

Effective Communication

Robert D. Cecil

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EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

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EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

How often have you heard someone say, either jokingly or seriously, “What we have here is a failure to communicate.” Many times problems are due to a failure to *communicate at all*. Most times, however, problems stem from a failure to communicate *effectively*. This booklet deals with how to communicate effectively.

The booklet is divided into four sections. The first defines communication and describes the communication process. The second discusses symptoms and causes of faulty communication, focusing on receiver attention, reception, and interpretation problems. The third and fourth sections outline principles and practices for effective communication. The third section specifically discusses a “sender’s” responsibilities for effective communication, and the fourth section specifically discusses a “receiver’s” responsibilities.

The principles, concepts, and procedures presented in this booklet are “universals.” They can be applied by *anyone*. In addition, they can help anyone improve his or her interpersonal relationships and learning, planning, problem-solving, and decision-making processes.

Communication Defined and Described

Definition of Communication

Effective communication is the *process of conveying a thought* (fact, bit of information, idea, instruction, decision, piece of advice) *or a feeling from the mind of one person to the mind of another person both accurately and understandably*.

The communication process involves a “sender” and a “receiver.” Effective communication between a sender and a receiver is a matter of “*getting through*,” *not simply “getting across*.”

Objectives of Communication

The real test of a communication process is *whether or not the receiver learns, feels, thinks, or behaves as the sender intended*.

The basic objective(s) of any particular communication process can be one or more of the following:

- A. To help (to inform, teach, advise, guide, assist)
- B. To influence or persuade — i.e., to get someone to (a) understand, accept, and agree with one’s point of view, or (b) do something that one is requesting or recommending
- C. To entertain
- D. To impress

Types of Communication

Types by Direction Involved

1. **One-Way (One-Sided)** [Sender → Receiver]
 - a. Speaking publicly; lecturing
 - b. Issuing instructions, decisions, orders
 - c. Writing a memo, letter, report, brief
 - d. Books, manuals, newspapers, magazines
 - e. Signs, posters, banners
 - f. Television, Cable TV
 - g. Movie
 - h. Radio

2. **Two-Way (Two-Sided)** [Sender ↔ Receiver]

These include one-on-one and group conversations, in which both the sender(s) and the receiver(s) are able to (a) exchange information, ideas, opinions, advice, and/or recommendations, (b) show and/or express their feelings to each other, (c) receive feedback regarding their own communications, and (d) give feedback regarding others’ communications. Examples:

- a. One-on-one conversations
- b. Informal group (social) conversations
- c. Interactive classes and seminars
- d. Business meetings

Table 1: Matrix of Communication Modes

	VERBAL			VISUAL AIDS	NONVERBAL			
	Oral	Written			Visual		Auditory	Tactile
		Text	H-O		Face/Body	Pictures		
One-Way (One-Sided)								
Speaking Publicly, Lecturing	ORAL		h-o*	VA	face/body	pictures	sounds	
Issuing Decision or Order (Written)		TEXT	h-o	va		pictures		
Issuing Decision or Order (Personally)	ORAL		h-o	va	face/body	pictures	sounds	touch
Memo, Report, Letter, Brief		TEXT		va		pictures		
Book, Manual		TEXT		VA		PICTURES		
Newspaper, Magazine		TEXT		VA		PICTURES		
Sign, Poster, Banner		TEXT		va		PICTURES		
Television, Cable TV	ORAL	text		va	face/body	PICTURES	SOUNDS	
Radio, HiFi, Stereo	ORAL						SOUNDS	
Two-Way (Two-Sided)								
One-to-One Conversation Face-to-Face	ORAL				face/body		sounds	touch
Telephone, 2-Way Radio	ORAL						sounds	
Group Conversation (Infrml)	ORAL				face/body		sounds	touch
Class/Seminar (Interactive)	ORAL	text	h-o	VA	face/body	pictures	sounds	touch
Business Meeting Face-to-Face	ORAL		h-o	va	face/body		sounds	touch
Conference Phone Call	ORAL		h-o*	va*			sounds	
Teleconference (TV Phone)	ORAL		h-o*	VA*	face/body		sounds	
Internet Conference	ORAL	text		VA	face/body	pictures	sounds	

CAPITAL LETTERS = Major/Primary Mode(s)

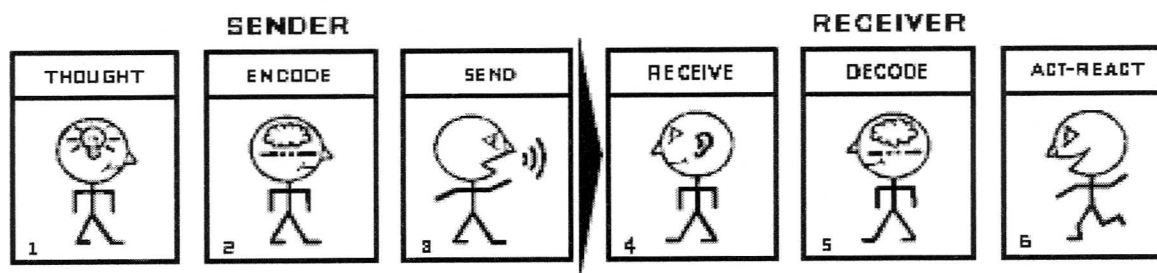
Lower-Case Letters = Other/Possible Mode(s)

h-o = Hand-Outs (Briefs, Outlines, Exhibits)

VA = Visual Aids (Models, Diagrams, Exhibits)

* = Provided for use

Figure 1: Main Sender and Receiver Steps in a (One-Way) Communication Process



Types by Mode (Means) of Conveyance

Most references on communication cite two basic modes: verbal and nonverbal.

1. Verbal (Worded) Communications

- Written communications — such as letters, reports, memos, briefs, books, articles in newspapers and magazines, and text in TV, magazine, newspaper, and billboard ads
- Oral (spoken) communications

2. Nonverbal (Non-Worded) Communications

We can communicate ideas and feelings nonverbally through several modes:

- Visually-Oriented Nonverbal Communications — such as pictures, symbols, diagrams (without text), and “body language” (which includes gestures and facial expressions)
- Auditory Nonverbal Communications
 - Vocal means — such as tone of voice, voice inflections, and vocal emphasis; and making non-verbal sounds such as laughing, screaming, crying, or moaning
 - Non-Vocal means — such as using sound-making devices or instruments (e.g., clapping hands, honking horns, and playing musical instruments)
- Tactile Nonverbal Communications — such as touching, stroking, caressing, or hitting

3. Combinations of Verbal & Nonverbal Means

As shown in **Table 1**, various modes of communication can be used in various types of situations. It should be noted that visual aids (models, diagrams, exhibits) generally contain both text and drawings.

Description of the Communication Process

The communication process involves at least one sender and at least one receiver, who, in a one-way or one-sided process, go through the six steps shown in **Figure 1**. (Of course, more than one sender and more than one receiver may be involved in a particular communication situation.) In a two-way or two-sided conversation, the receiver becomes the sender as he or she responds to the original sender’s message, while the original sender becomes the receiver.

As we outline the six steps below, we use the words “consciously or unconsciously.” This indicates that verbal and/or nonverbal messages can be sent consciously or purposefully, or they can be sent without our really thinking about the fact that we are communicating something. Our subconscious use of “body language” is a good example of the latter case. Another example is the common tendency to send messages without really thinking about what we are doing and how to do it well.

Step 1: The sender, responding to some internal or external stimulus, either consciously or unconsciously formulates a thought or feeling that he or she wishes (or is motivated) to convey to the receiver(s).

Step 2: The sender either consciously or unconsciously encodes the thought or feeling—i.e., the sender formulates how to convey (say, write, or otherwise express) the thought or feeling.

Step 3: The sender either consciously or unconsciously sends or conveys the message by verbal and/or nonverbal means.

Step 4: The receiver receives (hears, sees, or feels) the message (if he or she has focused either conscious or unconscious attention on it).

Step 5: The receiver either consciously or unconsciously decodes (interprets) the message.

Step 6: The receiver either consciously or unconsciously responds (or reacts) according to his or her interpretation of the message and to the emotions that it or the sender evoked.

This is not simply an intellectual (rational) process. Emotions as well as thoughts are involved.

Sender and Receiver Inputs to the Communication Process

Just as various individual characteristics influence learning, thought, and interpersonal behavior, they also influence communicative behavior.

