing how much your language affects you.

❖ Communicate through positive language.

▪ 'BUT' out!

One other way to shift your communication to the positive side is to 'BUT' out! The word 'BUT' is completely overused in our society. If you really think about it, the word 'but' *stinks!* Literally! When someone says something to you that's nice or sounds good, then follows up with the word 'but'... what do you expect is coming next? It usually isn't good, right?

- "The yard looks great, BUT you forgot to pull the weeds out of the flower bed."
- "The sales numbers are up this month, BUT I am worried about next month."
- "You did a good job cleaning your room, BUT the rest of the house is still a mess!"
- "I really like you, BUT I just want to be friends."

UGH! No matter what someone says in the first part of the sentence... when they follow it with 'BUT' you forget whatever nice thing they said and only hear the bad part at the end. It's like the word 'but' erases the first part of the sentence. So why use it unless you are purposely trying to make someone feel like, well... a butt! When you are talking and you hear yourself saying the word 'but'. STOP. What other word could you use? Try AND or SO...

It would be nice to hear something besides 'but' in these situations... See if you get the same message without the 'but'...

'BUT' out!

~~"The yard looks great, BUT you forgot to pull the weeds out of the flower bed."~~

"The yard looks great, so will you please pull the weeds from the flower bed, too?"

~~"The sales numbers are up this month, BUT I am worried about next month."~~

"The sales numbers are up this month, so let's keep up the good work for next month."

~~"You did a good job cleaning your room, BUT the rest of the house is still a mess!"~~

"You did a good job cleaning up your room, so please do the same in the rest of the house."

~~"I really like you, BUT I just want to be friends."~~

"I really like you, and I want to be friends."

You try...

Write down a few things you might have said lately that included the word 'but'... Use the white boxes only.

Now 'BUT' out! Go back and mark through the sentence using 'but'. Try to say it in a positive way using AND or SO... Write your new sentence in the gray box under it.

Let's review...

You cannot *NOT* communicate. You are always sending a communication signal.

If you are communicating anyway, do it on purpose!

Use the Communication Tool Chest:

- ❖ Communicate with your appearance.
- ❖ Communicate with your actions.
- ❖ Communicate with information that HELPS.
- ❖ Communicate through Problem Solving.
- ❖ Communicate through Positive Language.
 - Tell people what you *do* have, instead of what you *don't* have.
 - Tell people what you *can* do, instead of what you *can't* do.
 - Tell people what you *get* to do, instead of what you *have* to do.
 - 'BUT' out! Try to use AND or SO instead...

How can you use intentional communication to improve your life?

How can you use intentional communication to help you get a job or get promoted in the job you have?

Remember, you are always sending out a communication signal. Be aware of the signal you are sending and send a positive one as often as possible!