

Eight Communication Techniques

1. Clarification

This technique is used when a person wishes to check the accuracy of a message, to understand more clearly, or to hear the message repeated for reflective purposes.

Example: "I'm not certain I understand. Please clarify for me"

"Could you explain that process once again? I'm not clear on the last step..."

2. Transitions

This technique is used when a person wishes to add something to a discussion. Usually the name of the last person to speak is mentioned to indicate to that person that he/she has been heard and valued. This technique is highly recommended for group discussion.

Example: "Adding to what you've said Sue, I'd like to suggest"

"I think your input has helped me, Mary, and I'd like to say"

"In contrast to Dick's idea, I'm for moving slowly because"

"Agreeing with John and Jim regarding the plan, I'm suggesting that we"

3. Elaboration

This technique is used when a person wishes more information from the speaker. Usually the person who is asking for elaboration is very specific about a need. Use the name of the person in the request.

Example: "I'd like to hear more about that car, Jerry, please continue.

"Hey, Bob, would you give a few examples of how the machine could work in our department?"

"I need more details before I can make a decision, Judy. Please give me the most important details."

4. Name Calling

This technique is used whenever one person is talking to another. Using a person's name gives value to that person. This technique is highly recommended in a group discussion.

Example: "Luanne, would you check to see if all the equipment is in?"

"How does the group feel about the idea? Becky, I'm interested in hearing your opinion."

5. "You" Messages

This technique is used when a person wishes to practice some reflective listening. The message usually begins with the word "you" and includes a "feeling word" mentioned by the other person.

Examples: "You feel upset because . . . "
"You sound excited about "
"You want to be heard but you feel embarrassed when you "

6. "I" Messages

This technique is used in three different ways. First, when a person simply wants to tell another person something positive. Second, when a person is having a problem and wished to tell a third party about it. Third, when a person is having a problem with a person and he/she wishes to tell that person about it. The work "I" refers to the person having the problem. The person directs the problem to a particular behavior in the other person that is problematic to the person sending the "I" message. It is helpful to mention what the problem is doing to the owner of the problem.

Examples: "I am frustrated when you interrupt me in conversation because I forget what I want to say and I feel threatened."
"When you make that kind of noise in the room, I get very upset because people tell me I'm not a good leader."
"I like the way you talk to children, Jean "
"Jim, I'd like to tell you about a problem I'm having with Gene."

7. Support Statements

This technique is used when a person wishes to tell another that he/she agrees with the other person's statement. People need to hear supportive comments from others. Positive stroking helps people to feel valued and wanted. This technique encourages people to contribute their personal strengths and resources to the task.

Examples: "I'd like to go along with your comment, Jackie."
"Hey, that's a good idea, George."
"I'll support that point, Terry."
"John, I'm in favor of your approach."

8. Closure

This technique is used when a person has been asked a question by another. The person answers the question and then makes "closure" by simply making one of the following comments:

Examples: "Does that answer your question, Tom?"
"Are you clear on the idea, Michelle?"
"I'd like to summarize what we have been discussing."