1. **Motivational Inputs** include the following:

Basic Needs or Drives¹ — such as *physiological needs* (for water, food, rest); *safety needs* (for protection from harm or attack); *social needs* (for affiliation, love, and a sense of belonging); *ego needs* (for knowledge, competence, power or influence, status, achievement); and *self-actualization needs* (for becoming what one has the potential to become)

Personal Values² — such as concerns for the following: *economic matters* (money, success, material things, practicality); *intellectual or theoretical matters*; *social or altruistic matters*; *power or influence*; *aesthetics*; *religious or spiritual matters*; *achievement*; *variety*; *decisiveness*; *orderliness*; and *goal-orientedness*²

Interpersonal Values³ — such as concerns for *support*, *conformity*, *recognition*, *independence*, *benevolence*, and *leadership*

Personal Goals and Expectations

Personal Interests (Both Occupational and Avocational)

2. **Basic Mental Abilities**, which include *sensory perceptual abilities*, *interpretive abilities*, *learning abilities*, *the abilities for class (deductive) and propositional (inductive) logic*, and *speech abilities*. Most of these mental abilities are interrelated and often work together in learning, thinking, and communicating situations
3. **Knowledge Factors** include *vocabulary*, *factual knowledge*, and *experience*
4. **More “Attitudinal” Factors** include *opinions*, *beliefs*, *biases*, and *prejudices*
5. **Personality Traits**⁴ (behavioral tendencies) — such as (one’s levels of) *dominance*, *self-confidence*, *sociality*, *responsibility*, *social conscientiousness*, *original thinking*, *self-control*, *emotional stability*, *adaptability*, *mature relations*, and *vigor*
6. **Communication Skills** include *oral and writing skills*, *nonverbal skills*, *persuasiveness*, and *listening skills*

In general, these characteristics influence the sender’s communication steps in the following ways: The motivational inputs are largely responsible for initiating thought in response to some internal or external stimulus. In fact, needs or drives can be the internal stimuli. All characteristics can then be involved in Step 1 (thinking what one wants to convey) and in Step 2 (encoding or formulating how to convey it—e.g., by saying, showing, or otherwise expressing it). In Step 3 (actually conveying or sending the thought or feeling), personality traits and communication skills play a major role, but other characteristics can play a role, too.

The receiver’s characteristics influence Steps 4 through 6 in much the same way. Motivational traits largely influence whether or not and to what degree the receiver focuses attention on the sender’s message. In doing so, they also influence whether or not the receiver actually receives the message. Once the message has been received, all characteristics influence Step 5 (the receiver’s decoding or interpretation of the message). In Step 6 (the receiver’s response, action, or reaction to the message), all characteristics will influence the receiver’s integration and implementation of a response.

Other Inputs to the Communication Process

Personal characteristics are not the only factors operating in most given situations. In organizations, for example, task, social, organizational, and environmental factors can also influence the communication process.

1. **Task Inputs** include factors such as *job objectives, technical or functional tasks, work load, work flow, communication facilities, job interfaces, and many others*. For example, job interfaces may require communication between two people, but a lack of adequate communication facilities may make communication difficult.
2. **Social Inputs** include factors such as *group norms* (shared attitudes, and unwritten rules and behavioral expectations) and the *status and role(s) of the sender and receiver*. Group norms, for example, can influence who talks to whom, about what, and how. Several positive norms, which contribute to effective communication, include (a) concern for individuality or the uniqueness of each individual; (b) concern for others' ideas and feelings; and (c) trust in others' ideas and feelings. Several negative norms, which tend to obstruct effective communication, include blind conformity to, antagonism toward, and mistrust of others' ideas, feelings, or attitudes.
3. **Organizational Inputs** include factors such as *lines of authority, spans of control, channels of communication, organizational traditions, formal and informal policies, boss/subordinate relationships, and the pervasive managerial style*. For example, formal lines of authority and channels of communication can be obstacles to communication between people who must directly exchange information and ideas because their jobs are highly interdependent.
4. **Environmental Inputs** such as *noise, poor lighting, and disrupting or distracting stimuli* can render a speaker's presentation ineffective.

Symptoms and Causes of Faulty Communications

Many if not most causes of faulty communications lie within senders and receivers themselves. External causes

are important to the extent that they influence senders and receivers intellectually and/or emotionally.

Receiver Attention Problems

Without properly focused attention, a receiver will not begin to receive and interpret—or continue to receive and interpret—a sender's message. Attention is a function of both the sender's and receiver's inputs to the communication process.

Symptoms of Receiver Attention Problems

1. General Symptoms

- a. Receiver immediately tunes out
- b. Receiver subsequently tunes out

2. Specific Symptoms

- a. Mind-Wandering: The receiver's mind is preoccupied and is not focused on the sender and/or the sender's message.
- b. Selective Perception: The receiver is only paying attention to and perceiving what he or she wants (is motivated) to see or hear.
- c. Defensiveness: The receiver is somehow threatened by the sender or the sender's message and does not want to hear or see it.
- d. Disagreement: The receiver either partially or completely disagrees with message content and does not want to pay further attention.
- e. Polarity: The receiver either already has, or begins to develop, an opposing position, and adopts an "I'm 100% right and you're 100% wrong" attitude.

Underlying Causes of Receiver Attention Problems

The following factors often cause a receiver to begin tuning out a sender's communication. If dysfunctional feelings, attitudes, or perceptions formed at the beginning of the message are confirmed during the message, the receiver will tend to tune out completely at some point.

1. **Message Competition:** There are too many other messages competing for the receiver's attention.

2. Receiver's Motivation

a. **Message Importance:** The receiver senses that the message's content or objective does not fulfill (or will not contribute to fulfilling) his or her own needs, interests, goals, or expectations.

b. Risks to the Receiver

1. **Possibility (Threat) of Change:** The receiver rightly or wrongly perceives an impending change that will disturb the existing routine or equilibrium.

2. **Status or Ego Threat:** The receiver perceives that personal status, identity, or ego (sense of personal merit, ability, or worth) is threatened by the message, the sender, or both.

Especially in *helping situations*, there are things that make receiving help difficult:

- a. It is hard enough to admit our difficulties to ourselves, but even harder to admit them to others.
- b. The thought of having to depend on someone else is aversive to many people.
- c. It is difficult to recognize that we ourselves may be responsible for our problems and may need to change ourselves or our behavior.
- d. We can tend to feel that our problems are unique and that no one else can really understand or solve them.

There are also things that make giving help difficult:

- a. Giving advice makes us feel more competent and important than the person we are trying to help.
- b. We tend to meet receiver resistance with arguments and persuasive pressures.

3. **Personality Conflict:** A real or imagined personality conflict is experienced (perceived or simply felt) by the receiver, who "turns off" to the sender regardless of the sender's message.

4. **Frame of Mind:** For any number of possible reasons, the receiver is not in a receptive mood.

5. **Distractions:** Visual, auditory, or other stimuli present in the immediate environment are distracting the receiver's attention.

Receiver Reception Problems

Receiver reception involves the receiver hearing, seeing, feeling, or otherwise sensing the thought or feeling being communicated—but not yet interpreting what is being sensed.

Symptoms of Receiver Reception Problems

The receiver behaves in one or more of the following ways:

1. Immediately or subsequently "tunes out."
2. Does not respond in a "normal" manner while receiving the message.
3. Does not appear to hear or to understand the communication.
4. Asks the sender to repeat the message.
5. Acts confused.

Causes of Receiver Reception Problems

1. Superficial Causes

- a. The receiver cannot hear what the sender is saying (or is otherwise communicating auditorily).
- b. The receiver cannot see what the sender is showing (or is otherwise communicating visually).

2. Underlying Causes

- a. Something in the environment (e.g., noise, poor lighting, disruption) is interfering with receiver reception.
- b. The sender is not speaking distinctly or loudly enough.
- c. The sender is using visual aids that cannot be seen well enough.

Receiver Interpretation Problems

Interpreting (decoding) involves intellectual comprehension *filtered* through a receiver's motives, attitudes, and experience. Thus the quotation, "*We see (or hear) things not as they are, but as we are.*"

Symptoms of Receiver Interpretation Problems

The receiver behaves in one or more of the following ways:

1. Acts confused or appears not to understand.
2. Requests clarification, explanation, or restatement of the message.
3. Does not respond or react following the message.
4. Makes incorrect, improper, inappropriate, or unintended responses:
 - a. Misinterprets the sender's request.
 - b. Denies the sender's request.
 - c. Does not do (or give the sender) what the sender suggested or requested.
5. Otherwise reacts dysfunctionally:
 - a. *Polarity*: The receiver takes an opposing position and, in effect, says, "I'm 100% right and you're 100% wrong."
 - b. *Ambiguity*: The receiver's reaction to the message is ambiguous, vague, and/or noncommittal.
 - c. *Exaggeration*: The receiver makes exaggerated verbal and/or physical responses to the message.
 - d. *Disagreement*: The receiver disagrees with and/or argues with the sender.
 - e. *Defensiveness*: The receiver rationalizes or argues a point made about himself or herself.

Causes of Receiver Interpretation Problems

The symptoms mentioned above can stem from both intellectual and emotional phenomena associated with the

following causal factors or "elements" of communication.

1. Assumptions about the Communication Process

The process is both intellectual and emotional, not just one or the other. If, therefore, the sender assumes that it is basically an intellectual or rational process, he or she will be unaware of the process's emotional and/or interpersonal aspects. Thus, the sender may try to reach the receiver with one rational argument or explanation after another, not really dealing with the feelings that may be the real obstacles to the receiver's understanding and acceptance of the message.

2. Inferences (Opinions, Assumptions, Conclusions) vs. Facts (Data, Observations)

Language itself does not necessarily make it clear whether a statement is an inference or a factual observation. If a sender does not discriminate between inferences and facts (does not make it plain which statements are which), a receiver may incorrectly assume that (a) an inference is a fact, or (b) a fact is an inference. Also, if the receiver is discriminating between inferences and facts, and if the sender states an inference as though it were a fact, the receiver will tend to evaluate the statement from his or her own point of view. If the receiver disagrees with the statement, his or her reaction can tend to be rather negative toward the sender, the message, or both.

3. By-Passing (Miscommunicating Word Meanings)

a. General Vocabulary

If a sender uses a word which is not in the receiver's vocabulary, that word will probably have little or no meaning to the receiver, and, therefore, will be misinterpreted and/or cause confusion.

Keep in mind that our *recognition vocabulary* (words we recognize, but cannot necessarily understand and use) is considerably larger than our *reading vocabulary* (words we can understand when used in a context that either conveys or suggests the meaning). Our reading vocabulary is larger than our *writing vocabulary* (words we can use properly in written communications). Our writing vocabulary is larger than our *speaking vocabulary* (words we can use in oral communications).

b. Specialized Vocabulary

Highly specialized words can also be misinterpreted and cause confusion.

1. *Esoteric Words* — words that are known by a relatively few, highly literate or specialized people (e.g. the word “esoteric” itself)
2. *Technical Terms or Jargon* — words or terms that are peculiar to some specialized field of knowledge or endeavor
3. *Colloquialisms* — slang words or terms commonly used by a particular group, subculture, or geographic group
4. *Acronyms* — abbreviated titles or phrases (such as “CINCPAC,” the abbreviated form of “Commander-In-Chief, Pacific”)
5. *Initials* — e.g., does A.M.A. stand for American Medical Association, American Management Association, American Marketing Association, or what?

c. Word Precision

Words rarely have precise meanings. Some large dictionaries give as many as one hundred meanings for various words. A single word, therefore, can transmit many different messages.

d. Experience Field (of Sender and Receiver)

The meanings of words are not simply in the words themselves, but are also in people. To any particular person, whether a sender or a receiver, a word has meaning not only within the context of the individual’s learned vocabulary, but also within the context of the individual’s experience field (and attitudes and feelings). Thus, a sender and receiver can have different words to describe the same thing, or can have different meanings for the same word. All too often, therefore, the sender sends one word (meaning), but the receiver hears (interprets) another meaning.

e. Abstraction (Under-Definition) vs. Restriction (Over-Definition)

Words such as “animal,” “hardware,” or “weapon” may be too broad or abstract to create the intended, specific image in a receiver’s mind. Words such as “fox,” “hinge,” or “pistol” might better convey a particular image (message). On the other hand, using a word that is too specific may restrict a thought (image) too much. Thus, although it is important to restrict (to define, delimit, classify, or organize) for the sake of clarity and precision, it is possible to over-define as well as to under-define.

4. **Hidden Meanings (“Meta-Talk”)**

People do not always express what they really mean or feel, often in order to be diplomatic, purposefully vague, or noncommittal. Receivers, therefore, must often “read between the lines.” When meta-talk is suspected, a receiver can be uncertain when to “read between the lines” and when not to do so. When meta-talk is recognized, a receiver will tend to say to himself or herself, “What does the sender really mean (think, feel, think about me, feel about me, expect of me, intend to do, etc.)?”

5. **“Allness” (Know-It-All, Said-It-All)**

“Allness” is based upon two false assumptions: (a) that it is possible to know and say everything about something, and (b) that what one is saying (or writing or thinking) includes all that is relevant or important about the subject. The egocentrism and arrogance of such “know-it-allness” and finality are present in communications often enough to be major causes of dysfunctional interpretations and reactions by receivers.

6. **Indiscrimination (Stereotyping)**

Stereotyping occurs when one over-emphasizes similarities and fails to consider the differences between people, things, places, or activities. Statements that allude to stereotypes can cause both inaccurate intellectual interpretation and negative or dysfunctional emotional reactions.

7. **Prejudice**

The word “prejudice” means “to prejudge.” Prejudices are usually prejudgments about people, and are often based on stereotypes. But, unlike stereotypes, prejudices are built around over-emphasis on the differences between people, with little regard for the similarities that

also exist. Prejudices can be communicated through words and actions of a sender. If the receiver is sensitive to prejudice, he or she may argue with or tune out the sender.

8. Double Standards

Double standards are reflected in the following attitudes: (a) “I’m OK (or we’re OK), but you’re not OK (or they’re not OK)”; and (b) “It’s OK if I (or we) do something, but it’s not OK if you (or they) do it.”⁵ Even though a sender might unconsciously send this kind of message verbally and/or nonverbally to the receiver, it will probably elicit negative emotions toward the sender and the sender’s message, thereby causing a breakdown in the communication process.

9. Use of Emotion-Charged Words

To most people there are certain words that elicit strong positive or negative emotions. Those that elicit negative emotions are certainly the most likely to generate barriers to effective communication. The “negative words” may be common words, but if a sender uses them improperly or without regard for the receiver’s sensitivities, they can cause arguments and receiver tune-out. Some examples are words that, within particular contexts, may be taken as sexist, racist, ethnic, or religious slurs.

10. Condescension

Few people appreciate being spoken to in a condescending manner that, in effect, says, “There, there, I don’t mind having to stoop to your level.” A condescending tone can put a receiver on either the offensive or the defensive in order to protect a somewhat wounded ego. The results, which obstruct communication, include arguments, personality conflicts, and receiver tune-out.

11. Acceptance vs. Agreement

When a sender’s objective is to influence or persuade a receiver, and when the sender also assumes that communication is basically a rational process, the sender can tend to (a) want agreement from the receiver, (b) be unwilling to accept that the receiver may have another point of view, (c) not tolerate a difference of opinion, and (d) keep “hitting the receiver over the head” with more facts and arguments. As a result, the receiver

will either argue, become silent and unresponsive, and/or tune out, leaving little to be accomplished by continuing the process.

12. Number of Links in a Communication Chain (Multiple Filtering)

When a message is passed from person to person (perhaps to get it to a final receiver), each person in the chain tends to distort the original message to some extent. Details tend to be dropped. New details tend to creep in. Some things will be given greater emphasis, while others will be given less. The message at the end of the chain will reflect the “filters” (ideas, opinions, attitudes, assumptions, feelings, biases, motives, and experiences) of all those who “handled” it.

13. Word Order, Grammar, Sentence Structure, and Punctuation

Errors in any of these areas can (a) alter one’s original thought (meaning), (b) destroy the clarity of one’s message, (c) irritate the receiver, (d) confuse the receiver, and (e) cause the receiver to focus on form rather than substance.

Symptoms and causes of faulty communication are summarized in **Table 2** on the next page.

A Sender’s Responsibilities for Effective Communication

At least six rules should guide a sender’s communicative efforts.

1. Stop to think about what you are doing and how to do it well—especially if the situation or communication is important.
2. Keep two things in mind:
 - a. receivers are not mind-readers; and
 - b. the communication process involves both intellectual (rational, logical) aspects and emotional (irrational, illogical) aspects.
3. **Think about . . .**
 - a. what to convey (say, write, or otherwise express);
 - b. how best to convey it (in order to “get it through”);

Table 2: Symptoms and Causes of Faulty Communications

Symptoms of Faulty Communication	Causes of Faulty Communication
<p>Receiver <u>Attention</u> Problems Immediately tunes out Mind wanders Selective Attention Defensiveness Disagreement Polarity</p>	<p><u>Message importance</u> perceived low <u>Risk</u> felt/perceived by receiver (ego/status threat; threat of change) <u>Personality conflict</u> with sender <u>Frame of mind</u> (receiver unreceptive) <u>Environmental distractions</u></p>
<p>Receiver <u>Reception</u> Problems Immediately or subsequently tunes out Appears not to hear Seems not to understand Acts confused Asks to have message repeated Responds abnormally (while message is being sent)</p>	<p>Receiver <u>cannot hear</u> (because sender is not speaking loudly or clearly enough) Receiver <u>cannot see</u> what sender is showing or doing <u>Environmental interference</u> (e.g., noise)</p>
<p>Receiver <u>Interpretation</u> Problems Acts confused Requests clarification, explanation, or restatement Does not respond, reply, or react Makes improper, incorrect, inappropriate or unintended responses Responds negatively or dysfunctionally Response ambiguous, vague Response exaggerated Disagrees Is defensive Takes a polar position</p>	<p>Sender did one or more of the following:</p> <p><u>Assumed process is only intellectual</u> -- not also emotional Stated <u>inferences</u> (assumptions, opinions, conclusions) as thought they were facts or observations <u>By-passed</u> receiver (miscommunicated what meant) Used <u>words not in receiver's vocabulary</u> Used <u>overly specialized vocabulary</u> (technical terms, jargon, colloquialisms, acronyms, abbreviations) Was <u>imprecise</u> in word usage Talked <u>outside of receiver's experience field</u> Was too <u>abstract</u> (under-defined terms) or too <u>restrictive</u> (over-defined terms) Conveyed "<u>hidden meanings</u>" or "meta-talk" (did not say what really meant) Conveyed "<u>allness</u>" (know it all, said it all) <u>Stereotyped</u> people/places/things/activities (was indiscriminate) Conveyed <u>prejudice</u> Conveyed <u>double standards</u> Was <u>condescending</u> Used <u>negative or emotion-charged words</u> <u>Expected agreement</u>; was unwilling to accept receiver's ideas/feelings/opinions <u>Communicated through other persons</u>, enabling more filters to scramble message Used <u>improper sentence structure, word order, grammar, and/or punctuation</u></p>

- c. how best to send (deliver) your message.
4. Send (deliver) the message effectively.
 5. Insure that the receiver has properly received and correctly interpreted your message.

This next section elaborates on “rules” three, four, and five, which are actually the main steps to take to assure effective communication. Suggestions and recommendations are presented more or less in the order in which a sender should apply them.

Think What You Want to Convey

1. Identify/formulate the purpose(s) or objective(s) of your communication (to inform; to help or advise; to influence or persuade; to entertain; and/or to impress).
2. Formulate the main idea (thought, opinion, recommendation) that you want to “get through” to the receiver. — and/or —
Identify the feeling that you want to convey.

Think About the Motivational and Attitudinal Aspects of Communication

Getting and Maintaining Receiver Attention

1. **Think about the receiver(s).** Take some time to consider what you know (rather than simply assume) about his/her (or their) needs, motives, goals and expectations, knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, biases, feelings, abilities, and personality traits.
 - a. Consider not only what the receiver knows, perhaps does not know, or might need to know, but also consider what the receiver might want to know.
 - b. When considering the receiver’s motives (needs, values, interests, goals, and expectations), think about how you might introduce your message so as to appeal to the receiver’s inner motivation (e.g., by drawing the receiver’s attention to why the message is important to him or her).
2. **Think about yourself** and how your own attitudes might influence the receiver(s).

- a. Do you tend to stereotype people, things, places, and activities, thereby “turning off” receivers? Or do you allude to similarities *and* differences?
- b. Do you you have a tendency to “know it all and say it all?” Conveying “allness” is also a “turn-off.”
- c. Do you have some “hidden agenda?” Will you tend to convey hidden meanings or to disguise your real purposes, thoughts, meanings, or feelings. Or will you be as open and honest as possible.
- d. Do you tend to condescend to people? Or do you keep in mind what Will Rogers said: “Everybody is ignorant, only on different subjects.”
- e. Are you prejudiced? Will you tend to make prejudicial remarks that elicit receiver hostility?
- f. Do you have “double standards?”

Motivational Considerations and Approaches In Helping Situations

Especially when helping someone, also think about applying the following principles and guidelines.

1. Being honest and sincere helps establish an atmosphere and relationship of mutual trust, which facilitates discussion.
2. Jointly exploring (analyzing) the problem or situation together enables the other person to find his or her own answers—with some guidance and input from you.
3. Making it easy for the person to talk helps draw out his or her thoughts. For example: Encourage expression by asking leading questions that require more than simple “yes” or “no” answers. Then, listen more than talk, thereby encouraging the other person to continue talking freely.
4. Using “Solution Messages” turns off a receiver.

The following messages suggest “solutions” to someone’s problem or unacceptable behavior. In effect, they say, “You’re incapable of solving your problem (or my problem with your behavior),” or “I know better than you how to solve your problem (or correct your behavior).”

Ordering, directing, commanding
Threatening, admonishing, warning
Name-calling, ridiculing, shaming
Moralizing, preaching, lecturing

Solving, advising, suggesting
Giving logical arguments

5. Using “Put-Down Messages” also turns off a receiver.

The following messages threaten an individual’s self-concept by saying, in effect, “You’re not an OK person.” They can cause a person to feel guilt, inadequacy, or rejection—feelings that usually stir defensiveness and resistance.

Judging, criticizing, blaming, disagreeing
Over-praising or over-agreeing
Name-calling, ridiculing, shaming
Sympathizing, reassuring, consoling
Analyzing or diagnosing the individual
Questioning, probing, interrogating
Avoiding the issue
Humoring, or condescending to, the person

6. “I-Messages” are more effective than “solution” and “put-down” messages.

Example: “Here’s how your behavior affects me and how I feel as a result. Is there some way that you can help me deal with this?”

Such “I-messages” . . .

- a. reveal the sender as a human being;
- b. elicit positive responses to the sender; and
- c. are difficult to argue against.

“I-messages” should be . . .

- a. honest and accurate; and
- b. unambiguous and certain (not weak).

Considerations and Approaches in Influencing and Persuading Situations

When thinking about how to influence or persuade someone, it helps to keep the following principles and guidelines in mind.⁶

1. Two-Way vs. One-Way Communication

Research suggests the following:

- a. Two-way communications are more effective over

the long run, especially for better educated people and those who are initially against a desired action.

- b. One-way communications tend to work to a limited extent when people are not initially opposed or when they are less educated.

2. Types of Appeals

Research supports the view that “aggressively aroused” people will be more influenced by punitive appeals than by lenient appeals, while people who are not upset initially will be more influenced by lenient appeals.

3. Characteristics of the Sender (Influencer)

Studies show, in general, that if the influencer is seen by others as being trustworthy, expert, and impartial, then the influencer stands a much better chance of influencing or persuading others. Moreover, the studies show that a highly credible source will often achieve change in direct proportion to the amount of change that he or she advocates.

4. Predispositions of Receivers (Influencees)

a. Self-Esteem

People having high self-esteem have been shown to be more influenced by optimistic and self-enhancing communications than by pessimistic or threatening communications. People having low self-esteem show the reverse effect.

b. Ego-Defensiveness

Numerous studies have shown that people who have a high need to “defend against inner conflict” are less influenceable than those who have strong abilities to open themselves to and tolerate of internal conflict.

c. Need for Conformity

Findings show that people having a high “need to conform” tend to be highly influenced by social pressures. Thus, if they are members of groups who are resisting change, they are likely to resist, also. On the other hand, if they are being pressured only by influencers outside their groups, they are likely to comply with the influencers’ requests.

d. Authoritarian Nature

Research has shown that authoritarian people are more easily and effectively influenced by superiors than by subordinates (largely because of their attitudes about authority and their respect for authority figures). Studies also show that authoritarians move just as easily toward liberal attitudes as toward conservative attitudes—when pressured by a superior to do so.

5. Social and Organizational Pressures

Research has shown the following:

- a. Involving a group in decision-making, especially when the task is complex, is likely to enhance individual motivation to work and to increase personal identity with group goals and decisions.
- b. When an influencer's message is ambiguous, people allow social norms to determine the manner in which they perceive the message.
- c. Outside attempts to influence a person without first obtaining the support of his or her immediate superior is likely to reduce the extent to which the person (subordinate) can be influenced.

Thinking How to Convey Feelings or Ideas in Order to "Get Through"

The following are basic, general guidelines.

Conveying Feelings

Consider whether to describe a feeling or simply express it. You are *expressing* a feeling when you say, "What a mess!" or "Aw, nuts!" or "Let's get this over with!" You are *describing* a feeling when you say, "I am hurt and angry," or "I feel embarrassed."

Expressing a feeling may get it across, but describing it is more likely to "get it through."

General Exposition of Ideas

1. Statements of ideas and feelings should be clear, concise, accurate, and to the point.

2. Order of Ideas Presented

- a. Avoid jumping around. Express ideas in an easily understood sequence, each idea flowing naturally, meaningfully, logically, and easily into the next.
- b. Lead the listener or reader through the rationale (background and substantiation) and/or the emotional appeal that will result in the receiver's acceptance of, and action on, your recommendation.
- c. "Pros" vs. "Cons": Research generally shows that the first-heard ideas in a communication are usually the most powerful, especially when they arouse people's needs and satisfy those needs with "pro" or rewarding arguments. Communications that begin with "con" arguments, or are impersonal in their need-arousal, tend to be less effective.

3. Facts vs. Inferences (Personal Assumptions, Opinions, or Conclusions)

- a. Use the facts, especially when they are readily available. Avoid stating inferences as though they were facts.
- b. If certain facts are not available and assumptions must be made, base "working assumptions" on recognized, solid facts, not on other assumptions, opinions, or conclusions.
- c. Differentiate between facts and inferences. Tell the receiver which statements contain which.
- d. Maintain objectivity (and credibility). Avoid relating only those facts or inferences that "prove" your idea or recommendation. Also relate and discuss contrary evidence or information.

4. Reinforcement of Ideas

These guidelines particularly apply to influencing, persuading, and selling situations.

- a. Appeal to the receiver's needs, problems, and/or motives.
- b. Relate ideas to something that the receiver already believes or accepts. Cite comparisons that are both meaningful and believable.
- c. Also cite general illustrations, real-life experiences,

and specific examples or instances (more or less in that order) that the receiver can easily understand and relate to personal experience.

- d. Discuss how perceived risks involving costs, time, change, ego, status, or goals may not be realistic, and how, if they are realistic, they can be dealt with or minimized.
- e. Emphasize advantages (or “pros”), but also deal with disadvantages (or “cons”) and how the latter can be dealt with or minimized.
- f. Restate important points, but restate them in different ways than they were stated initially. But remember: Repetition becomes less effective when it sounds too repetitious.

5. Visual Aids

Pictures and visual models or diagrams are worth a thousand words. They help make verbal impressions more meaningful and recallable. (Studies show that we remember 25% of what we see and 25% of what we hear; but we remember 40% of what we see and hear.)

- a. Use visual aids to the extent possible and appropriate.
- b. Keep visual aids simple.
- c. If a model or diagram is fairly complex, first show a simplified or abbreviated version (to give the receiver an idea about the “whole” concept, system, etc.). Next, describe or discuss the “parts” (sub-diagrams, flow charts, etc.) in detail. Finally, relate the “parts” back to the “whole.” If for some reason the picture, model, or diagram cannot be divided into “parts,” lead the receiver through it step by step.
- d. Especially in the cases of slides and overhead projections, make the images large enough for receivers to see clearly (or give them handouts to follow).

6. Making Recommendations

- a. First, build your case by presenting ideas and substantiating or reinforcing them.
- b. Then, state in specific terms who should do what, when, and how.

Thinking How to Convey a Message Through Language

Word Usage

Having considered the receiver’s education, type of job, cultural background, and experience, follow these guidelines:

1. Use words that are in the receiver’s vocabulary and experience field.
2. Avoid using highly specialized, technical, or esoteric words, jargon, acronyms, initials, or colloquialisms (that are not in the receiver’s experience field).

Table 3⁷ (next page) lists words that most people like and dislike.

3. If you must use an unfamiliar word, or if you are trying to increase the receiver’s vocabulary in a given area, be sure to define the word the first time you use it.
4. Be precise. Think about the image that a word will create in the receiver’s mind. Use words that are appropriately specific.

If the meaning or image to be conveyed is broad or abstract, use a word that is broad, general, or abstract (e.g., animal, hardware, weapon). If the meaning or image to be conveyed is very specific, use a specific word (e.g., fox, claw hammer, revolver).

5. Avoid using emotion-charged words, especially those that tend to elicit strong negative emotions and reactions.
6. In influencing or persuading situations, use words that reinforce what you want the receiver(s) to do (or not do).
 - a. When discussing what you want the receiver(s) to do (or not do), use words most people like and to which they react favorably.
 - b. When discussing the *consequences* of not doing what you are asking, suggesting, or recommending, use words most people do not like and to which they react unfavorably.

Table 3: Words People Like and Do Not Like

Words to Which Most People React Favorably			Words to Which Most People React Unfavorably		
advantage	energetic	progress	abuse	dispute	pain
appreciate	enthusiasm	quality	alibi	exaggerate	prejudiced
benefit	exciting	reliable	allege	extravagant	retrench
capable	genuine	responsible	anxiety	failure	outline
confidence	helpful	results	apology	fault	rude
conscientious	honesty	satisfactory	argue	fear	squander
cooperation	honor	service	beware	fraud	sneaky
courtesy	integrity	success	blame	hardship	suffer
dependable	justice	superior	boring	ignorant	superficial
desireable	kind	useful	cheap	imitation	tardy
ease	loyalty	valuable	commonplace	implicate	timid
economy	please	vigor	complaint	impossible	unfortunate
effective	popular	you	cost	lie	unsuccessful
efficient	practical	yours	crisis	misfortune	waste
energy	prestige	we	decline	negligent	worry
			discredit	opinionated	wrong

Writing (and Speaking) Style

1. Sentences should have complete subjects and predicates. For variety, mix long sentences and short ones, but try to average about twenty words or less.
2. Paragraphs should be kept to about four or five sentences, one of which should be the topic sentence (central thought). The topic sentence is generally placed at the beginning of a paragraph so that the receiver (reader or listener) will have an idea about the thoughts to be covered in the paragraph. Sometimes, however, it can be more appropriate to place the topic sentence at the end of the paragraph (e.g., when the central thought might be resisted if it came first, and the speaker or writer wishes to lead the receiver up to the central thought).
3. Vocabulary: Since words are vehicles or tools for expressing thoughts and feelings, one's style is affected by the depth and breadth of one's vocabulary. (Remember that your recognition vocabulary is the largest, your reading vocabulary is smaller, your writing vocabulary is smaller yet, and your speaking vocabulary is the smallest.) Increasing your writing and speaking vocabularies, and thus your writing and speaking effectiveness, is not simply a matter of looking up words in a dictionary—although this helps. It is more a matter of developing a "word consciousness" and encountering new or recognized words in a variety of contexts, especially through extensive reading.
4. Watch your "Fog Index." You can calculate your Fog Index as follows: Choose a sample of at least 100 words. Figure the average sentence length in words. (Count clauses separated by colons and semicolons as full sentences.) Count the number of Big Words. [A Big Word is any word having three syllables or more—unless it is a proper name, a verb that has reached three syllables by adding "ed" or "es" (but not "ing"), or a short-word compound like "everything" or "bookkeeper."] Figure the percentage of Big Words. (It is 100 times the number of Big Words divided by the number of words in the sample). Add the percentage of Big Words to the average sentence length. Multiply the sum by 0.4 and drop everything after the decimal point.

The last paragraph has a Fog Index of 8. Most magazines have an index of about 11. Scientific journals tend to have an index of about 17. The Gettysburg Address has a index of 10. The Lord's Prayer has an index of 4.
5. Avoid using the passive voice too frequently. Instead of saying, "It should be done," or "It can be made to work," or "It is recommended," say "I/you/we should do it," or "I/you/we/they can make it work," or "I recommend." Don't be afraid to use personal pronouns occasionally. Too frequent use of the passive voice sounds impersonal and can be extremely dull.
6. Phrases at the beginning of sentences such as "There is," "It is," or "There are" should be used only occasionally.

7. Use a consistent, parallel structure for lists or series. For example, instead of saying, “This booklet seems interesting (an adjective) and an informative piece of work (a noun),” say, “This booklet seems interesting and informative (both adjectives).” Or, instead of saying, “The most important factors are time and temperature, careful control at every point, and the mechanical equipment must be in perfect condition,” say, “The most important factors are time and temperature, careful control at every point, and mechanical equipment in perfect operating condition.”
8. Use proper spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Incorrect usage is generally annoying and distracting, especially to better-educated receivers.

These are just a few, general guidelines concerning style and form. For sources of additional guidelines, see the list of references provided at the end of this booklet.

Delivering the Message

When and Where to Communicate

1. Pick the **right time** to communicate (e.g., when the receiver will not be distracted by competing messages).
2. Pick the **right place** to communicate (e.g., where the receiver’s attention will not be distracted by extraneous stimuli).

Demeanor

1. BE: interested, friendly, good-natured, flexible, animated yet relaxed, tactful, sensitive, and courteous.
2. DON’T BE: egocentric, dogmatic, condescending, argumentative, lifeless, insensitive, or insincere.

Initiating the Communication

1. Avoid using the following “openers”, which can “turn off” receivers:
 - a. False Humility (“In my humble opinion”)
 - b. Softeners (“Would you be kind enough to...?” or “You’re right, of course, but...”)
 - c. Foreboders (“Nothing is really wrong, but...”)

- d. Interesters (“Guess what?” or “Did you know that...?”)
- e. Downers (“How about...?” or “Don’t...”)

2. Get (and maintain) the receiver’s attention. Appeal to the receiver’s inner motivation by drawing attention to the message’s importance to him or her.

Speaking (The “Mechanics”)

1. Speak clearly and audibly. Do not mumble.
2. Speak neither too slowly nor too rapidly. The typical speaker talks at a rate of about 125 to 130 words per minute, but the typical listener can easily think four or five times that fast. Speaking too slowly enables listeners to “go on mental side trips.” Speak fairly quickly and assuredly, but not so quickly that your words sound jumbled or run together to the listener.
3. Use appropriate vocal tones and inflections.
4. Use natural gestures and facial expressions (e.g., animated, but not exaggerated, forced, “put on,” flamboyant, or distracting).
5. Control distracting mannerisms such as fidgeting, biting the lips, shifting position frequently, pacing back and forth, tapping fingers or feet, and fussing with hair.

Using Language

1. Word Usage

- a. Use words that the receiver will understand
- b. Use appropriately specific words
- c. Avoid using emotion-charged words

2. Style

- a. Speak mostly in complete sentences
- b. Avoid unnecessarily complex words and clauses
- c. Avoid using the passive voice too frequently
- d. Use parallel structures for lists or series
- e. Use proper grammar and punctuation

Attitudes/Messages to Suppress or Convey

1. Avoid the following in any situation:
 - a. Conveying allness (know it all, said it all)
 - b. Stereotyping (particularly people)
 - c. Being condescending in manner/tone
 - d. Using negative or emotion-charged words
 - e. Showing prejudice
 - f. Conveying double standards
 - g. Conveying hidden meanings (meta-talk)
2. Do the following in helping situations:
 - a. Establish mutual trust by being honest and sincere
 - b. Jointly explore the situation or problem
 - c. Listen more than talk
 - d. Avoid using “Solution Messages”
 - e. Avoid using “Put-Down Messages”
 - f. Use “I-Messages”

Insuring that the Receiver Has Correctly Interpreted the Message

Regardless of a sender's attempts to follow all the guidelines discussed above, a receiver can still misinterpret the message.

1. Don't assume that the receiver properly received and interpreted your message as you think you sent it.
2. Encourage questions and feedback. Ask, for example:
 - a. what the receiver understands, not if he or she understands (which usually invites an untrue “yes”);
 - b. what the receiver is assuming;
 - c. how the receiver feels about the message;
 - d. what the receiver perceives about the process; and
 - e. how the receiver feels about the process.
3. Accept the receiver's perceptions, even though you may disagree.
4. If the receiver disagrees with your idea or recommendation, don't automatically assume that he or she misinterpreted your message, and then proceed to offer more arguments and explanations. Instead, explore any difference of opinion together. Emotions as well as ideas may be involved.

5. Ask yourself the following about the receiver's feelings: Is the person actually describing a feeling? Or, is the person simply expressing a feeling? If the latter is the case, ask the person to describe how he or she feels.
6. Accept the receiver's feelings, even though you may disagree. *Whether right or wrong, justified or unjustified, or inappropriate, they are still his or her feelings, and are realities with which you must deal.*
7. Try to understand the receiver's perceptions or feelings from his or her point of view.

A Receiver's Responsibilities for Effective Communication

This section discusses rules for being an effective receiver. Since senders can become receivers in two-way communication processes, the rules apply to them as well. Unfortunately, many receivers do not apply these rules. This makes it even more important for senders to know them, so that they can anticipate receiver problems and eliminate or avoid them by using the guidelines discussed above.

Receiver (Listener) Rules for Focusing and Sustaining Attention

This section covers motivational and other rules that relate to focusing and maintaining attention. Receivers must focus and maintain attention in order to receive messages continuously and effectively. We will be referring to listeners here, but most of the rules apply to readers as well.

Motivational Aspects and Rules

- A. Focus on the elements of personal value. Poor listeners, deciding that the message is uninteresting after the first few sentences, mentally “turn off the switch.” Good listeners, on the other hand, look for new ideas, gimmicks, and facts that they can add to their store of knowledge and use later. They evaluate and sort, but they do listen.
- B. Rise to challenging material. Good listeners listen closely not only to light, easily comprehended messages, but also to more complex and challenging ideas that develop and sharpen their mental faculties.

- C. Control egotism. Good listeners are honest enough with themselves to acknowledge that they do not know it all. They therefore look to the sender to provide useful information, ideas, and insights.
- D. Deal with perceived risks and threats. Good listeners summon the courage to cope with ego-threatening ideas. They also have a willingness to change, because they look at change as an opportunity to improve things (or themselves).
- E. Control selective perception. Good listeners listen not only to the things they want to hear, but also to the things they may not want to hear.

Other Aspects and Rules

- A. Give the sender your conscious attention. Good listeners do not let their minds wander or “tune out.” They could miss valuable information. If necessary, they force themselves to focus their full attention on the message. They do not over-relax. They maintain eye contact with the speaker. They know that you can always read something again, but that you probably will not hear the speaker’s message again.
- B. Avoid tuning out to evaluate the speaker. Good listeners realize that the message—not the speaker—is most important. Poor listeners waste time and miss important points when they are evaluating the speaker’s voice, looks, mannerisms, and clothing.
- C. Adjust quickly to distractions. Poor listeners allow their attention to be diverted easily by distractions. Good listeners “fight off” distractions and work even harder to concentrate on the message.
- D. Maintain flexibility in note-taking. Note-taking and outlining can be very useful. Poor listeners, however, often over-do taking notes or making outlines, thereby missing important points. Good listeners adapt their note-taking to the situation and to the nature of the message. They listen carefully for important points and do not let note-taking interfere with their attention to the message.
- E. Control reaction to emotionally charged words or ideas. Everyone has certain cherished ideas, beliefs, or notions that amount to “psychological blind spots.” Frequently, when a speaker “treads on these sacred cows”—even inadvertently, listeners can become emotionally aroused

and block out the sender’s message. Good listeners are able to keep their emotions under control and to concentrate on getting the message.

- F. Withhold making judgments until the message and one’s comprehension are complete. Poor listeners tend to pass judgment on the sender’s entire message, if, at any point in the message, they hear something with which they disagree or that “rubs them the wrong way.” Good listeners do not let themselves become aroused. Instead, they withhold judging the message until the speaker has completed it and they have fully comprehended and evaluated it.

Receiver Rules for Effectively Interpreting and Evaluating Messages

- A. Focus on central ideas. Poor listeners just listen for facts as the speaker moves from point to point. They can fail to absorb and comprehend the sender’s central ideas, of which the facts may only be supporting evidence. Good listeners, having developed an ability to recognize conventional patterns of organization, transitional wording, and summation procedures, look for the central ideas being developed.
- B. Make effective use of listening time. Remember that the typical receiver can think four or five times faster than the typical sender speaks (125 to 130 words per minute). Poor listeners use all of this spare time by “going on mental side trips,” only tuning back in occasionally to check on what the speaker is saying. Finding it more and more difficult to follow the speaker’s train of thought, poor listeners tend to give up trying to gain anything useful from the speaker. Good listeners, however, use their extra thinking time to good advantage—in the ways mentioned below.
- C. Objectively extract the sender’s intended meaning. Good listeners try not to let their own views, opinions, feelings, and word meanings color or distort their interpretation of the sender’s message. They try to understand the sender’s meaning and/or feelings from the sender’s point of view. They also keep in mind that neither they nor the sender are 100% right or wrong.
- D. Summarize points and extract key ideas. Good listeners use their extra time to review and summarize the points being made and to pick out the key or central ideas.

- E. Try to anticipate what the speaker is going to say. Good listeners tend to think ahead, often recalling what they already know about the sender's subject and fitting it into the context of the sender's message.
- F. Distinguish between facts and inferences (assumptions/opinions/conclusions). Based on what they may already know about the speaker's subject, good listeners attempt to separate facts from inferences.
- G. Consider the sender's motives, point of view, and biases. Good listeners try to determine why senders feel, think, and say what they do. This helps them to separate fact from inference and truth from falsehood. It also helps them to decide whether or not to think, feel, or behave as the sender intends.

Receiver Rules for Providing Good Feedback

- A. Voluntarily feed back (to the sender) your summary of the ideas and/or feelings as you have interpreted them. Don't automatically assume that you have correctly interpreted the sender's message. Just as it is wrong for a sender to assume that he or she sent the message in a way that the receiver would interpret properly, it is also wrong for a receiver to assume that (a) the sender actually sent the intended meaning, or (b) the receiver actually understood the message sent.
- B. Be open, honest, and sincere as you . . .
1. relate or describe what you understand;
 2. describe how you feel about the message content;
 3. describe how you perceive the communication process; and
 4. describe how you feel about the process.
- C. Accept differences of opinions and feelings—and explore them with the sender.

Summary

Phases and steps of an effective communication process are summarized in **Table 4**. However, many causes of faulty communication can be compensated for or minimized if senders and receivers will apply several basic guidelines.

Senders can improve their communications by doing six main things:

1. Stop to think about what you are doing and how to do it better.
2. Remember that (a) the receiver is not a mind-reader, and (b) the communication process is both rational and emotional.
3. Think about the receiver. Ask yourself how to appeal to his or her inner motivation and how to formulate your message (paint the picture, state the idea, or express the feeling) so that the receiver will understand what you mean.
4. Follow the Golden Rule. At least treat the receiver the way that you would like to be treated. You might even follow the Platinum Rule and treat the receiver the way that he or she would like to be treated.
5. Get feedback from the receiver. Make sure that what you meant to send was actually received and interpreted properly.
6. Explore differences between opinions and feelings together.

Receivers can contribute to more effective communication processes by doing these six main things:

1. Focus attention on the message (not on the sender's appearance and mannerisms or on environmental distractions).
2. Listen or read first—then evaluate.
3. Try to “pick up” the information, idea, picture, or feeling that the sender is attempting to “get through.”
4. Follow the Golden Rule. At least treat the sender the way that you would like to be treated. You might even follow the Platinum Rule and treat the sender the way that he or she would like to be treated.
5. Make sure that you received what the sender intended to send. Feed back the central points or feelings that you think the message contained. If the idea, picture, or feeling being communicated seems fuzzy, ask for clarification, explanation, or elaboration.
6. Explore differences between opinions and feelings together.

Table 4: Phases and Steps of a Systematic Communications Approach

A C T I O N	B E N E F I C I A L E F F E C T S
Phase I: Preparation	
Step 1: Awareness — Think what you're doing and how Step 2: Increase motivation Step 3: Seek a conducive environment Step 4: Get organized (materials, references, etc.) Step 5: Brief preliminary analysis (Preview)	consciously structure process. increase/sustain concentration and effort. minimize distractions, interruptions. minimize distractions; organization. importance; priorities; budget time, money, effort; organization.
Phase II: Analyzing -- Defining and Reducing Communication (Problem) Situation	
Step 6: Describe situational requirement to communicate Step 7: Identify what needs to be improved, changed, done Step 8: Identify by whom — receiver(s) Step 9: Analyze receiver(s): knowledge, attitudes, traits * Identify receiver factors that could affect receiver attention, reception, interpretation Step 10: Analyze own characteristics, attitudes, skills * Identify how oneself could affect the effectiveness of the communication process Step 11: Identify non-personal/environmental factors that could affect communication effectiveness Step 12: Derive criteria for Phase IV (Decision making)	increase repertoire; look for right factors. focus; motivation; desired end result. focus. minimize receiver attention, reception, and interpretation problems. minimize sender planning, formulation, and delivery problems. minimize sender and receiver problems. improve testing of alternatives.
Phase III: Alternatives Formulation (Communication Planning)	
Step 13: Formulate communication goals/objectives Step 14: Formulate (alternative) strategies/tactics, programs/ projects and action plans to persuade/influence re: * To whom [receiver(s)] * Contents of communications (ideas, feelings) * <u>Mode(s) utilize</u> (verbal, nonverbal, combination) * Where, when, facilities, equipment Step 15: Budget — account for costs (if any)	desired end result; focus. alternative approaches for "getting through." account for costs/resources.
Phase IV: Test, Compare, and Select Alternative(s) (Decision Making)	
Step 16: Analytically test and compare alternative sets of goals and plans * Identify advantages and disadvantages * Test against criteria Step 17: Select appropriate alternative goals/plans for implementation	sequence of implementation acts and events; mentally test using "class logic." mentally test using "propositional logic." select alternative(s); final decision-making.
Phase V: Communicate — Implement Chosen Alternative(s)	
Step 18: Communicate as planned (write, speak, show, do) Step 19: Obtain and evaluate feedback Step 20: Revise communications as appropriate	assure effectiveness. correct/alleviate attn, recptn, interp problems

FOOTNOTES

1. Maslow, A. H., *Motivation and Personality* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1954).
2. Allport, G., Vernon, P., and Lindzey, G., *Study of Values* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1960); and Gordon, Leonard V., *Survey of Personal Values* (Chicago: Science Research Associates, 1967).
3. Gordon, Leonard V., *Survey of Interpersonal Values* (Chicago: Science Research Associates, 1960).
4. Traits by these or similar names can be found in the following psychological measurement instruments:

Thurston Temperament Schedule
Gordon Personal Profile
Gordon Personal Inventory
Guilford/Zimmerman Temperament Survey
Bernreuter Personality Inventory
Humm-Wadsworth Inventory
Myers-Briggs Type Indicator

5. Sample quotes are adaptations of: Harris, Thomas A., MD, *I'm OK, You're OK* (New York: Harper & Row, 1967).
6. Most research results reviewed herein are from: Hovland, C., Janis, I., and Kelly, H., *Communication and Persuasion* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1961).
7. Here we have adapted, and added a few words of our own to, a list by: Pollack, Ted, "Words That Can Make or Break You," *Supervision 31* (February 1969).

References on Communication

Words and Word Usage

Use a good college dictionary, such as published by Merriam Webster, Random House, American Heritage, or World. These are good not only for word choice, synonyms, and spelling, but also contain sections that deal with conventions regarding grammar and punctuation.

Accepted Conventions Regarding Proper English Usage

1. *A Manual of Style - 16th Edition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2010).
2. Perrin, Porter G., *Writer's Guide and Index to English* (Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1972).
3. Ebbitt, Wilma R., and Ebbitt, David R., *Writer's Guide and Index to English* (Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1982).

Speaking and Writing Styles and Guidelines

1. *Write Better, Speak Better* (Pleasantville, New York: Reader's Digest, 1978).
2. Coffin, Royce A., *The Communicator* (New York: AMACOM, 1973).
3. Strunk, W., Jr., and White, E. B., *The Elements of Style* (Macmillan, 1979).
4. Hodges, John C., and Whitten, Mary E., *Harbrace College Handbook* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977).
5. Brusaw, C. T., Alred, G. J., and Oliu, W. E., *Handbook of Technical Writing* (St. Martin's Press, 1976).
6. Adelstein, Michael, *Contemporary Business Writing* (Random House, 1979).

Appendix A

Nonverbal Communication

By dealing mostly with verbal communications, we have not meant to imply that nonverbal communications are unimportant. Actually, they are very important. Communication of ideas, attitudes, and feelings can be accomplished through various visual, auditory, and tactile modes. Ideas (thoughts, principles, concepts) can be very effectively communicated through visual models, diagrams, and other visual aids. Attitudes and feelings can be communicated—either consciously or unconsciously—through various visual, auditory, and tactile modes. Examples are body language (e.g., facial expressions, body position, body movement), nonverbal sounds (e.g., laughter, crying, sighing), and touch (e.g., caressing, back-slapping).

The visual, auditory, and tactile cues that communicate feelings and attitudes often go unnoticed by both the sender and the receiver. When they do go unnoticed, important messages are missed by both persons. In such cases, communication can be incomplete and ineffective.

Listed below are various attitudes and the non-verbal means by which they can be communicated. Before we list

them, we should mention several cautionary notes for you to keep in mind.

As you go down the list, you will note that some nonverbal behavior patterns can have several meanings. Interpreting these behavior patterns, therefore, should be done with the same care as interpreting verbal communications. We recommend the following: Before trying to interpret nonverbal messages routinely, closely observe family members and those with whom you work, identifying their nonverbal cues (messages) and learning to connect them with their moods and verbal messages. Also, make a point of interpreting nonverbal cues within a *total context*. For example, avoid drawing any conclusions about someone's mood or attitude based on just one or two nonverbal cues. Look for others as well, and see if they all indicate the same thing. In addition, think about whether or not the nonverbal cues relate to the context of the verbal message being sent. Learning to interpret nonverbal cues is not as easy as it may sound. It will take some time, effort, thought, insight, and patience.

Openness

- Open hands
- Unbuttoned coat

Defensiveness

- Arms crossed on chest
- Crossed legs
- Sitting reversed in armless chair
- Pointing index finger

Evaluation

- Hand to face gestures
- Head tilted
- Stroking chin
- Peering over glasses
- Tightened lips

Expectancy

- Moving closer
- Rapt attention
- Poised and ready posture

Suspicion

- Not looking at you
- Arms crossed
- Moving away from you
- Sideways glance
- Tensed posture

Readiness

- Hands on hips
- Sitting on edge of chair
- Moving closer
- Rapt attention

Cooperation

- Sitting on edge of chair
- Tilted head
- Readying self (e.g., roll up sleeves)
- Open hands

Confidence

Hands behind back (authority position)
 Back stiffened
 Hands on coat lapels
 Head upright
 Direct gaze at you

Need for Reassurance

Touching
 Hands in pockets
 Nervous mannerisms

Nervousness / Tension

Clearing throat
 Deep breathing
 Fidgeting
 Hand covering mouth while speaking
 Not looking at other persons
 Wringing hands
 Perspiring
 Changing position frequently

Frustration

Short breaths
 "Tsk" sound
 Wringing hands
 Tightly clenched hands (fistlike)
 Running hand through hair
 Rubbing back of neck
 Tightened lips

Self-Control

Holding arm behind back
 Clenched hands
 Tightened lips
 Tensed body

Boredom

Doodling
 Drumming fingers
 Head in hand(s)
 Blank stare or closed eyes

Acceptance / Positive Regard

Open arms and hands
 Touching gestures
 Moving closer to person
 Leaning toward person
 Direct eye contact

Hostility / Aggressiveness

Clenching hands (fistlike)
 Shrugging shoulders
 Scratching self
 Widened, glaring eyes
 Avoidance of eye contact
 Rapid eye blinking

Intense Disagreement

Turning away
 Rapid eye blinking
 Tensed lips/body
 Crossed arms and/or legs
 Diverted glance
 Squinting eyes

How Some People Say "No" Nonverbally

Frowning
 Turning back to you
 Giving a "cold shoulder"
 Thrusting chin outward
 Tightening jaw/lips
 Running hand through hair
 Rubbing back of neck
 Squinting eyes
 Heavy sighs
 Pushing away from you
 Crossing arms/legs
 Buttoning coat/jacket
 Removing, putting down glasses
 Shaking head "no"

How Some People Say "Yes" Nonverbally

Pupils dilated
 Head tilted
 Sitting on edge of chair
 Legs/arms not crossed
 Moving/leaning toward you
 Smiling
 Touching
 Shaking head "yes"

Appendix B

Guidelines for Writing Effective Reports, Memos, and Directives

Phase 1: Formulate Objectives

Identify your purpose. What do you want to achieve? What results do you want to get?

Phase 2: Plan – Formulate a Basic Design (Approach, Tone, Scope)

1. Identify the audience to whom you are writing.
2. Formulate a basic approach, scope, and tone that will be most appropriate for achieving objectives.

First, answer these questions:

- a. What is your reader likely to know and not know?
- b. What are your reader's attitudes, beliefs, and biases?
- c. What does your reader need to know or do?
- d. What might your reader want to know or think he or she needs to know?
- e. What is your credibility in the reader's eyes?
- f. If there is a problem to be solved (perhaps through your recommendation), does the reader already know that it exists, or will you have to show or prove that it exists?
- g. What is the importance of your information or advice to the reader? What does the reader stand to gain or lose by acting on your information or by following your recommendation?

Then, decide the following:

- a. What approach to use (rational, emotional, or a combination of both).
- b. The appropriate scope (amount of information; depth of analysis; specificity of substantiating detail; breadth and depth of discussion).
- c. The appropriate tone (assertive vs. subdued; urgent vs. calm; professional or formal vs. casual).

Phase 3: Prepare and Initial Written Document

1. Research the subject; gather all the pertinent information available.
2. "Line up the ducks." Identify all applicable questions, comments, details, supporting evidence or data, and alternative recommendations. At this point, however, avoid making judgments about their importance or appropriateness.
3. Examine, judge, and organize the materials.
 - a. Determine what is important, necessary, or useful.
 - b. Organize ideas, factors to deal with, and available data into logical groupings.
 - c. Be alert for fresh insights into, questions about, and gaps in your material.
4. Identify the main idea(s) to be communicated, taking into account the following:
 - a. What precisely is the problem situation and what appear to be the superficial and underlying causes?
 - b. What actually needs to be changed or improved?
 - c. Exactly what action(s) is/are required of whom?
5. Outline the ideas to be expressed in an order that is strategic, logical, and convincing. Arrange supporting material in the order and degree of specificity or detail that you consider appropriate for substantiating your case without obscuring your central thought.
6. Check your outline for technical/substantive content (logic, essentials, breadth, depth, completeness, accuracy) and make any appropriate revisions.
7. Write a rough draft, keeping in mind the basic concepts of communication and adhering to accepted conventions regarding grammar, syntax (language precision, usage, clarity, flow), and punctuation. Also consider the reader's idiosyncratic likes and dislikes concerning substance, syntax, grammar, and punctuation.

8. Check your rough draft for (a) technical/substantive content; (b) syntax; and (c) spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Make appropriate revisions.

Phase 4: Submit the Document to Someone for Review

1. Ask the person to (1) read the document once, and (2) answer the following questions:
 - a. Why was the document written?
 - b. If you were the addressee, what action would you now take?
 - c. Were you given the information you need to make an adequate response or appropriate decision?
 - d. Is the document readable? Understandable?
 - e. What spelling, grammar, and/or punctuation errors did you find?
2. Observe the following guideline rules:
 - a. Submit the document to someone who will not be “checking off” on it before it goes on to the specified addressee(s).

- b. Don’t hang over the reader’s shoulder and explain things as he or she reads.
- c. When the reader has finished answering the questions listed above, thank him or her for the critique.
- d. Don’t argue with the reader about his or her comments.
- e. Consider the reader’s comments, criticisms, and recommendations carefully.

Phase 5: Prepare a Smooth Draft, Making Appropriate Revisions

Taking into account the reader’s comments, write a smooth draft, revising substantive content and the mechanical aspects of the rough draft.

Phase 6: Obtain Approval of the Final Draft and Prepare Copies for Distribution